

Founded in 1989
The Post-Polio Support Group of Orange County
Newsletter

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March 2012

Joint Rancho & Orange County Fund Drive

The last fund drive to benefit the Rancho Los Amigos and Orange County Post-Polio Support Groups was four years ago. Our treasuries got dangerously low. We run our groups on shoestrings. Our major expenditures are for producing our newsletters and for meeting room rentals.

IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY WE SENT OUT RETURN ENVELOPES AND QUESTIONNAIRES. WE NEED YOUR RESPONSE TO MAKE OUR SUPPORT GROUPS DO THE BEST WORK POSSIBLE.

No one is required to make a donation to receive our newsletters. However, all readers must confirm by email standard mail, or phone that they want to continue to receive our newsletters. (Note phone numbers and emails on pg 7) We regret that **readers who do not submit a confirmation will be removed from the mailing list.**

Inside this Issue

Funds and Mar 10 Meeting	Pg 1
Disabled Workers	Pg 2
Disabled Housing Probe	Pg 2-4
Medication Life	Pg 4-6
Questions for Dr. Perlman	Pg 7
Support Group Info	Pg 7
Meetings	Pg 8

Saturday March 10 Meeting

Do you have questions about:

- **WHEELCHAIRS OR POWERCHAIRS**
- **LIFTS and RAMPS ?**
- **DISABILITY ADAPTED VEHICLES ?**

On **Sat. March 10**, we are looking forward to a return visit from Omer Shalika from The Mobility Center in Orange. Omer was here last year to discuss wheelchairs and Power chairs. However, since that time, the Mobility Center has added several other products to their line of offerings which include automotive equipment and the like. If you are contemplating the purchase of a big ticket item, you should come hear and discuss what is now available.

But wait ! **That's not all** March 10 !

- **Are you at the point where you think you might need to go into an assisted living facility but are wondering if there is an **alternative**?**
- Have you ever been part of a discussion about professional **In-Home Care** and all the things these caregivers can do for you?

During the second half of our **March 10** meeting we will have a return visit from Miguel Ortin from *Evergreen Homecare*. He will explain the legal and health screening required of home health care workers and the standard basic wages. His goal is to help us determine whether or not in-home care might best suit our current needs as opposed to assisted living care.

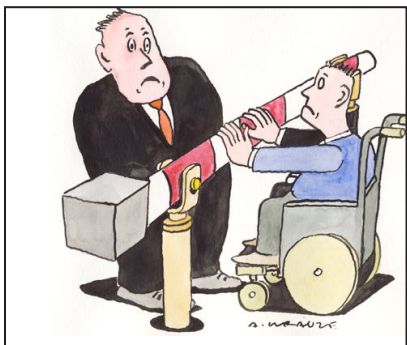
Note change meeting location pg. 8

A PUSH TO HIRE DISABLED WORKERS

The Obama administration wants to use the power of government purchasing to help increase the number of disabled people in the workforce, proposing to require federal contractors to set a goal of having disabled workers make up at least 7% of their employees.

Labor officials called the plan one of the most significant efforts to protect disabled workers' rights since the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act in 1990.

"This is really an historic moment in the civil rights movements in America" said Patricia Shiu, Director of the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.



Federal contractors and subcontractors account for nearly a quarter of the nation's workforce. The proposal could have a ripple effect across the country and help bring down the 13% unemployment rate for disabled workers, which is about 1-1/2 times the rate of those without disabilities.

There are about 200,000 federal contractors taking in approximately \$700 Billion annually in contracts.

The government long has used the leverage of federal spending to promote affirmative action in the hiring of women and minorities. The new rule would, for the first time, give that treatment to people with disabilities.

The rule would require companies to devote more resources to recruiting efforts to hire disabled workers, improve training programs and update data collection. Contractors would have to keep records showing compliance and list job openings to increase their pool of applicants.

The Labor Department will take comments on the rule for 60 days before considering final approval.

Businesses have had mixed reactions to the plan, which could be easier for larger companies to put in place than smaller ones.

