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Excerpts and Summary of the 43rd Community Hunger and Nutrition Forum
Wednesday, April 14, 2004 12:00PM –1:30PM

Trinity Lutheran Church, Fresno

Sponsored by Fresno Metro Ministry

Supported by

USDA, Community Food Project

California Dept. of Health Services Cancer Prevention

and Nutrition Section, by USDA

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

California Food Policy Advocates

The following is a summary of the reports made at the forum compiled by Edie Jessup and Carey Berend.

FOCUS: New Diabetes Data:

Reason for Alarm and Action

What is Up in Sacramento and How to Be Involved in Fresno

Edie Jessup: Good afternoon. My name is Edie Jessup and I am privileged to work for Fresno Metro Ministry with the Community Hunger and Nutrition Project, and this is the Community Hunger and Nutrition Forum. Today we have a very exciting speaker from the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, Stefan Harvey.

I became familiar with the Center for Public Health Advocacy when I started working on this project. They have consistently provided critical information in the hunger, nutrition and public health area and have informed the state. The two major reports published by CCPHA recently that impact our hunger and nutrition work is the study that was done last year on the numbers on childhood overweight and unfit. The thing that they did that was so helpful was to crunch those numbers by legislative districts so we can go to our legislators and say, "In our district..." instead of just a vague number for the State of California. We can now look and see what is happening in our district.

As a result of that it was used to help pass SB 677, which banned the availability of sodas on elementary and middle school campuses throughout the state. The passing of this legislation was directly as a result of this study because people had somewhere to go with the information. They talked to their legislators and they advocated for change in the school health environment. Thinking this was so brilliant this project then determined that with our Community Food Assessment we are working on here through Fresno Metro Ministry, that we would assess those surveys by our Board of Supervisors and City Council districts. We would then have some place to go with our information. Now, we have a new study that the Center for Public Health Advocacy has done, and Stefan, I will let you tell us more about that. (I apologize that our projector and your computer are not in sync, so that your PowerPoint will not be viewed)

Stefan Harvey: Thank you very much, Edie. I'm going to actually distribute copies of the Center's Policy Brief so that you have something to follow along with.

What I'd like to do this afternoon before talking specifically about the study is just make some introductory comments. It is delightful to return to meet with all of you. It was a little less than a year ago that I joined you for one of these forums. If my recollection is correct it was July, and needless to say, it was far hotter than it is today. I actually live in Davis and the Center's office is in Davis, so having driven down through much of the Central Valley this morning for those of you that haven't made this trip recently and perhaps haven't made it on a Wednesday morning let me just assure you that Highway 5 and even to a greater degree Highway 99 is chock-a-block full of trucks, and given

that we're here this afternoon to talk about a chronic disease that stems in large part from dietary habits of Californians as well as their physical activity habits I would be remiss in not reporting to you that I saw more than a single soft drink truck. In fact, at one point I looked to the right off Highway 99 and I thought there was a 7-Up truck in a field and I couldn't quite figure out how the truck had gotten into what appeared to be the middle of a field, so I looked both straight ahead and looking to my right determined that in fact there was a road which you initially did not see. I thought the presence of the Coca Cola truck in the field was a rather appropriate place for it. And I saw, as all of you that make the trip from your home city of Fresno north to the State Capital know, a preponderance of fast food restaurants all up and down Highway 99 and all up and down Highway 5. At a recent talk that my boss Harold Goldstein gave he asked everyone in the room if they had driven to Los Angeles recently, and if so had they been able to find healthy food? One woman in the audience yelled out, "Oh, yes, there's a Subway in a gas station," and I thought it was ironic because I had been in that very Subway. It comments on the lack of healthy food options and choices along California's highways and byways.

