



Palo Alto Rotary Pinion

Weekly Newsletter

Date May 4, 2009

Reporter: GEOFF ZIMAN

Editor: NICK NICHOLS

OPENERS

MIKE COUCH started the meeting at 12:15PM. RICK RAYBIN led the Pledge of Allegiance.

VISITORS & GUESTS

ED DANGLER welcomed our guests:

Visiting Rotarians: Michael Fleishman from Suttons Bay, MI, a former Palo Alto resident

Rotarians with Guests: BETSY BECHTEL introduced Katie Seedman from Borel Bank; TODD LEWIS introduced Bruce Gee.

OPENING REMARKS

DIANA DIAMOND, previewed the May 19 ballot measures. Public opinion is polarized on the measures with Democrats advocating passage and Republicans opposing all ballot measures. Diana offered she is in the middle on these and recommended all to pay attention to election editorial analysis and KQED's Michael Krasny. Diana concluded that legislators should not be paid until California's budget is balanced.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MIKE reminded us that May is Rotary endowment month and encouraged contributions. We need to get 100% club participation. MIKE also mentioned May 13 is the Avenues of Service meeting and May 16 is the District Assembly meeting.

MIKE thanked our greeters, cashier, ePinion reporter and others helping to produce today's meeting.

PRESIDENT'S CLUB CONTRIBUTIONS

JUDITH STEINER joined as a prospective grandmother and mentioned a successful fundraiser for Indian schools recently held at TONY CARRASCO'S house.

JOHN O'KEEFE contributed in honor of BOB BULMORE winning the CA Seniors tennis championship.

MIKE COUCH joined in honor of his 4th grandchild.

JOYCE CUSICK joined in honor of SALLY TOMLINSON'S green work.

CASH ALAEE confirmed there would be a Spring Garden party at MIKE COUCH'S Los Altos Hills house on June 7.

NEW (RETURNING) MEMBER

MIKE warmly welcomed CHARLES CHENG, just back from Shanghai, as a returning member.

PROGRAM

JANE BOOKER introduced Dr. Harold Luft, Executive Director of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute, and author of "Total Cure", a book outlining possible solutions for health care reform.

Dr. Luft started by saying the unfunded liability of Medicare is \$40 trillion and climbing. The US healthcare system is broken, but other more successful systems can't easily be transplanted here. Reason: All US health care expenses represent someone's income and can't be easily changed.

What do we really need?

1. Hospitalization coverage without patient payment. "Once you're horizontal, you can't negotiate."
2. Chronic illness coverage. Associated medical expenses for chronic illness are almost always out of individual's control.

Other health care costs are more discretionary and are predictable. They could be prepaid by patients or through a universal coverage pool. Participants would have a health care services credit card.

A redesigned system could potentially be more profitable to practitioners and more affordable for patients.

Q: Your proposed system seems to favor the wealthy. What about low-income patients?

A: There would be income-based subsidies

Q: What are most effective criticisms of your proposed system?

A: It's perceived as too complex. People should read my book again. Need to create a conceptual model.

Q: How is your proposal being received in Washington?

A: Obama is trying to get there. Most discussion is around single payer systems. Need to recast health care questions for Washington debate. Ted Kennedy's illness and legacy are helping.

Q: How do you explain health care premiums steep annual increases?

A: Development of new techniques and particularly imaging technology.

More information is available at www.securechoice.info.

MIKE thanked Dr. Luft for a good presentation and announced a dictionary will be presented in his honor to Green Oaks Academy.

Meeting adjourned.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

[Palo Alto Rotary - Speakers Schedule](#)

May 11 – Dr. Robert Sapolsky – "Stress and the Brain"

May 18 – Colonel Joe Felter – "The Origins of Terrorism and Insurgency"

May 25 – Dark – Memorial Day Observed

NEARBY MEETING PLACES:

[Palo Alto Rotary - Meeting Information](#)