

San Francisco Human Services Network Update: 10/27/08

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(1) HSN CALENDAR

The [HSN calendar](#) has been updated with November meetings and events.

The **HSN Public Policy Committee** will meet on Wednesday, October 29, 10 a.m. at the Progress Foundation, 368 Fell St. This meeting is open to all HSN members that paid dues in 2008.

This month's meeting will feature a conversation with Seth Katzman, Director of Supportive Housing and Community Services at Conard House. Seth represented HSN on the [Safe Streets and Neighborhoods Workgroup](#), convened by the Mayor to develop recommendations to improve public safety in the central city. He will educate us on the workgroup's report and next steps.

We will hold our final **general member meeting** of the year on Friday, November 21, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 214 Van Ness.

Our main speaker will be Controller Ben Rosenfield. His office recently reported that the city faces at least a \$70 million deficit in the current year's budget, which will force mid-year cuts, as well as a projected \$250 million shortfall next year. Ben will speak with us about the city's fiscal status, as well as his efforts to reform the city's financial policies and budget process.

Please see the HSN website for other upcoming [calendar](#) items related to contract reform (including a Health Commission hearing on November 4), a hearing on amendments to the Health Care Accountability Ordinance on October 30, and election activities.

(2) ELECTION NEWS

(A) GET OUT THE VOTE FOR PROPS N AND Q

With a week to go before the election, the campaign for Propositions N and Q is organizing **GOTV activities on Saturday, November 1 and Monday, November 3**. These measures will

bring in about \$40 million a year, which will help save some of the most critical safety net services from budget cuts.

The [Yes on N, Yes on Q web page](#) has information on these measures, how to donate, and ways to get involved.

(B) HSN BALLOT MEASURE ENDORSEMENTS

Besides Props N and Q, HSN has made endorsements on four other ballot measures. We encourage all of you to learn more about these measures, and spread the word to everybody you know!

[Yes on San Francisco Proposition A](#): San Francisco General Hospital needs to be rebuilt to protect its patients, doctors and nurses, and to ensure it remains open and operating in the event of an earthquake. This medical center is a critical resource for our city's most vulnerable residents!

[Yes on San Francisco Proposition B](#): Affordable housing is a critical safety-net need. This measure will set aside funding for housing and related services. People who range from homeless to lower middle-income will be eligible. Prop B also establishes a transparent government process that allows for public participation in deciding how funds are spent.

[No on California Proposition 4](#): Prop 4 threatens teen safety by mandating parental notification prior to a minor terminating a pregnancy. Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers' lives. But Prop 4 can't force teens to talk to their parents, and it may force them to do something desperate and dangerous.

[No on California Proposition 8](#): Prop 8 would eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry in California. Marriage provides the certainty and the security that people know they can count on in their times of greatest need.

(C) CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

HSN hosted three candidate forums in Supervisor races this fall, which included four candidates from District 1, three from District 3, and three from District 11.

We also sent our candidate questionnaire to all 42 candidates in seven districts, and 16 of them responded. The questionnaire focused on issues related to health, human services, and community-based nonprofit organizations. See our website to [read their responses](#).

(3) WAGE AND BENEFIT CHANGES

All San Francisco employers, especially city contractors, need to be prepared for a number of important changes related to wage and benefit ordinances. The [Office of Labor Standards Enforcement](#), which enforces these laws, has posted information and forms on their website.

(A) HEALTH CARE ACCOUNTABILITY ORDINANCE

Minimum standards: This ordinance requires all city contractors to provide health insurance to employees that work on the city contract, or to pay a fee to the city. **HSN is very pleased that the Health Commission approved changes to the HCAO minimum standards last week. These amendments have the potential to save contractors tens of thousands of dollars next year. Please review the changes before you make any final decisions on your health care package for the coming year.**

The HCAO states that employers must provide insurance that meets the minimum standards, which are set by the Health Commission. The Commission last revised the minimum standards in 2004.

The 2004 standards mandated that employers must offer at least one HMO plan with no employee premium contribution or deductible, listed the services that your health plan must include, and set a maximum co-pay for office visits at \$15 for closed panel plans such as Kaiser, and \$20 for other HMOs.

We thank the Health Commission, as well as DPH employees Anne Kronenberg and Frances Culp, for finally moving the process forward. DPH convened a group of stakeholders for a series of meetings, including HSN and representatives from several member organizations, the Living Wage Coalition, labor, city departments, and others. The Health Commission adopted the group's recommendations on October 21.

