



From the President...

By Debby Weintraub

Each day, I witness a new assault on the rights and freedoms of people living in this country. Of particular importance to PRO members are Trump's and the Republicans' attempts at dismantling the Affordable Care Act and their plans to privatize Medicare. The PRO Board has discussed the need to respond to these attacks as an organization.



Our numbers give us strength and a power we cannot have as individuals. In the name of PRO, we should show up at hearings, write letters, call elected officials, and contact members of the Peralta Board of Trustees if needed. We should seek partnerships with other retiree organizations and add our name to public documents protesting the privatizing of Medicare and the weakening of the Affordable Care Act.

PRO was originally formed to be an organization that was pro-active in protecting our health benefits in retirement as well as giving retirees opportunities to stay connected. But, if we are to continue as a vital organization, we need to look beyond the small perimeter of Peralta and work to protect everyone's health care, particularly as Peralta employees hired after 2004 who do not have the same lifetime retirement benefit package as pre-2004 hires.

Though our unions fought to give us excellent affordable benefits while we were active employees and did much to ensure our health benefits stayed in place when we retired, we should be aware that there will be increased pressure upon active employees to accept reduced benefits or pay more out of pocket if the Republicans forge ahead with their plans.

The District (and unions) will be forced to look at ways to reduce their health care costs, and it is not

out of the question to think that they may reach back to retiree benefits. So far, the courts in California have protected the health care benefits promised to public sector retirees, but districts can go to court again. The active employees will need to fight to protect their benefits, contracts, and agreements, but we too need to be out on the front lines, fighting to preserve both our and active employees' benefits.

Though the attacks on health care and other disconcerting actions of the Trump administration have been of concern to me and others on the PRO Board, we have recently also focused on several other issues. The addition of new Board members has been wonderful, giving new energy to all of us.

We are working with the District to create a listserv (email list) for all Peralta retirees, whether they are in PRO or not. We think it is important for retirees to be able to keep up with events at the District and to be aware of any important or impending changes. The listserv would also provide PRO with more opportunities to share information with a broader group of retirees.

The District has also agreed to notify us twice a year of all retirements in Peralta so that PRO will be able to invite new retirees to join us; hopefully this will lead to a more diverse group of members.

In addition, we are also

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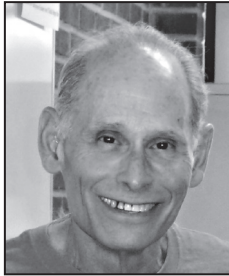
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PRO Board Elects Officers, Discusses Priorities



Debra Weintraub



Bruce Jacobs

Anna
Pavelka-Lodato

Patricia Dudley

At its January meeting the PRO Board elected the following officers for 2017.

Debra Weintraub was re-elected as President

Bruce Jacobs was re-elected as Vice-President

Anna Pavelka-Lodato was re-elected as Treasurer.

Patricia Dudley was elected as Secretary

The Board also discussed its priorities for the organization given the changed political climate in the country. They decided that it was important for PRO to continue monitoring and providing information to retirees about Peralta District health benefits. They also prioritized sponsoring several social events during the year such as the upcoming Spring Gathering at the Oakland Museum scheduled for May 19 (see page 3). Everyone agreed to continue to raise funds for the PRO scholarships which are currently awarded at \$1500 for one student from each of the colleges.

The Board also set as a priority disseminating information about ways in which retirees could be active defending policies that reflect Peralta's values including providing medical insurance benefits for people who recently acquired them through the Affordable Care Act, allowing immigrants and refugees to live free of fear of government persecution, and supporting policies to improve the police and justice systems so as to make them more equitable.

Peralta Retirees Organization

1250-I Newell Ave., #162
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

<http://www.peraltaretirees.org>

President - Debby Weintraub
info@peraltaretirees.org

Vice-President - Bruce Jacobs
Secretary – Patricia Dudley

Treasurer - Anna Pavelka-Lodato

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working on a survey of retirees' interactions with the Benefits Office.

And this spring we continued our tradition of sponsoring a Medicare and Peralta Benefits workshop, an excellent event coordinated by Bruce Jacobs and Patricia Dudley and co-sponsored by the PFT. At the workshop we presented a clear and thorough explanation of how Medicare and Peralta Benefits intersect and we provided handouts for participants to take home.

In addition, we are once again planning a spring gathering, this time at the Oakland Museum on Friday, May 19 from 1-4. More details can be found in this newsletter on page 3.

In a time when there is so much pulling to divide us as a nation, I hope PRO will take a path of unity by standing with our former colleagues and millions of people across the country that are dependent on affordable health care including Medicare. Please let Board members know what concerns you about the changes to health care that are being proposed by the Trump administration and how you would like PRO to respond as an organization.

