

# State Strategy Summit for SB 840

## ACTION REPORT

### Brief Overview and Summary of Action Steps

Moseley-Salvatori Conference Center at the Good Samaritan Hospital  
Los Angeles, February 23 & 24, 2008

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0ke8RR8m3s>

#### I. Summit Overview

Background – SB 840 & the OneCareNow Campaign

Summit Objectives

Summit Participants

Leaders

Welcome Address to Advocates:

Andrew McGuire, Executive Director, Health Care for All—  
California; Chair, State Strategy Group for SB 840

#### II. Workshop Action Recommendations

Endorsement & Outreach Campaign

2/3rds Campaign

Multimedia Truth Squad Plans

#### III. A Huge Thank You to All Volunteers

### I. Summit Overview

**First, some background.**

The California OneCareNow Campaign for SB 840 single-payer legislation kicked off on August 12, 2006 with a health and music festival in Morro Bay. This was followed by an event each day for 364 days straight, each in a different California city. This historic grassroots campaign was initiated by [Health Care For All—California](#) and achieved by HCA Chapters and coalition partners across the state.

In over [365 cities](#), educational “prairie fires” of awareness and understanding about SB 840 kindled enthusiasm for permanent change to our crumbling health care system. Indeed, those 365 events in stoked a firestorm of public demand for the only reform that will work for all of us. That reform: a [single-payer](#) health care system.

California’s single-payer proposal, Senate Bill 840 authored by Senator Sheila Kuehl entered it’s second year of legislative deliberation in January following approval in 2007 by the California Senate. This year, SB 840 will be heard by the Assembly and passage is once again expected. A similar bill was approved in both houses by a 62% majority vote in 2006 but vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger.

Governor Schwarzenegger’s proposed patchwork health plan of mandated insurance and limited cost controls, ABx 1 1, was held up in the Senate Health Committee in February, by a nearly unanimous bipartisan vote.

The California Field Poll, released in December last year, showed an unprecedented 50% leap in just six months for support for single-payer, universal health insurance (even if it meant increasing taxes). The same poll showed that 64% of all Californians were clearly unsatisfied with the current system.

The legislators, the public and much of the health industry knows that major reform is desperately needed and most want it to happen now. In spite of overwhelming power and funding of drug and insurance corporations, grassroots pressure for legislative action will bring the change we need if we have a strategy and a plan to make it happen.

This first-ever Strategy Summit was perfectly timed to propel us into action. And the results were quickly apparent to all attendees.

### **The Primary Objectives for the Summit**

- 1) Generate Action Plans for the 2008 grassroots campaign for passage of single-payer legislation in California – SB 840
- 2) To network with supporting California organizations and activists

### **Summit Participants**

Over 250 of California’s activist leaders, representing some 25 organizations answered the invitation to attend this first-ever “working” Summit on single-payer health care reform in California. Summit co-chairs, George Savage (HCA) and

Jose Morales (CSEA) saluted some 15 HCA members with over 10 years in the fight for health care reform.

The Conference then opened with a powerful and inspiring recap of the past 18 months of California's OneCareNow Campaign and coalition events that have powered this grassroots movement. The video was directed by Don Schroeder, director and producer of the 22 minute HCA video "The Health Care Solution."

Attendees included members of the State Strategy Group of organizations: California School Employees Association, League of Women Voters, Church IMPACT (the lobby arm of the CA Council of Churches), California Nurses Association, California Physicians' Alliance, California Alliance for Retired Americans, Dolores Huerta Foundation, Consumer Federation of California, California Teachers Association, California Federation of Teachers, California Retired Teachers Association, American Medical Students Association, Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club, California Gray Panthers, Health Care for All—California. And partners: JustHealth, Older Women's League, Progressive Democratic Club of California, The Green Party, LA Labor Task Force for Universal Health Care, United Teachers of Los Angeles, UTLA-Retired, Vote Health.

### **Summit Workshop Leaders**

**Multi-Media Truth Squad:** Leader: Andrew McGuire, HCA, Carolyn Constantino, CSEA, Eric Haas, Rockridge Institute, Miles Mogulescu, Business Strategy Group

**Endorsement & Outreach:** Leader: Libby Sholes, Church IMPACT, Bill Taxerman, LA Labor Task Force, John Hughes, Rhythm & Hues, Peter Laarman, Progressive Christians Uniting

**2/3<sup>rds</sup> Campaign:** Leader: Cindy Young, CSEA, Deanna Furman, CNA, Mike Smith, HCA

**DIA On-Line Communications/Fund Raising Workshop (HCA-CA):** Leader: George Savage, HCA Expansion Committee, Barry Eidlin, UC Berkeley, Kip Williams, Democracy In Action, San Francisco,

### **Welcome Address to All Advocates**

#### **"Our Gift to California and the Nation"**

Andrew McGuire  
Executive Director, Health Care for All—California  
Chair, State Strategy Group for SB 840

"Welcome to you all and to Senator Kuehl's staff, (Sara Rogers and Emily Gold), and members of the **State Strategy Group** and other organizations that are represented by your attendance at this summit.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like to read a statement that I received last night from Congressman John Conyers.