The revised minimum standards take effect on November 1. As before, employers must provide at least one HMO with no employee premium contribution or deductible. However, there are several important changes that will increase contractors' health insurance options at a much lower potential cost:

- The maximum for office visit co-pays is increased to \$30.
- For the first time, plans may include a prescription drug deductible.
- The annual out-of-pocket (OOP) maximum is increased from \$2500 to \$3500. However, if the plan includes a prescription drug deductible, that amount must be included in the OOP maximum. (For example, the plan can have a \$3,000 OOP maximum and a \$500 drug deductible.)

Additional changes will go before the Board of Supervisors soon: One significant change is the size of the fee that you must pay for covered employees for whom you don't provide insurance. In order to encourage employers to insure employees, the fee is set at a level that is higher than the cost of insurance. **The current rate of \$2.00 per hour is expected to increase to \$2.80 per hour.** The Board must approve this increase before it takes effect, but DPH is seeking legislation that will automate the increase every one or two years by an amount consistent with the rise in premium costs.

The stakeholders also recommended that the Board amend the HCAO to exempt 15-19 hour/week workers. Employers cannot purchase health insurance for these workers, and must

pay the hourly fee to the city. Meanwhile, these employers receive no health benefits. Now that the Health Care Security Ordinance is in effect, requiring employers to make healthcare expenditures for all employees that work 10 hours/week, 15-19 hour/week employees will be better off under that law instead of the HCAO.

HSN will support this proposed amendment when the Board considers it. Two years ago, the Board acted on HSN's recommendation to exempt nonprofit relief workers from the HCAO for the same reason, and those employees now enjoy the benefits of the HCSO. By the same reasoning, temp employees would also benefit if the HCAO was amended to exempt them. It does not make sense to keep workers in a system that deprives them of potential health benefits.

HCAO regulations: The Office of Labor Standards Enforcement is currently reviewing and revising the HCAO regulations. A draft of [proposed changes](#) is posted on their website. Written comments are due by November 3. You may also provide comment at a public hearing on Thursday, October 30, 5pm at City Hall, Rm. 408.

(B) MINIMUM COMPENSATION ORDINANCE

This law requires city contractors to pay a "living wage" to employees working on the contract. I have received several calls from members who are unsure about the current rate.

Last year, the Board of Supervisors amended the MCO to provide for annual increases. However, HSN won provisions in the law that defer nonprofit increases in any year where the Mayor and Board do not fund the increase. The city did not provide funding for an increase in FY 2008-09.

Therefore, the **current MCO rate is still \$11.03 for nonprofit contractors**. The rate for for-profit contractors will go up to \$11.54 on January 1, 2009. The nonprofit increase is banked until such time as the city funds it.

(C) MINIMUM WAGE ORDINANCE

This ordinance, passed by voters in 2004, sets San Francisco's minimum wage and provides for an annual increase. This wage applies to your employees that are not covered under the MCO.

The current San Francisco minimum wage is \$9.36. **On January 1, 2009, it will increase to \$9.79.**

(D) HEALTH CARE SECURITY ORDINANCE

This law applies to your employees who are not covered by the HCAO, and requires all San Francisco employers to make minimum "health care expenditures" for those workers. Examples of eligible expenditures include health insurance, dental insurance, payments to the city to enroll employees in Healthy San Francisco, employer contributions to health spending accounts, and cash reimbursement for employee medical costs.

Currently, nonprofits with 50 to 99 employees must demonstrate minimum expenditures of \$1.17 per hour for eligible employees. Nonprofits with 100 or more employees must spend \$1.76 per hour. The law applies to employees who have been employed at least 90 days and average 10 hours of work per week over the quarter.

Effective January 1, 2009, nonprofits with 50-99 employees must spend \$1.23/hour. Those with 100 or more must spend \$1.85/hour. The requirement for hours worked will drop to 8 hours per week.

An employee who is a manager, supervisor, or confidential employee AND who earns at or above an annual salary of \$76,851 is exempt from coverage under the HCSO. The Controller's Office has determined that the annual salary exemption for 2009 will be \$80,397 or \$38.65/hour.

(E) OTHER ORDINANCES

San Francisco employers must be in compliance with two additional ordinances:

Paid Sick Leave Ordinance: Like the ordinances above, this law is enforced by the OLSE, and information is on their website. All San Francisco employers must provide one hour of paid sick leave to all employees for every thirty hours worked.

