

**Union of American Physicians and Dentists**

UAPD, the largest post-graduate Doctor's Union in the United States, represents more than 1800 doctors working in ten California counties--Alameda, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Mateo, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Sacramento, and Solano--as well as the doctors of the Gardner Family Health Center.

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## UAPD news in brief

**New Improved Website:** UAPD strives to keep all of its members aware of what's going on with their Union. Visit the new website [www.uapd.com](http://www.uapd.com) for up to the minute information on issues affecting you and other union doctors. Use the on-line form to give UAPD a personal (non-employer) e-mail address to receive updates electronically.

**General Meeting in September:** The first General Membership Meeting and Steward's Training for salaried and county-employed doctors will be held in September in Southern California. The dates and location will be announced next month and communicated to county doctors. Doctors interested in attending the meeting and trainings can contact the labor representative assigned to their facility.

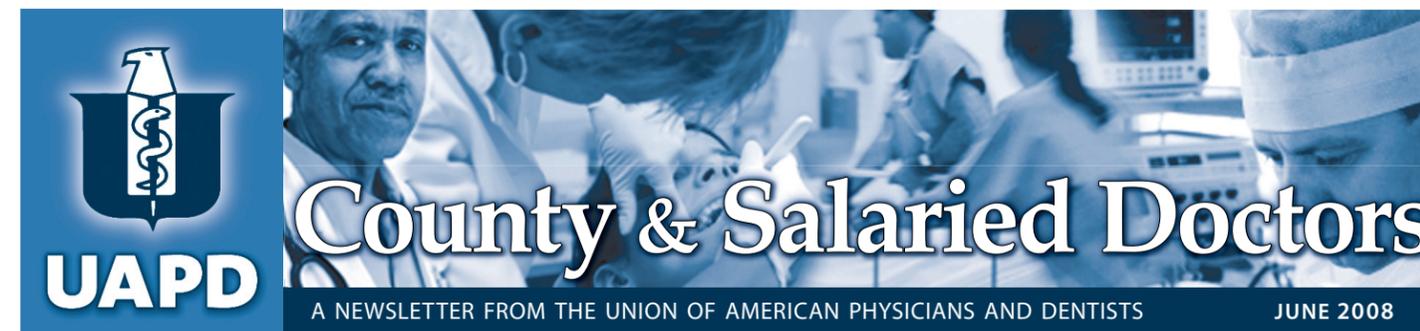
**Ventura County Fight :** Doctors in Ventura County have seen their attempts to organize with UAPD thwarted by the County, which argues that the doctors are private contractors not eligible for union protections. Attorneys for UAPD continue to battle the County in court, with a decision expected later this year.

**Join the UAPD IPA:** Do you also have a private practice? If so, go to [www.uapd.com](http://www.uapd.com) and click on the UAPD IPA link to learn more about UAPD's own Independent Physicians Association. Your non-exclusive membership in UAPD's doctor-run IPA will give your practice access to millions of patients for a very low annual cost.



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# Tight Budgets Squeeze County Doctors

This is one of the leanest budgetary years in recent memory. But some counties seem able to weather the budgetary storm, while others, like San Francisco County, have been completely blown off course. What explains this difference?

Most state cuts will impact each county equally. The Governor's current budget contains a 10% cut in Medi-Cal reimbursement rates. The budget would also lower the salary ceiling for Medi-Cal families and increase their paperwork requirements, a move expected to boot more than a half million people from the program. These state-level changes, slated to go into effect July 1, will cut revenue and increase costs for all county facilities.

Foreclosures and declining property values, however, have impacted

county budgets differently. As homes are re-assessed, Alameda County expects to lose \$20 million in taxes this year. Santa Clara County expects a \$60 to \$70 million dollar loss. Lower revenue means less money for health care.

Sound management plays a role in avoiding--or exacerbating--county budget crises. Some county governments are top-heavy with high-earning managers who contribute little to public services, yet seem to avoid the lay-off axe no matter the budget situation. And some managers come up with short term "solutions" to budget problems that would compromise care and even increase costs in the long run. On the other hand, some counties have the right number of managers, who work with staff to find sensible ways to increase revenue and lower costs over the



*San Francisco's Laguna Honda Hospital has suffered unit closures.*

long-run.