Reprint – LA Times 12-9-11 (Associated Press)

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FRAUD PROBES TARGET CITY AGENCY

US Investigates whether laws to Protect the Disabled were Ignored on L.A. Housing Projects

The U.S. attorney has launched an investigation to determine whether Los Angeles city officials ignored federal laws designed to protect the disabled when building or fixing up housing.

City Attorney Carmen Trutanich and the

Community Redevelopment Agency received letters last week from the U.S. Attorney's civil fraud unit instructing them to preserve records for housing developments that have received federal funds through the city since 1988 – a time frame that covers scores of projects.

The investigation spans January 2001 to the present, the letters said. If violations are uncovered, city agencies that used federal housing funds could face financial penalties, lose out on future grants or possibly become the subject of a criminal investigation, said Bill Carter, Trutanich's senior deputy.



“The federal government is obviously taking this investigation very seriously”, he said.

Carter said he does not know what sparked the federal inquiry. But, Becky Dennison, co-director of the advocacy group known as the Los Angeles Community Action Network, said disabled rights activists have repeatedly gone to the redevelopment agency to complain that housing built or renovated with agency funds has violated provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act. In testimony and in person, activists alleged that doors were sometimes too heavy for wheelchair users to open, elevators were not working in at least one city-funded building, and managers either refused to rent to wheelchair users or did not have apartments available for them, Dennison said.

The redevelopment agency convened a task force to come up with strategies for addressing complaints two years ago, part of a settlement of a lawsuit over the downtown Alexandria Hotel, according to documents. That action alleged that disabled tenants were wrongly evicted and faced discrimination during repairs to the building.

Dennison, whose group was a plaintiff in the lawsuit, said her group made recommendations to the task force that were not accepted by redevelopment officials, including the creation of a database of all wheelchair accessible units that have been funded by the city. The recommendation “never went anywhere”, Dennison said, “and it was clear the violations were widespread.”

Christine Essel, the top executive at the redevelopment agency, referred questions to the office of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, which referred questions to the U.S. Attorney's Office, which had no comment. Madeline Janis, one of Villaraigosa's redevelopment commissioners, confirmed that her agency had received complaints from as many as 15 disabled activists over the last six years.

“I was compelled by their stories and very interested in seeing the agency develop a policy”, she said. “I don't have information whether they were legitimate or not.”

Paula Pearlman, executive director of the Disability Rights Legal Center, said activists for the disabled are frequently treated as gadflies by decision makers. She said that, based on interviews and investigations by her group, L.A. officials have not been ensuring that their redevelopment projects comply with federal law.

“People go to rent them and there are no

accessible units, or they go to rent them, and their luxury units are accessible but not the low-income housing units,” she said.

Carter said city officials are trying to determine whether the federal investigation focuses exclusively on redevelopment projects or takes in other city agencies, such as the Community Development Department and the Housing Department – both of which provide federal funds for housing projects. Either way, the letters from the Department of Justice cap a year of other investigations at City Hall, covering an array of agencies and allegations.

The FBI conducted a sting at the Department of Building and Safety, arresting two employees on suspicion of accepting bribes. Department officials launched their own inquiry and fired two additional employees, one of whom has filed an appeal.

Federal prosecutors are also investigating allegations that Advanced Development and Investment, an affordable housing developer, defrauded the city of tens of millions of dollars in city subsidies. In June, the City Ethics Commission opened its own investigation into that developer’s lobbyist, former Los Angeles City Councilman Richard Alatorre, according to documents obtained by The Times.

Meanwhile, L.A. County District Atty. Steve Cooley is probing allegations that Villaraigosa’s appointees on the housing authority board violated conflict-of-interest laws and engaged in “double dipping” --- getting reimbursed twice for the same expense.

The letters sent to Trutanich and the redevelopment agency, both dated Nov. 30, said federal prosecutors are trying to

determine whether city officials falsely told the federal Housing and Urban Development Department that they were in compliance with federal regulations requiring protections for those with disabilities.

“Obviously, this is troubling, particularly on top of all the other investigations happening in the city today,” said City Controller Wendy Grueuel.

“As someone who served at HUD and knows housing issues, these are laws that need to be followed, plain and simple”, she said.