Perhaps I will see you at meetings or events that champion the causes I have discussed in this column, and I am hoping to see many of you at our spring social event at the Oakland Museum.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Bill Bell
Jenette Golds
Mary Mangiopane
Irwin Mayers
Marsden Price
Nathan Strong
Ed Walker

If you have any information about the passing or the serious illness of a Peralta retiree, please contact Bruce Jacobs at: brucejjacobs@gmail.com or by writing to PRO, 1250-I Newell Ave., #162, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

How the GOP's Health-care Plan Helps Make Case for Medicare-for-All

State efforts toward single-payer healthcare, like California's, could be bolstered by GOP's Medicaid-gutting proposal

By Deirdre Fulton, staff writer for Common Dreams

[The following article was published on the Common Dreams website. Although this article was written before the failure of the American Health Care Act when it was pulled from consideration Friday, March 24, we still think it is relevant both because of its advocacy of Medicare for All and because the Republican leadership has stated that the American Health care Act will be revived and reconsidered by the House of Representatives.]

Common Dreams is an independent, non-profit, advertising-free and 100% reader supported organization. It has been providing breaking news and views for the progressive community since 1997. Its web site is <http://www.commondreams.org/>

The GOP's new plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) with something much worse merely supports the argument that the only way to achieve true healthcare reform is to enact a single-payer, Medicare-for-All system, advocates said this week.

“Instead of fixing the very real holes in the ACA—and moving forward to a permanent solution for our broken healthcare system, as could be done by expanding Medicare to cover everyone, at lower cost—the Republican plan moves us back, far back, to the worst vestiges of a profit-focused system based on ability to pay and widespread health disparities,” said National Nurses United (NNU) co-president and registered nurse Jean Ross.

To make matters worse, “the architects of the new bill have exploited the repeal and replace meme with paybacks to some of their wealthiest friends and donors,” Ross added.

There is another way, as Ross' colleague and California Nurses Association co-president Deborah Burger *(Continued on page 5)*

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argued in an op-ed. She pointed to the effort in her home state to “create a genuinely universal system for all Californians, with comprehensive covered services, no insurance networks that restrict patient choice of doctor, hospital or other provider, and no more copays, deductibles, or surprise medical bills.”

That effort, the Healthy California Act or Senate Bill 562 (SB562), would declare it the “intent of the Legislature” to enact a law that would establish a comprehensive, single-payer healthcare program for all state residents. According to Burger, the system would do so “[b]y pooling what the state already pays for healthcare services, using the power of a single-payer system to negotiate bulk discounts, and eliminating the waste and profiteering of the insurers.”

The American Healthcare Act (AHCA) proposal put forth by House Republicans only underscores the necessity of the California bill.

“Speaker Paul Ryan’s plan to shred the Affordable Care Act is a hard-right wish list that will cover fewer people and cost more, and a huge step backward from our goal of universal healthcare,” said California state Sen. Ricardo Lara, who introduced SB562 last month along with state Sen. Toni G. Atkins. “We need a way to cover the millions of Californians who will lose insurance or pay more under Republicans’ plan, and that’s what the Healthy California Act will do.”

Indeed, NNU’s executive director RoseAnn DeMoro added, SB562 “could become the national model as an alternative to both the ACA and the fraudulently named GOP American Health Care Act.”

Previous single-payer salvos have failed, in California and elsewhere. But, writing at the *Los Angeles Times*, reporter David Lazarus suggested: “Thanks to [President Donald] Trump and the Republican-controlled Congress, things are now very different.”

He explained:

“We should give our great state governors the resources and flexibility they need with Medicaid to make sure no one is left out,” Trump said in his speech to Congress this week.

What he and Republican leaders mean by that is

giving states a fixed amount of Medicaid money in the form of block grants to cover low-income people. States currently are guaranteed at least \$1 in federal funds for every \$1 in state spending.

The Republicans’ goal is for the federal government to pay less for Medicaid annually. But what they’re also unintentionally doing is removing perhaps the biggest obstacle to California and other states establishing their own single-payer systems.

With block grants, states wouldn’t need congressional approval to use Medicaid money for a broader insurance program.

“If Republicans abandon California and Congress moves to cut Medicaid, we will insist that the federal
(Continued on page 6)

Legislature to Take up Single Payer System in California

Two California lawmakers have introduced legislation to replace private medical insurance with a government health care system covering all 38 million Californians — including its undocumented residents.

“We’ve reached this pivotal moment and I thought to myself: ‘Look, now more than ever is the time to talk about universal health care,’” one of Senate Bill 562’s authors, Sen. Ricardo Lara, D-Bell Gardens, said in an interview.

The Healthy California Act, co-authored by Sen. Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, was submitted just before the deadline for new legislation. It doesn’t yet offer many specifics other than the lawmakers’ intent: to create a so-called single-payer system that would pay for coverage for everyone.

Here are several organizations in California that are working to make SB562 a reality:

- Healthcare For All California
(www.healthcareforall.org/)
- CaliforniaOneCare.Org
(californiaonecare.org/)
- Health 4 All
(health4allca.org/)

(*Medicare for All Continued from page 5*)

government treat us like any other state and give us the flexibility and freedom to address the health needs of our entire population through a universal healthcare system,” Lara told the *Times*.

Medicaid would indeed be dismantled under the GOP’s AHCA plan.

A single-payer effort is also underway in New York, as journalist Michelle Chen wrote, “where State Assembly Member Richard Gottfried has reintroduced a comprehensive single-payer model reform plan.”

