

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Thursday, June 19, 2008 – San Francisco

City and SFOP leaders announce expansion of universal healthcare program

Before a crowd of 90 community members yesterday at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav (CSZ), SFOP leaders from CSZ, Supervisor **Bevan Dufty**, and Director of the Department of Public Health (DPH) Dr. **Mitch Katz** announced an agreement to expand the City's universal healthcare program, Healthy San Francisco (HSF), and a plan for setting a final date when the program will become fully universal. The program will be expanded to include at least individuals making up to five times the Federal Poverty Level by February 2009, and HSF will be opened completely as soon as lower-income persons have had the opportunity to enroll.

Two years ago, Dr. Katz, Sup. Dufty, and the Mayor's Office committed to creating a universal, comprehensive healthcare program as soon as possible at a meeting similar to Wednesday's at CSZ.

Nearly two years after HSF was originally approved, uninsured San Franciscans who are still ineligible for the program are relieved to know when they will get covered. "During three years without insurance I've had some health scares," said Kelley Clements, SFOP leader at CSZ and Home Health Aide. "That mixture of fear and frustration is something I hope no one else has to go through. It's good to know that I'll really be able to start taking care of my health."

Implementation of HSF started almost one year ago with a phased roll-out. The original roll-out plan had stopped, with only those making less than three times the Federal Poverty Level (about \$31,000 per year for a single person) being eligible, and there was no timeline for making the program universal.

For more information, including leaders and uninsured people available for comment, call Jonathan Crosby at (415) 255-1858.