



## Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

Issue 13-142

October 23, 2013

Contents this week:

### **CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY**

Medical costs highly concentrated across population groups

### **ECONOMY**

CA's economy continues its recovery

### **EDUCATION**

Review of teacher prep programs finds deficiencies in most

### **EMPLOYMENT**

CA's largest unemployment decrease, 2nd highest unemployment rate in August

### **ENERGY**

Overview of European Union policies on renewable electricity

### **ENVIRONMENT**

CA Water Boards seek feedback on groundwater work plan draft

### **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

Federal government shutdown: causes and effects

### **HEALTH**

Housing the chronically homeless reduces public & hospital costs

### **HOUSING**

Reforms to improve federal housing loan programs

### **HUMAN SERVICES**

Poverty portrait varies by county in CA

### **TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

Interactive map of local governments in U.S.

### **VETERANS**

VA provider performance pay system needs revising

### **CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY**

*Differentials in the Concentration in the Level of Health Expenditures across Population Subgroups in the U.S., 2010.* By Steven B. Cohen, et al. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Aug. 2013. 11 p.  
[http://meps.ahrq.gov/mepsweb/data\\_files/publications/st421/stat421.shtml](http://meps.ahrq.gov/mepsweb/data_files/publications/st421/stat421.shtml)

"In 2010, health care expenses among the U.S. community population totaled \$1.263 trillion. Medical care expenses, however, are highly concentrated among a relatively small proportion of individuals in the

community population. As previously reported in 1996, the top 1% of the U.S. population accounted for 28% of the total health care expenditures and the top 5% for more than half.... Using information from the Household Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS-HC) for 2010, this Brief provides detailed estimates of the concentration in the level of health care expenditures for the nation, and further distinguishes them by specific population subgroups.”

## **ECONOMY**

***2013-2017 California & Metro Forecast.* University of the Pacific Ebberhardt School of Business, Business Forecasting Center. Sep. 2013. 66 p.  
(Available at the California State Library)**

This forecast covers California and 10 metropolitan areas from Sacramento to Fresno to the San Francisco Bay Area. Highlights from this issue include: “California’s real gross state products will grow 3.3% in 2014 and accelerate to 3.9% in 2015.... California unemployment rate has fallen 8.7% due to the increasing employment and slow growth in the labor force.... Single-family housing starts are beginning to recover in 2013 to 40,000 units from the 2009-2012 trough of below 30,000 units.... Professional Scientific & Technical Services led all industries in job growth in 2011 and had already recovered to pre-recession employment levels by 2012. This sector will continue its strong growth and add roughly 40,000 jobs in 2014.”

## **EDUCATION**

***Teacher Prep Review: A Review of the Nation’s Teacher Preparation Programs.* By Julie Greenberg, et al. National Council on Teacher Quality. Aug. 13, 2013. 112 p.  
[http://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Teacher\\_Prep\\_Review\\_2013\\_Report](http://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Teacher_Prep_Review_2013_Report)**

This report provides a review of the colleges and universities producing America’s teachers and finds that “a vast majority of teacher preparation programs do not give aspiring teachers adequate return on their investment of time and tuition dollars.... Fewer than one in nine elementary programs and just over one-third of high school programs are preparing candidates in content at the level necessary to teach the new Common Core State Standards.... Three out of four elementary teacher preparation programs still are not teaching the methods of reading instruction that could substantially lower the number of children who never become proficient readers, from 30% to under 10%.” U.S. News & World Report is currently partnering with NCTQ and will use its methodology as part of U.S. News’s ratings of teacher preparation programs.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

***Metropolitan Employment and Unemployment – August 2013.* U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Sep. 26, 2013. 22 p.  
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/metro.pdf>**

“Unemployment rates were lower in August than a year earlier in 311 of the 372 metropolitan areas, higher in 47 areas, and unchanged in 14 areas.” Though El Centro, California, had the largest over-the-year unemployment rate decrease in August (-5.6 percentage points), it also had the second highest unemployment rate in the nation at 26.3%. “Of the 49 metropolitan areas with a Census 2000 population of 1 million or more, Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, Calif., had the highest unemployment rate in August, 10.4%.”

## ENERGY

***European Union Wind and Solar Electricity Policies: Overview and Considerations.*** By Phillip Brown. Congressional Research Service. Aug. 7, 2013. 44 p.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43176.pdf>

“European Union (EU) countries have provided support for the development and deployment of renewable energy technologies, dating back to as early as the 1980s. Today, the European Union has established binding renewable energy targets with the goal of having the entire EU derive 20% of total energy consumption (electricity, heating/cooling, and transportation) from renewable sources by 2020.... Feed-in tariffs (FiT) are the most commonly referenced incentive mechanism used by EU countries. However, other mechanisms, such as market premiums, green certificates, and reverse auctions are also used to motivate renewable electricity generation.”

## ENVIRONMENT

***Groundwater Workplan Concept Paper: Discussion Draft.*** California Water Boards. Oct. 4, 2013. 10 p.

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/groundwater/docs/gw\\_workplan100713.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/groundwater/docs/gw_workplan100713.pdf)

The Water Boards are developing a work plan that will align their current groundwater protection activities with those of other entities. The proposed framework is organized around five factors: thresholds for water level drawdown, monitoring and assessment of both water level and quality, governance structures capable of preventing negative impacts before they occur, funding for required monitoring and governance, and enforcement activities where protection of groundwater is insufficient.

