UC SANTA BARBARA

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The Cost of Health

As the ongoing political skirmish over the fate of the Affordable Care Act continues, the rumblings are being felt throughout the country, right down to our pocketbooks. Meanwhile, the aging Baby Boomer generation is predicted to strain the existing healthcare system with projected enormous impacts to the economy. In California, lawmakers have recently forwarded a proposal to create a government-funded single-payer system — a gamble made several times before that may finally have the power to pay off.

With the healthcare terrain constantly shifting, there's no time like the present to discuss the future of healthcare in Santa Barbara County.

On Friday, May 12, panelists at the 36th Annual UC Santa Barbara Economic Forecast Project's (EFP) North County Economic Summit will do just that. In addition to the analyses and predictions of local and regional economic and market trends that are the standard for the annual event, Santa Barbara County's slice of the $3 trillion healthcare industry will be the topic of discussion.

The North County Economic Summit, which will be held at the Radisson Santa Maria, 3455 Skyway Drive, begins with a 7:30 breakfast and check-in. At 8 a.m. North County EFP Board Chair Karen O'Neil will welcome the guests and participants and introduce the program.

The summit's featured guest presentations will begin with Sacramento Bee columnist **Dan Walters**. A California journalist for more than a half-century, Walters

joined The Sacramento Union in 1975 and, in 1981, began writing the state's only daily newspaper column devoted to California political, economic and social events. He moved to The Sacramento Bee in 1984. He has written more than 7,500 columns about California politics and his syndicated column now appears in more than 50 newspapers. His discussion will focus on the politics of healthcare in California.

Following Walters, four leaders in local healthcare will offer their perspectives:

Naishadh Buch, chief operating officer of the Lompoc Valley Medical Center. Born in Uganda, he grew up in England and graduated from the University of Reading. After emigrating to the United States, he served 12 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. He later received his Pharm.D. and MBA from the University of Southern California. Buch joined the Lompoc Valley Medical Center in 2002.

Chuck Cova, senior vice president of operations at Dignity Health, the parent corporation for French Hospital Medical Center in San Luis Obispo, Marian Regional Medical Center in Santa Maria, St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard and St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital in Camarillo. Cova also serves president and CEO for Dignity Health's Central Coast Service, the Pacific Central Coast Health Centers and Health Services of the Pacific Central Coast.

Bob Freeman, CEO of CenCal Health, one of the first Medicaid-only managed care plans in the nation. Freeman also serves on the board of directors of the Local Health Plans of California and the Community Action Commission, and serves as the chair of Pacific Health Centers. Before coming to CenCal in 1993, he spent 10 years in Sacramento as an assistant cabinet secretary for Business, Transportation and Housing.

Ron Werft, president and CEO of Cottage Health, overseeing Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Barbara and Goleta Valley Cottage Hospitals. Before joining Cottage Health in 1987, he served as associate director of the University of Minnesota Hospital. Werft holds his bachelor's degree from UC San Diego and his master's in hospital and health care administration from the University of Minnesota.

Finally, UCSB economics professor and EFP director **Peter Rupert** will take the stage with his annual presentation and analyses of business, housing and job trends in Santa Barbara County. Rupert is the associate director of the UCSB Laboratory for Aggregate Economics and Finance with Nobel Laureate Finn Kydland. He served as

senior research advisor for the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland for 13 years.

The presentations will be followed by a panel discussion moderated by Rupert. The event will conclude at approximately 10:30 a.m.

The UCSB Economic Forecast Project was established in 1981 by the Department of Economics to provide the community with information on economic, demographic and regional business trends. The main sponsor for this year's event is founding sponsor Union Bank.

The summit is open to the public and admission is $50 per person. A copy of the 2016 North Santa Barbara County Economic Outlook report is included with admission. Tickets can be purchased by calling (805) 893-5148 or visiting artsandlectures.sa.ucsb.edu; they can also be purchased at the door on the day of the summit.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.