

# Watch Words

Donald W. Ingwerson,  
Committee on Publication

## Keeping up with Legislation

*Committees on Publication for Southern California and Northern California attend public hearings in Sacramento*



Sacramento Capitol - Photo illustrated by Allie Caulfield

## Church Workshops

*The Committee is again available to conduct workshops at churches throughout Southern California. The focus of the workshops is on "Explaining Christian Science to the Public" and offers an opportunity for everyone to participate. If your church is interested in hosting one of these events — and would be willing to include other area churches — call or email the office to set up a time.*

Don Ingwerson

On Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, Eric Nelson, Northern California Committee on Publication, and I visited legislative staff members in Sacramento and attended the Essential Benefit Board public hearing. Six legislative staff members who have been helpful with health care items in the past were once again contacted about the present status of health care legislation. Each contact was helpful and aided with planning next steps in obtaining the concept of spiritual care as part of California legislation.

During the public hearing section of the Essential Benefit Board meeting, there were an estimated 50 individuals waiting to present remarks or make requests. Their remarks, suggestions, and requests were varied and covered a broad range of subjects and the individuals represented most geographical areas of the state. Most testifiers were requesting to have some form of consideration in the essential Health Benefits List in the Affordable Health Care Act.

The next public hearing is scheduled for February 21<sup>st</sup>. Eric and I are planning on being present for this meeting. To see the 2012 Health Benefit Exchange Board Meeting Calendar, go to the Benefit Exchange Board meetings' [website](#).

**PLEASE DUPLICATE WATCHWORDS AND SHARE WITH YOUR MEMBERS**

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## *From the Federal Office*

There is a great amount of information on the [Federal Committee office web site](#) and I encourage you to peruse it. The article below on insurance is just one of the many items that are presented on this web site. The comments from readers and the answers from the Federal office that follow this article are very informative.

### **Insurance Plans Covering Christian Science Care**

Various federal, state, and private health insurance plans provide for the reimbursement of Christian Science nursing care and practitioner treatment. Additionally, 17 Christian Science nursing facilities across the country are Medicare providers, which means individuals who have Medicare Part A can receive reimbursement at those facilities.

Christian Science services qualify as tax-deductible medical expenses under Section 213(d) of the IRS code. Because of this, health savings accounts (HSAs) or flexible spending accounts (FSAs) can be used for Christian Science care.

Below you can find a **sampling of insurance plans** we have on record that accommodate Christian Science care:

- **Federal Government and Civilian Employee and Military and Dependents plans**
- **State Employee plans**
- **Private and Individual plans**
- **College/University student plans**

If you are aware of other plans we haven't listed, please let the Federal Committee office know. These plans may also be of use if you'd like to ask your employer or insurance provider to consider covering Christian Science care in the future.

If you encounter difficulties filing a claim for Christian Science care and treatment with any of these insurance providers, please be in touch with the Federal Committee office.

Federal Committee office e-mail <[federal@csps.com](mailto:federal@csps.com)>

## ***Recent Committee Activity***

### ***Media visits:***

- ▶ San Clemente Times
- ▶ The Orange County Register
- ▶ Farandula USA
- ▶ Laguna Niguel News (2)
- ▶ Los Angeles Times
- ▶ Newport Beach Independent
- ▶ UCLA G'Wish program
- ▶ Brea La Habra Star-Progress
- ▶ Laguna Beach Independent

### ***Legislative face to face:***

- ▶ David Panush, Government Relations – Health Benefit Exchange Board
- ▶ Tim Valderrama, Chief of Staff – Senator Hernandez
- ▶ Andrew Langley, Legislative Director – Senator McLeod
- ▶ Alison Merrilees, Senior Legislative Assistant – Senator Leno
- ▶ Kristy Wiese, Lobbyist – Nielsen, Merksamer

***Readership of the blog*** – The Committee on Publication blog at [www.csinsocal.com](http://www.csinsocal.com) continues to maintain a strong readership. We had approximately 2500 visits to the blog in January, up from 2000 in December. We also saw an increase in new readers in January. Let me know what you think of the blog – I enjoy reading your comments!

