



# Care Giver Extra January 2010

United Domestic Workers of America [www.udwa.org](http://www.udwa.org)



## UDW to March for California's Future

Members of UDW, other California labor unions, and a host of civil rights, religious and community organizations will participate in one of the largest mobilizations in our state's history this spring.

Beginning in early March in Bakersfield, we will "march for California's future" through the Central Valley all the way to Sacramento, where we will hold a massive rally in late April at the State Capitol. The march is designed to focus public attention on the need to reform our state's broken budget process and to ensure that education, health care, fire and police protection and other vital public services are adequately funded.

Since we have one of the largest memberships in the Central Valley of any union in the state, UDW will be a key organization in the march. UDW members and others will participate in activities including media and public outreach, organizing, and voter registration in the communities through which the march will go. Please contact your local UDW office or check our Web site: [www.udwa.org](http://www.udwa.org).

## The President's Report

### 2010 Will Bring Challenges and Opportunities



As you know, we are facing yet another attack by Gov. Schwarzenegger on IHSS. Ever since he has been in office, he has targeted IHSS for destruction.

This year, he's actually come up with two options. If he does not get \$7 billion in funds from the federal government, he wants to completely eliminate the program. If he does by chance get the money from Washington, he will only cut IHSS by 90 percent. What a wonderful choice! At the same time, we are just beginning to feel the effects of last summer's disastrous budget agreement, which created a new maze of bureaucratic red tape and onerous "anti-fraud"

requirements designed to discourage participation in IHSS and to brand recipients and providers as "fraud criminals."

Under the new rules, IHSS consumers will have to be fingerprinted. Providers will have to submit to background checks. New provider enrollment forms will have to be filled out. All providers will have to attend a mandatory orientation which includes a video that looks more like "America's Most Wanted" than a caregiver orientation.

To make matters worse, despite the state's budget crisis, counties have been given millions of dollars to create so-called "anti-fraud task forces" to fight "widespread" IHSS fraud. Sacramento County created such a task force last year. The results so far are underwhelming. Out of 42,000 IHSS recipients in Sacramento County, the task force has uncovered 57 "dubious" time sheets and 19 cases of fraud. Not exactly an "epidemic"!

Another challenge: Because of inflexible deadlines established by the state and the failure of the Department of Social Services to provide counties with the information and instructions needed to meet those deadlines, the enrollment process for new IHSS recipients and providers is in a state of turmoil. *(For up-to-date information on the new IHSS requirements, contact your UDW office or check out our Web site: [www.udwa.org](http://www.udwa.org).)*

Despite all this, I remain optimistic that 2010 will be a year of opportunity for UDW. Thanks to the series of meetings we held last year with Democratic legislators who voted in favor of cuts to IHSS in July, I'm confident they got the message that those votes were unacceptable and our members will be holding them more accountable this year. Therefore, I'm hopeful that all Democrats will stand up for IHSS this year and fight further cuts.

I expect us to continue our success in the courtroom, where Federal judges last year blocked proposed program and provider salary cuts in IHSS because they may violate Federal laws. We are working closely with representatives from other consumer and provider organizations to develop more legal challenges in the coming months.

At the same time, UDW will be joining with other unions, with civil rights, religious and community groups, and with dozens of other organizations this spring on a massive campaign to Fight for California's Future, including a march from Bakersfield to the State Capitol in Sacramento. *(There's more about this elsewhere in this issue of Caregiver Extra. Watch for further information in the coming weeks.)* Through this statewide mobilization, we will demand that important public services like health care, fire and police protection, and education are adequately funded in California.

Finally, elections for your UDW statewide officers and for delegates to this summer's AFSCME International Convention will be held in the coming months. I encourage all of you to read the election information you'll be receiving in the mail shortly and to vote. Remember, this is YOUR union.

In Solidarity,

**Laura M. Reyes, President**

## **A Message from the Executive Director**

### **2009: A Year of Moving Forward and Fighting Back**

First, I want to thank the members and staff of UDW, the clients we serve, and our friends and community supporters for sticking with us in 2009, one of the most challenging years in our union's history.

Many of our proudest achievements last year involved standing up to Governor Schwarzenegger and his right-wing allies in the Legislature, in the courts, and in the streets.

- Perhaps our union's all-time high-water mark was the huge rally we held in Los Angeles in May to protest cuts in IHSS. Thousands of UDW members from as far away as Butte, Placer and El Dorado Counties marched and rallied that day. I was especially proud that--in a city and a county that we do not represent--the thousands of green shirts vastly outnumbered the purple shirts. It was a great day for UDW!
- Earlier last year, the "green wave" rolled into Sacramento as UDW members from as far away as Orange and Riverside Counties rallied in front of the State Capitol to defend IHSS.
- In October, we were at the Federal Courthouse in Oakland, where a Federal court judge issued a temporary order blocking the governor from implementing major cuts in IHSS. Working with other unions, the IHSS Coalition and the disability rights community, UDW used legal action to block several Schwarzenegger initiatives.
- Unfortunately, a number of Democratic state legislators voted in July to support last year's IHSS cuts. And UDW called them out on it. In a series of "accountability" meetings up and down the state, we had these legislators stand before our members and explain why they voted to cut IHSS.
- During 2009, our members sent some 6,000 e-mail messages to their legislators, using the "E-Activist" section of our UDW Web site.