Politics plays a role, too. In San Francisco voters have approved many "set asides" for programs which may be valuable but which carve out a growing portion of the budget, leaving less money for programs like Public Health.

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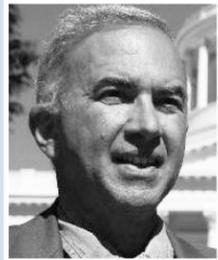
### UAPD Sponsors Assembly Bill 1917

## Legislators Consider Safety Retirement for LA County Doctors

Assembly Member Mervyn Dymally (D-Los Angeles) has introduced AB 1917, sponsored by UAPD, a bill to reclassify doctors in the LA County Jail and LA County Mental Health Facility as "safety members," who earn enhanced retirement benefits. Safety members can retire at an earlier age with a higher percentage of income. These would become the first county doctors to be classified as safety members, as some state doctors already are. UAPD intends to sponsor bills covering other counties if the bill for Los Angeles County passes through the Legislature. "We hope to start with a large county like LA to gain a toe hold that we can use to pull other counties along," explains Executive Director Al Groh. Visit the Legislative Advocacy page of [www.uapd.com](http://www.uapd.com) to track the progress of AB 1917.

# UAPD President's Report

Stuart Bussey, M.D., J.D.



**G**reetings from Oakland! This will be my first monthly message to you in our new County newsletter. There is much activity to report from the Counties which our Union represents--Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz,

San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Sacramento, Solano, Ventura, Alameda and Los Angeles. Use the newsletter as a starting point. The issues it raises can be explored more fully on our new and improved website, [www.uapd.com](http://www.uapd.com).

Over the years the number of County doctors who have joined our Union has steadily risen. With the recent addition of Los Angeles County, UAPD's County sector will nearly match the State sector in size. As our numbers increase, so does our ability to address the medicolegal, financial and political issues that impact every County Doctor.

For instance, complex issues are being raised in the fight over Martin Luther King-Harbor Hospital in Los Angeles. For many years MLK-Harbor and its dedicated physicians have ably served South Central Los Angeles. Due to unfortunate circumstances that plague other County hospitals and ERs, MLK lost its accreditation last year as a full service hospital. Now Kaiser, CHW and even UC have shown interest in resurrecting MLK. But what are their agendas? And what would be the results for the MLK physicians, patients and communities? Would profits take precedence over patients, as in other corporate models? UAPD's charge is to honor its original charter—to fight not only for the best interests of our doctors, but also for the best interests of their patients. We will continue to take that battle to the Bargaining Tables, Courts, Legislature and Media.

The first convocation of County physician leaders will be held in Southern California in September. I look forward to meeting many of you personally there. Meanwhile, if you have any questions or comments, email me at [sbussey@uapd.com](mailto:sbussey@uapd.com). Until next month.

## Budgetary Troubles

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Of all the UAPD-represented counties, it is San Francisco that has the largest deficit (\$338 million) and the most dramatic health service cuts. UAPD was among a coalition of unions that tried to stave off the crisis back in February by agreeing to a one year contract extension (saving the county money in the short-run) in exchange for pension improvements down the road, an agreement that still requires voter approval as a ballot measure in June. But months later the County was still threatening to lay off hundreds of workers to balance the budget. The UAPD Bargaining Team negotiated another agreement, this time accepting unpaid "micro-furloughs" to avoid layoffs. The city has also accelerated its plans to shut portions of Laguna Honda as the hospital prepares to move to its new facility, emptying 110 bed Claredon Hall one year ahead of schedule in order to cut costs.

**W**hile not as dramatically as in San Francisco, the cuts are being felt elsewhere. Santa Barbara and Santa Clara Counties both face \$8 million cuts to their Mental Health Departments next year, and Santa Barbara doctors are considering accepting furloughs. In Santa Cruz, no layoffs are expected but doctors are being pressured to raise revenue by increasing the number of patients seen, meaning less time with each.