Since I joined you all last July, a number of things have happened in California which have bearing on the work that you're all doing here locally and the work that we're doing collectively across the state with a particular emphasis on Sacramento. I'd just like to comment on a couple of the changes in the past not yet 12 months. We're all aware that California's budget crisis is growing ever worse and when we're in the business of advocating for change at the state and local level. Edie mentioned in her comments that the cutback in Summer Food programs is one of the countless examples of the result of the budget crisis that we're all facing. As we advocate for changes at the state and local level I think that it is incumbent upon us to somehow address the response of, "We cannot do that because we simply don't have the money." The budget crisis makes our work ever more difficult. In addition to the budget crisis at the state level which affects communities, we have a new governor. The leadership provided by the governor on issues having to do with nutrition and physical activity remains to be seen but will have bearing, we believe, on the work that we're all doing. In addition, we have a new Superintendent of Public Instruction, and as some of you in the room may know, Superintendent O'Connell has just very recently established and named members of a statewide taskforce on obesity. In fact there are maybe 14 members of that taskforce, not many more than that, and one of those individuals is your nutrition education coordinator for the County Office of Education, **Terri Soares**. Many of you know **Terri** and it seems to me her appointment to this taskforce gives all of you in this forum an opportunity to get your message and your priorities well articulated to the superintendent of schools. (Also on the Superintendent's Task Force, a student from Sunnyside High School, and Dr. Ed Moreno, Fresno County Public Health Officer from Fresno.) **I think we would all agree that as a community we would be in a much stronger position to prevent chronic disease if the nutrition environment in California's public schools was radically different.** We are very encouraged that the new Superintendent has named a Taskforce on Obesity. The role that the Federal Child Nutrition programs can play in California's public schools in trying to address the overweight and obesity crisis is enormous.

In the last month we have heard of and received through the media and other means information about both the increase in the ill effect of the outcome of the overweight and obesity epidemic. I'm referring to the word that recently came from the **Center for Disease Control that now 400,000 Americans die annually from chronic diseases that are in part caused by unhealthy diets and/or sedentary lifestyles.** That 400,000 figure has grown, as I suspect many of you know, and it means that the **overweight and obesity epidemic and the consequential diseases that result from those health conditions are getting closer and closer to the number one killer in the United States: tobacco.** This news is both staggering and stunning. Having been an advocate now for most of my adult life, it's another example of bad news is good news. What I mean by that, quite simply, is that this new data from CDC gives all of us and our colleagues across the state yet another tool to use as we **try to convince policy makers across the state of California to make changes in the physical activity and nutrition environments. We now have evidence as to what these epidemics mean in terms of death in the nation.** I think it also calls on us to be even more

vigilant than we've been to date, and if need be raise our voices and be rather **insistent on the need for environmental change**.

More recently than the Center for Disease Control data, and in fact information about what the California population thinks about this epidemic, we have new polling data from the field poll that was recently funded by and conducted at the request of the California Endowment. There are some very interesting findings from that polling data. I was at a meeting yesterday of colleagues of mine in the **Strategic Alliance**, which is a group of about 16 organizations across California. I hope some of you are members of the Alliance, get their e-mail alerts, and may have attended regional meetings that they hold (*Fresno at the Hunger & Nutrition Forum was a site for this recent poll, in a 'listening session' earlier this year*). We had a meeting to discuss those findings from the field poll. It's heartening to hear and learn that **92% of Californians realize that obesity is a serious problem**. When one examines other conclusions from the polling one realizes that we have a tremendous amount of work to do in order to inform our family and friends and people we don't know in our communities about the severity of the problem all with an eye towards increasing quite substantially the number of Californians who, like all of us in this room, are spending at least some of each day trying to **change the nutrition and physical activity environment in California as a preventive measure so that chronic diseases like diabetes affect far fewer California children and result in far fewer California adults dying from diseases like diabetes**.

Edie mentioned that since I joined you all last summer we have released a new study. We looked at **diabetes deaths by state legislative district**. This afternoon I'd like to talk about that **study and its findings**. Then I'd like to tell you about **tools that we have published as an outgrowth of that study**. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I will give you a brief **overview of what's going on in Sacramento concerning legislation addressing nutrition and physical activity and most importantly the way you all can continue to be involved in that work or if today you haven't started to get involved in that work how you can get involved**.

One very easy way to speak up, as Edie suggested, would be to go to Sacramento. How many of you have already made a trip to Sacramento to meet with legislative staff and/or members either individually or as part of one of these organized efforts? About half of you. For those of you that didn't raise your hand I too urge you to if you're able attend the day in Sacramento on May 12th. My understanding is that three very large coalitions are coming together to work collectively. As someone who now goes to the state capital often, it is quite impressive when in fact there is a very successful lobby day under way and everywhere you turn you see people who are there advocating for one cause or another. I may be much more this kind of person than all of you in this room, but those of you that focus on a very few issues often forget that elected officials, not to mention their staff, are faced with enormous challenges that are absolutely endless. While we may go and have a very good meeting, and may meet with staff and/or members and have their undivided attention, I often forget that issues having to do with nutrition and physical activity and their effect on chronic disease are only one of a multitude of issues that elected officials are working with day in and day out. I mention that just to be mindful of the fact that **repetition and persistence is absolutely imperative if we are going to be effective at changing public policy and most importantly changing communities in California**. I would also like to invite you to join the California Center for Public Health Policy network.

