



# DIGEST

## *Around and About*

EL CERRITO hospital in Long Beach has phased out its in-patient function, now is an ambulatory center for walk-in patients.

GEORGE WASHINGTON (the statue) will have a neighbor in the Mall—Christopher Columbus. The Board of Supervisors has accepted a Sons of Italy offer to provide a statue of the explorer. The Sons of Italy will pay an Italian sculptor \$500 to build it.

NAMES: William Geller, County librarian the past ten years, will retire Oct. 1. He began as a County student worker in 1937. . . Human relations director Herbert Carter resigned last week to run in the Sept. 10 special election for the L.A. city council seat vacated by Mayor Tom Bradley. . . Lee Arnold left the CAO (July 13) to become Museum of Natural History assistant director. . . Ben Nathanson, reelected employee relations commission chairman. . . O. Richard Capen, named president of the civil service commission, replacing departed Thelma Mahoney.

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## BOARD PUSHES CAR POOL PLAN

A BROAD program to reduce the number of County employees' cars driven to work each day—a program including car pools and subscription bus service—has been approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Core of the program, as recommended to the Board by CAO Arthur Will (July 17), would be a computerized system to match the home and work locations of County employees so that, given the information, staffers could voluntarily form their own car pools.

Will said the computerized lists also could be used to organize a subscription bus service. Employees living in the same area would board an express bus daily at a common point and ride to Civic Center or another work location. The Board directed Will to check costs of such service with both the Rapid Transit District and with private bus companies. An average monthly charge of about \$40 a month per rider has been mentioned in preliminary conversations.

Will said his ride conservation program was spurred by Board concern over air pollution, traffic and parking congestion, the gasoline shortage, and apparent energy crisis.

Principal target in the first carpooling drive, Will said, will be the 5,000 County employees (not including 2,300 mileage permittees) who now drive to and from Civic Center daily. If these were to double up with two persons per car, Will said, traffic and parking congestion in Civic Center would be reduced by 2,500 cars daily.

Another 2,700 Civic Center em-

ployees already ride in car pools or on buses, the CAO reported.

Adding more cars to the County pool fleet, Will said, may make it possible to reduce the number of mileage permittees (totalling 2,300) who now drive their own cars to Civic Center to use during the day. Relieved of needing their autos for daytime use, these permittees could join car pools.

As an incentive to form car pools, Will said parking spaces in the Mall garage upper level, the health building garage, and the Brunswig complex parking will be set aside for car pools. The CAO said County management should give preferred parking to car poolers who work at outlying County facilities, too.

An added incentive, Will said, will be the estimated \$700 a year an employee can save by carpooling.

The Board authorized department heads to adjust the working hours of employees who want to join car pools.

Will said a car pool questionnaire asking for home and work addresses and other information will go to all employees. This data, computerized, will be fed back to potential car poolers, listing co-workers they may call to arrange a ride system.

The CAO predicted the ride-sharing program will be operating by late summer or early fall.

The Supervisors instructed mechanical director Robert Sudduth and data processing director Tom Kidwell to report to the Board Aug. 14 on progress toward creating the car pool system.

# New Hospital Benefits Explained

NEW RATES and new benefits will go into effect Sept. 1 for the five County-sponsored health plans.

Director of personnel Gordon Nesvig said the 58,000 County employees enrolled in the plans need take no action such as filling out new forms. The changes will be handled automatically by the health plan offices, Nesvig said, and the County auditor-controller's office will automatically adjust payroll deductions to reflect both the higher rates and the County's increased contribution toward health plan premiums (up to a maximum of \$26 a month per employee). These adjustments will appear in the Aug. 10 paychecks—three weeks before the new benefits go into effect because the plans are financed on a prepaid basis.

The department of personnel issued the following plan-by-plan explanation of the Sept. 1 changes in benefits:

BLUE CROSS. Blue Cross will increase hospital benefits Sept. 1 to provide \$60 per day for hospital room and board, and full coverage for hospital extras and intensive care.

Here are two examples of how the improved coverage will work:

If a County employee is taken to Hospital A, whose semi-private daily room rate is \$79 and daily intensive care rate is \$205, the charge for spending three days in intensive care and three days in a semi-private room will be \$852, plus perhaps \$1,000 in hospital extras, for a total of \$1,852. The present Blue Cross coverage would pay \$1,250, leaving \$602 to be paid by the patient. After Sept. 1, Blue Cross would pay \$1,795, leaving only \$57 to be paid by the patient.

Suppose the employee goes to Hospital B, where the semi-private daily room rate is \$72 and the intensive care daily charge is \$155. With a total bill for the six days of \$1,681, including \$1,000 in hospital extras, the present Blue Cross pay-

ment would be \$1,250, leaving \$431 for the patient to pay. After the Sept. 1 benefits go into effect, Blue Cross would pay \$1,645, leaving only \$36 to be paid by the patient.

