

# Measure AA doesn't raise taxes; it preserves funding

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and Kate Quick

The positive impact that Alameda County Measure A has had in preserving and expanding access to care since its enactment in 2004 is enormous. This is why the medical community, a blue-ribbon panel representing community organizations from throughout the county, the Alameda County Taxpayers Association and the League of Women Voters strongly urge voters to preserve this vital funding source by voting yes on Alameda County Measure AA on the June 3 ballot.

Measure AA will not raise taxes. It simply preserves an existing funding source for vital health care services that have served more than 400,000 Alameda County residents directly and preserved essential health care resources for the entire community.

While health care reform

promises to improve access to care, local health care services and facilities remain in constant danger of closing due to continuing federal and state underfunding of health care services. Recognizing the value of preserving a stable funding source that community health care facilities and clinicians can count on to continue to fulfill their mission, the organizations listed above came together this year to support passage of Measure AA.

This funding preserves: a robust county health care system; pediatric primary and specialty care; mental health services; emergency and trauma care throughout the county; primary and preventive care in community clinics throughout the county; dental care and dermatology care; school-based clinics; and a long list of other programs that have enhanced access to health care and quality of life for Alameda County residents.

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The Measure A Oversight Committee's recent report to the board of supervisors applauds the many programs that Measure A funds, concluding all recipients of Measure A revenue were in compliance with the measure. It is not an expression of concern about the value of those programs as has been interpreted by some. Measure A funds enabled recipients to expand their services and facilities, which is a primary goal of the measure. In addition, a record number of recipients were able to secure federal and foundation matching grants. The small discretionary

grants awarded by members of the board of supervisors gave the supervisors the flexibility to respond to unanticipated needs in their districts.

In the interest of writing a thorough and comprehensive report, the committee noted that obtaining more detailed information from a few of the programs would enable the committee to more fully illustrate the full impact of those programs in the community along with continual improvement planning.

Additionally, we believe the language in Measure AA—which mirrors the language in the

original Measure A that was overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2004—clearly defines how the funding is to be used to serve patients in need in our community and does not require any changes.

Measure A is an enormous success story of the community coming together to ensure that its people, particularly those who are most vulnerable, receive essential health care services they need. Passage of Measure AA in June will help sustain trends toward our overall community health improvement. Please join us in preserving our health care safety net for the future by voting yes on Measure AA on June 3.

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*John Becker is chair of the Measure A Oversight Committee. Arthur Chen, MD, is secretary-treasurer of the Alameda-Contra Costa Medical Association and Kate Quick is chair of the Alameda Council, League of Women Voters.*