In light of the fact that I have no Power Point, as I mentioned, what I'm going to do is pass out copies of the policy brief and then spend the next 10 or 15 minutes talking about the study, what we found, and then discuss the tools that we've published that I hope will be useful in your work. For those of you that are familiar with the California Center for Public Health Advocacy's first policy brief (on Overweight and Unfit Children), at first you may say when you see this new report, "Oh, I've already seen this." They're similar by design but we hope recognizable as separate reports. As Edie mentioned, we have a somewhat unique way of analyzing chronic disease data: to look at diabetes deaths by state legislative district. We have also been asked now that we have begun to analyze data by state legislative district if we would do the same thing by congressional district and if we would break these numbers down by cities and counties. I'm delighted to hear that Edie and her colleagues

at Fresno Metro Ministry have used a similar approach using other data. There is no question that **specific information is much more compelling to elected officials.**

In **'Death by Diabetes'** we looks at five years' worth of diabetes deaths because state legislative districts, particularly assembly districts, are relatively small geographic areas, and in order to have enough data to analyze we used five years' worth of data from **1996 to the year 2000**. We found a number, if you turn to page 4 of the Policy Brief you see the four key findings laid out in the upper left-hand corner. It will probably come as a surprise to none of you in this room who have worked on health issues in particular to see that **in fact the Central Valley in California had among the highest diabetes-related death rates of any legislative districts in any area in the state.** Along with the Central Valley, Los Angeles County and the southwest area of San Bernardino also had the highest diabetes-related death rates. There are 80 assembly districts in California and 40 senate districts. Across those 80 assembly districts and across the 40 senate districts there was variation in the diabetes death rates. About one-third of the way through the analysis one afternoon for reasons I can't remember one of us said to another of us, **"I wonder if there is any relationship between the legislative districts where we're finding high diabetes death rates and those legislative districts where we found high percentages of overweight and high percentages of unfit children going back to the study that was released in 2002?"**

We called our biostatisticians and posed the question to them and they explained that if we adjusted the fitness data which we had analyzed in the first study for race and age, which we had not done initially, if we adjusted it because the diabetes death data we had adjusted for race and for age, and the fact that we adjusted the diabetes death rate means that the variation in diabetes-related death rates across those 80 assembly districts and those 40 senate districts was not due to a difference in the ages of the individuals who died from diabetes in those districts. Maybe even more importantly, the variation was not due to differences in race and ethnicity. Having adjusted for those two factors there is something else going on in communities in California, and I use communities somewhat simultaneously with legislative districts. **Something is going on in some communities that is causing more people to die from diabetes than conditions in other assembly districts. That led us to believe that there are specific conditions in legislative districts that lead to or contribute to people developing diabetes and other chronic diseases, but in this case diabetes.** So we took the Overweight and Unfit Children data, and we adjusted it for age and race so we could **correlate it to the diabetes death rates and we found that in those legislative districts where there was a high diabetes death rate there was also a high prevalence of children who were overweight**, and similarly, we compared the adjusted data for the fitness, because as you may remember the initial study looked at overweight and fitness level, and **we found the same correlation when we looked at those legislative districts where there was a high prevalence of unfit children. Same correlation to those districts where there was a high diabetes death rate.**

Our conclusion was that, indeed, there is something going on in those communities that is contributing to both these realities. I don't mean to suggest that overweight kids were causing people to die from diabetes. You can see very clearly that both studies looked at different people in each legislative district. The fitness study looked at children. The diabetes death rates, I am pleased to report, looked at Californians that are dying from diabetes. In fact, **almost all Californians who are dying from diabetes are in fact adults, so we're not saying that the overweight kids caused a higher diabetes death rate.** We're just saying that **in those legislative districts where there is a high diabetes death rate there is also a high prevalence of overweight kids. Our supposition is that that's a result of an unhealthy nutrition environment and an unhealthy physical activity environment.** We also found that among Californians within ethnic and racial communities African Americans, Latinos, and American Indians had a higher burden of diabetes death rates than other races in California.

