



From the President...

By Debby Weintraub

I will have to clear off the dining room table I think to myself as I read the March 8 revised CDC guidelines for vaccinated people.

Close friends had come over for dinner on the Sunday prior to the first shelter in place orders a year ago, but even that night, we felt it would be safest to sit at opposite ends of our fully extended dining room table. The extensions are still locked in place all these months later though not one guest has sat at that table since March of 2020.

In the first couple months of uncertainty and anxiety about everything COVID, our old cherry wood table was covered with mail and newspapers that we were afraid to touch for at least several days after arriving on our porch. After a while, and a better understanding of how the virus spread, the newspapers and mail were shoved aside for postcards, stamps and scripts to address voters in different states. And later, when the chaos of the November election and reverberations from it were dissipating, I started bringing down boxes of accumulated collaging materials and depositing them on the once large eating area. Each week, the table became more congested with collaging projects.

BUT NOW

I want my children or my brother and sister and their spouses who live only blocks away to come into our home and enjoy a meal together. I want others who I have missed so much, to come back inside our home and sit with us in our dining room. I want to take a delightful couple of hours to arrange and re-arrange the table settings, the way I did before March 17, 2020. For those who are all fully vaccinated, we can do this now in small groupings.

But the dining room table needs to be cleared before any of that can happen. Yet, I am bit slow to start the process of removing the abundant piles sprawled across the surface before me.

Strangely, I feel some bit of regret too or perhaps it is just a sense of a missed opportunity or a little apprehen-



siveness about moving on now. I didn't know how long, how very long this isolation would last, but I did think in the first few months that I was going to buckle down and really learn Italian, work on a collection of stories with my brother and sister about our family, clean the attic and read many of the books I have had every intention of reading for years now, and I would get my photographs from multiple trips sorted and into albums so I could easily access them on the computer. And really, I still plan to do all of this. That is what retirement is about after all, isn't it? Doing all the things one finally has time to do. And yet, even in this year of being cut off from so much, I still didn't manage to do a half of what I intended to do. Retirement and COVID isolation seem to go that way for me- perhaps for you too.

Part of returning to "normalcy" beyond clearing the dining room table off, is focusing more deeply on things other than me or my loved ones' health vis a vis COVID.

One news item in mid-March that grabbed my attention was that the current interim Chancellor of Peralta, Dr. Carla Stalling Walter, was stepping down as of April 15, 2021. That makes four Chancellors or interim Chancellors within as many years. According to the letter from the current President of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Cynthia Napoli-Abella Reiss, Dr. Walter helped place PCCD "firmly on the road to overcoming probationary status by the ACCJC" and helped shepherd the District to financial security. Jerry Herman, PRO Board member and a member of the Peralta Retirement Board, which oversees the OPEB bonds, reported to the PRO Board that the bond investments are performing well and, short of the Dis-

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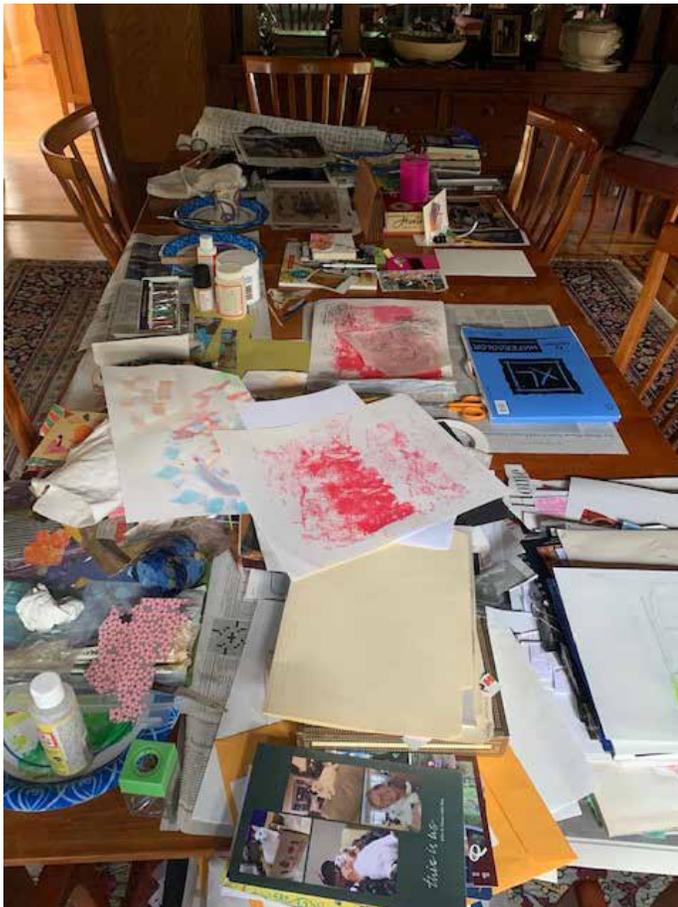
(From the President, from page 1)

