

POLICY WATCH – August 2019

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Lots of good news in this issue! NBLC is delighted to announce our new Leaders of the North Bay honorees – what an exciting group of people and organizations who are catalyzing positive change in the North Bay! And our Youth Power Speech contest winner, is a not-to-be-missed keynote speaker at this year's Award luncheon on November 1st. Mirna Mejia's personal story about being an immigrant and fighting to stop the deportation of her father is poignant and compelling. Tickets are on sale now so don't wait – this luncheon always sells out.

We also address the proposed changes to the public charge. While the term may be obscure, it's impacts potentially will affect all of us. Read how the proposed changes could cost you more money, threaten your health and make it harder to have the skilled workforce we need to thrive.

Hope you have a great Labor Day weekend!

Best,



Cynthia

Announcing this Year's Leaders of the North Bay!

- **Murray Legacy Leadership: Ben Stone, *Retired Executive Director of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board***
- **United We Stand, Community Building: Ross Liscum, *Century 21 Alliance***
- **Paint the Community Green, Environmental Stewardship: Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital**
- **The "Light Bulb" Went On, Innovative/Entrepreneurial Spirit: Don Carney, *YMCA***
- **Empowering the Latino Community, Leadership within the Latino Community: Voces de Cambio**
- **From Red Tape to Red Carpet, Leadership in Government: First 5 Sonoma County**

The Murray Legacy Leadership Award recognizes a lifetime of leadership in the North Bay. This year this award goes to Ben Stone, former director of the Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB). For 33 years, Ben Stone has been the driving force transforming the EDB from being solely a business attraction entity into a highly effective agency known for enabling local businesses to better prosper and endure. Because of Ben, the EDB is one of the few agencies in the state to have twice won California's highest award for economic development, first for its tourism program and second for its post-wildfire Shop Local campaign. Ben's innovative programs have boosted the economic vitality of the county and helped ease the stresses of economic downturns and the natural disasters. Ben is the catalyst who helps business and civic leaders find new approaches and better results.

The United We Stand, Community Building award is being presented to Ross Liscum. Ross is now well into his 4th decade of participating or spearheading community efforts. As a Veteran himself, Ross was instrumental in Santa Rosa's Veteran's Monument dedicated at City Hall in 2008. As a long-time Director of the Sonoma County Fairgrounds Board of Directors, Ross has directly been involved in supporting the local agricultural community through its various programs and activities. As a recognized leader in the real estate industry, he's utilized his professional talents in serving on various nonprofit boards, among them Sonoma County Alliance and Community Housing Sonoma. Ross also serves on the Board of Public Utilities for the City of Santa Rosa, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Sonoma County Assessment Appeals Board.

The Paint the Community Green, Environmental Stewardship award goes to Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital. Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital completed a historic clean energy, self-sufficiency project to reduce dependency on the traditional power grid, by installing solar panels. The hospital's environmental total stewardship project resulted in 85% of all electricity being generated on-site; 40% of which comes from renewable energy solar panels and 45% of which comes from clean fuel-cell technology energy servers, installed when the facility opened in 2014. The installation of solar panels and usage of energy alternative fuel cells at Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital will reduce carbon emissions and reliance on traditionally dirty energy sources. This means better air quality for patients, staff and visitors, along with a lower carbon footprint overall. On-site energy generation also means reduced long-term costs to run the hospital, helping lower the cost of care to patients.

The "Light Bulb" Went On, Innovative/Entrepreneurial Spirit award, we are honoring Don Carney. Don stands out for his relentless commitment to youth in and beyond Marin. As the Director of Restorative Youth Services at the YMCA, Don helped to create the Youth Court program nearly 20 years ago and is now a thriving organization. Diverting over a thousand youth since its inception in 2004, Youth Court is on the forefront of mitigating the school-to-prison pipeline by using restorative practices that keep kids in school and out of the juvenile justice system. This innovative program has a 95% completion rate and successful completion of the program can remove their juvenile record. Don is not only changing our community but working towards changing every community for the better.

The award for Empowering the Latino Community through Leadership within the Latino Community recognizes the work of Voces de Cambio (Voice for Change), a community-based volunteer group comprised of 19 former Center for Domestic Peace (C4DP) service users and survivors of domestic violence. It presents an alternative, culturally specific view of volunteerism from the perspective of the Latina community. For the past 15 years, this amazing group of volunteers have achieved breathtaking results. In the past year, this group of volunteers devoted 220 hours toward purposefully expanding their activism to reach more domestic violence victims in new and diverse ways. They do this through reaching out to marginalized groups such as members of the LGBTQ in the Latino community. Voces de Cambio

opened the door for Latinos to seek help in situations of domestic violence causing a 52% increase in Latina victims assisted through advocacy efforts and inspired members and future generations to join activism to end domestic violence.

