

## Measure A Blue Ribbon Task Force Meeting

Wednesday, September 18, 2013

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Castro Valley Library, Chabot Room

3600 Norbridge Ave.

Castro Valley, CA 95616

Members Present: Chair - Supervisor Nate Miley, Jennifer Root, Terry Sandoval, Patricia Danielson, Peter Manoleas, Rebecca Rozen, Charles Plummer, Dr. Milton Lorig, Lucinda Bazile, Scott Gregerson, Pamela Russo, Chris Iglesias, Michael Lighty, Gail Steele, Fran Jefferson, Donald Waters, Bertram Lubin, Sue Compton, Wright Lassiter, Sherry Hirota, Ralph Silber, Nancy Van Huffel, Stephen Cassidy, Joe Devries, Dr. Zettie Page, III

### MEETING MINUTES

#### I. Welcome and Introductions (4-4:10pm)

Supervisor Nate Miley, District 4, presented introductory comments and welcomed members and guests to the second meeting of the Measure A Blue Ribbon Task Force. The Task Force plays an advisory role working towards the reauthorization of Measure A, an essential health care services tax ordinance.

#### II. Presentation of Poll Results (4:10-4:20pm) [\*attachment\*](#)

Presenter: Ruth Bernstein of EMC Research

In August, EMC conducted a telephone survey of 609 likely November 2014 voters to gauge the political environment for a campaign to reauthorize Measure A. Results were compared to a similar survey conducted prior to Measure A's initial authorization in 2004.

##### *Key Findings*

- Strong support exists for renewing Measure A with 76% of survey respondents likely to vote yes. Support is equally strong between June and November voters.
- While respondents see the measure as necessary for the health of the community even in the wake of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), many are unaware of the details of the current sales tax.
- While strong support currently exists, public debate and controversy may likely negatively impact voter opinion. EMC recommends a vigorous and well-funded campaign for the reauthorization of Measure A.

##### *Results*

- Levels of voter optimism and initial support for Measure A are currently similar to those in 2004.
- The greatest concern related to healthcare in the county is the affordability of healthcare (19%) followed by access to care (11%) but over a quarter (27%) did not list a concern.
- When asked if Measure A should be renewed without changes, 70% said yes, 6% said they were leaning towards yes, 5% were undecided, and 19% were leaning towards or responded no.
- Almost half of voters see healthcare as a core value for the county.
- Additional information that emphasizes the protection of a healthcare safety net was found to be compelling by voters. 75% would vote yes after being provided with these statements.
- Voters could be swayed by negative information. After being presented with arguments by the opposition, only 57% of respondent said yes. This is similar to results from the 2004 survey.

#### III. Important "take aways" from Measure A Poll Results (4:20-4:40pm)

Larry Tramutola of Tramutola Advisors provided an assessment of the viability of a campaign to renew Measure A. Calling the survey results solid, he said that a well-funded, well-organized campaign would be able to attain the 2/3rds support necessary for passage. Only the existence of strong opposition could prevent the reauthorization. He does not foresee strong opposition to Measure A or think that the ACA health reform will greatly impact the campaign.

He listed several challenges for the Task Force to focus on. They are as follows:

- The impact of state funding on Measure A brings uncertainties. (See bullet point IV.)
- Voters have been asked to pass many tax measures in the past decade. The Task Force must figure out how to position Measure A in relation to other county measures, such as Measure B-1.
- Reaching unity on Measure A's allocation formula is critical. The group must decide whether to do a straight reauthorization or make changes to the percentages allocated to the Alameda Health System and community-based healthcare service organizations.
- A decision is needed on whether to pursue a Measure that is in effect for perpetuity or one with a set end date. Tramutola's recommendations are for a measure that has a sunset date.
- Further work is needed to develop a campaign infrastructure, including fundraising. The group must also decide how to spend campaign funds. Tramutola noted that social media is an ineffective tactic for county tax measures. In 2004's Measure A campaign, \$600,000 was spent on cable TV commercials and direct mailings.

Tramutola noted that if the group decides to put the measure on the November 2014 ballot, decisions will have to be finalized by July. If it decides on June 2014's ballot, decisions will have to be made by February. According to him, June currently seems like the less competitive election. Changing the funding formula will result in "five years lost" as a new formula would come into effect before the original Measure A's sunset date in 2019.

#### **IV. 1991 Realignment Update & Strategy (4:40-5:00pm)**

Alex Briscoe, director of the Healthcare Services Agency, presented an overview on how the state's changes to the healthcare realignment strategy impacts the county's ability to provide healthcare services. He says the county's goal is to keep as many resources in the county as possible.

Summary: In 1991, facing severe budget deficits, the state of California began covering its financial obligations to the counties by providing block grants. The block grants are used to provide healthcare for medically indigent adults without children or disabilities. Alameda County receives \$51 million from this block grant and 80% of it is spent on healthcare expenditures for the indigent.

2011's A.B. 85 allows the state to take back its realignment money because these funds are unnecessary due to the passage of the ACA. Briscoe argues that this is untrue. Because the state will take away an amount that is calculated based on counties' current local revenues, counties are penalized for spending more on healthcare provisions.

The county has two options: (1) Convince the state to exclude Measure A funds from its healthcare expenditures. (2) Include more costs in its estimates to lower the amount of money the state can take away. Because the first option is unlikely to succeed, Alameda County is pursuing the second option.

The Healthcare Services Agency, the Auditor-Controller's office, and consultants are evaluating numbers right now. A proposal with changes to the distribution of funds will be ready by the next meeting for the Measure A Blue Ribbon Task Force to review. Briscoe and Supervisor Miley emphasized that carefully apportioning dollars is key and that it is tantamount to consider the county as being one united system.

#### **V. Review of Fundraising from Previous Measure A (5:00-5:20pm)**

Larry Tramutola spoke about the 2004 fundraising campaign where major contributors came from the healthcare community. Because Measure A has generated money for many healthcare service providers, there are additional sources of potential fundraising dollars.

Supervisor Miley said the fundraising goal is currently \$500,000. Pam Russo remarked that while fundraising is important, deciding on the wording of the reauthorized Measure A is equally important.

Gail Steele commented that she would like to see the budget for the campaign. Joe Devries said the most important message to send out about Measure A is that in the absence of state and federal support, it is up to the local community and government to care for its own people.

#### **VI. Small Group Breakout to Discuss Next Steps**

Tramutola said that in compliance with campaign laws, those interested in discussing potential campaign contributors would caucus together with him after the official meeting is over.

#### **VII. Wrap Up & Meeting Schedule**

Supervisor Miley thanked members of the Task Force and reported that the Board of Supervisors will look at the Measure A poll results at a retreat. Alex Briscoe and Larry Tramutola will be speaking again at October's meeting of the Task Force.

The Measure A Blue Ribbon Task Force will continue to meet monthly through March 2014.

All meetings are held from 4-6:00pm at Castro Valley Library, 3600 Norbridge Ave, Castro Valley, CA 94546. The future meeting schedule of the Task Force is as follows:

- Wed, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013
- Wed, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013
- Wed, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014
- Wed, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014
- Wed, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (Location to be announced)

**Adjourn at 6pm**