Reprinted from article by David Zahniser, L.A. Times. 12/12/11

###

Letter to the editor

PONDER THIS!
Ask your pharmacist, too!



**DO MEDICATIONS
REALLY EXPIRE ??????**

Some reassuring and very useful info !!!!!!!
By Richard Altschuler

Does the expiration date on a bottle of a medication mean anything?

If a bottle of Tylenol, for example, says something like “Do not use after June 1998,” and it is August 2002, should you take the Tylenol? Should you discard it? Can you get hurt if you take it? Will it simply have lost its potency and do you no good?

In other words, are drug manufacturers being honest with us when they put an expiration date on their medications, or is the practice of dating just another drug industry scam, to get us to buy new medications when the old ones that purportedly have “expired” are still perfectly good?

These are the pressing questions I investigated after my mother-in-law recently said to me, “It doesn’t mean anything,” when I pointed out that the Tylenol she was about to take had “expired” 4 years and a few months ago. I was a bit mocking in my pronouncement -- feeling superior that I had noticed the chemical corpse in her cabinet -- but she was equally adamant in her reply, and is generally very sage about medical issues.

So I gave her a glass of water with the purportedly “dead” drug, of which she took 2 capsules for a pain in the upper back. About a half hour later she reported the pain seemed to have eased up a bit. I said, “You could be having a placebo effect,” not wanting to simply concede she was right about the drug, and also not actually knowing what I was talking about.

I was just happy to hear that her pain had eased, even before we had our evening cocktails and hot tub dip (we were in “Leisure World,” near Laguna Beach, California, where the hot tub is bigger than most Manhattan apartments, and “Heaven,” as generally portrayed, would be raucous by

comparison).

Upon my return to NYC and high-speed connection, I immediately scoured the medical databases and general literature for the answer to my question about drug expiration labelling. And voila, no sooner than I could say “Screwed again by the pharmaceutical industry,” I had my answer.

Here are the simple facts:

First, the expiration date, required by law in the United States, beginning in 1979, specifies only the date the manufacturer guarantees the full potency and safety of the drug -- it does not mean how long the drug is actually “good” or safe to use.

Second, medical authorities uniformly say it is safe to take drugs past their expiration date -- no matter how “expired” the drugs purportedly are. Except for possibly the rarest of exceptions, you won’t get hurt and you certainly won’t get killed. Studies show that expired drugs may lose some of their potency over time, from as little as 5% or less to 50% or more (though usually much less than the latter). Even 10 years after the “expiration date,” most drugs have a good deal of their original potency.

One of the largest studies ever conducted that supports the above points about “expired drug” labelling was done by the US military 15 years ago, according to a feature story in the Wall Street Journal (March 29, 2000), reported by Laurie P. Cohen.

The military was sitting on a \$1 billion stockpile of drugs and facing the daunting process of destroying and replacing its supply every 2 to 3 years, so it began a testing program to see if it could extend the life of its inventory.

The testing, conducted by the US Food

and Drug Administration (FDA), ultimately covered more than 100 drugs, prescription and over-the-counter.

The results showed, about 90% of them were safe and effective as far as 15 years past their expiration date.

In light of these results, a former director of the testing program, Francis Flaherty, said he concluded that expiration dates put on by manufacturers typically have no bearing on whether a drug is usable for longer.

Mr. Flaherty noted that a drug maker is required to prove only that a drug is still good on whatever expiration date the company chooses to set. The expiration date doesn't mean, or even suggest, that the drug will stop being effective after that, nor that it will become harmful.

"Manufacturers put expiration dates on for marketing, rather than scientific, reasons," said Mr. Flaherty, a pharmacist at the FDA until his retirement in 1999.

"It's not profitable for them to have products on a shelf for 10 years. They want turnover."

The FDA cautioned there isn't enough evidence from the program, which is weighted toward drugs used during combat, to conclude most drugs in consumers' medicine cabinets are potent beyond the expiration date.

Joel Davis, however, a former FDA expiration-date compliance chief, said that with a handful of exceptions -- notably nitroglycerin, insulin, and some liquid antibiotics -- most drugs are probably as durable as those the agency has tested for the military.