*In the last couple of months, we have published articles in Blogcritics, the Laguna Beach Patch, and The Desert Sun blog. These articles have been picked up by various Patch sites in surrounding areas as well as other internet sites, which has led to a significant increase in readership. Of the eight recently published articles, the article that was republished the most was "Bringing Spirituality to Medicine," which was published a total of 16 times.*

### ***Bringing Spirituality to Medicine***

***by Don Ingwerson***

*Article first published on [Blogcritics](#)*

Two years ago a friend mentioned that her daughter was appointed as a chaplain in a near by hospital. I remember at the time contacting her and asking if any materials were needed to share with patients. I don't recall her response, but I got the sense from her that religious activities were not an integral part of the hospital's operation. Instead, they were more of a support service – available upon call with a small office and maybe a small room for prayer. Wow, did I reach the wrong conclusion!

Recently, there has been much consideration given to the relationship between religion, spirituality, and health. Like all new areas of development, some wish to move forward with little supportive evidence while others wish to only refine what might be acceptable in their own field. However, a new breath of fresh air is blowing and individuals from all sides of this issue – connecting religion, spirit, and health – are looking into methods to treat the whole man.

Treating the whole man is what the [GWish](#) and the John Templeton Foundation are working toward. Gwish, or George Washington University's Institute for Spirituality and Health, is currently

overseeing a National Spiritual Care Demonstration Project at nine academic medical centers – with one at UCLA in Los Angeles, California. These pilot sites are testing and developing tools that may be used to make judgments about quality of care while applying alternative and traditional western medicine in healing the whole man. According to the Wall Street Journal, [John Templeton Foundation](#), which funds research into such issues that intersect science and spirituality, recently awarded a three-year, \$3 million grant to the New York-based [Health Care Chaplaincy](#). This organization will use this grant to select and fund half a dozen national research projects to advance and test models for chaplaincy practice, especially in palliative care for the most seriously ill patients.

Quality of care is not the only concern for hospitals, though. With present health care costs continually rising, hospital administrators, doctors, and nurses are trying to find ways to contain expenses while still providing programs that are beneficial to the patient. Adding new programs in an already expensive arena means that the chaplaincy program will need to provide solid evidence of its benefits. "There is research to support that what chaplains do helps, but we really need to see more of it," stated Emanuel Chirico, Chief executive of apparel maker PVH Corp, and trustee at the Health Care Chaplaincy.

The discussion of care and treating the whole man is becoming more vocal in the medical arena, which is leading to more receptivity toward chaplain work and spirituality in hospitals. "Physicians, meanwhile, need to stop focusing solely on medical cures and consider the needs of the "whole person," says [Linda Lee](#), clinical director of the integrative medicine and digestive center at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine."

This documented, well financed, and professionally led effort by GWish to focus on the

whole man through the development of a team approach has great potential as it is designed to use the best practices in the spiritual and medical fields. Spiritual leader Mary Baker Eddy wrote in the 1800's, "The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible to God, – a spiritual understanding of Him, an unselfed love....Prayer, watching, and working, combined with self-immolation, are God's gracious means for accomplishing whatever has successfully done for the Christianization and health of mankind."

Having served as a visiting chaplain in California institutions and feeling isolated from the institution's leadership, I can appreciate the foundation this pilot program will give for the development of a more balanced use of alternative medicines as well as traditional western medicine. According to studies, the most commonly used alternative is prayer. Having a well organized chaplaincy program integrated into the health team can allow for a view with consideration of the whole man – which includes spiritual aspects – in treating health concerns.

*It shall be the duty of the Committee on Publication to correct in a Christian manner impositions on the public in regard to Christian Science, injustices done Mrs. Eddy or members of this Church by the daily press, by periodicals or circulated literature of any sort. This Committee on Publication shall be responsible for correcting or having corrected a false newspaper article which has not been replied to by other Scientists, or which has been forwarded to this Committee for the purpose of having him reply to it.*

Article XXXIII, Section 2, Church Manual of The First Church of Christ, Scientist