trict going bankrupt, should be able to cover current and future costs of our lifetime benefits. So, overall, it appears the District is in relatively strong financial health right now despite much lower enrollment numbers. Yet having consistent leadership at the highest levels has proven to be elusive and creates some larger concerns. The lack of

***DISTRICT APPEARS IN
RELATIVELY STRONG FINANCIAL
HEALTH YET CONSISTENT
LEADERSHIP ELUSIVE.***

stability of leadership raises questions for me about why this is an ongoing problem and who can we look to for solutions.

One result of the constant change in leadership is that PRO has been unable to finalize the agreement about



Debby's messy pandemic table.

emeritus status and “perks” for all Peralta retirees that have worked for the District for more than ten years. PFT President, Jennifer Shanoski is working with the current VC of HR, Mr. Ronald McKinley to enact the proposal that Jerry Herman and I (and eventually, Articulation Officer at BCC, Joseph Bielanski, too) brought to former Dr. Jowell Laguerre over six years ago. I hope in the next newsletter to detail our victory- fingers crossed!!

Finally, as I have written before, PRO is an organization primarily formed to protect and advocate for our earned lifetime benefits, so the membership does not necessarily share political or cultural perspectives. Yet, in this edition, we wanted to address two major topics. One is regarding vaccinations. The Board, after some discussion, agreed that we wanted to provide science- based resources related to vaccinations. In addition, the Editorial Board of the newsletter, such as it is, wanted to condemn the unfortunate and horrifying recent attacks against the Asian-American community. As always, we welcome members responses to articles posted in the newsletter.

I hope all of you stay well. It looks like the light is expanding at the end of the very dark tunnel we have been traveling through over the last year. I hope you all are able to clear off your dining room tables, invite your friends and family to once again break bread together. May we all be safely in the embrace of our loved ones soon.

Peralta Retirees Organization

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The Peralta Retiree is published four times a year by
the Peralta Retirees Organization (PRO)

Volume 17 Number 3

UPDATE

Funding for Healthcare Providers During the Pandemic

By Karyn Schwartz and Tricia Neuman
Kaiser Family Foundation, Policy Watch

Starting early in the coronavirus pandemic, Congress and the Administration adopted a number of policies to ease financial pressure on hospitals and other health care providers. The infusion of funds was intended to help alleviate the fiscal impact of revenue loss due to patients delaying non-urgent care, coupled with new costs associated with COVID-19. This brief describes the main sources of federal funds for health care providers and how those funds have been allocated.

While health care spending plummeted early in the pandemic, recent studies show that health care spending is rebounding. Overall health spending was up 3.4% in the fourth quarter of 2020, as compared to 2019. Over the full year, 2020 health spending was down 1% overall compared to 2019, although the impact of COVID-19 varied by type of provider. Spending on physician office visits was down 3.8% for the year, hospital spending was relatively stable (0.1% higher than 2019), while laboratory spending increased 9.1%.

