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Marin County Board of Supervisors, District 2

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School may be out for the summer, but two very important public health issues directly related to youth and community are topics of discussion at the local and state-wide level - legislation regarding vaccination requirements for children and a local proposal for safe disposal of medications. I share updates on both issues below as well as information on a couple of other important local initiatives.

As always, please never hesitate to contact me with your own opinion, comments, questions, and concerns on these or any other issues. Email krice@marincounty.org or call 415-473-7825. You can also connect with me by “liking” my Facebook page at www.facebook.com/D2KatieRice and twitter at [@SupervisorRice](https://twitter.com/SupervisorRice).

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Stronger Immunization Legislation Signed into Law

With the support of many individuals, organizations and public agencies, including the Marin County Board of Supervisors, SB 277 (Pan) - legislation strengthening childhood vaccination requirements - passed through the State Assembly and Senate, and was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on July 1. Under this bill, children enrolling in schools are required to have certain vaccinations prior to entrance, and exemptions based on personal beliefs will no longer be allowed. Home-schooled children are exempt from this regulation, as are children who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons.

Vaccination rates are an important issue here in Marin. Personal belief exemption rates have been on the rise over the past couple of decades, and are at levels today that put

the broader community at risk for diseases such as whooping cough, measles, and other serious, highly communicable, but preventable diseases.

I strongly supported this legislation. Community health is a shared responsibility. As parents and as members of a community, we not only have a responsibility to our children's health, but to the broader community's as well. SB 277 codified that responsibility, ensuring our community's "herd" immunity is at levels that protect all our children and ensure a healthier, safer school environment.

For more information on school and child care immunization requirements, visit www.shotsforschool.org.

Prescription Drug Crisis and Safe Disposal Programs

Marin County, like many other counties in California and across the nation, has seen in recent years a steady increase in number of prescriptions being written for pain management and other controlled substance medications. At the same time we are seeing an attendant rise in prescription drug misuse, abuse, and accidental overdose resulting in hundreds of hospitalizations and even more sobering, many deaths (54 in last two years - most of whom were young people). We are also seeing a rise in crime associated with prescription drug addiction, as well as more evidence of medicines (toxic to aquatic life) in our waste and water systems as a result of improper disposal.

Towards addressing this multi-faceted problem, a broad coalition of stake-holders ([RXSafe Marin](#)) from public health, law enforcement, the medical community, education, pharmaceutical retailers, environmental health, waste management - have been working together to develop programs around prevention and education, and to make recommendations and inform policy. I am happy to report that over the past two years significant progress has been made, from working with the medical community to improve prescription drug protocol in emergency rooms reducing over-prescription, to education efforts with primary care doctors, pharmacists and consumers.

The next step in this effort is to make it easier for consumers to properly dispose of their unused/unwanted medications so that these medications don't end up in the wrong hands, or in the wrong place. Currently, there are limited convenient, safe and legal disposal options in Marin County, and constraints (both regulatory and financial) to expanding options under the current County program.

Towards rectifying this situation, and making the disposal of medications as convenient as possible, the Board of Supervisors will be considering a "Safe Medication Disposal" ordinance at hearings this summer. This ordinance would require drug producers to

develop and finance product stewardship programs for the collection and disposal of medications from residential customers. Similar ordinances have been adopted in Alameda, San Mateo and San Francisco, and are being considered in other counties. With such a program in place, drug “take back” bins would be located in pharmacies, hospitals and police stations throughout the county - convenient locations where residents could dispose of their unwanted/unused/expired medications properly, keeping them out of our waste system and out of the hands of unintended users.

I am extremely pleased with the progress we have made in addressing the prescription drug crises, and with the additional inroads we will be able to make with a “Safe Medication Disposal” ordinance. We will be hearing a first draft of the ordinance on July 28, and potentially consider adoption in August. Go to the [county website](#) to review the [agenda](#), read the [staff report](#) and [draft ordinance](#).

Financing Energy-Saving Home Projects

In July the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to expand financing options for property owners via the [Property Assessed Clean Energy \(PACE\) Program](#), for home efficiency, energy saving and water-conservation improvements. The PACE program allows property owners to secure upfront funding for home-efficiency projects repaid through a special line item on their property taxes versus traditional consumer credit.

Our actions taken this month will allow competition in the PACE marketplaces, the result of which will be more choices, more competition, more financing choices, program options, and potentially lower rates for property owners in unincorporated areas of Marin to finance upgrading for home-efficiency projects. Residents will be able to “shop around” and find a solution that best fits their needs.

The county is partnering with Marin Clean Energy on this PACE expansion. For more information read the [press release](#) on new programs offered and/or go to the [PACE website](#) for general information.

Bald Hill Preserve Expands with Sky Ranch

The legacy of preserving land in the Ross Valley and beyond continues today as recently demonstrated by the Marin County Open Space District’s purchase of 15 acre Sky Ranch property which straddles exquisite ridgeline adjacent to the Bald Hill Preserve above Fairfax and San Anselmo and provides trail connectivity to thousands of acres of open space lands. Working closely with the Marin Open Space Trust (MOST), the towns of Fairfax and San Anselmo, and community members from throughout the Ross Valley, we were able to keep Sky Ranch from being developed, and to make this truly special place a public place forever.

The property expands Bald Hill Preserve to 46 acres with Sky Ranch, and importantly, connects the preserve to more than 100,000 acres of additional public lands and hundreds of miles of public trails stretching west to Point Reyes and south to the Golden Gate.

The Marin Open Space Trust purchased the property in February of this year from a private landowner and offered to sell it to the Open Space District. Sky Ranch is within an area targeted for open space preservation in the Marin County Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan. The District is using Measure A funding reserves and grant funding to secure the purchase that will be finalized late this summer.

Tentative plans for the property include development of a day-use equestrian center to recognize the historic legacy of the property. As part of the purchase agreement, MOST has agreed to remove existing structures except those that support equestrian day-use and donate up to \$90,000 toward restoration of natural contours and drainage, erosion prevention, and prevent non-native plant plan intrusion.

For more information, read the [press release](#) and visit the [MOST website](#)

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