Blue Cross will notify the admitting offices of every hospital in Southern California of the improved coverage for County subscribers.

The present Blue Cross identification card that subscribers have will continue in effect. They will receive later a new certificate describing the increased benefits. Subscribers who believe Blue Cross may not have their correct home address should complete a change-of-address card available in each County department's personnel office.

Claims examiners will answer questions about payment of actual Blue Cross claims. County subscribers should telephone 666-3364.

BLUE SHIELD. Improved Blue Shield benefits effective Sept. 1 include \$60 per day for hospital room and board, as well as full payment of hospital extras and intensive care.

For example:

A Blue Shield subscriber who spends six days in Hospital A—three days in a semi-private room costing \$79 a day and three days in intensive care at \$205 a day—would have a total bill of \$1,852, including \$1,000 for hospital extras. Present Blue Shield coverage would pay for \$1,472, leaving \$380 to be paid by the patient. After Sept. 1, Blue Shield would provide \$1,795, leaving only \$57 for the subscriber to pay.

In our other hypothetical Hospital B, with a semi-private daily room rate of \$72 and an intensive care rate of \$155 a day, the total charge, including \$1,000 for hospital extras, would be \$1,681. At present Blue Shield would pay \$1,352, the patient \$329. After Sept. 1, Blue Shield would pick up \$1,645, and the patient only \$36.

Gunther Dumalski, County em-

ployee insurance manager, said Blue Shield subscribers may have the physician of their choice, but he pointed out that physicians who are Blue Shield members have agreed to accept the Blue Shield payment as full compensation for their services. Dumalski warned that non-member physicians may ask the patient to pay additional money if they believe the Blue Shield payment is too low.

Blue Shield will mail to each County enrollee's home a new roster of Blue Shield member physicians, along with a booklet describing the improved benefits beginning Sept. 1. The mailing is scheduled for late August. Subscribers who have moved may advise Blue Shield of their present mailing address by completing a "member change request" form available at County departmental personnel offices.

Subscribers having questions about claims payments may telephone Blue Shield customer relations department at 381-7355. Or they may write to: Blue Shield of California, 720 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94119.

ROSS-LOOS. Ross-Loos, under greatly improved hospital coverage beginning Sept. 1, will provide up to 365 days of care at the full semi-private rate for room and board, and will pay 100 percent of the cost of hospital extras. Ross-Loos will pay for up to ten days of intensive care at twice the semi-private room rate.

The new coverage, titled the A-100 plan, will be provided directly by Ross-Loos rather than through the Commonwealth Independence Life Insurance company. This means that Ross-Loos will pay hospital bills only when a Ross-Loos doctor has prescribed the hospital care.

Later this month each Ross-Loos subscriber will receive at his home a new identification card, a new certificate, and a brochure describing the A-100 coverage.

Enrollees wishing to make sure Ross-Loos has their correct home address may fill out a "change request" form at their departmental

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# Premium Deductions to Change Aug. 10

THE UPCOMING Aug. 10 paychecks, for most County employees, will reflect two significant changes—the higher salaries that went into effect for the majority of workers July 1, and revised premium deductions for the five County-sponsored health plans. Gross premiums for all plans will rise—so will benefits.

Most staffers, however, will find the higher premiums offset by the higher County contribution of up to \$26 a month per employee. (Those having premiums below \$26 a month receive free coverage.)

Auditor-controller Mark Bloodgood has urged employees to check their Aug. 10 paycheck stubs against the table (right) to make sure the proper amount is being deducted for health insurance. Any discrepancies should be reported immediately to the department of personnel insurance section, room 524 Hall of Administration, telephone 974-2474.

The adjoining table shows total health plan premiums and, in italics, the amount left as the employee's deduction after subtracting the County contribution of up to \$26 in each case.

	<u>Employee only</u>	<u>Employee and one dependent</u>	<u>Family coverage</u>
<b>BLUE CROSS</b>			
<i>(Deduction Code 09 on the paycheck)</i>			
Total premium	\$22.08	\$45.79	\$51.06
<i>Employee's share</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>\$19.79</i>	<i>\$25.06</i>

## CALIFORNIA BLUE SHIELD

*(Deduction code 44)*

Total premium	\$21.90	\$39.67	\$44.63
<i>Employee's share</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>\$13.67</i>	<i>\$18.63</i>

## HOSPITAL-ONLY PLAN

*(Deduction code B-3)*

Total premium	\$ 5.05	\$12.45	\$18.05
<i>Employee's share</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

**IMPROVED BENEFITS:** Effective Sept. 1, the Blue Cross, Blue Shield, and Hospital-Only plans will provide \$60 a day hospital room and board; fully paid hospital extras; fully paid intensive care; and full semi-private daily rate in an extended care facility (\$30 a day in the Hospital-Only plan). Other coverages remain unchanged.