The capacity of hospitals and other health care providers to withstand the pressures of the pandemic depends on a variety of factors, including their financial health prior

CONGRESS IS POISED TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR HOSPITALS AND PROVIDERS.

to the pandemic, the impact of the pandemic on revenue and expenses, and how much assistance they received from the federal government. Reports in the press and earnings statements suggest that some hospitals remained profitable through 2020. However, many rural hospitals were struggling before the pandemic, and it is not clear if the assistance they have received will be sufficient to prevent additional closures that would further impact access. The impact on physicians varied by type of service, according to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC), but between June and early December, the volume of total primary care visits (including telehealth) and elective services remained close to or just below the

2019 levels. MedPAC also found that new federal assistance made available to skilled nursing facilities helped to offset much of their financial losses and costs incurred due to COVID-19, although the longer-term effects of lower utilization for some facilities remains uncertain.

Now, more than one year into the pandemic, Congress is poised to provide additional financial protection for hospitals and other health care providers by continuing to waive the automatic 2% reduction in Medicare payments that would be required under budget rules, known as sequestration. During 2020, Congress waived this payment reduction through March 31, 2021 in response to concerns raised by providers. The House recently passed a bill that would continue to waive the 2% reduction in Medicare rates through the end of 2021.

The House-passed bill would also exempt the American Rescue Plan (ARP) from separate budgetary rules known as PAYGO. PAYGO requires the administration to impose spending cuts if Congress passes a law with spending increases or tax cuts that result in an increase the deficit. Without the House-passed legislation, PAYGO rules would require the Administration to reduce spending because the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates the ARP will increase the deficit by \$1.9 trillion. However, PAYGO has never been implemented because Congress has always blocked it from taking effect. Unless Congress intervenes, the recently enacted ARP would trigger a 4% decrease in Medicare payment rates in 2022.

In addition to the temporary suspension of the sequester, policymakers have adopted a range of other programs that offer financial assistance to providers during the pandemic.

Provider relief fund: The \$178 billion provider relief fund gave virtually all health care providers grants that amounted to at least 2% of their previous annual patient revenue. These grants could be used to cover lost revenue and unreimbursed costs associated with the pandemic. Distributing grants as a percent of revenue allowed HHS to quickly give grants to a diverse set of providers, but analysis of hospital data shows it favored providers with a larger share of revenue from private insurance since private insurers tend to reimburse at higher rates than Medicare and Medicaid. Certain providers—including skilled nursing facilities, safety net hospitals, and hospitals that treated a large number of COVID-19 patients early in the pandemic—were among those that later qualified for additional grants (see Figure 1). The Trump administra-

(See Funding, page 11)

MOBILIZING VOTER TURNOUT

Helping Georgia Cast a New Blue Vote

By Carole Ward Allen, PRO Member, Laney Retired faculty and administrator

In 2018, I relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, from my lifetime residency in Oakland. In the process of relocating, I reached out to the Peralta Retirees Organization (PRO) for some assistance with transferring my health benefits to Georgia. PRO was extremely helpful in successfully guiding me through the steps to take. As a result, I was able to retain my benefits earned from 1970 - 2017 with the Peralta Community College District. I am thankful to have PRO assisting my colleagues and me when it comes to accessing our healthcare. In addition, I would like to express how I miss all of my colleagues and friends. To our new members, welcome to a great organization.

As a resident of Atlanta, Georgia, I was proud and excited to serve as a campaign surrogate in the recent 2020-21 U.S. Senate elections in Georgia for Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff. From the start of their candidacies, I felt very strongly that Georgia would become a blue state again and determine which political party would hold the majority in the U.S. Senate. There was extreme optimism among untraditional voters to cast their ballots early, which was unprecedented.

I was most impressed by Stacey Abrams and her political apparatus on how they organized and energized underrepresented communities to turn out to the polls. Abrams, Fair Fight Organization, was undoubtedly critical to Georgia's election results. She encouraged people to wait patiently daily in massive lines at various polling places leading up to the general and special elections. I felt very hopeful having personally seen the determination of countless voters waiting in inclement weather for hours to cast their ballots.

Also, Abrams worked tirelessly to significantly increase voter registration in our state and deployed organizers to get out the vote in almost every county during the 2020 general election and 2021 special election. I worked closely with Abrams' team to understand senatorial campaign strategy on the virtual trail and what issues were most important to Georgians. We determined the main issues were voter suppression, healthcare, and the economy.