And this year's honoree for From Red Tape to Red Carpet, Leadership in Government, award goes to First 5 Sonoma County, a public agency established by the Board of Supervisors in accordance with California statute, that works with a broad range of stakeholders to strategically invest in community-based organizations serving children, prenatal to five years. First 5 Commissioners and staff, led by Commission Chair, Kelly Bass Seibel, spent over thirteen months conducting an in-depth fiscal analysis, consulting community leaders and stakeholders and working with the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to amend the County's original ordinance to reestablish First 5 as an independent public agency, separate from the County of Sonoma. The Commission developed a compelling proposition for restructuring First 5 to save millions of dollars in administrative costs in the next ten years. These savings are to be re-directed to sustain community-based services that ensure that our youngest residents are healthy, nurtured, ready to succeed in school and on a positive trajectory for life!

Congratulations to these wonderful honorees, who inspire us and make living and working in the North Bay a positive experience!

Mirna Mejia Wins Youth Power Speech Contest

NBLC is pleased to announce that Mirna Mejia is the winner of this year's Youth Power Speech Contest. Mirna is a freshman at UC – Davis and has a great story to share about being an immigrant and how that has affected her and her family. She is a first generation college student who entered the U.S. at the age of 5 in hopes of a better life and future. Mirna's dad was the focus of a fight to prevent his deportation, in which Mirna played a huge role in rallying support for him to remain in the U.S. with his family. Mirna's passion for racial equity has led her to develop leadership skills and put her on a path to help others by becoming either a clinical psychologist or social worker. You don't want to miss Mirna's talk about saving her dad from deportation and finding her passion in life while doing so!

As the winner of the speech contest, Mirna will give the keynote speech at the Leaders of the North Bay Awards luncheon on November 1st. She is also being awarded a \$5,000 scholarship to help her pursue her college education. NBLC also awarded scholarships to the runner ups in the contest.

Please see below for more information about the Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon.

Get Your Ticket Today – Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon on November 1st!

Date:

Location:

Time:

Ticket Link:

Changing the Public Charge Will Impact All of Us

The Washington Post's "How President Trump's new immigration rule could erode the social safety net," by Salonee Bhaman, ([Link](#)), we learn that the proposed change would effect all of us if implemented. Bhaman says, "The Department of Homeland Security announced a new "public charge" rule aimed at disqualifying applicants legally in the United States from obtaining green cards that will enable them to stay permanently. People who access certain social services such as Medicaid, housing vouchers and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (food stamps) — or who are determined likely to access them in the future — may be deemed by immigration officials "more likely than not" to become a public charge, or dependent on government social programs, and denied a green card."

Bhaman says, "Although the U.S. government has long tried to restrict the legal immigration of poor people and has severely restricted immigrants' access to social services, the new rule is still stunning in its potential effect. Immigrants may be forced to choose between accessing services for which they qualify and applying for lawful immigration status. The mere appearance of poverty or even the potential for it may become the basis for a denied petition."

She points out, "What is different about this most recent interpretation of a very old immigration law, however, is not just that it enacts a wealth test on potential migrants, but that it does so by placing benefits and support services widely considered critical to public health and human dignity on the line. In closely tying the mere potential for public dependence to moral failure, the Trump administration attacks not only immigrants, but the very legitimacy of the social safety net."

The CT Mirror's Grace Jin and Howard Forman writing in "Make Health care accessible, not a burden for immigrants," ([Link](#)), go into further depth about the impacts, especially related to health. They say, "The new public charge rule accompanies a barrage of anti-immigration policies that establish documentation status as a social determinant of health. Squalid conditions in detention centers are morally reprehensible and detrimental to the health of new migrants. Doctors, medical students, and volunteer clinics have fought on the frontlines of this humanitarian crisis. Noncitizen immigrants already living in the U.S., regardless of legal status, are also discouraged from seeking healthcare: for fear of deportation, separation from family, or designation as a public charge. Green card applicants can be deemed likely to become a public charge if they have negative factors including a lack of private health insurance, medical conditions that require extensive treatment, or limited English proficiency."