*To the California Strategy Summit:*

*As California goes, so goes the nation - how often we hear that in Washington. You have led in CAFE standards, election protection, environmental protection, and so many other issues. I wanted to thank you and urge you on in your efforts to make sure Senator Sheila Kuehl's SB 840 brings single payer health care to California. It is especially important this year, when the national effort is to make sure HR 676 brings single payer health care to the nation by becoming part of the Democratic party platform. Thank you for never giving up on California, and we stand ready to do what we can to help.*

Let me repeat Congressman Conyer's first statement of fact.

*"As California goes, so goes the nation..."*

For those of us committed to the cause of single payer health insurance, that is our charge. We will bring single payer to California as our gift to the nation. WE WILL WIN.

As we all know, however, passing SB 840 with a 2/3 majority of the Assembly and Senate will not be easy. But there is a pathway to victory. And, if you will allow me, I would like to paint a simple picture of the future work, and describe how we get to single payer.

First, let me state the obvious and declare what our shared goal is.

We demand a future where all residents of this state and the nation are guaranteed full, affordable insurance coverage for all illness and injury conditions. In addition, and most importantly, our affordable health insurance will reward all of us by promoting wellness and prevention.

Our goal is clear. How do we get there?

Before describing how we win, it is necessary to acknowledge and understand the opposition.

Let me begin by mentioning our toughest opponents. Those opponents are our friends and neighbors who believe that "government run" programs do not work. These opponents number in the millions and, for decades, they have received a first class brain wash by the "free market," right wing, noise machine.

Another group of well meaning opponents are organizations, policy makers and legislators who promote incremental steps that are flawed. For the record, I don't

think any of us have an objection to a new law or regulation that will lead to the demise of the private insurance industry. But, I believe that we are opposed to measures that add complexity and bureaucracy to our existing Kafkaesque non-system.

In fact, the recent legislative episode with AB 8/ABx 1 1 reminds me of a quote by my favorite writer, Mark Twain, who said:

*Sometimes I wonder whether the world is being run by smart people who are putting us on or by imbeciles who really mean it.*

To illustrate what Twain meant, I'd like to tell you what a friend of mine allegedly heard at a high level meeting in Governor Swarzenegger's office about a year ago.

The discussion among the Governor's advisors and his lobbyist friends went something like this:

During the meeting, a representative from the Chamber of Commerce said that the best way to provide universal health insurance was to promote health savings accounts. Then he said, "We could hire a public relations firm and sell HSA's to voters as a huge health reform idea, an idea that would rival sending a man to the moon!"

The Governor, reflecting on what he had just heard said, "No, I've got a bigger idea. Let's look to Massachusetts and sell the idea that everyone will be personally responsible for health reform. Then we will mandate that people buy insurance. This idea is so big, it will be like sending the first manned space mission to the sun!!"

A few lobbyists in the room were a bit dazed and confused by the Governor's grand idea and one of them meekly asked, "How can you land a manned spaceship on the sun?"

The governor didn't hesitate. He said, "We've thought of everything! We can land the spaceship at night."

Now, whether the Governor said those very words, is not clear--nor the point. What we do know is that his and the Assembly Speaker's plan for universal health insurance had as much clear thinking as a landing on the sun.

Again, any reform that allows the private insurance industry to remain in business, and expand, will be unsuccessful.

I've described the toughest opponents, folks who don't trust government and incrementalists. The weaker opponents are the health insurance industry, the

pharmaceutical industry, the medical device industry, the corporate media industry and their allies. These Goliaths are lumbering around unaware that there is a growing grassroots movement of David's and Susan's who are filling their slingshots with truth pellets.

The ongoing confrontation between the industry and single payer advocates is nearly a century old, but something new has been introduced this century. The "new" idea, which has been borrowed from past social movements, is that those of us who demand and support a single payer system simply join forces and take our information and passion directly to the people.

We've all heard the following statement from friends and foes: single payer is the right answer, but it will never happen because it is not politically feasible.