Georgians were clear: our country has suffered too much under the Trump administration and organized vigorously to deliver change. Therefore, many were eager



Stacy Abrams and Carol Ward Allen

to take action and exercise their diverse voices. As a campaign surrogate to Warnock's campaign, I participated in virtual fundraisers, phone banking, canvassing and disseminating literature in diverse communities. I endorsed Warnock immediately given he is my pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church, and I have been impressed by his leadership and commitment to fighting for justice and equality.

Warnock and Ossoff mobilized massive turnout among Black voters, other reliably Democratic groups and won enough white suburbanites to flip both of Georgia's Senate seats giving Democrats control of the U.S. Senate by the narrowest of margins—a 50-50 Senate, with Vice President Kamala Harris casting the tie-breaking vote. The results giving President Biden Democrats, narrow control of both chambers of Congress, making it easier to appoint liberal judges, and advance legislative priorities such as The John Lewis Voting Rights Act (VRA), Corona virus Relief, and others related to stimulus and environment.

In 2013, the Supreme Court gutted key portions of the Voting Rights Act, that protected eligible voters from discriminatory voting laws. The court claimed those protections (See Georgia Votes, page 5)

(Voting in Georgia, Continued from page 4)

tions were no longer necessary. In recent weeks, Georgia Republicans have muscled through anti-voter bills that would disproportionately impact African American voters, (according to Brennan Center analysis). Senator Warnock, stated publicly, “This is Jim Crow in new clothes.”

Warnock is the first African American to represent Georgia in the U.S. Senate and the first African American Democrat elected to a senate seat by a former state of the Confederacy. With his victory, Jon Ossoff is the youngest member of the Senate and he is also the first Jewish member of the U.S. Senator from Georgia.

The last time Georgia voted blue was thirty years ago in 1992 for Bill Clinton. The state remained Republican until the 2020 presidential election. President Joe Biden’s win makes him the first democratic president from Georgia in 30 years.

IN MEMORIAM

The following Peralta retirees have passed away. PRO extends our deepest condolences to their families and loved ones.

Vivian Bailey

Lloyd Baysdorfer

Johnny Black

Charles Ford

William Love

Curt Stephen

Yvonne Flowers Thompson

Lois Wilkinson

Please contact webmaster@peraltaretirees.org or by writing to PRO, 484 Lake Park Ave., #598, Oakland, CA 94610-2730

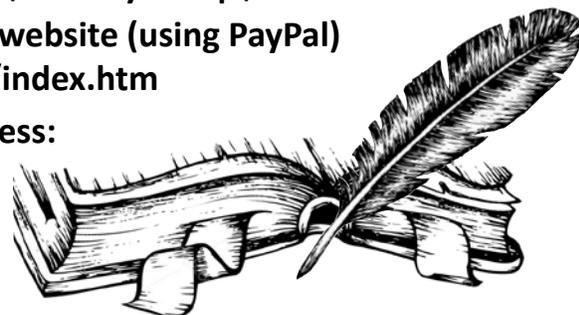
Renewal Due for Retirees Whose Membership Expired at the End of 2020

If your PRO membership expired at the end of 2020 (or before) you should have received an email letting you know that you need to renew for 2021. If you did not receive an email renewal notice at the end of October and you think your membership needs renewal you can send an inquiry email to: webmaster@peraltaretirees.org

Dues are: \$20—1 year | \$55—3 years | \$80—5 years | \$250—Lifetime

- **securely pay by credit card at the PRO website (using PayPal)
—Just go to: www.peraltaretirees.org/index.htm**
- **by mailing your check to our new address:**

**PRO
4200 Park Boulevard, #605
Oakland, CA 94602**





Barbara Lee

CONGRESSWOMAN FOR THE 13TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Dear Friends,

The COVID-19 pandemic is yet another horrific example of the legacy of structural racism in our public health system, and how it has created deep disparities in health outcomes for Black, Brown, AAPI, and Indigenous communities.