She reported:

The bill passed the assembly in 2015 and 2016 by overwhelming majorities, but died in the Republican-dominated Senate. The bill builds on the coverage expansions of the ACA, draws from other federal and state funding streams like Medicaid, and moves toward a fully public consolidated medical system overseen by an appointed board of providers and government stakeholders, with all funds consolidated under the brand “New York Health.” Though it could use multiple state and federal funding sources for patients and providers, services would come directly from the state, not private insurers, and New Yorkers would all essentially be cared for by one “seamless” government authority.

Gottfried’s proposal would be funded by an estimat-

ed progressive annual income tax surcharge ranging from 0 percent for poor families up to 16 percent for household incomes exceeding \$200,000. By improving cost-effectiveness in every aspect of care, the plan aims to save nearly \$2,200 per person in the first year, while generating some 200,000 jobs for the state.

Chen posits that “[t]he Trump-induced health crisis could become an unforeseen opportunity for single-payer advocates: The combined trauma of Obamacare’s bureaucratic dysfunction, along with fear of the Republican agenda’s privatization assault, just might spur a mass movement for a comprehensive government-run plan liberated from insurance markets: a single payer providing free, equal access, regardless of health or economic status.”

Added Harvard Medical School instructor Adam Gaffney, a national board member of Physicians for a National Health Program and a practicing pulmonologist at Cambridge Health Alliance: “The long-awaited House Republican Obamacare replacement law would be terrible for America. While the well-off would benefit from tax cuts, the sick and the poor would suffer from cutbacks in Medicaid and insurance subsidies. GOP Care would therefore take us farther [from], not closer to universal healthcare, a goal that is achievable only through single-payer reform.”

STAHLER, 2017
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Contributions Received for the PRO Scholarship Fund

In Memory of:	Contributor
John Dahlquist	Mike Wirth
Marion Fay	Renata Polt Schmitt
Paul Harless	Thomas Pearse
Proverb Jacobs	Thomas Pearse
Vic Japzon	Susan Chin
Vic Japzon	Debra Weintraub
Marsden Price	Cathleen Sullivan
Nathan Strong	Susan Chin
Nathan Strong	Kerry Compton
Nathan Strong	Mike Wirth

In Honor of:	
Bruce Jacobs	Roger Ferragallo
Bruce Jacobs	Stan Shaff
Linda Japzon	Roger Ferragallo
Ralph Marinaro's birthday	Susan Chin
Ann Whitehead	Debra Weintraub

General Contributions:

Dorcas Kowalski Estate
Will Price (on the occasion of Christmas)

Letters To The Editor

Asbestos has not gone away

Asbestos exposure causes thousands of cases of pleural mesothelioma in the United States each year, and the mission of our organization, Pleural Mesothelioma Organization, is to help the families affected by this cancer. Our organization offers free assistance and resources to anyone coping with pleural mesothelioma. Feel free to contact us at our site: www.pleuralmesothelioma.org or at 844-880-7267.

Chad Maycumber

I Remember Marsden

I too was hired in 1960 to teach at Oakland City College as Marsden Price was. I was 26, had 1 year of teaching English at a junior high in Kansas City and was a TA at Wichita State University where I got my master degree in English.

I was Marsden's office mate for 11 or 12 years before we moved to Merritt. I learned a lot from him. I had a student who had just returned from Vietnam. He was depressed and had PTSD. I referred him to Marsden who was a marine medic in WWII. Marsden may have saved this Vietnam veteran's life! I was grateful to him.

Cathleen Gaffney Sullivan



Contribute To The PRO Scholarship Fund By Honoring Or Memorializing A Friend Or Loved One

Yes, I want to support the PRO Scholarship Fund with a contribution.

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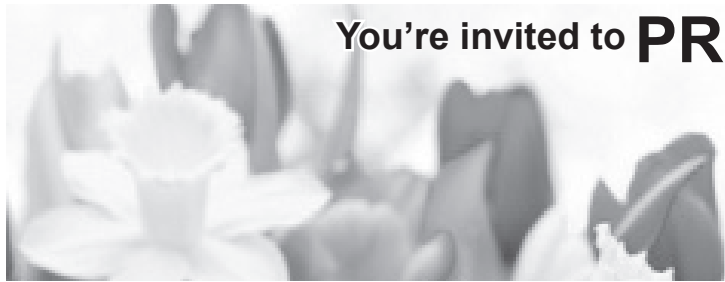
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The Peralta Foundation—PRO

**Send to: PRO, 1250-I Newell Ave.,
#162, Walnut Creek, CA 94596**

Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by federal and state law.



You're invited to **PRO's Spring Gathering**

Afternoon Food and Wine Reception
at the Oakland Museum

Friday, May 19 from 1 – 4 PM.

Details on page 3

Welcome New Members

*PRO welcomes the following
retirees who have recently joined.*

**Karen Anderson
Ira Hannon
Lorna Pascual**



**Peralta Retirees Organization
1250-I Newell Ave., #162
Walnut Creek, CA 94596**