

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
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**Agenda Number:** 9/19/02  
**Prepared on:** 9/19/02  
**Department Name:** SOCIAL SERVICES  
**Department No.:** 044  
**Agenda Date:** 10/01/02  
**Placement:** Departmental  
**Estimate Time:** 60 Min.  
**Continued Item:** Yes  
**If Yes, date from:** 08/19/02

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Joni Gray, Supervisor, Fourth District  
Charlene A. Chase, Director, Social Services Department  
Roger Heroux, Director, Public Health Department

**STAFF CONTACT:** Charlene A. Chase, Director, Social Services Department  
x4451

**SUBJECT:** **CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY: *Perspectives from the Regional Health Authority, Providers, and the County***

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## Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. receive a report from the Santa Barbara Regional Health Authority, the Social Services Department and the Public Health Department, recognizing the impending crisis in health care in Santa Barbara County and
2. provide direction as appropriate so that we may assist in whatever ways we can to help avert this crisis.

## Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The objective to stabilize the current health care system in Santa Barbara County is aligned with the County's Strategic Plan Goal II: Safe and healthy community in which to live, work, and visit.

## Executive Summary and Discussion:

The health care system in Santa Barbara County faces an impending crisis – a crisis that can only be exacerbated by the new cuts to health and social service programs contained in the recently approved 2002-2003 State Budget. At the heart of this crisis is the collision of rapidly escalating health care costs with decreasing sources of revenue. Government continues its reduction in funding for public programs such as Medi-Cal and Medicare, and this places additional strains on the system as the obligations to provide care falls to providers -- most especially physicians and hospitals – coupled with payments that fall far short of covering the actual cost of delivering health care of acceptable quality.

The Medi-Cal program is being particularly hard hit, as the 2002-2003 State Budget reduces physician reimbursement rates to 1985 levels. These reductions in funding also have a direct impact on the Santa Barbara Regional Health Authority, which has successfully managed the Medi-Cal program in Santa Barbara County for the last 19 years since 1983. Mr. David Lamkin, the Executive Director of the Authority,

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will present to the Board a description of the current challenges facing the health plan and its providers in this era of constrained resources. He will be followed by comments from local physicians and hospital administrators, with a wrap-up by Mr. Heroux and Ms. Chase addressing the expected impacts on the County's Public Health Department, and its ability to continue to deliver services to the growing low-income population of the County (including the rising uninsured segment).

**Mandates and Service Levels:**

No mandates or service levels affected.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

No Fiscal or Facilities impacts.

**Attachments:**

A: PowerPoint Summary of the Presentation