



DIGEST

Around and About

PROFESSIONAL PEACE Officers association apparently has won the right to represent nearly 3,700 deputy sheriffs, D-A investigators, and criminologists as their negotiator on pay and working conditions. Tuesday's ballot count showed PPOA with 1,341 votes to 1,117 for Association for L.A. Deputy Sheriffs.

PAY-AND-BENEFITS agreements for two employee units—350 County guards and 133 supervisory non-professional paramedical-health employees—have been approved by the Board of Supervisors.

RETIREMENT BOARD chairman Harold Ostly says SB 249, which Governor Reagan signed last week, affects only counties having contracts with the state retirement system. L.A. and the 19 other counties operating their own retirement systems are not affected.

THE COUNTY didn't have to issue revenue anticipation notes to eke out the last two days of the fiscal year last Tuesday and Wednesday after all. Sacramento came through at the last minute with \$53 million the U.S. and state advanced for welfare aid.

J U L Y 2

1 9 7 1

Volume 4 Number 9

BIG MERGER MOVES AHEAD

STEPS HAVE begun to merge four departments — health, hospitals, mental health, and County veterinarian — into a single department of health services. It will be the County's largest department with more than 21,000 employees.

The Board of Supervisors (June 22) approved amending the administrative code to provide for a Director of Health Services with four deputy directors—for Personal Health Services, for Community Health Services, for Mental Health Services, and for Comparative Medical and Veterinary Public Health Services.

Governor Reagan signed a bill

(AB 591) June 11 that permits the Board to appoint either a doctor or a lay administrator—that is, a non-doctor—as director.

The Board is expected to make the appointment later this year when AB 591 becomes effective.

IN ALLIED action, the Board ordered plans prepared for possible consolidation of the departments of community services, military and veterans affairs, senior citizens affairs, and human relations, along with the delinquency prevention and community action functions of

(Continued on next page)

Board Makes Cuts, Okays Budget

THE 1971-72 County budget went into effect yesterday (July 1), swollen by sharply higher welfare needs and other mandatory state and federal program increases.

The budget totals \$2.78 billion, up \$547 million over the budget adopted a year ago (the general fund portion of \$2.457 is up \$525 million).

The Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted the budget last Tuesday (June 29) after adding \$10 million for hospitals to prevent layoff of 444 temporary employees and to keep other hospital staff and outside medical services at 1970-71 levels. This expenditure was offset by a onetime settlement of old MediCal bills from the state.

The Board also deleted 30 public information positions in 18 depart-

ments, cut \$6.9 million from the "buy back" of County buildings on retirement board leases, and made cuts in capital projects and other items in the preliminary budget proposed by CAO Arthur Will.

The Supervisors rejected requests for more staff from the D-A, assessor, marshal, public defender, APCD, public guardian, health department, and mental health.

"The tightened budget means that most general fund departments are having to absorb work load increases and the effect of inflation on costs," Will said. "We are forced to plan service decreases beginning at once."

The Board left intact an item of \$215,000 to demolish the old Hall of Records within the next six months.

Health Plans Raise Premiums

THE CONTINUING upward spiral in medical costs will squeeze 42,000 County employees once more in August as four health plans—Kaiser, Blue Cross, Blue Shield, and Ross-Loos—put new premium rates into effect.

The increases, however, will be more than offset for employees by the higher County health plan subsidy, which goes into effect at the same time.

The Board of Supervisors (June 22) approved renewing for another year the County's contracts with the four health plans. Present con-

tracts expire August 31. Because premiums are paid in advance, the new September premiums will be deducted from the Aug. 10 paychecks.

Gunther Dumalski, County employee benefits manager, reported that health plan spokesmen said three factors have caused the rising rates—higher salaries and other costs in hospitals, more doctor visits and hospital stays by County employees, and increasing use of expensive new techniques and equipment to give higher-grade treatment and preventive medicine.

Dumalski said Blue Cross records showed that County employees accounted for 1,256 of its hospital cases in the six months ending last March, compared with 1,108 hospital cases in a similar period in 1969-70, a rise of 13 percent—and the number of County employees' accidents claims went up from 864 to 1,558, an increase of 80 percent.

For the same periods, Blue Shield experienced an increase from 7,720 doctors' visits to 9,872 (up 28 percent), and a rise in surgery claims from 4,687 to 5,977 (up 28 percent).

"Since more than 90 cents of every premium dollar County employees pay goes to meet their claims for medical attention," Dumalski said, "this heavier usage is bound to reflect itself in higher premiums."

Kaiser plan premiums will rise \$2.61 a month for the employee who insures only himself, \$5.22 for employee-and-one-dependent coverage, and \$7.50 for family coverage. Blue Cross increases will range from \$3.10 to \$4.47 a month, Blue Shield from \$3.08 to \$4.98 a month, and Ross-Loos from a drop of \$1.11 a month to an increase of \$1.48.

When allowance is made, however, for the increase in the County contribution from the present \$8 a month to a maximum of \$16.50 a month, each subscriber will find a smaller health plan deduction from his paycheck, beginning Aug. 10.

Dumalski said auditor-controller

Mark Bloodgood will make the changes in health-plan deductions automatically for the Aug. 10 paychecks. Employees now enrolled need not fill out new payroll deduction authorization cards.

Dumalski also said none of the health plans is making any change in benefits.

Dumalski said arrangements are under way to have an open enrollment period this fall when any permanent, fulltime County employee may enroll in any of the four health plans. At present only new employees may enroll during their first 90 days on the job. Three of the plans—Blue Cross, Blue Shield, and Ross-Loos—also will enroll employees with more than 90 days service upon the filing of an acceptable health statement.

When arrangements have been completed for the autumn open enrollment, dates will be announced in THE DIGEST.

LACEA Loses Suit

AN ATTEMPT by Los Angeles County Employees association to force the Board of Supervisors to pay, retroactively, higher health insurance premium subsidies for all of fiscal year 1970-71 has failed in superior court.

Judge John Cole held (June 4) that the prevailing-wage provision of the County charter, Section 47, does not apply to fringe benefits, and the Board therefore could refuse to increase health plan subsidies if it found that funds were not available.

County of Los Angeles

DIGEST

EDITORIAL BOARD

ARTHUR G. WILL, Chief Administrative Officer

GORDON T. NESVIG, Director of Personnel

LISTON WITHERILL, President County Management Council

LORIN PETERSON, Editor

Editorial Office: Room 526 Hall of Administration, 222 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 90012
Telephone 625-3611, ext. 65878
For extra copies, extension 65420

CONSOLIDATION

(Continued from page 1)

DPSS, probation, public guardian, personnel, and urban affairs departments.

The Board directed that a committee of the nine affected department heads and nine advisory committee chairmen develop plans for the consolidation "as soon as possible."

Changes at Hospitals

FOUR SWITCHES in the upper levels of County hospital administration will go into effect next Tuesday (July 6).

Director of hospitals William Barr announced that Leslie Smith, administrator of Harbor General since 1966, will move into the chair of David Odell, director of County-USC Medical Center, who will become director of hospitals development, a planning function. Smith will serve pending a civil service examination.

Don Avant, who has headed Olive View hospital since 1968, will replace Smith as administrator at Harbor General.

John O'Connor will become interim administrator at Olive View in addition to his regular duties as director of community and contract services.