We also found that from 1996 to the year 2000 diabetes death rates in California increased each of those years, and that is pretty unsettling news. It probably may not be new information for many of you in this room that **diabetes death rates increased from 1996 to the year 2000**. Based on health data the **Center for Disease Control about six months ago estimated that of children born in the year 2000 one-third of all those four-year-olds will develop diabetes within their lifetime**. For those of you that work with four-year-olds and those of you that may have four-year-old children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews, if you think of all the four-year-olds you know and then think of all the four-year-olds in **California the estimate is that one-third of all those four-year-olds will develop diabetes within their lifetime**. We need to stop and think about the implications of that for those four-year-olds as they grow older. For those of you that work on diabetes you're well aware that in California as well as **across the nation type 2 diabetes, which used to be a disease that affected adults, is now being diagnosed among children at staggeringly frightening rates**. We need to think about the implications of an increase in the diagnosis of type 2 diabetes and all those four-year-olds and a fact that one-third of them are going to develop diabetes in their lifetime. **The implications for those individuals, their families, our communities, and our state are staggering both in terms of managing the disease, the way the disease can limit one's good health, and the fact that more Californians may die at an earlier age if they develop diabetes.**

The tools that we have developed as a result of completing the study include a number of things. The first is the **policy brief that you have**. **We also have for each of the 80 assembly districts and the 40 senate districts a district fact sheet, and I believe you have a copy of the District 31 fact sheet**. The fact sheet is generic on the front side inasmuch as in Fresno County I'm aware that you have more than a single assembly district and if I am remembering correctly there are two senate districts that represent a portion of your county. Much of the information on the fact sheet on the first page is for the state as a whole. There is a section that talks specifically about the particular district that this fact sheet represents, and then on the back side of the fact sheet, as you can see, there is **detailed information about the respective communities within this particular legislative district and it also gives you the opportunity to learn how your community did, or more specifically, what the diabetes death rate is for the district as a whole and then for the communities within the district, and by communities in this case I'm speaking of ethnicities, and then also what the rate was for California as a whole for that particular ethnicity**. **Copies of all the district fact sheets as well as the policy brief can be downloaded from the center's website**. **Our website is www.publichealthadvocacy.org**. The policy brief is there, all 120 fact sheets are there, and I should mention that the data from our previous study that looked at overweight and fitness levels of California's school children is still on our website as well.

There are two other tools that may be of interest to you and useful. We have an **interactive mapping tool** and it enables you to pull down even more information about diabetes death rates in your legislative district, and finally there is a background report which was written for the center by Samuels & Associates. Some of you may know our colleagues at Samuels & Associates, and it's a rather in-depth report on diabetes. Also, for those of you that are interested in understanding precisely what data we used and how we came to the conclusions that we did there is a chapter on methodology in the background report as well. We hope you will use all of these tools and inform others here in Fresno County of their availability.

As Edie also mentioned, we analyzed chronic disease data to understand in this case how serious things are in California, and equally important, we analyzed the data to develop tools that a very broad community in California can use to try to affect public policy both locally and at the state level. We convened a panel of experts to advise us in the diabetes study. Dr. Phyllis Preciado was a member of that scientific panel and was very helpful, as were her colleagues on the panel, in advising the center both in terms of what precisely should we analyze as well as coming up with a set of policy recommendations. We have a very lengthy list of policy recommendations in the policy brief. They address both the management of diabetes as well as the prevention of diabetes. The center I work for has a name that is impossible to remember but very long, the California Center for Public Health Advocacy. We don't intentionally mislead people, but it sounds as though we work on an array of

public health issues in affecting public policy that will prevent overweight and obesity and prevent chronic disease, so as you will see, **a number of the policy recommendations are prevention oriented and really address ways to change the nutrition environment and the physical activity environment in California.**