Jin and Forman say, "A joint statement from National Hospital Associations urged the administration to withdraw the harmful rule, because it "could undermine access to care for legal immigrants by discouraging the use of critical public programs like Medicaid." Over 13.5 million Medicaid and CHIP enrollees live in a household with at least one noncitizen; they may disenroll out of uncertainty or fear. At HAVEN Free Clinic, a Yale student-run primary care clinic serving uninsured patients in New Haven, eligible patients have mentioned not applying for Medicaid or nutrition assistance programs for fear of jeopardizing their family's immigration status."

They continue, "Government health programs are meant to help people receive lifesaving care and, more generally, to protect the overall health of the public. They are now being weaponized against low-income immigrants, a shortsighted move which can hurt vulnerable populations, widen health disparities, and harm public health for years to come. The vast majority of the healthcare community recognizes the dire need for evidence-based solutions to improve healthcare access for the undocumented and uninsured —

not only as a moral imperative to protect the marginalized, but also a policy and economic priority for our nation's well-being."

Jin and Forman state, "Barriers to accessing health insurance will increase uninsured rates and worsen health outcomes for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants and 22 million noncitizens residing in the United States. While the Affordable Care Act (ACA) expanded coverage to millions of Americans, it left intact the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PROWRA), which excluded undocumented immigrants from government-funded insurance including Medicaid, Medicare, and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)). The cost of uninsurance, in both economic and health terms, is immeasurable."

They say, "Without preventive primary care services, uninsured populations experience more avoidable health emergencies and expensive chronic illnesses. Medical debts are the leading cause of bankruptcies in the U.S., and low-income, uninsured patients are at the highest risk for catastrophic health expenditures. Under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA), hospitals receiving federal payments must treat all medical emergencies regardless of patients' ability to pay. The cost of uncompensated care for uninsured populations in 2013 was estimated to be \$84.9 billion."

Taking their argument further, they say, "Much of these costs, incurred when the uninsured are billed for medical services they cannot pay for, are already absorbed by the public system. The federal government helped offset about \$32.8 billion through channels including Medicaid and Medicare; state, local governments and the private sector also shared the burden. Uncompensated care is mainly provided through a network of hospitals (60%), community health centers (26%), and office-based physicians (14%). However, as safety net hospitals that provide crucial healthcare for the underserved become strained, their closures can cause spillover pressure on nearby hospitals and state governments to cost-shift."

Jin and Forman close with, "Medicaid expansion drastically lowered hospitals' uncompensated cost burden. It also reduced emergency department visits by uninsured patients from 16% in 2006 to 8% in 2016. The public health benefits of expanding coverage are abundant, with improved healthcare access and health outcomes, mitigated infectious disease, enhanced economic productivity, and social inclusivity, among others. In the long run, public health insurance serves as an investment in children, their healthy development, and the financial stability of their families. Medicaid and CHIP expansions in the 1980s -1990s demonstrated that children with increased eligibility paid more taxes, collected less EITC, and had higher cumulative wages by age 28; the study also estimated decreases in mortality and increases in college attendance. In short, providing access to healthcare yields a positive return on taxpayer spending."

The changes to the public charge will hurt our health and our pocketbooks. Let's hope reason prevails and these proposed changes are not implemented.

NBLC CEO Named Woman of Industry by San Rafael Chamber of Commerce

The San Rafael Chamber of Commerce will celebrate women in business at the Seventh Annual "Women of Industry" Luncheon and Marketplace, on Friday, November 15, at Embassy Suites in San Rafael. Since 2013, the Chamber has annually recognized a Marin Businesswoman who exemplifies extraordinary leadership in her industry. This year, the Chamber will honor Cynthia Murray, CEO and President of North Bay Leadership Council. She is joined by 7 other exceptional industry and community leaders: Joan Capurro, Ann Brebner, Patty Garbarino, Melissa Prandi, Patricia Kendall, Mary Kay Sweeney and Stephanie

Plante.

For the past 13 years, Murray has focused on a variety of public policy issues to help improve the quality of life for those she represents, which is over 25,000 employees from over 50 select employers in the North Bay. “Cynthia and I have been working very closely together this past year on workforce housing initiatives in Marin County,” said Joanne Webster, San Rafael Chamber of Commerce President & CEO. “I am continually impressed with her passion and fortitude and inspired by her commitment to improve the lives of all. We are thrilled to be honoring her this year,” said Webster.

“Through all her community and public policy efforts, she has become a mentor and teacher to Chamber business leaders, women in business and young women just entering the workforce,” said Cynthia Gregory, San Rafael Chamber’s 2019/20 Women of Industry Co-Chair. “She’s an amazing force and one of the community’s most involved female leaders” said Gregory.

