

**MAYOR NEWSOM OUTLINES NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION
OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH ACCESS PROGRAM
FOR SAN FRANCISCO'S UNINSURED**

*Mayor and Supervisor Ammiano take part in ceremonial
signing of health access legislation*

San Francisco, CA – Mayor Gavin Newsom today announced the next steps in the implementation of his plan to provide healthcare access to all of San Francisco's uninsured. The San Francisco Health Access Plan (SF HAP) is the culmination of Mayor Newsom's 2005 State of the City pledge to provide universal healthcare access to the city's estimated 82,000 uninsured. Supervisor Tom Ammiano, who sponsored legislation that in part funds the SF HAP, including mandated fees on business and the ability for the City to charge co-pays, joined the Mayor for a ceremonial signing of the law.

Reiterating the goal of implementation by July 2007, Mayor Newsom announced the formation of an "Advisory Council" to oversee and shape the defined benefits program that is the core of the SF HAP. Modeled after the Universal Healthcare Council that recommended the framework for implementing SF HAP, the Advisory Council is charged with providing expert consultation to the San Francisco Department of Public Health for design and implementation of the program, including setting membership rates, designing the range of benefits and health care services for participants, researching utilization and costs, and evaluating the success of the program, including areas for improvement.

"San Francisco is the first city in the nation to provide universal healthcare access to the uninsured. We have created a plan that will allow for every San Franciscan to have access to ongoing primary and preventive healthcare. I am proud of the commitment demonstrated by Supervisor Ammiano, as well as San Francisco's healthcare, business, labor, advocacy, and philanthropic communities in helping us create this plan and legislation," said Mayor Newsom.

"With the passage of the San Francisco Health Care Security Ordinance by unanimous vote at the Board of Supervisors, our city sends a strong message to state and local governments across this nation. The message is that when the community speaks up, and the political will is there, no problem is too great. Even the question of universal health care can be surmounted," said Supervisor Ammiano.

"Today, San Francisco is throwing down the gauntlet and challenging government at all levels in the United States of America to do what they know is morally incumbent upon them to do. Resolution of the health care dilemma should not be delayed any longer. Apathy and inertia around the health care issue have claimed enough lives already and cannot remain the status quo," Ammiano continued.

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The Advisory Council, which will be chaired by Lloyd Dean, CEO, Catholic Health Care West and Dr. Mitch Katz, Director of the SF Department of Public Health, will provide a bridge from the planning work of the Universal Healthcare Council to implementation. It meets for the first time on August 25. Other key milestones in the implementation of the SF HAP are:

September 1	HAP website (hosted by SFHP) goes live to provide information on HAP
October 1	Application to State for funding needed for SF HAP via SB 1448
December 15	First draft of regulations for employer mandate issued for public comment
Jan 31, 2007	Interim report on SF HAP status to Board of Supervisors
July 1, 2007	Implementation date

In February 2006, Mayor Newsom created the Universal Healthcare Council (UHC) to provide healthcare for San Francisco 's 82,000 uninsured. The collaborative effort, chaired by Sandra Hernández, M.D., CEO of the San Francisco Foundation, and Lloyd Dean, CEO of Catholic Healthcare West, and comprised of representatives from the healthcare, business, labor, philanthropy and research communities reviewed demographic and actuarial data and heard from community advocates and employers to identify and quantify the needs of the uninsured. It issued its final report on June 23, which is the foundation for the implementation phase announced today.

SF HAP will provide a medical home and primary physician, allowing a greater focus on preventive care, as well as specialty care, urgent and emergency care, laboratory, inpatient hospitalization, radiology, and pharmaceuticals. It will be administered by the San Francisco Health Plan, the city-sponsored health plan that currently provides care for 50,000 San Franciscans.

All San Francisco residents are eligible for the program regardless of employment or immigration status. In order to join the SF HAP, an individual must be uninsured, live in San Francisco , and be willing to apply for state and federal health benefits for which s/he is eligible. Primary care and specialist physicians, clinics, and hospitals that currently comprise the San Francisco Health Plan network will deliver the services. Efforts are underway to encourage San Francisco 's medical providers to join in the city-wide collaborative to expand care.

The SF HAP proposal will be financed through a combination of employer, individual, City and County of San Francisco , and other sources. Since HAP provides health care rather than insurance for health care, it maximizes federal and state sources of reimbursement for its patients. Costs are also contained by emphasizing preventive care and chronic disease management. The Health Access Program will cost approximately \$200 million or \$2,400 for each person.

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