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Shutdown of the Federal Government: Causes, Processes, and Effects.*** By Clinton T. Brass. Congressional Research Service. Sep. 25, 2013. 24 p.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34680.pdf>

“When federal agencies and programs lack appropriated funding, they experience a funding gap. Under the Antideficiency Act, they must cease operations, except in certain emergency situations or when law authorizes continued activity. Failure of the President and Congress to reach agreement on interim or full-year funding measures occasionally has caused government shutdowns, the longest of which lasted 21 full days, from December 16, 1995, to January 6, 1996.... This report discusses the causes, processes, and effects of federal government shutdowns, including potential issues for Congress.”

## HEALTH

***Getting Home: Outcomes from Housing High Cost Homeless Hospital Patients.*** By Daniel Flaming, et al. Economic Roundtable. Sep. 2013. 72 p.

[http://www.economicrt.org/summaries/Getting\\_Home.html](http://www.economicrt.org/summaries/Getting_Home.html) (Free, registration required)

The 10th Decile Project is a pilot program in Los Angeles that “helps hospitals collaborate with homeless service providers and community health centers to target and house the highest-cost, highest need individuals.... Today, the 10th Decile Project is working with 18 partner hospitals that see over 6,000 homeless inpatients each year, using two 10th decile triage tools to screen for high-cost, high need homeless individuals and enroll them with experienced community-based homeless service providers.”

This report indicates that chronically homeless people in the study visited the hospital less, for a net savings of thousands of dollars in public and hospital costs.

## HOUSING

***Federal Involvement in Real Estate: A Call for Action.* Smart Growth America. July 25, 2013. 18 p.**  
<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/a-call-for-action.pdf>

This report puts forward a proposal to reform the federal government's spending and commitment to real estate programs. "From loan guarantees to commercial tax credits, this spending amounts to roughly \$450 billion annually and spans over 50 programs created at multiple agencies.... [T]here are problems with these programs both individually and as a group. Today's programs unfairly penalize families who can't afford or choose not to buy a home, favor single-family homes over other types and provide financial incentives to purchase second homes when many families still struggle to purchase their first." The report suggests that reforms could save taxpayer money and also benefit more American homeowners.

## HUMAN SERVICES

***A Portrait of Poverty within California Counties and Demographic Groups.* By Christopher Wimer, et al. The Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. Oct. 2013. 12 p.**  
[http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/poverty/cpm/CPMBrief\\_CPI.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/group/scspi/poverty/cpm/CPMBrief_CPI.pdf)

"The California Poverty Measure (CPM) indicates that 22.0% of Californians were living in poverty in 2011. This is 1.5% points lower than the 2009-2011 Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) for California, but 5.8% points higher than the official poverty measure (OPM) for California. The differences arise principally because safety net benefits are not fully reported in the Census SPM and because the high cost of living in California is not taken into account in the OPM.... There is wide variation in poverty rates across California, with especially high rates observed in counties with high housing costs, such as Los Angeles County (26.9%) and Orange County (24.3%). By contrast, lower rates tend to be observed when housing costs are more moderate, as in Placer County (13.8%) and Sacramento County (17.0%)."

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

***Governments by the Numbers: Interactive Map.* By Melissa Maynard, et al. Pew Charitable Trusts. Sep. 30, 2013.**  
<http://www.pewstates.org/projects/stateline/headlines/interactive-the-many-layers-of-local-government-85899508134>

This link provides a breakdown of local governments within counties, states, and the U.S. as a whole. There are 4,425 local governments in California, or 12 local governments for every 100,000 people. These governments include municipalities, counties, independent school districts, and special districts.

## VETERANS

***VA Health Care: Actions Needed to Improve Administration of the Provider Performance Pay and Award Systems.*** By Debra A. Draper. Government Accountability Office. GAO-13-536. July 23, 2013. 39 p.

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/656185.pdf>

“The Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) performance pay policy has gaps in information needed to appropriately administer this type of pay. The performance pay policy gives VA’s 152 medical centers and 21 networks discretion in setting the goals providers must achieve to receive this pay, but does not specify an overarching purpose the goals are to support. VA officials responsible for writing the policy told us that the purpose of performance pay is to improve health care outcomes and quality, but this is not specified in the policy. Moreover, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has not reviewed the goals set by medical centers and networks and therefore does not have reasonable assurance that the goals make a clear link between performance pay and providers’ performance.”

### **About *Studies in the News***

*Studies in the News* (SITN) is a service provided by the California Research Bureau (CRB), a division of the California State Library. CRB provides independent, nonpartisan research and analysis for the Governor, Legislature and State Constitutional Officers.

- SITN lists of current studies related to public policy issues are e-mailed weekly. Archived issues are available at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb>.
- To add or remove your name from the SITN distribution list, or to update your e-mail address, please contact us at [crb@library.ca.gov](mailto:crb@library.ca.gov), or (916) 319-2691.
- SITN is available as an RSS feed at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb/>.