Prior to starting the North Bay Leadership Council, Murray served eight years on the Marin County Board of Supervisors and seven years on the Novato City Council, including one term as Mayor. She received the 2010 Women in Business award from the North Bay Business Journal for her achievements in economic development.

Cynthia Murray serves on the boards of many organizations including the North Bay Life Science Alliance, Bay Area Council Economic Institute; First 5 Sonoma County Commission, Sonoma County Health Action Council, Healthy Marin Partnership, Marin School to Careers Partnership and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s Policy Advisory Council. She brings together the public, nonprofit, education, and private industry sectors to help address and solve Marin’s most pressing issues, and is also deeply engaged and devotes her time to the Regional Economic Association Leaders Coalition, the Bay Area Council Economic Institute Board of Directors (19 years), as an Adjunct Professor at Dominican University, and currently also teaching MBA students at Sonoma State University, as well. She’s the Moderator and monthly Business Edge Briefings Breakfast at Dominican University.

The “Women of Industry” Luncheon and Marketplace is in recognition of all the successful Women Business Owners, Professionals and Entrepreneurs here in Marin County. This event draws over 300 professional women and men from the Marin business community. Proceeds of the event underwrite the event costs, as well as add to the “Women of Industry” Scholarship Fund. This fund was established to provide tuition fees for a deserving woman entrepreneur or small business owner to attend the San Rafael Leadership Institute. For more information and tickets, please visit srchamber.com

Members in the News

Redwood Credit Union Opens New Branch in American Canyon

Redwood Credit Union (RCU) today announced the opening of its new, full-service branch in American Canyon at 406 Napa Junction Road, Suite 126 in the Napa Junction Shopping Center.

Arrow Benefits Group Leaders Named First Ever Dual Advisers of the Year by Employee Benefit Adviser

Employee Benefit Adviser has named its 2019 winners for the annual Adviser of the Year awards, selecting dual honorees by recognizing Andrew McNeil and Rosario Avila, the founders of BenefitsTV.

More Than 2,200 People Protected by Securely Shredding Documents at Redwood Credit Union’s Annual Shred-a-Thon

More than 2,200 local residents (an all-time high) took action to protect themselves from fraud and identity theft by shredding old financial records and other paperwork at Redwood Credit Union's (RCU's) free annual Shred-a-Thon, held at RCU's administrative offices in Santa Rosa on Saturday, August 10, 2019.

109 Named Best Places to Work in the North Bay for 2019

This year's winners of the 14th annual Best Places to Work in the North Bay awards were revealed.

Side by Side Accelerates Expansion of Irene M. Hunt School in San Anselmo to Accommodate Displaced Students in Foster Care

Side by Side (formerly Sunny Hills Services), a San Anselmo-based nonprofit that serves vulnerable youth and their families in four Bay Area counties, today announced the expansion of its Irene M. Hunt School in San Anselmo by adding spots for up to 20 students, following the closure of Timothy Murphy School in San Rafael.

San Rafael Chamber Names Cynthia Murray 'Women of Industry' Honoree

Cynthia Murray, the executive director of the North Bay Leadership Council, has been named this year's Women of Industry honoree by the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce.

Midstate Construction Completes the Fuji Towers Project

General contractor Midstate Construction Corporation and construction manager The John Stewart Company recently completed an occupied rehabilitation of Fuji Towers, a 140 unit affordable housing community for Fuji Towers, Inc. in San Jose, CA.

Comcast Announces Largest Ever Expansion of Internet Essentials Program

Comcast announced the most sweeping eligibility changes ever to the Internet Essentials program, which is the largest, most comprehensive, and most successful broadband adoption program in America.

Dominican University of California, Xavier of Ohio and University of New Haven Are The Latest Colleges to Go Test Optional

Three more colleges — Dominican University of California, Xavier University of Ohio and the University of New Haven — have gone test optional.

CSU to Increase Investment in Mathematics and Science Teacher Initiative

The California State University (CSU) will further increase the number of mathematics and science teachers in California by committing an additional \$10 million over the next four years to its Mathematics and Science Teacher Initiative (MSTI).

Sutter Announces \$158M Expansion To Its Santa Rosa Hospital

Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital announced Friday it will hold a groundbreaking event on Sept. 20 at 11 a.m. to mark the official start of its \$158 million expansion project — a 3-story structure that will add dozens of hospital beds, more treatment areas in the emergency room, and additional surgical suites.

Read more online at www.northbayleadership.org/news



Over twenty five years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org