Some counties seem to be holding their own. In San Mateo, doctors are invited to give budget suggestions at monthly meetings and via the internet. Solano implemented a hiring freeze last year in anticipation of this year's problems, and actually ends the year with a 39 million dollar surplus.

The budget fight reaches its peak this month. Doctors should continue to communicate with their Union leaders and Labor Representatives to plan strategies for best dealing with the specific happenings in each county.



# LA Ratifies Historic Contract; San Joaquin Fights On UAPD Bargains in Four Counties

**U**APD-represented physicians and dentists in three counties ratified contracts in recent months, while doctors in one other county continue to fight for the agreement they deserve. County of Alameda doctors settled a four year contract in late January, while the newly organized Los Angeles County doctors ratified an eighteen month agreement at the end of February. Solano County TA'd an agreement on May 28, 2008. Negotiations continue in San Joaquin County.

The **Los Angeles County** agreement came just five months after county-employed doctors certified UAPD as their exclusive bargaining agent. The eighteen-month pact includes a continuation of the highly desirable Mega-Flex pension benefit for current employees and a new pay scale that increases doctors' wages between 12% and 25%, depending on specialty and seniority. Just as important as the significant economic gains, the contract protects doctors by offering binding third-party arbitration for disputes that cannot be settled at an earlier grievance stage.

As of this writing, one important issue remains open. About one-third of the 700 LA County doctors are also employed by UCLA or USC, which remain in negotiations with the County over proposed changes to the way the doctors are paid. A portion of these doctors' salaries now comes in the form of stipends funded by the County but distributed by the Universities; the County has proposed paying these doctors a fixed salary and eliminating the stipends entirely. If the County and the Universities have not yet reached an agreement by May 31st, the new contract allows the Union to reopen bar-

gaining over the salaries of this group of doctors. Doctors who work for either University should check [www.uapd.com](http://www.uapd.com) for updates on this issue.

In **Alameda County** doctors won a contract that locks in a 15% increase for all doctors over the course of the agreement, in addition to a number of other economic gains. The reimbursement for CME increased from \$1000 to \$1500 a

In LA, a new pay scale that increases doctors' wages between 12% and 25%, depending on specialty

year, and the monies can now be used for online education courses. The maximum dental benefit was raised to \$1450 per year. Members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the contract.

The Bargaining Team in **Solano County** TA'd an agreement on May 28, 2008. The three year agreement begins with a 3% COLA and 1% signing bonus for the first year, followed by a COLA of between 3% and 5% in years two and three. The County and Union have agreed to a wage reopener later in 2008, after the results of a county-wide salary study are made public. UAPD will continue to press for equity increases to bring doctors up to area salary standards. The doctors will see benefit improvements, with more choices and better coverage, under a new Cafeteria Plan. The UAPD

Bargaining Team recommends ratification of the agreement.

Doctors in **San Joaquin County** continue their year-long battle to achieve parity with other county workers in retirement benefits, as well as win the compensation package needed to attract doctors. The doctors are the only San Joaquin County employees not included in the county defined benefit pension plan. In 2007 the County Pension Board agreed to add the doctors to the plan, but the County Board of Supervisors sued the Pension Board and Union to prevent the change from taking place. While litigation on the pension issue continues, the San Joaquin doctors still hope to resolve the issue at the bargaining table.

From day one this well-organized group of doctors sent a clear and unified message that they would ratify no contract that did not include the county pension plan. Eventually the County reconsidered its initial refusal and offered to add the doctors to the County pension plan, but at a later date. While the county's offer definitely showed progress, the doctors believe that they have waited long enough for good retirement benefits and continue to push for immediate enrollment in the plan. Both sides also continue to negotiate over market driven compensation packages. The latest set of union proposals is under review by the County; should the County again reject the Union's proposals, it is likely the negotiations will reach impasse for a second time.

Doctors at the Alameda County Medical Center will enter negotiations over performance pay on June 11, 2008. The ACMC Bargaining Team is in place.