While it may seem that we spent all our time last year fighting the governor, UDW also had a number of other notable achievements. For example:

- We held a highly productive Constitutional Convention in Anaheim, resulting in further progress toward making UDW a truly member-driven union.
- After a nearly two-year struggle, UDW obtained a new contract with San Diego County. In addition to a raise for providers, the contract puts administration of provider healthcare benefits in the hands of UDW, not the county. We also reached tentative contract agreements in Placer and Kern Counties that are up for member ratification this year.
- In January, members and staff from throughout the state participated in UDW's first statewide bargaining conference in Pomona, designed to help UDW increase membership activism, education and growth and to obtain better contracts for our members.
- We held a training conference for members seeking appointment as "shop stewards" in the three UDW counties--Butte, Riverside, and Santa Barbara that have ADDUS contracts.
- UDW was given a second AFSCME International Vice President position as a result of our growth in membership. We are now the largest AFSCME affiliate in California.

To summarize, 2009 was the year that UDW emerged in Sacramento and in our counties as a strong, effective "fighting" union willing to do whatever it takes to serve and protect IHSS homecare providers and those for whom we care.

In Solidarity,  
**Doug Moore**

## Coming Soon! The New UDW Web Site

Watch for the launch of our new UDW Web Site: [www.udwa.org](http://www.udwa.org) in the coming weeks. The new, more colorful, and more interactive site will provide the latest news about your union, your contracts, and the IHSS program. It will also give you a greater opportunity to discuss important UDW issues online with your union brothers and sisters and to contact your state and local public officials to support IHSS.

## Notes from the Field: 2009 Highlights

**Butte County:** UDW staff successfully represented members at several ADDUS hearings in the county. In one case, we proved at an unemployment benefits hearing that a member was not available for work. Because of this, instead of being liable for reimbursing several weeks of unemployment benefits, the provider only had to pay one week's reimbursement.

**El Dorado County:** Member activism improved in El Dorado County in 2009 and a member survey authorized last year will help bring about even greater member participation and more successful meetings in 2010. In addition, UDW successfully represented several clients and providers at IHSS eligibility hearings.

**Kern County:** After a long and difficult struggle, UDW was able to obtain a tentative contract that maintains wages at their current level, despite threats by County Supervisors to roll back wages. This was due in large measure to providers' face-to-face meetings with Supervisors as well as letters and phone calls. Thanks to a series of UDW advocacy workshops and meetings, Kern County providers have been contesting assessments and winning back hours that were unfairly taken away from their clients. Also, UDW was a key player in convincing Congressman Bob Costa to switch his vote from NO to YES on health care reform.

**Merced County:** Merced County saw a marked increase in member activism and meeting turnout in 2009, as well as an increase in the number of chapter committees. Three busloads of members, clients and their families came from Merced to Los Angeles to participate in the historic May 22 march and rally at the State Office Building. Our members also provided strong support for the May homecare rally at the State Capitol in Sacramento and at the October rally at the Federal Courthouse in Oakland.

**Orange County:** Orange County members are *stepping up, networking, and taking action*. During the fall, we held "accountability meetings" with state legislators from our county to have them explain why they voted for IHSS cuts last year. We were active participants in a November citizenship forum where we helped 25 UDW members begin the process of becoming U.S. citizens. We initiated Area Information Meetings to provide our members with important information about our union and IHSS, and Advocacy Workshops to help them advocate for their clients more effectively. Our success rate for 2009 in helping our members and their clients was 90 percent.

**Placer County:** Throughout 2009, UDW members in Placer County worked diligently to fight proposed cuts in the IHSS program. Members held two Emergency Membership Meetings and an Area Informational Meeting to get the word out about the cuts. Our members met with Assembly Members Roger Niello and Ted Gaines to discuss the program. They participated in UDW rallies and marches across the state. Members wrote heartfelt stories about their clients and the importance of IHSS in their lives. Some were interviewed by the media. More than 200 members attended our Member Appreciation BBQ in Rocklin in August and our Year End Party in Roseville in December. In addition, we held a successful blitz to get more members to participate in the AFSCME PEOPLE program.

**Riverside County:** Thanks to a series of Advocacy Workshops, which taught members how to advocate for clients through their union, UDW had a success rate of 95 percent in helping our members and their clients maintain their current hours or obtain more IHSS services to improve the quality of their lives. One example is Joanne Johnson of Lake Elsinore, a single mother who, prior to attending our workshops, was only receiving pay for 97.5 hours of care for her mentally disabled daughter. With the help of a UDW representative, Joanne took her case to a hearing and had her hours increased to 271.6 per month; this allowed her to quit her second job and concentrate on caring for her daughter. She said she would not have had the courage to participate in a hearing alone and is grateful to UDW for its support.