Our disagreement with the pundits is profoundly simple: it is politically feasible if enough people support the common sense reform. If, in other words, there is a massive grassroots movement to support and demand single payer for all.

And, Saul Alinsky said it best:

*It becomes a contest of power: those who have money and those who have people. We have nothing but people.*

And this brings me to the purpose of this Summit. We, and hundreds of thousands of others not attending this Summit, are the people who will construct a single payer health insurance system in California. We will do it by planning together, by strategizing together, by sharing information together, by working together, by suffering minor defeats and winning big victories together and by keeping our "eyes on the prize" together.

Our three workshops are, indeed, planned to engage all of you in the process of working together. You will be given background information in each workshop that will explain how and why the topics were chosen.

This weekend is historic. We have come together to develop an action plan that, I'm sure, will be one of many during the coming months and years. We have also come together to meet new allies or to get to know each other a bit deeper. We are doing this so that we will win.

We must be aware that after we win and single payer is mandated, we must stay together to protect our gift to California and the Nation. If we don't convert our grassroots movement into a potent watchdog overseeing the legislature, you know what will happen. The lobbyists and other evildoers (did I say that?) will rob our single payer fund. We must not let that happen.

A final note: there is another cause that we must all support—clean elections,

campaign finance reform, whatever you wish to call it. That cause is important to us and all other reform movements.

To conclude, may I read one final quote from Herman Melville. He sums up the soul of this summit:

*We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results.*

Now, for planning our grassroots campaign and our eventual victory, let's roll up our sleeves and work for the cause. We know the results to come."

## II. State Summit Workshop Recommendations

The State Strategy Group was formed in December 2006. The mission of this California-based Group is twofold: support the creation of a single payer health care system and assist in the development and expansion of a grassroots movement to bring about a single payer system.

Six months ago, after a planning session, two subcommittees were formed by the Group.

The "**Endorsement**" subcommittee was charged with planning and promoting a massive, statewide endorsement campaign for SB 840.

The "**2/3**" subcommittee was charged with identifying a few Senate or Assembly districts where a joint lobbying effort of the Group could potentially create a change of position in support of SB 840 by a recalcitrant Senator or Assembly member. The long term goal of the "**2/3**" subcommittee effort is to garner support for SB 840 by 2/3 of the members of the Senate and Assembly. With 2/3 support in both houses the financing requirements can be adopted and the bill becomes veto proof.

The State Strategy Summit for SB 840 purpose was to conduct the first statewide workshops for the "**Endorsement**" and "**2/3**" campaigns and, thereby, receive comments from a larger audience of activists. It should be noted that in the initial planning for the Summit, there was to be a third workshop to plan the campaign to defeat the ABX 1 1 ballot initiative, the Governor and Speaker's health reform plan. However, after ABX 1 1 was held up in the Senate Health Committee, the organizers of the Summit changed the charge of the workshop to develop, instead, a plan of action for a media advocacy campaign, i.e., "**Truth Squad**" campaign, that can augment the "**Endorsement**" and "**2/3**" campaigns.

The four hour workshops were held concurrently with attendees choosing their workshop or otherwise assigned randomly to each workshop. The following

Sunday morning, summaries of the workshops were presented to all participants, in a plenary session, and further input was gathered from Summit attendees.

Finally, there was consensus among the participants that the specific “**Endorsement**” and “**2/3**” campaigns and the larger social movement for single payer were in need of a major infusion of diverse organizations and people. There is a commitment to actively recruit activists and organizations that represent all of the residents of California.

The following excerpts from the workshops will provide the reader with a sampling of action points provided by the creative, intelligent and passionate workshop participants.

### **Endorsement & Outreach Action Plan (excerpt)**

- Organize geographically: Los Angeles, San Diego-Inland empire, Central Valley-Sacramento, Central Coast (Ventura-Santa Maria) , San Francisco-Bay Area.
- Organize functionally so that various interest groups – **business, labor, faith, communities of color, people with disabilities, nurses, physicians, students, etc.** – could secure endorsements from within their own populations and the organizations that serve them.
- Build inter-group coalitions to secure endorsements from County Boards of Supervisors, City Councils, etc. The coalitions create a strong presence showing broad community support for single payer. Additionally, coalitions can focus attention on the savings of a single payer system as expressed by different populations.
- Seek endorsements from both interest groups and coalitions and promote the fiscal benefits of single payer to the current budget crises that affects both state and local/regional operations. This can serve to encourage cash-strapped governmental bodies to pay attention to the savings from single payer.
- Reach out to small business owners, particularly women, for endorsements.
- Target insured, not just the uninsured, to secure endorsements.
- Completed endorsements, action, rallies, press conferences, letters to the editor, Op-Eds and other accomplishments will be reported back to the regional HCA contact person and/or to the Strategy Group members. Every legislative session requires new endorsements. The OneCareNow website will have lists of endorsements and the list will be updated regularly.

