

COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA

For the
Agenda of:
September 13, 2007
9:30 a.m.

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: Report Back On The Impact Of Discontinuing to Serve Medically Indigent
Individuals In An Undocumented Status

Contact: Lynn Frank, Director, 875-2002

Background

The Department was requested to provide the impacts associated with the reduction of services provided to undocumented individuals.

Discussion

On July 31, 2007, the Board received a Report Back on Budget Priorities. Included as Attachment I was the Department of Health and Human Services "Report Back On Cost Of Providing Discretionary Medical Services to Indigent Individuals With Undocumented Status." The Department reported that depending on the methodology used, the estimated cost for serving indigent individuals with undocumented status ranges from \$1.4 to \$2.3 million, less the cost of approximately \$202,000 for additional eligibility staff to screen for legal residency.

The two methods used to estimate undocumented medically indigent persons vary from a low of 2,519 clients to a high of 4,056. How large actual savings and the impact would be are uncertain because of the lack of information as to the actual number of undocumented medically indigent served.

If the County were to cease treating undocumented indigents, those who have no other alternative will seek treatment in our local emergency rooms (ER). Many with chronic diseases will not follow their medical regiments and left untreated, these commonly treated chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes will result in significant and frequently permanent impairment (stroke, heart attack, neuropathy, ketoacidosis, ulcer, blindness, kidney failure), at these stages persons will most often require care at ER's and in hospitals. The cost for treating

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the end stages of any chronic disease is much more costly than controlling the chronic disease while asymptomatic.

The impact to the medical care system in our County would be significant, resulting in increase demand on an already overloaded ER system driving up costs of an already costly medical care system.

Respectfully submitted,

LYNN FRANK, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

APPROVED:
TERRY SCHUTTEN
County Executive

By: _____
PENELOPE CLARKE, Administrator
Countywide Services Agency