In addition to the threat of COVID-19, racism has long-lasting and far-reaching impacts on Black, Brown, AAPI, and Indigenous people. Structural racism manifests itself through widespread chronic health conditions, police brutality, and mental health.

Finally, the federal government has acknowledged racism as a serious public health threat and is taking steps to invest in health equity measures to combat these challenges. Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a statement recognizing structural racism as the public health threat it is and outlined steps they are taking to address it.

These steps include:

- Continuing to study the impact of social determinants on health outcomes and expanding evidence of how racism affects health.
- Making new and expanded investments to provide resources to address disparities related to COVID-19 and other health conditions.
- Expanding efforts at the CDC to foster greater diversity and create an inclusive environment for all.
- Launching a new web portal “Racism and Health” as part of a public and scientific discourse around racism and health, and to be accountable for our progress.

I am pleased that the CDC’s actions reflect my legislation with Congresswoman Ayan-na Pressley and Senator Elizabeth Warren to declare systemic racism a public health crisis. This is a significant step in the right direction, but our work is far from over. I will continue pushing in Congress to put these actions into law and look forward to working with the CDC to tackle these challenges and ensure health equity across this nation.

As always, my office is here for you. If you need help with a federal issue, please call my Oakland office at (510) 764-0370. You can also connect with me via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Please continue to stay healthy and remember to wear a mask.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Barbara Lee' in a cursive script.

Barbara Lee

Do COVID-19 Vaccines Stop Transmission?

How to understand the difference between vaccination to prevent Covid-19 and shots to halt infection.

By Dr. Angela L. Rasmussen a virologist at the Center for Global Health Science and Security at Georgetown University Medical Center.

The purpose of the Covid-19 vaccines is to prevent death and serious health complications that strain our overburdened health care system. All the vaccines authorized for emergency use do this, and their safety and effectiveness in clinical trials have surpassed expectations. But most people, quite understandably, want to know something more: Will being vaccinated stop the spread of Covid-19 so they can socialize outside their bubbles and dine indoors with abandon?



EVENTUALLY, YES

Many scientists are reluctant to say with certainty that the vaccines prevent transmission of the virus from one person to another. This can be misinterpreted as an admission that the vaccines do not work. That's not the case. The limited data available suggests the vaccines will at least partly reduce transmission, and the studies to determine this with more clarity are underway. There should be more data within the next couple of months. Until then, precautionary measures like masking and distancing in the presence of unvaccinated people will remain important.

It is true that, according to the clinical trial data, both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are highly effective at preventing Covid-19, the disease, but it's unknown how well they prevent infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus. Although Covid-19 and SARS-CoV-2 are often used interchangeably, they are fundamentally different. You can't have the disease without the virus, but you can have the virus without the disease — as many asymptomatic people already know. It's possible that vaccinated people are protected against Covid-19 themselves, but still spread SARS-CoV-2 to others who are not vaccinated.

COVID-19 VACCINES AS MUCH A VICTORY AS SALK VACCINE.

Why would scientists make vaccines that protect against only a disease rather than the virus that causes it? They don't set out to do that, but it is the result, in part, of the exigencies of clinical trials. Practically, clinical trials can be completed more quickly if the endpoint of the trial — the main scientific question the trial is investigating — is something that can be easily observed. If SARS-CoV-2 infection were the trial endpoint, participants in the clinical trials would need to be tested at least weekly. It's easier to identify participants who develop Covid-19 symptoms and then swab them to confirm. So for efficiency's sake, the primary endpoint of the clinical trials was

whether the vaccines protect against Covid-19 symptoms.

This study approach also makes sense from a public health perspective. Most people who are infected with SARS-CoV-2 will not die, but many will become very sick and require medical care. This fills up hospitals and places significant strain on the health care system. Vaccines that can transform what would normally be a severe illness into something mild and manageable relieve this burden, saving lives and improving their quality.