## KAISER FOUNDATION

*(Deduction code 10)*

Total premium	\$20.47	\$40.94	\$58.21
<i>Employee's share</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>\$14.94</i>	<i>\$32.21</i>

Kaiser will provide type A coverage starting Sept. 1. This will remove the \$2 charge for office visits. Other benefits remain unchanged.

## ROSS-LOOS GROUP

*(Deduction code 19)*

Total premium	\$19.51	\$46.19	\$58.60
<i>Employee's share</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>\$20.19</i>	<i>\$32.60</i>

Ross-Loos will provide A-100 hospital coverage effective Sept. 1—full semi-private room coverage for up to 365 days; twice the semi-private rate for intensive care up to ten days; fully paid hospital extras for up to 365 days.

## NEW BENEFITS

(Continued from page 2)

personnel office. Or they may telephone the Ross-Loos health plan administration department at 623-1381, extension 421.

**KAISER.** County subscribers to the Kaiser health plan, now getting B coverage, will receive the higher A coverage Sept. 1

This will eliminate the present \$2-a-visit charge. All other Kaiser benefits will remain as at present.

Kaiser will mail new identification cards to its subscribers in late August. Subscribers may make sure Kaiser has the correct home address by telephoning 660-1720.

Questions about what Kaiser services are available, and where, can be answered at one of the Kaiser membership service departments. Their telephone numbers are listed in each subscriber's Kaiser brochure; brochures also are on file at County departmental personnel offices.

**HOSPITAL-ONLY PLAN.** Benefits under the County's hospital-only plan will rise Sept. 1 to provide \$60 a day for hospital room and board and full coverage for hospital extras and intensive care.

"Since we inaugurated the hospital-only plan a year ago," Nesvig said, "we have signed up about 1,600 subscribers for the plan. Some of these are employees who want protection for hospital bills but not for doctors' services. Others are covered by a comprehensive medical-hospital plan either through the County or through their husband's or wife's employer, but want the hospital-only plan for supplementary coverage of hospital expenses."

Nesvig predicted some of these subscribers now may reassess their need for supplementary coverage in view of the improved hospital benefits going into effect Sept. 1 on the Blue Cross, Blue Shield, and Ross-Loos plans.

Questions about hospital-only claims payments will be answered by Blue Shield, telephone number 381-7355.

## Green Wins Election

**MILES GREEN, Sr.**, former parks and recreation employee, has been elected as eighth member of the County retirement board. He defeated Everett Christensen, 4,586 votes to 2,356, in a mail ballot among County retirees.

A 1972 state law provided for two new board positions—one elected by the retirees, the other to be named by the Board of Supervisors to represent the public. The Board has not yet made its appointment.

## Agreements OK'd

**AN AGREEMENT** granting pay increases to 1,225 hospital interns and resident physicians and 16 dental interns and residents has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Board is scheduled to adopt an ordinance next Tuesday (July 31) implementing the agreement.

The Board also approved (July 24) a memorandum of understanding granting higher salaries Sept. 1 to 505 automotive and equipment maintenancemen. The action will bring a salary increase to 47 other employees in the supervisory blue-collar unit, whose pay is tied to that of the maintenancemen.

Five other units, including fire fighters, deputy probation officers, superior court clerks, and pharmacists, whose pay customarily moves on July 1, remain at odds with County management on the salary issue.

Negotiations are continuing with seven units of craftsmen, engineers, and appraisers, whose salary year begins Sept. 1.

A "gilt-edged" union of 100 executives in the road, flood control, engineering, planning, APCD, real estate, and communications departments has been certified by the employee relations commission. Its members' salaries range from \$20,600 to \$31,100 a year.

The executives, in a May election, rejected the proposed union by a vote of 73 to 15. In a second election July 6, ordered by ERCOM, the union proposal won with 42 yes votes to 28 noes.

## Direct-Deposit Pay

**CAO ARTHUR WILL** has informed the Board of Supervisors that a system of eliminating paper paychecks and depositing County employees' pay directly into their personal bank accounts is "technically feasible" but faces many practical problems.

The state law would have to be changed, Will said, that now requires an employee himself to endorse his pay warrant.

In addition, Will said, such a system would have to be voluntary, with the result that the County would have a dual payroll system, with some employees continuing to get paper warrants and others using the paperless entry system. This system, Will said, "would complicate the present overburdened payroll system to the point of jeopardizing the issuance of employees' pay."

The CAO recommended that any future study of further computerizing and modernizing the County payroll system should consider the possibility of using direct deposits.

The Board had directed Will to investigate the pros and cons of establishing a direct-deposit system.

## Evening Class Issue

A SPECIAL issue of THE DIGEST describing fall semester evening classes for County employees will be published Aug. 10. Registration opens Aug. 29, classes begin Sept. 11.

County of Los Angeles

## DIGEST

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