We are among the group here in the state as well as the broader national group that thinks that the **twin epidemics of overweight/obesity and diabetes will not be solved by all of us urging each other to change our personal behavior.** Some of our leaders seem to feel we can whip these epidemics by simply saying to all Americans, "Eat less and move more." There is no question that many of us, and I am among this group, need to eat less and move more, but **if all Californians ate less and moved more we are of the opinion that we would still have far too many overweight people and people suffering from chronic disease. The environment makes it extremely difficult to change behavior.** I spent 30 years working on hunger issues, specifically being an advocate for the WIC program in Washington D.C. I grew up in California, went to California public schools K through college, came back to California, and was, **I must confess, quite horrified to learn of contracts that California public schools have with soda companies.** That was one horrifying realization, and this is said by someone who spent 30 years as a nutrition advocate in a different arena of the nutrition advocacy world, the WIC arena. **I was also horrified to learn that physical education in California's public schools is a thing of the past.** Given that I was in elementary in high school so many decades ago perhaps I am incorrect, but my recollection is that I had physical education every single day through high school, and because I was someone who had that physical education experience and it was a positive one I developed the lifelong habits and love of activity and carried on that way in college. Those **two radical changes** indicate to me that while I need to change my personal behavior, **equally as important is that we have to change the environments that we're all living and working in and particularly the environments of California's children so that they have far less of a chance of becoming overweight and developing diseases like diabetes.**

As a result of the Policy Brief recommendations there is legislative activity going on in Sacramento, and soon to be an additional effort, that stems in part from what we found and then the recommendations that our panel made.

Now what I'd like to do is just turn specifically to what is going on in Sacramento and then talk about how you can actually be involved in that process. Edie mentioned that the organization I work for did work on SB 677. I hope many of you in this room also worked on **SB 677. This is the bill known as the Soda Ban bill. It was passed by the legislature last year and it was signed by our previous governor. The implementation date for SB 677 is July 1st of this year.** As someone who spent 30 years as a national advocate for the WIC program it was a phenomenal opportunity in large part because I had the opportunity to work with thousands of people across the United States in the implementation of public policy that the Congress enacted with regard to the WIC program. I am prone to repeat myself, and I oftentimes repeat myself on purpose. I think if Harold Goldstein, who is the Executive Director of the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, were in the room he would jump up and say, "You don't have any idea how much she repeats herself." I have been back in California for two-and-a-half years and I've worked with the Center that entire time and I have known all along given my 30 years of WIC experience that **particularly in California given the constraints that the California Department of Education finds itself in I am even more convinced that if groups like yours don't monitor what is going on at the local level that the policy changes that we're all successful in bringing about will make absolutely no difference to any Californian whatsoever.** It is absolutely imperative that we as a community work with groups such as the groups that are represented in this room today and individuals to **ensure that the policies that the California legislature passes and the governor signs are in fact enacted.** I know I sound like a pessimist and I would love to be incorrect on this point, but **I'm afraid that if we don't all accept the responsibility and ensure that policy changes that are passed by the legislature and signed by the governor are in fact enacted we will see our nutrition environments and our physical activity environments continue to be unhealthy and the problem persist.**

This leads me to talk about the first bill that we are sponsoring, **SB 1566**, which has been introduced by Senator Escutia. **It calls for nutrition standards in California's public schools K through 12.** Some days I have continued to be very pleased and other days amazed and some days nonchalant about the fact that I go to meetings. I went to my local school board meeting the week before last and the administrator for the school system kept talking about the new laws and, although I have not yet confirmed this, my understanding was that my local administrator had the understanding that nutrition standards for California public schools were already law. In fact, **the earlier Escutia bill known as SB 19, while it was passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Davis, included a funding requirement for schools in California that provide school lunch and school breakfast to increase the state investment in that reimbursement.** For those of you that have followed this legislation you're probably well aware that **that money was never appropriated, so there are no nutrition standards in California's public schools today with the exception of the beverage requirement, which is law.** It doesn't have a funding requirement to it. That will go into effect on July 1st, as I mentioned. So Senator Escutia has introduced a similar bill to SB 19, which is current law but has not been implemented because there was the funding requirement, and given the budgetary constraints it came to none of us, in fact, our organization didn't and I don't believe any organization worked to try to ensure that appropriation. **Senator Escutia's bill SB 1566 would require the same set of nutrition standards for K through 12 with no funding requirement.**

