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Health Impacts of State and Local Ballot Propositions

San Francisco, CA – Jim Illig, President of the San Francisco Health Commission, has announced the Health Commission’s intention to consider the health impacts of the upcoming state and local ballot initiatives during their regularly scheduled meeting on October 7, 101 Grove St., Room 300 beginning at 4 p.m..

“The people of San Francisco deserve to know the implications for public health of these initiatives, pro and con, before they vote on November 4th, observed Illig. “We will hear from our health policy analysts and have a frank discussion about the health-related items on the ballot.”

The seven-member San Francisco Health Commission is appointed by the Mayor and serves as the City’s health-related governing and policy body. This is the first year that the Health Commission has asked for a health impact analysis of the ballot initiatives.

“We want to bring these issues before the public,” Illig said. “As a Commission, one of our important roles is to educate the public about issues that affect the community’s health.”

Among the 12 state and 22 local propositions, voters will be asked to cast a vote on 12 health-related items.

“There are important arguments on both sides of each ballot initiative and we owe it to the public to air these items within a thoughtful, deliberative process and in full view of the people we serve,” Illig noted.

A number of the ballot items will require voters to commit future resources such as local Proposition A, the \$877 million San Francisco General Hospital bond. Others, such as State Proposition 5, have the potential to bring as much as \$13.8 million to San Francisco for substance abuse treatment. Voters will also decide whether to make substantive changes to health policies such as State Proposition 4 that will require parental notification prior to a minor receiving an abortion. Local initiatives include proposals to change enforcement of prostitution laws, establish a 9-1-1 tax and budget setasides for affordable housing and substance abuse treatment, and increase the General Fund that supports health and human services.

“The mission of the Department of Public Health is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans. We believe this public forum is essential to our duty of keeping the public informed about political issues that have significant health-related impacts,” Illig concluded.

The Commission will also discuss the recommendations of St. Luke’s Blue Ribbon panel and the CPMC Board’s approval of the future plans for St. Luke’s Hospital.

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