

Monthly Meeting Highlights



Children & Families
Commission of Orange County

August 2007

Commission Welcomes New Commissioner

The Orange County Board of Supervisors has appointed Sandra Barry to the Children and Families Commission of Orange County. Barry currently serves as the District Superintendent for the Anaheim City School District. She has an M.A. in Education from California State University, Fullerton and a B.A. in Education from Nebraska Wesleyan University. Barry has served as a voting member of the Commission's Pediatric Health Services Committee for over three years and has assisted the Commission as the school superintendent liaison.

Reach Out and Read Program Expanding in Orange County

Reach Out and Read is a national, non-profit organization that promotes early literacy through well-child visits and pediatricians who give new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud. Orange County received a grant from National Reach Out and Read for almost \$100,000 in 2006. The Commission matched the grant with an additional \$100,000 for more books. In 2006 there were 21 Reach Out and Read sites. Today there are 42 sites, and the goal is to have 62 pediatric sites implementing a Reach Out and Read program by December 2007. A volunteer recruitment program is being implemented to increase the number of readers in the waiting rooms. In addition, a gently-used book program has been developed to solicit, sort, clean and distribute used books to be used in the waiting rooms and given to patients and their siblings.

Pediatric Health Services Initiative Continues to Progress

The Commission received its Annual Report on the Pediatric Health Services (PHS) Initiative. The initiative is designed to increase access to pediatric primary and specialty care services through collaborative programs throughout the county. Approximately 43,000 children ages 0-5 received healthcare services through the initiative. Approximately 55,000 family members received educational and support services. All services were established through a variety of referrals; relationships with school districts, school health nurses and agencies throughout the county. In 2005, the Commission approved the renewal of four major programs in the PHS Initiative: Ambulatory Care, Asthma Chronic Lung, Metabolic and Integrated Neurological Programs.

Orange County Receives over \$6 Million in State Funds

In 2006 Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law AB 172 which created the Prekindergarten and Family Literacy Program. The program provides \$50 million statewide for preschool and family literacy programs. Funds are targeted to programs serving children the year prior to kindergarten in low performing school districts. The Commission helped provide technical assistance to Orange County school districts. When the awards were announced by the state, 9 school districts and several programs received an allocation, totaling more than \$6 million for Orange County. In many cases, the Commission's School Readiness Program was cited as a resource that could be incorporated into the programs. Congratulations to the prior or existing school district (SD) and program grantees in Orange County who received AB 172 funding: Anaheim City SD, El Puente Community Development Corp (KidWorks), Fullerton SD, Garden Grove Unified SD, Hands Together – A Center for Children, Magnolia SD, Newport-Mesa SD, Ocean View SD, Orange Unified SD, Santa Ana Unified SD and Tustin Unified SD.