For those of you that haven't been working locally on the development of your nutrition policy and may not have been following the statewide debate on nutrition standards I just want to pass along what happened when the Soda Ban Bill, SB 677, went before the Assembly Health Committee last spring. I want to share this story with you because it gives us a very good indication and an insight into **how difficult our job is to convince elected officials that we ought to have nutrition standards, not only in elementary school and middle school but we ought to have nutrition standards in high school as well.** *When SB 677 got to the Assembly Health Committee the chairman, not a member of the committee, but the chairman of the Health Committee explained that he was opposed to sodas and sweetened beverages being removed from California public schools by a state statute. His rationale was that 18-year-olds are old enough to defend us overseas so they are old enough to have the right to choose a Pepsi and a Coke. Those were his words almost verbatim.* I mention that not to take issue with the then chairman of the Assembly Health Committee but to just give you some insight into **how great our challenge is.** One of the slides I was going to show you is a **quote by the president of Coca Cola Enterprises, "The school system is where you build brand loyalty."** Our experience to date with work on the soda bill as well as the work on SB 19 is that the **soft drink industry and to some degree other members of the food community are going to fight tooth and nail against nutrition standards and they're going to fight against them for economic reasons.**

*As we continue to advocate for policies that would radically change the nutrition environment in California public schools and we're met with responses from teachers and parents that schools can't afford to give up these foods that we would call unhealthy foods because of the financial implications, and as we work with students, I think we have to consistently say **we cannot afford not to give the money up.*** There are now examples of schools in California, and I regret that I didn't ask Edie this before, there may be examples of schools here in Fresno that have gone from selling unhealthy foods or less healthy foods to selling healthier foods and they're making the same amount of money. I think as nutrition and anti-hunger and public health advocates **we have got to work with others in the community to say this is just no longer an acceptable practice and we will work with you to come up with means that money can be raised so that in fact the after school programs, the clubs, the bands, the football teams and other sports teams, boys and girls, can continue to exist. They're all obviously very important activities.**

SB 1566 has been introduced by Senator Escutia. It passed the first committee in the Senate. It will go before the Senate Education Committee a week from today, and at least the assessment of its support in the Senate is good.

The other piece of **legislative activity that we're working on specifically is a resolution having to do with the marketing of unhealthy foods to children.** For those of you in the room that are over the age of 50, as I am, this whole issue of marketing to kids reminds me of the 1970s. This whole issue was very thoroughly debated in Washington D.C. in the 1970s and we came very close to getting Congress to pass laws that would have far more stringently restricted advertising of unhealthy products to small children, but then politics being what they are we did not succeed in the 1970s. **Thirty years later we're back discussing the same issue and the importance of government intervention. The big difference between the 1970s and the year 2004 is that we now have a significant public health crisis and an epidemic,** which means that there is even more need for some sort of regulation of advertising of unhealthy products to small children. Senator Kuehl will introduce a resolution. There is a big difference between a resolution and a law, as you may know. **A resolution is not binding in any fashion whatsoever.** To give you some clue as to the uphill battle that Senator Kuehl expects that this issue will face in the California legislature she said something has got to be done but we have to be practical about this and we're not going to go the route of a law, we're going to go the route of a resolution. Our hope is that this will give us all an opportunity to raise awareness about the **role that marketing plays in the food decisions that children in California make** and that eventually down the road some sort of legislation could be introduced.

There are about a dozen other bills that address nutrition and physical activity issues. Our colleagues at **California Food Policy Advocates are sponsoring three bills this year, AB 2686, which is a bill addressing the improvement of lunch in the School Lunch Program. AB 2686 passed the first committee last week and the most exciting thing about the vote on AB 2686, I thought, was the fact that Republicans joined their Democratic colleagues on the Assembly Education Committee and voted in favor of this bill.** I have come from, as I mentioned, 30 years of doing national advocacy work on the WIC program. WIC from its very inception was a program that was supported by Republicans and Democrats alike.

One of the challenges that we all face and actually most of your colleagues in California face is that to date nutrition and physical activity issues, unfortunately, are very partisan issues. Why an ever increasing death rate from diabetes should be of concern primarily to Democratic members of the legislature and not Republican members confuses me, but the challenge that we all face is working to educate all members of the California legislature about how significant the crisis is, what it means in terms of its health impact and its economic impact, and then what can be done about that to educate members on both sides of the aisle in the California legislature. As I mentioned, the vote on AB 2686 was the first time in the two-and-a-half years that I've now worked with you all that Republicans like Democrats in a committee voted for a bill. It's not something that just happens in committee. When SB 677 was voted on by the full Senate and the full Assembly if I'm remembering correctly there was not a single Republican senator who voted in favor of 677 and I believe on the Assembly side there may have been two Republicans who voted in favor of that bill. We get legislation passed because at this juncture the Democrats have a majority in both the Senate and the Assembly.

