



## *Executive Summary*

*Women LEAD for Health (Women LEAD) is a collaboration of diverse health and Women's organizations working to move California toward universal access to health care, by educating and involving women and women's organizations in state and local health reform efforts.*

### **Goals**

1. Promote widespread public understanding that universal health care is a women's issue
2. Educate and involve women and women's organizations in the health care reform debate
3. Increase the involvement of women of color, women with disabilities and younger women in the health care reform debate
4. Support public policy that improves health access and moves us towards universal health care

### **Members**

ACCESS/Women's Health Rights Coalition ♦ Breast Cancer Action ♦ Breast Health Access for Women with Disabilities (BHAWD) ♦ California Latinas for Reproductive Justice ♦ California Women's Agenda ♦ California NOW ♦ California Pan-Ethnic Health Network ♦ Center for Genetics and Society ♦ Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health ♦ Circulo de Vida ♦ Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) ♦ Health Access ♦ Health Care for All - California ♦ Latino Issues Forum ♦ Mujeres Unidas y Activas ♦ Older Women's League ♦ Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health ♦ Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California ♦ Planned Parenthood Shasta Diablo ♦ Planned Parenthood Golden Gate ♦ San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women ♦ San Francisco Labor Council ♦ UCSF National Center of Excellence in Women's Health ♦ UCSF Lesbian Health Research Center ♦ Vision y Compromiso ♦ Women's Community Clinic ♦

### **Summary of 2006-2008 Activities**

Women LEAD is comprised of community organizations and individual women from throughout the state and across lifespan from a range of racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds and diverse sexual identities. These women have shaped Women LEAD's mission, vision, goals and activities. The work of Women LEAD is fueled by a shared belief in women and girls as the dynamic promoters of social change and in the "kitchen table" wisdom that women bring to health care issues. Over the last two years, the work of Women LEAD has demonstrated that the challenges faced by underserved communities to accessing and utilizing health care also equip them to find solutions and work for appropriate public action.

### **2006 Accomplishments**

In 2006, Women LEAD organized its first Women LEAD (Leadership Education and Advocacy Day) for Health at San Francisco City Hall on May 18. More than fifty women, representing twenty organizations participated, representing every neighborhood in the City. Participants were diverse in age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, language and experience. Women learned about city-wide universal coverage proposals and participated in visits with members of the Board of Supervisors. Simultaneous translation was provided in Spanish and American Sign Language. These visits are credited with securing the two remaining votes needed for a veto-proof majority. As a result, two companion ordinances were signed into law on August 7, 2006. Women LEAD for Health is a model of active citizen engagement. Participants were inspired by the diversity of women and the opportunity for

engagement that it provided. For many attendees, this was their first time speaking to their supervisors. Out of this effort Women LEAD authored a position paper on universal health care as a women's health and rights issue, which was translated into Spanish.

### **2007 Accomplishments**

In 2007, Women LEAD organized community convenings to educate and engage underserved women throughout the state not yet involved in the health care reform movement, particularly women of color, younger women, immigrant women and women with disabilities. More than 200 women participated in convenings held in San Francisco, Monterey, Gonzales, Poplar, Stockton, Salinas, San Diego, Los Angeles, Pacoima, and Hayward. Participants were provided with a framework to evaluate competing policy proposals in terms of their potential to move California towards universal health care; examined how health care reform proposals can be evaluated through a "women's health framework"; and explored opportunities to get involved with health care reform efforts.

Local convenings culminated in the Women's Health Summit on Universal Health Care and the Second Annual Women LEAD for Health. Held on May 10 in San Francisco as a precursor to Women's Health Week, the Summit brought together over 100 community members, health care providers, and activists for a day of learning and dialogue on universal health care as a women's issue. The Summit featured Tangerine Brigham, Director of the Health Access Program; Bree Johnston, MD, UCSF Department of Geriatrics, Elizabeth Patchias, National Women's Law Center; Aileen Hernandez, California Women's Agenda; Mary Smith, a community activist for women with disabilities; and Sara Rogers, Office of State Senator Sheila Kuehl. The Summit drew attention to the importance of universal health care to women and girls and generated significant print, radio and television media coverage, including a positive editorial in the San Francisco Chronicle on the importance of health care reform to women and girls.

Women LEAD for Health at the State Capitol mobilized more than 200 women from around the state. Senator Patricia Berg, the Chair of the Women's Caucus, was the keynote speaker, addressing why women's voices are crucial in the California health care reform debate. Attendees learned about the state-wide health care reform proposals under consideration, received advocacy training and met in groups with their legislators to discuss women's needs in health care reform. The event, which included more than 100 community health workers from throughout the state, was conducted in Spanish and translated in English.

### **2008 Goals and Activities to Date**

In 2008, Women LEAD provided critical gender analysis of the health care reform proposals and successfully placed several op-eds on the importance on health care reform to women and girls. Women LEAD has developed a "listening tour" for 2008 to engage new constituencies in health care reform work and to explore new potential partnerships and collaborations to bringing comprehensive, affordable, accessible health care to every Californian. In addition, Women LEAD is developing a leadership development curriculum for women advocates on health care reform. Women LEAD is exploring partnerships for implementation of the curriculum. In 2008 Women LEAD also convened a policy subcommittee to develop Women LEAD's policy agenda for 2008 and to continue to provide critical analysis of the impact of health care reform bills on women and girls.

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