**San Diego County:** An 18-month intensive bargaining campaign with the Public Authority and Board of Supervisors, including large demonstrations, candlelight vigils, and a number of other union actions, resulted in a new contract that will run through the end of 2011. The contract includes a salary increase and a Union Health Care Trust Fund to allow UDW--not the County--to administer health care benefits for the first time. Last year UDW San Diego County created a broad-based coalition of community, religious and labor organizations to help support IHSS and other health and social service programs in the county. In addition, we played a key role in getting an initiative requiring term limits for County Supervisors placed on the ballot for this June's election.

**San Luis Obispo County:** The County Board of Supervisors began contract negotiations with UDW by proposing to roll back our wages to \$8.50 an hour. Fortunately, after several months of tough bargaining, we were able to maintain the current wage level in the new contract. In addition, the county agreed to provide funding for hand sanitizer, latex gloves and other sanitary supplies for providers. Members also mobilized to protest proposed cuts in IHSS at the state level. We demonstrated for more than a week in front of the office of State Assembly Member Sam Blakeslee. Members involved in the demonstrations were quoted in local newspapers, on television and in online blogs.

**Santa Barbara County:** Our members in Santa Barbara County have strongly supported UDW's statewide protests of IHSS budget cuts, including participating in the huge Los Angeles rally in May and testifying at the State Legislature in Sacramento. At the county level, UDW has helped Santa Barbara providers fight to obtain the hours to which they are entitled and restore hours unfairly reduced. We've also reached out to the community in a number of ways, from supporting local CLC's and raising funds for

local charities to building a float and participating in the annual Elks Parade in Santa Maria.

**Stanislaus County:** We've seen tremendous growth in member participation and activism during 2009. One example: Our chapter meeting in April drew about 70 providers and clients; more than 300 (our first quorum) attended our July chapter meeting. We nearly doubled our workload assisting our members at hearings. We increased our delegation at the Stanislaus County CLC from one to eight delegates. Hundreds of our members participated in UDW rallies in Los Angeles, Sacramento and Oakland. And we had the highest participation of any union in a Stanislaus CLC rally protesting corporate tax breaks.

## New UDW Dental Plan Available to Members, Families

Members, watch your mailboxes for great news about a new member benefit: A Dental Plan for you and your families. Dental Health Services is mailing information about this exciting new dental plan to all UDW members beginning in February.

Here are some details about this new voluntary benefit:

You purchase the plan on your own. You are responsible for the monthly premium. Payment options include checking/savings automatic withdraw or credit card charge on a monthly basis. You can also prepay for an entire year by paying by check, money order or credit card.

Not only does the plan offer low out-of-pocket expenses on procedures, it also features:

- No waiting period to get services
- No annual maximums
- No copayments for preventative services
- No deductibles
- Services available at any DHS participating dental office location. To do a search of the network please visit [www.udwdental.com](http://www.udwdental.com)

The UDW Voluntary Dental Plan is available to all union members and their dependents. If you currently have a dental plan through the union that does not cover your children or spouse, you can now enroll just your dependents.

You can join the dental plan by telephone at: 877.890.7023, online: [www.udwdental.com](http://www.udwdental.com), or by completing the application which you will receive in the mail.

**Call DHS toll-free at: 877.890.7023 if you have any questions.**

## UDW Releases State Budget Analysis

UDW has compiled a detailed analysis of the impact the 2010-2011 state budget proposed by Gov. Schwarzenegger will have on IHSS providers and consumers. The document also describes the impact of the 2009-2010 budget cuts and new requirements for providers and consumers. In addition, it tracks the various lawsuits filed by UDW and others to stop the IHSS cuts.

For further information, go to the UDW Web site: <http://www.udwa.org>, click on "**Budget Detail and More Information**", and then click on the "**Jan. 26**" link. For a copy, contact Tranisha Rabb in the UDW Sacramento Office, at 916-554-0931 or [trabb@udwa.org](mailto:trabb@udwa.org).

## Bargaining Update

Here's the latest update on UDW contract negotiations:

- **ADDUS (Butte, Riverside and Santa Barbara):** Currently in negotiations.
- **El Dorado:** Bargaining completed. Currently in ratification process.
- **San Luis Obispo:** Ratification finalized and now waiting for Board approval.
- **Kern:** Bargaining completed. Currently in ratification process.
- **Placer:** Bargaining completed. Currently in ratification process.

For more information, check out the County Page for your county on the UDW Web site: [www.udwa.org](http://www.udwa.org) or contact your local UDW office.

**SEE PAGE 6 FOR EXCITING NEWS ABOUT A NEW  
UDW DENTAL PLAN FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY**