



Countywide Services Agency

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Health and Human Services

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FIRST 5 SACRAMENTO APPROVES FUNDING FOR ENHANCED CHILDREN'S  
MEDICAL CLEARANCE EXAMS**

*Child Protective Services improved program will help identify medical needs and uncover hidden abuse in children under the age of five entering foster care*

**SACRAMENTO, CA** — The First 5 Sacramento Commission today approved funding which will allow Child Protective Services (CPS) not only to provide medical clearance exams for children entering foster care, but to expand services into a comprehensive model of services for children ages zero to five who are placed in protective custody.

Under the grant proposal drafted by CPS, the newly-titled “Health Exams, Assessments, Referrals and Treatment Services (HEARTS) for Kids” program will offer medical and dental screenings for children and home visitations to perform developmental screenings and prevention and education services.

CPS’s medical clearance exam program was suspended in October 2009 because of county budget cuts. Clearance exams help identify underlying health issues in children entering foster care, including conditions which need immediate treatment. This is important because children under age five – CPS’ most vulnerable population — often cannot verbalize medical problems or injuries.

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The exams also uncover abuse and neglect that could not be detected during a child welfare investigation. According to data from UC Davis Medical Center, which previously provided the service, 38 percent of all physical abuse injuries were found in children who were placed into custody for reasons other than physical abuse.

“Clearance exams are not required by law, but CPS has offered them because it is a best-practice model which clearly benefits victims of child abuse and neglect,” said Laura Coulthard, Director of Child Protective Services. “We were heart-broken to see the program go. In a year of bad budget news, First 5 Sacramento has given the community something to cheer about.”

“Thank you to the Commission and CPS for being responsible with Proposition 10 funding to create a new program with substantial service enhancements,” said Roger Dickinson, Chair of First 5 Sacramento and Chair of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. “A great collaboration has emerged that ultimately will improve the welfare of young children in Sacramento County,” Dickinson added.

The First 5 Sacramento Commissioners voted unanimously to provide \$743,281 for the new program, which will run from May 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012, at which time CPS can re-apply for funding. Total cost of the program is \$1.46 million, with half the costs covered by matching federal funds. Exams will be provided by Children’s Specialists Medical Group of Sacramento at the Children’s Receiving Home Clinic.

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