When scientists develop a vaccine against a novel virus, it's difficult to predict whether vaccination will completely prevent infection — what's called sterilizing immunity. If the Covid-19 vaccines do not provide sterilizing immunity, it means a vaccinated person can still inhale enough of the SARS-CoV-2 virus to develop an infection, and it will be swiftly cleared from the body before becoming Covid-19, but that person could still pass the infection to another person.

There are many vaccines that do not provide fully sterilizing immunity but nonetheless have huge public health benefits. Every year, the flu vaccine saves lives and keeps people out of the hospital despite the fact that it doesn't prevent infection altogether.

...

Studies to better determine the impact of vaccines on transmission are ongoing, and in the meantime, if precautions like masking are paired with increasing immunization, SARS-CoV-2 cases should plummet.

Historical evidence shows that vaccines that do not prevent virus infection can still stop epidemics in their tracks. The polio vaccine developed by Dr. Jonas Salk, which does not provide sterilizing immunity, resulted in the rapid elimination of polio in the United States beginning in the 1950s. People lined up eagerly to receive the vaccine to protect their children and themselves. The Salk vaccine was highly protective against the devastating impact of the disease and also worked to reduce spread of the virus because so many people were vaccinated and could clear their infection.

These Covid-19 vaccines are as much a victory for public health now as the Salk vaccine was then. We would do well to remind ourselves of the transformative power of vaccines that prevent disease without completely preventing infection when enough people take the vaccine. The sooner we reduce spread in the community and protect as many people as possible through vaccination, the sooner we'll be able to relax.

Angela L. Rasmussen from the New York Times 2/23/21

More Questions and Answers about the vaccine: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/experts-answer-the-biggest-covid-vaccine-questions/>

Other voices in the conversation about vaccines
<https://theundefeated.com/features/new-public-information-campaign-answers-black-peoples-questions-about-covid->

News on CalPERS CalSTRS investments

CALPERS AND CALSTRS INVESTMENTS IN FOSSIL FUELS.

According to [Fossil Free California](#), "...[T]he California Public Employees Retirement System still holds



\$8.5 million in thermal coal producers in violation of SB 185, a 2015 state law on thermal coal divestment. This act requires CalPERS to divest from companies that earn the majority of their revenue from thermal coal production."

AND

"At present, CalSTRS has over \$6 billion invested in fossil fuel producers; a total of \$17.5 billion in all fossil-fuel-related companies. But while the rest of the portfolio has doubled in size, fossil fuels have languished. If CalSTRS had divested 10 years ago, they would have increased their profits by \$5.5 billion! Fossil fuels are considered a declining industry - there is no financial future in these destructive activities."

Recently the Pro Board was asked to include information in the Newsletter about the efforts and activities of youth groups to petition CalSTRS to divest from its fossil fuel holdings.

[CalSTRS: Divest from Destruction!](#) Stand with Fiona Ma, Tony Thurmond, and youth activists

[Youth vs Apocalypse](#), a diverse group of young climate justice activists, and [Earth Guardians Bay Area](#), an intergenerational organization that trains diverse youth to be effective leaders in the environmental, climate and social justice movements across the globe,

It was recently learned (<https://www.earthguardians.org/crews>) that CA teachers retirement money is being given by CalSTRS to fund Line 3 where Indigenous com-



munities are currently camping out in the snow to prevent the pipeline that will bring nearly a million barrels of tar sands per day from Alberta, Canada to Superior, Wisconsin! To learn more about CalSTRS investments and how you can support the work of these groups you can go to their site.

Coincidentally, The New Yorker, in the April 3 online edition just published [an article](#) on the financial loss of investing in fossil fuels:

THE POWERFUL NEW FINANCIAL ARGUMENT FOR FOSSIL-FUEL DIVESTMENT

A report by BlackRock, the world's largest investment house, shows that those who have divested have profited not only morally but also financially.