Commuter Benefits Ordinance: Last year, the Board of Supervisors passed a **new ordinance that requires San Francisco employers with 20 or more employees to offer a commuter benefits program. This law takes effect January 19, 2009.**

Commuter benefits encourage employees to use public transportation to get to work. The federal government allows employees to deduct up to \$115 per month from their paychecks, pre-tax, to pay for transit and vanpool expenses. Employees save by using pre-tax dollars for their commute expenses, and employers get the advantage of reduced payroll taxes and a popular benefit program that's easy and inexpensive to administer.

San Francisco's Department of the Environment is overseeing this program, and is available to assist employers with compliance. The law gives employers three options: (1) Offer a pre-tax deduction program for employees to purchase transit passes; (2) Pay for employee transit costs up to \$45/month (the current costs of a MUNI Fast Pass); or (3) Provide transit between home and work, such as through an employer-funded shuttle.

Here are links to three helpful websites to assist you with compliance on this new ordinance:

- [Commuter benefits ordinance requirements](#)
- [Commuter benefit programs](#)
- [Commuter checks](#)

(4) OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reminders about some upcoming events:

(A) 2008 HOARDING & CLUTTERING CONFERENCE

Leading experts now believe that compulsive hoarding, the acquisition of and failure to discard a large number of possessions which appear to be of useless or limited value, affects over 1 million households in the U.S. On October 29, 2008, the Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHA-SF) will hold the nations largest annual conference on compulsive hoarding and cluttering at the Westin San Francisco Market Street hotel.

The theme for this 11th annual [Conference on Hoarding and Cluttering](#) is, "*Building Support Systems Through Community Collaboration*". You can register onsite beginning at 8 a.m. For more info, call (415) 421-2926 x-301.

(B) RE-ENTRY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

As part of a city-wide and county-wide effort to enhance current recidivism reduction strategies, Walden House offers a comprehensive one-day workforce development training event. The event will provide training to assist local stakeholders, community based providers, and criminal justice professionals who work with offenders during their community re-integration efforts.

The training takes places on Tuesday Nov. 4, 9am to 3pm at St. Mary's Cathedral, 1111 Gough St. Learn more on [Walden House's website](#) or by calling Melba Smith at (415) 355-2535.

(C) EAST BAY NONPROFIT CONFERENCE

You can [register now](#) for the 3rd annual East Bay Nonprofit Conference. On November 6th, join your colleagues for a full day of workshops, panel discussions, an inspirational keynote address, and a town-hall meeting. The conference is focused on leadership -- specifically on new leadership models that encourage collaboration, teamwork and inclusivity, and allow us to break-free of the heroic leadership trap.

The conference is sponsored by the CBO Center. It takes place on November 6 from 8am to 4:30pm at the Hilton Hotel in Concord.

(D) INSTITUTE ON AGING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Institute on Aging invites you to join them for a unique educational series that explores four cornerstones of professional eldercare. This quarterly series will address end-of-life care, caregiving, clinical care and issues of capacity.

["Rounding the Corner: Integrating End-of-Life Care and Conversations With Services"](#),
Wednesday, November 12, 2008 - 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

["The Labyrinth of Caregiving: Current and Future Issues and Options"](#), Wednesday, February 11, 2009 -- 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

["Complexities of Clinical Care in the 21st Century"](#), Wednesday, May 13, 2009 - 8:30AM - 4:30 PM

["Capacity: What Is It? How Do We Assess It? What Happens When We Lose It?"](#), Wednesday, September 16, 2009 -- 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Continuing education units are available. [Register online](#) or call Janet Howell at (415) 750-4180 x-227.

(E) SF CARD INFO EXCHANGE

[San Francisco Community Responding to Disaster](#) works with human service agencies serving vulnerable populations to ensure continuity after a disaster. They now provide free monthly training "Information Exchange" workshops to all human services agencies. These are designed to provide you with the information you need to create and develop your agency's emergency plan.

The next info exchange is on November 20, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., location to be determined. The topic is *"Lesson's from Hurricane Gustav in Louisiana for Nonprofit and Congregational Leaders."* To RSVP or learn more, [e-mail Brian Whitlow](#) by November 18.

(F) HOUSING CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE

[Housing California](#) presents *"Creating Community 2008: Planting Ideas, Growing Solutions"*, December 8 to 10 at the Wilshire Grand Hotel in Los Angeles. The conference features three days of trainings, workshops and exhibits.

Housing California's "Creating Community" conference focuses on affordable homes -- including homes with services ("supportive homes") -- for the mental health and homeless communities. Through discussion and interactive presentations, the conference will bring together policymakers, service providers, and advocates from different disciplines and strengthen alliances between the mental health, law enforcement, hospital, homeless, and affordable-home communities.