

**Feb. 6, 2015  
Issue #12**

## **Upcoming Legislative Hearings of Interest to Cities**

The Legislature's bill introduction deadline is fast approaching on Friday, Feb. 27 and then legislative policy committees will begin to hold hearings on bills. There are also a number of oversight and informational hearings on a variety of policy areas of interest to cities.  
*For more, see Page 2.*



## **California City Solutions: Visalia Reduces Health Care Cost by Providing Free Clinic for Employees**

*This story is part of an ongoing series featuring Helen Putnam Award entries. The 2014 entries are available on the League's website as a resource for cities in a searchable database called [California City Solutions](#). The City of Visalia's Employee Health and Wellness Clinic was submitted in 2014 for the Internal Administration award category. For more, see Page 2.*



## **Register for the Feb. 27 Municipal Law Institute's Symposium**

The [2015 Municipal Law Institute Symposium](#) will be held on Feb. 27 and presented by the Municipal Law Institute of the League of California Cities® and the Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law. This symposium is approved for five and a half hours of MCLE credits.  
*For more, see Page 4.*

Here are a number of hearings of interest to cities:

**Feb. 10**

- **Joint Hearing of the Assembly Public Safety Committee and Senate Public Safety Committee**, 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1:30-3:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 4203
  - Informational Hearing on Law Enforcement and Community Trust in California
- **Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife**, 9:30 a.m., State Capitol, Room 437
  - Informational and Oversight Hearing on Proposition 1, Water Bond, Implementation

**Feb. 11**

- **Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy**, 9 a.m., State Capitol, Room 444
  - Informational Hearing on an Overview of the California Economy

**Feb. 12**

- **Senate on Budget and Fiscal Review**, 10 a.m., State Capitol, Room 4203
  - Oversight Hearing on Local and State Water Funding Relationships

**Feb. 17**

- **Senate Committee on Judiciary**, 2:30 p.m. or upon adjournment of Floor Session, State Capitol, Room 4203
  - Oversight Hearing on Drones — Is California Law Ready?
- **Senate Joint Hearing of the Transportation and Housing and Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 2 on Resources, Environmental Protection, Energy and Transportation**, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 4203
  - Informational Hearing on Transportation Funding

**Feb. 20**

- **Joint Hearing of the Assembly Elections and Redistricting Committee and Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee**, 10 a.m., Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Metro Board Meeting, third floor
  - Oversight Hearing on Los Angeles County Voter Turnout

**March 4:**

- **Joint Hearing of the Assembly Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security and Senate Public Employees and Retirement Committees**, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 3191
  - Informational Hearing on Orientation and Report of the California Actuarial Advisory Panel

Before opening what is believed to be California's first city-run employee health clinic, Visalia's employee health care cost roughly as much as fire protection for its citizens.

The clinic has helped Visalia begin stemming the tide of growing costs, saving about \$32,000 annually, while improving employee morale.

The clinic idea grew in response to factors it found were contributing to increased health care costs, including maintenance of prescribed medical treatments and regular health care office visits.

Employees also found it difficult to schedule timely appointments with their doctors and, once they arrived at their doctors' offices, time spent in the waiting room took away from time on the job.

Recognizing that good overall health makes for a productive work force, the Visalia City Council authorized the city to partner with a local health care provider to develop an on-site clinic for all those on the city's health plan.

Visalia, which is self-insured, faces health care costs about \$10 million annually. It has an a standing agreement with its bargaining units that health care costs will be shared equally between the city and its employees, allowing employees to receive quality care at a relatively low cost.

Open four hours per day, five days per week, the [city of Visalia's Health and Wellness Clinic](#) provides walk-in and appointment health services, wellness plans and immunization to its 579 employees, 150 retired staff and their 1,600 related dependents providing health services, wellness plans and more recently, immunizations.

The clinic also offers health and nutrition services 40 hours per week, with two nutrition and health counselors available.

The physician's level of care extends beyond patient appointments. Clinic staff members follow up with each patient after their visit to determine if their needs were met or if they have further health concerns. Additionally, the clinic helps schedule appointments for referrals services outside the clinic if needed.

With a relatively small number of clients, the clinic staff is able to build a closer relationship with city employees and patients, building trust and a willingness by patients to address potentially serious and chronic health issues that may have otherwise gone undetected.

Patients do not pay co-payments or deductibles for the medical care provided at the clinic. Commonly prescribed and generic brand medications, if available, are issued at no charge. This helps reduce out-of-pocket costs for the employee while encouraging the patient's long-term commitment to good health.

Employees can view healthy meal suggestions, changes to the clinic's schedule and upcoming events by following the [City of Visalia Health and Wellness Clinic Facebook page](#). Some of the events include an organization-wide Biggest Loser weight loss contest, Eat Fruit Month, flu shot reminders, healthy recipes and healthy activities.

The city reports that these activities have been successful in motivating staff to make healthy lifestyle decisions.

While the city's onsite clinic is still in its beginning stages, Visalia believes the increased focus and hands-on care by both the on-site provider and comprehensive wellness and prevention services will significantly impact employee health and help prevent future catastrophic claims.

The clinic also maintains a strong focus on existing disease management which provides a long-term benefit to the patient and the city.

About 440 of the 570 full-time employees have visited the clinic, many making it their primary front-line health care provider.

The benefits from the clinic include:

- **Quicker doctor visits.** The clinic is very close to where people work and there is almost no wait time when individuals come to the clinic.
- **Greater compliance with prescribed medical treatment.** Because employees and dependents are known by the clinic staff and the staff makes follow-up phone calls, the patients are complying with the prescribed treatment more regularly, improving the likelihood of good health outcomes.
- **Individuals are taking control of their health.** Because the clinic is free, readily available and employees have come to trust the staff, a number of employees have taken their own initiative to improve their health. Individuals have lost weight, gained control of their diabetes and are reducing other chronic health conditions.

- **Regular health screenings are also available in the clinic.** The city is required to provide a number of physical and screenings in the course of an individual's employment, which are being added to the clinic, making the clinic a one-stop shop.
  - **Costs are being controlled and should be reduced in the long-run.** The clinic's cost is about half of what the city would be charged if the employee were to seek services from a typical pay for service provider. The clinic's costs are essentially being covered by reduced cost while the satisfaction of the user is much higher at the clinic.
  - **The city believes the clinic's benefits outweigh the costs.** The numbers speak for themselves, not to mention improved morale and overall health, which are unmeasurable.
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'MLI Symposium' Continued from Page 1...

This year's symposium will cover "Local Government in a Brave New World: Law Enforcement, Code Enforcement, and Public Agency Liability." Public agencies have recently faced many new and challenging issues. Presenters will discuss issues arising from developing technology, including regulating businesses in the new "sharing economy" and balancing new technology with privacy concerns, particularly in the context of law enforcement. Additional topics are likely to include how public agencies have arisen from emerging jurisprudence in the areas of the Second Amendment and police and municipal liability.

The symposium will take place at Chapman University School of Law. The law school is situated 11 miles from John Wayne Airport in Orange County, one block from the lively Old Towne dining and shopping district in the city of Orange, and minutes from Disneyland.

It is important to register and make travel arrangements soon because there are a limited number of spaces for the conference.

Register [online](#).

Chapman University School of Law has preferred rates at two hotels:

The Double Tree-Anaheim  
100 The City Drive  
Orange, CA 92868  
(714) 634-4500  
\$139 per night plus tax  
Book reservations [online](#) for Chapman preferred rates.

The Ayres Inn Orange  
3737 West Chapman  
Orange, CA 92868  
(714) 978-9168  
\$105 per night plus tax

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