Announcement of CalPERS Board election

CalPERS has announced the pending election for two [Member-at-Large] openings on the Board of Administration. Two current members' terms expire on January 15, 2022. The new terms of office begin January 16, 2022 and run through January 15, 2026. The CalPERS Board of Administration consists of 13 members who are elected, appointed, or hold office ex officio for four-year terms. **Their decisions affect all active and retired members. The 13-member CalPERS Board of Administration sets policy and oversees the administration of retirement and health benefits on behalf of California public employers, and their active and retired employees. The board also oversees administration of the pension fund's investments. ... the CalPERS Board has exclusive authority to administer the CalPERS Pension Fund. Current and retired CalPERS members are eligible to vote.

A detailed NOTICE OF ELECTION timeline and ballots with instructions on how to vote was mailed to eligible voters in August. The Notice provides information on becoming a candidate, voter eligibility, and the election schedule. Eligible active CalPERS members and eligible retired CalPERS members may be nominated ...

To learn more about the election process, go to:

<https://www.calpers.ca.gov/page/home>



REFLECTIONS ON RETIREMENT

It is Our Birthright to Achieve Completeness

—Carrying Forward My Efforts Toward Completeness

By Mario Rivas, PhD

“It is our birthright to achieve completeness” is a favorite quote of mine, so in June of 2019 I transitioned into retirement with the intent of ensuring that what I did with the rest of my life would indeed help me to become more complete as a person. For many years I’ve wanted to write a book on how Gestalt personal development work helped me become more complete, both personally and professionally. My retirement led to writing and developing the title and ideas of my book: *The Gestalt of My Life: A first-generation U.S. Latino’s Journey to Personal and Professional Growth from a Gestalt Perspective*. My passionate involvement in this project was fueled by my apprehension that retirement signaled the upcoming end of life. I saw retirement as the beginning of my dying. As I was to find out, this fear was unfounded,



Writing my book has made me reflect on the meaning of my life and work, and has given me a greater understanding of what it means to achieve completeness as a person. My life was to “ayudar a nuestro proximo,” a maxim that my Latina mama, Josefina, instilled in me: “The most important thing is to help people, especially the less fortunate.” What I have discovered in retirement is that completing myself as a person involves continuing the thread in my retirement what I had done in my career: supporting students from underprepared academic backgrounds to succeed as learners. When I was a professor, Merritt students often approached me to help them with their efforts to develop themselves and to move more effectively to their goals. I did workshops at the Learning Center workshops on how students could use Gestalt personal development ideas to strengthen their academic and personal development and personal development. In retirement, I began to mentor students who were transferring to the UC system or State University Colleges. I am heartened by students’ willingness to work with me and enjoy as well my successes and challenges in working with them. I’ve discovered that retirement was much like my career, and that I could continue my passion to help others grow and succeed. I just needed to let students, faculty, and staff know that I was open to helping students, and a part of my time became filled with our beautiful students’ desires to learn. I’ve worked with African-American students, Latinx students, and other diverse students,

much like all those persons who filled my career life at Merritt College, Berkeley City College, San Francisco State University, and the University of Minnesota.

In retirement I’ve continued other pursuits that make me feel complete as a person. I joined the Board of Unity Middle School and High School, and have done volunteer personal growth groups with students at Unity High School and taught a Psychology course there. I’m still busy as a retiree, but busy as a person living my values in the way and manner that I desire. When COVID arrived, I continued doing Zoom Gestalt counselor training at the Bay Area Women Against Rape. I’ve realized that retirement does not mean the end of my life; instead, retirement means that I can choose and continue expressing and living my passions.



Dr. Mario Rivas

So, what’s the upshot of this short article? I simply want to share how my thinking about retirement has changed from apprehension to excitement and enthusiasm for the possibilities of my life. I spend more time with my garden, more time walking in my neighborhood, and more time being just like I want to be to complete myself. I’ve learned more clearly that completing myself means just being true to how I want to experience and open up and share life with those around me.

Welcome New Member

*PRO welcomes the following member
who has recently joined*

Bob Grill

PRO Awards Annual Scholarships

This is the second year that PRO has had to award the PRO Scholarships to students during COVID. This is troubling enough, but even worse is that we urgently need more membership contributions to the scholarship fund.