Finally, I would like to invite you to join the California Center for Public Health Advocacy's network. We don't want money from you but we want something that's as valuable as money and that's a small bit of your time. We send out periodic alerts to roughly 1300 people across the State of California. If we're going to change these environments we need far more than 1300 of us to be involved. It will give you up to date information on the 12 or so bills that we are following and then at particular points asks for your participation in a very specific way depending on where the bills are in the Senate and the Assembly. Just let me say in closing that I really appreciate having the opportunity to come and talk briefly about our report and bring you up to date ever so slightly on what's going on in Sacramento.

We will not change the environments in California unless there are more people like all of you in this room working to both affect the policy at the state and local level and then ensure that the policies that are passed actually are implemented and are implemented creatively and correctly and then have some bearing on California's children. With that let me end. I would be happy to take questions.

Rev. Walt Parry: You stated that of children born in the year 2000, the four-year-olds now, one out of three will develop diabetes in their lifetime. Is that for all of California, the valley, or is it for the whole United States?

Stefan Harvey: It's for the United States. That was a Center for Disease Control study that looked at children nationwide.

Rev. Walt Parry: The numbers for the 31st Assembly District are actually a little under the numbers for California for overweight and unfit children, but we're much higher related to the deaths per 100,000 people. Could you just comment on that? It looks like we have more people that die from diabetes in that Assembly District but most of them live a month or two or a year or two longer before they die.

Stefan Harvey: To comment on your first question, Walt, while we found a correlation in some legislative districts it didn't hold true for all. In fact, if you look at figures 2A and 2B on page 5 that's an illustration of the correlation and you can see that while there is a rather strong correlation there are many districts that are outliers, and obviously, the 31st District is one of these outliers. **We at the California Center for Public Health Advocacy were just beside ourselves over the difference in the average age of death among Californians within each of the racial and ethnic groups. For me it was just another confirmation of the unfairness, the unreasonableness, and maybe atrocity of health disparities. It just is another illustration of how we all don't have an equal chance.**

Virginia McKinney: I'm doing some research on childhood obesity. **Did you have any statistics on regulations for building new schools and if there is a requirement to include playgrounds? Do they have to have playgrounds or they don't have to?** I saw briefly somewhere where they built a state-of-the-art school but this school did not have a playground. I don't know how to get that information.

Stefan Harvey: At the California Center for Public Health Advocacy currently not only do we not track and analyze data on the building of new schools, but we're also not familiar with what the current rules and regulations are. If you give me your card I'll put you in touch with another advocacy organization that knows that information.

Rev. Walt Parry: My assumption is that the reason there is less physical activity in the schools is because of teaching for the testing that the state is pushing, and secondly, of high school students who want to go to college they need to use all their free time, what could be possible option time, for those courses that would make them most competitive for scholarships. From my understanding those are two of the biggest reasons that there is less physical activity in the schools. Is this correct, and if so, what can we do about it?

Stefan Harvey: My understanding is the same as yours, Walt, and I think there are a couple of things we can do about it. **I think we can join our colleagues, and I use the term colleagues very loosely, who are physical education teachers and we can support them in their efforts. From what I understand, there are individual schools where physical education is considered an extra, and not only is it considered an extra, but as you pointed out, Walt, there is rarely time for it. We as nutrition and public health advocates are going to have to continue to remind people of the relationship: a healthy body brings about a healthy mind and that there is data that indicates that children who are physically fit do better academically. I think we're just all going to have to insist that the education system accept the need for physical education, and it may mean that obviously something is going to have to give in each of those school days. With regard to the whole issue of students wishing to go to college and needing to be mindful of the requirements**

and AP courses and doing their level best so that they can get scholarships there has been a lot of talk about changing the admission requirements to the California State University system and the UC system and a lot of discussion about changing the requirements so that physical education is a requirement for admission. As you all may know, and I think this has come about in large part because of what you've just described, Walt, **physical education is not required each year of 9 through 12, so another thing we can do if we think this is important is to can get behind a bill that would change that requirement from only two years in the last four years of high school to four years.** Interestingly enough, the field poll that I mentioned earlier asked the thousand people that were interviewed which of the following policies they would support as a way to address the overweight and obesity epidemic and one of the options was to require physical education in all four years of high school and more than a majority of those participating in the poll supported that proposition.