"Most drugs degrade very slowly," he said. "In all likelihood, you can take a product you have at home and keep it for many years."

Consider aspirin. Bayer AG puts 2-year or 3-year dates on aspirin and says that it should be discarded after that.

However, Chris Allen, a vice president at the Bayer unit that makes aspirin, said the dating is "pretty conservative"; when Bayer has tested 4-year-old aspirin, it remained 100% effective, he said. So why doesn't Bayer set a 4-year expiration date? Because the company often changes packaging, and it undertakes "continuous improvement programs," Mr. Allen said.

Each change triggers a need for more expiration-date testing, and testing each time for a 4-year life would be impractical. Bayer has never tested aspirin beyond 4 years, Mr. Allen said. But Jens Carstensen has.

Dr. Carstensen, professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin's pharmacy school, who wrote what is considered the main text on drug stability, said,

"I did a study of different aspirins, and after 5 years, Bayer was still excellent. Aspirin, if made correctly, is very stable.

Okay, I concede. My mother-in-law was right, once again. And I was wrong, once again, and with a wiseacre attitude to boot. Sorry, mom.

Now I think I'll take a swig of the 10-year dead package of Alka Seltzer in my medicine chest to ease the nausea I'm feeling from calculating how many billions of dollars the pharmaceutical industry bilks out of unknowing consumers every year who discard perfectly good drugs and buy new ones because they trust the industry's "expiration date labelling."

###



What would you like to ask the director of the UCLA post-polio clinic?

Dr. Perlman is asking our help to prepare her presentation to us on May 20th. Please think about what topics you would like hear and what you would like to ask her. Then email Priscilla at prisofoc@aol.com or call her at 714-968-1675

How to contact Rancho Support Group

The Rancho Los Amigos Post-Polio Newsletter is published as a joint venture with the Polio Survivors Association.

For additional information please call Richard at **562-862-4508**

Or email us:
Rancho PPSG@hotmail.com



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Agenda ideas for PPSG of OC?

Please call Aleta at 949-559-7102 or email Priscilla at prisofoc@aol.com

Don't Forget!

**The March and May OC meetings will be at the Carpenters' Hall
1916 W Chapman Ave
Orange**

Across the Street from
The McDonalds.



Special thanks all who have **donated** so generously to both support groups. There are too many donors to list. Please write checks to **Polio Survivors Association** and during the fund drive please mail them to **Polio Survivors Association, 12720 La Reina Avenue, Downey, CA, 90242**. All fund received will be evenly divided between the Rancho and Orange County Post Polio Support Groups.

Disclaimer: Information provided in our newsletters and at our meetings is provided by the PPSG of OC and the Rancho Los Amigos Support Group solely as information. It is not to be taken as an endorsement of any product, individual, medication, or treatment. If you have personal medical problems, please consult a physician knowledgeable in the late effects of Polio. Unless otherwise stated, the articles in this newsletter may be reprinted, provided that they are reproduced in their entirety and that the author, the original source, and the PPSG of OC and/or the Rancho Los Amigos Support Group are acknowledged in full. Copyrighted articles require prior



Rancho Los Amigos Meeting

Future Rancho SG Meetings

Contact Rancho Group for Meeting Info.



Orange County Meeting

SATURDAY, March 10, 2012

Mobility Aids & In-Home Care.

See Page 1 for details

NOTE CHANGED

MEETING LOCATION IN MAP BELOW

Future PPSG of OC Meetings

- **No OC meeting in April**
- **SUNDAY May 20th 2pm - 4pm**
Dr. Perlman from UCLA on current PPS research and care.
See Map Below!
MEETING at 1916 W Chapman Orange
- **No OC meeting in June**
- **Saturday, July 14, 2pm - 4pm Indoor Picnic and Sharing**
- **No OC meeting in August**
- **September 8 - HICAP on Medicare changes.**

Due to remodeling work in Villa Park our March and May Meetings will be at the Carpenters' Hall at **1916 W. Chapman, Orange.** Park behind front building. Enter rear doors.

N

NOT TO SCALE