If you can find it in your heart and pockets to donate now, please send a donation. The need is larger and thus more in demand than ever. Donation Instructions can be found on the PRO website: <https://peraltaretirees.org/>

Thanks so much to Edy Chan, Catherine Crystal, Mark Greenside, Barbara Brooks, Mario Rivas, Michael Mills, Marie Wilson and Jose Ortiz for volunteering to read and rank the PRO Scholarship applications this year. The recipients are listed below



LANEY COLLEGE

To paraphrase the words of his recommender, Ryan Barba is a “quintessential Laney Eagle” — a native of Oakland who turned to Laney both to discover himself and reinvent himself “as a lifelong learner, advocate, journalist, editor, scholar, activist and leader.” His dedication, perseverance and commitment to his education and his community make him a worthy recipient of this year’s PRO scholarship.

BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE



Ms. Crystal Swan is a stand-out amongst standouts. Her statement makes it clear. She knows the critical importance of gaining an education, of transmitting that message to others and of preparing for a position that will allow her to instill the love of books in the youngest of the young. Ms. Swan, hurry up,

whichever community you are going to serve needs you. Our entire educational system needs you and more like you. Congratulations.



COLLEGE OF ALAMEDA

Veronica Then is an outstanding candidate for COA's PRO Scholarship. She is a clear and insightful writer and continues to enhance her leadership skills with service to her peers and the greater college community. She has proven herself to be hard-working and determined, earning an outstanding GPA, and she is well-deserving of this scholarship award.



MERRITT COLLEGE

Michelle Flores is hard-working and working hard. With three strikes against her, she's hitting home runs. With not much in her pocket, she's giving away the store. It was moving to read about her and her life, and a pleasure to be able to help her on her journey-

-and for a little bit and a little while make her life a little better.

Contributions Received for the PRO Scholarship Fund

In Memory Of	Contributor(s):
John Holleman	Agatha Galas
Anita Black	Sue Chin
Diana Lara	Debra Weintraub
In Honor Of	Contributor(s)
Jay Quesada	Sue Chin
Ned Pearlstein	Bruce Jacobs
Alex Pappas	Bruce Jacobs
PRO Board	Ann Elliott

(Funding, from page 3)

tion also allocated \$10 billion from this fund to Operation Warp Speed contracts, according to press accounts. As of March 19, 2021, an estimated \$15 billion of the fund had not yet been allocated. In addition, some providers returned the funds they received.

- Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payment Programs: Health care providers that participate in traditional Medicare were eligible for loans through the Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payment Programs, which helps providers facing cash flow disruptions during an emergency. About 80% of the \$100 billion in loans went to hospitals. Repayment for the loans was originally set to begin in August of 2020, but Congress delayed the start date for repayments until one year after providers received the loans, which will be in April 2021 for most providers. Once repayment begins, a portion of the new Medicare claims will be reduced to repay the loans (25% during the first 11 months of repayment and 50% during the next six months).

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Other Loans: Many health care providers were eligible for some of the loan programs included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, including the PPP. Under the PPP for small businesses, loans are forgiven if employers do not lay off workers and meet other criteria.

Health care providers received nearly \$68 billion of the \$520 billion in PPP loans that have been distributed. The CARES Act also appropriated \$454 billion for loans to larger businesses—including hospitals—but the eligibility criteria for those loans have limited their reach.

- Increase in Medicare COVID-19 inpatient reimbursement and vaccine administration: Medicare is increasing all inpatient reimbursement for COVID-19 patients by 20% during the public health emergency, which will likely remain in place throughout 2021. Medicare also recently increased its reimbursement for COVID-19 vaccine administration to \$40 per dose.

- Additional funds in the ARP: The American Rescue Plan (ARP) includes \$9 billion for rural health care providers to help cover lost revenue and costs associated with COVID-19. It also includes \$7.6 billion for community health centers and \$200 million to support infection control and vaccination uptake at skilled nursing facilities.

When hospitals and other health care providers experienced steep drops in revenue early in the pandemic, Congress stepped in with an infusion of funds to bolster these providers. Health care spending overall has now largely stabilized, though the financial impact of the pandemic varies across communities and providers.

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