Edie Jessup: Thank you so much, Stefan. Just my one last comment. The "P" word, or the "poverty" word hasn't actually been overlaid exactly in your talk in terms of the study and the poor health outcomes for communities of color. Can you say anything about poverty with this study, or is that another tie that needs to be made?

Stefan Harvey: Thanks for raising that very important issue, Edie. **We did not in either the first study or the more recent study on diabetes deaths examine the issue of income across legislative districts.** We have had people respond to the correlation by saying, "Well, of course, because if you look at those districts they are districts that are poorer than other districts in the state." At some point in the near future we are very likely to look at this all important question of income.

Edie Jessup: I hope to see you all tonight at "Poncho" at Sunnyside High School. Thank you very much. Thank you, Stefan.

The Packet Contained:

Agenda, Calendar of Hunger and Nutrition events Save the Date flier for tonight's premier performance of 'Poncho'; (written and acted by students at Sunnyside High School that have worked with Dr. Phyllis Preciado and the **Estar Group**. It is about a young adolescent Hispanic male, Poncho, who develops diabetes and the journey he takes in adjusting to a new, chronic illness)- I can tell you that it is poignant and it is also very funny. There is a cameo appearance by Dr. Ed Moreno, our new public health officer. He is the father in the family. I really hope that you will follow up today's forum by going to see Poncho tonight. I think that it will be used statewide and nationally because I think that it is that good, so I hope you will join me there.

Summary of last month's forum which was on WIC Nutrition Program

Last year there was a summit on childhood obesity that a group of local people including the Health Collaborative put on and it kicked off a look at childhood diabetes. Following that our Child Nutrition Task Group took that up as its major focus. **The Task Group is ready to go to the Fresno Unified School District Board with a recommendation and a request that they appoint a Healthy School Environment Policy Committee to come up with a policy that will be a recommendation to the board to adopt.** This will center both on **child nutrition issues and also on physical activity. The committee really considered that this was the quickest way to make a big improvement in the kind of health outcomes that we are seeing with our children here in Fresno.** If you are interested we will probably go to the school board on May 12th with this request. If you are interested in having your name or organization on the list of those endorsing this request please fill out the rapid response form and leave it on the table for us or you can fax it to us later. If you are interested in participating on the committee that will go before the board let us know that also and we will be working on it. On the back of that you will see that we are recommending a list of stakeholders who should be on that committee that the school board appoints and we are listing possible representatives of people who would like to be on the committee in different categories. If you know of someone who should be on that committee we would be happy to list that as a draft recommendation.

May 12th also is our annual trip to Sacramento for Hunger Action Day. We make appointments with all of our legislators from the Fresno area so that people can talk to them directly about issues here in Fresno that

are critically important to them around hunger and nutrition. I also have included both California Food Policy Advocates' and California Hunger Action Coalition's legislative agendas. '

'When school was out last summer --who ate? For the 75-85% of our kids in Fresno County School District that are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches, when school is out **Summer Lunch is a way to provide that lunch to them consistently during the summer so that they are healthy and ready to learn when school starts again.** This year we are looking for community organizations that might be sites. *Both Fresno Unified and EOC and Reverend Jim Chapman are sponsors. They will handle the paperwork and the delivery of food.* **What we need are volunteers and places for lunches to be handed out to kids and people to publicize that this is available for our children.** I have the list from Fresno Unified as to what schools are going to have Summer Lunch. There are probably a dozen fewer schools this year than last year and the only way that we can increase those sites and increase the availability to kids is to have volunteers who will work with the school to use that school site as a place to hand out meals or to have congregations or community-based organizations offer to do that. This has to do with our de-funding of education and reduction of the amount of summer schools that are going to be in session this year. Anyone interested in participating in being a site or being a volunteer with this program this summer is invited to come to Fresno Metro Ministry on May 7th.

There are a couple of news items in yellow, an announcement of Earth Day, which is April 25th. The pink sheet is the evaluation of this program today.

Information on a new Kaiser Permanente Child Health Plan is in the -packet. . If people are not eligible for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families this may be where they can get health insurance for their kids. The new **Making Connections Resource Directory** will be ready in May sometime.