



The Contra Costa Health Care Coalition Bargaining Update No. 5 - June 24, 2015

The Contra Costa Health Care Coalition met with the County in the afternoon on Wednesday, June 24, and were joined by a representative from Buck Consulting – the firm responsible for working with the insurance providers under the County’s direction. After passing our first proposal aimed at restoring quality, affordable health care the preceding week, we expected an initial response to our proposal calling for a two-phase solution to unsustainable and rising health care costs.

The presentation provided by the representative from Buck Consulting was informative and useful. The Coalition Bargaining Team was able to better analyze and understand some of the information and data provided to us in response to our comprehensive information requests. This is especially the case for the Kaiser and Health Net plans offered. Meanwhile, the County’s willingness to bring subject matter experts to the bargaining table is the result of continued pressure by the Coalition Bargaining Team – as well as the membership at large who have participated in early Coalition actions – to be more transparent and accountable with respect to the dire state of health care in Contra Costa County.

Unfortunately, we did confront a familiar obstacle: the Contra Costa Health Plan, or CCHP, is as non-transparent with the County’s hired contractor, Buck, as it is with the Coalition. CCHP has never provided utilization data to support the need for steep annual premium rate increases. The Coalition Bargaining Team underscored to Buck as well as the County’s Negotiator that this is patently unacceptable.

Once the representative from Buck Consulting was excused from the room, the County moved to respond – orally and in unwritten concept form – to the Coalition’s written comprehensive proposal. The response amounted to an early preview of what the County envisions as the way forward. It is important to emphasize, however, that the County did not provide a response in writing. It is impossible to seriously consider the County’s vision without anything being provided in proper written proposal form. The Coalition Bargaining Team will next meet with the County on Wednesday, July 8. It is hoped that the County will respect the process and provide its proposal in writing. There is little time or need for further delay. We look forward to the County fulfilling its commitment to work with the Coalition to improve health care for all County employees and their families, because now is the time to turn good will and promise into action.