## 2/3<sup>RDS</sup> Campaign Action Plan (excerpt)

- Target candidates for Legislature in November 2008 election to vote for SB 840.
  - Look at political environments in particular districts
  - Ask whether candidates will co-author or support bill.
  - Request that candidates highlight their support for SB 840 in their campaign literature and request that they distribute SB 840 literature at their campaign events
  - Attend legislative fundraisers and donate as single-payer supporters
  - Target geographic areas not only where efforts may be most effective as far as incumbents are concerned, but also specify areas where we are likely to get the most grassroots participation.
- Grassroots Efforts.
  - Participate in public forums: encourage single payer supporters, get media coverage, put individual faces on problems
  - Local supporters can canvass and phone bank
  - Get media coverage of people harmed by the current system
  - Target Chambers of Commerce groups
  - Target those not voting in past and younger voters.
- Communications
  - Create media talking points in local districts for advocates
- Coalition Building
  - Need business community support, including small businesses
    - Show business how they would save
    - Organize business leaders in support of SB 840
  - Find allies with similar issues, such as hospitals, community colleges and show how SB 840 would help them
  - Tie in to state budget issues
  - Reach out to local union leaders in targeted districts and solicit support from community, religious leaders, etc.

## **Multi-Media Truth Squad Action Plan (excerpt)**

- Develop list serve/communications system.
- Provide Speakers Training.
- Create central repository, on one website (OneCareNow.org), for all documents, training materials, videos, etc. Materials to create: “calculator” to ascertain savings from SB 840 for individuals, organizations, businesses and public agencies.
- Initiate “Campus” outreach to engage students in the campaign.
- Engage in more “street” theater, campaign songs, etc.
- Collaborate with Rockridge Institute to develop “framing” and other key communication tools.
- Establish a “Writers Truth Squad” (cadre of writers) to create and disseminate information, especially proactively.
- Use internet strategically (e.g., blog, etc.) to disseminate information.

### III. A Huge Thank You To All Summit Volunteers!

We are much indebted and thankful for a spirited bunch of HCA, CSEA, League of Women Voters, California Council of Churches and California Nurses Association members who jumped in to help put this Summit together in just over two months time.

Our thanks also goes to the management and staff of The Moseley-Salvatori Conference Center and Good Samaritan Catering Department, including Kim Fisher who worked so diligently to make this event a success.

Finally, we are profoundly grateful and inspired by an unforgettable evening of joy and fun provided by our equally hard working “star performers.”

First and foremost was our keynote speaker, **Senator Sheila Kuehl**, who was given a rousing introduction by **HCA-CA Board of Directors Chairman, Dan Hodges**. Senator Kuehl, author of SB 840, received thunderous applause from over 300 gathered for the Saturday dinner and entertainment. Senator Sheila Kuehl’s speech truly launched the evening into orbit for everyone.

Then our other hero in our fight for single payer health care, **Lily Tomlin**, introduced a few friends she brought by to move us and delight us: **David L. Lander, Kathy Joosten, Sally Kellerman with pianist Chris Caswell, and the awesomely funny and brilliant Paula Poundstone**.

Thanks to each of them and each of you, we are on our way to making more history in 2008.

**The State Strategy Summit Steering Committee:** Jose Morales, Anita Horn, Libby Sholes, Dan Hodges, George Savage, Don Schroeder, Jeanne Ertle, John Glass, Andrew McGuire

**Summit Staff Volunteers:** Melonie Magruder, Connie Lemke, Jeff Breitbart, Warren Felt, Dolly Arond, Dessa Kaye, Andrea Alfred, Vicky Gaega, Nilda Esteban, Susan Gosman, Francine Lyness, Jose Morales, Eileen Savage, Susan Haskell, Maureen Cruise, Tony Ubano, Marc Rich. **Entertainment Volunteers:** Don Schroeder, Director, Ian Garrett (Lighting), Justine Garrett (Stage), Rob Scott (Sound), Tony Urbano (Stage Manager). **Advocacy Book Store:** Deni Mosser, Irma Strantz, Doris Nelson. **Summit Graphic Design:** Gilbert Garcia. **Summit Video:** Don Schroeder, Director, Diannah Morgan, Editor.