

3-22-05

To: Marin County BOS

Dear Colleagues,

Our health care system is still in crisis. Millions of Californians are uninsured or underinsured. The piecemeal approach that has historically been used in an attempt to fix the broken system hasn't achieved the goal of universal, comprehensive affordable health care. Even though our State is facing fiscally difficult challenges, there are a growing number of legislators willing to tackle these complex problems with our health care system.

On June 2, 2003, I requested that our Board hear a presentation about a bill that was introduced by Senator Sheila Kuehl which proposed a comprehensive, not for profit, single payer system formerly known as SB921. The Marin County BOS took a position of support for the bill. SB 921 successfully passed through the Senate and ended in the last bill cycle with a majority vote of support in the Assembly Health Committee.

Since that victory, the Lewin report has become available. The Lewin group analyzed the fiscal impact and issues related to Senator Kuehl's proposed bill. The study produced some impressive conclusions which have encouraged some of the most critical skeptics and the broader community to seriously evaluate the merits. The conclusions indicate a path that will lead us in a serious way to the reform that is needed to ensure that all Californian residents are covered for their health care. I have asked Dr. Meredith to summarize the Lewin report for us and for Margaret Kisliuk to present the key points in the revised bill.

Senator Kuehl reintroduced her bill (now known as SB 840) in a more refined version than SB 921 and it will now take the tour through the various legislative committees at the State. There is growing support for a single payer approach to health care reform in the Senate and Assembly, in the private sector and from the community at large. I am requesting that the board reconfirm its support for this single payer legislation now known as SB 840 and send a letter acknowledging the decision to Senator Sheila Kuehl.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Adams, Ph.D., RN

