



**NEWS**

Date: April 24, 2007  
Subject: San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative  
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***San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative Celebrates One Year  
Initiative shares accomplishments and receives sustainability funding from The California Endowment***

(San Diego, CA)\*\*\*\*The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative (Initiative) today shared program highlights and accomplishments since its launch in January 2006. The Initiative is a public-private partnership designed to create a supportive environment for the implementation of the goals and strategies established by the *Call to Action: San Diego County Childhood Obesity Action Plan (Action Plan)* which was released in 2006.

“It is difficult for people in San Diego County to make healthy choices when so many social, cultural, and physical environments work against healthy lifestyles,” states Cheryl Moder, director of the Initiative. “The Initiative is a working collaborative focused on making policy and environmental changes in San Diego County. We have more than 100 public and private agencies and organizations working together and there is a place at the table for anyone in the county interested in joining this effort.”

“Our goal is to create a healthier environment for our families, including things like the development of walk-able communities, access to parks and the availability of nutritious foods for everyone. These are the kinds of issues we are focused on right now and we are proud of our work so far,” states Dr. Nick Yphantides, co-chair of the Initiative.

The Initiative’s focus is on environmental change and policies that will make it easier and more natural for families to make healthy choices. The Initiative identifies seven sectors of domains that have the most influence on creating healthy environments including county and city governments; healthcare systems and providers; schools and before and after-school providers, childcare and preschool providers, community-based, faith-based and youth organizations; media outlets and the marketing industry; and businesses. In its first year, the Initiative has accomplished the following:

- Developed a working structure for the Initiative including creation of a leadership council, engagement of domain champions and creation of a domain council.
- County Board of Supervisors passed a policy that will assure healthy food and beverage selections in all vending machines on County property.
- Convening of public health and planning (land use, transportation, etc.) professionals in a series of meetings and workshops to begin a dialogue on incorporating public health into community design.
- Working to develop a comprehensive, centralized, multilingual resource/referral network for childhood obesity and diabetes programs and services that will be available at no cost to community residents and health care providers.

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- Developed a collaborative effort involving schools, government, local chefs, and the Junior League of San Diego to incorporate wellness education and community involvement through school gardens.
- Working with the San Diego Padres, the San Diego Office of Education, and San Diego State University to develop a school-based fitness program to increase opportunities for children to participate in physical activity throughout the school day.
- Presented the Initiative in a plenary panel session at the 2007 statewide childhood obesity conference in Anaheim as an example of an innovative, community-wide approach to addressing the issue of childhood obesity.
- Planning a childhood obesity summit on September 20, 2007 to engage current partners and new participants across all seven domains. The summit will be at the Town & Country Hotel in Mission Valley and is \$25 for registration. The summit will promote the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned, identify collaborative opportunities, recognize outstanding efforts and results and provide state and countrywide updates on obesity prevention efforts.

In 2005, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors supported the development of the *Action Plan*. Subsequently, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, in partnership with the First 5 Commission of San Diego County, combined efforts to fund a Childhood Obesity Initiative Director for three years. “The overarching goal of the Initiative is to improve the health of children and families in San Diego County,” states chairman of the board of supervisors Ron Roberts, “I am pleased that our efforts have resulted in so many community partners coming to the table and taking an active role in leading San Diego toward a healthier future.”

“In San Diego County, more than 25% of school-aged kids are overweight. This is an alarming statistic that impacts all of us. As a community we are taking action to provide a better environment for our children and families and through this Initiative we will continue to make great strides toward a healthier environment in San Diego County,” states county supervisor Pam Slater-Price.

The Initiative’s fiscal agent is Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), a local San Diego healthcare collaborative. In March, the Initiative received \$331,052 from The California Endowment over two years to support capacity building of the program. The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. The Endowment makes grants to organizations and institutions that directly benefit the health and well-being of the people of California. To date, The Endowment has awarded more than 8,800 grants across California totaling near \$1.7 billion. For more information, visit The Endowment’s Web site at [www.calendow.org](http://www.calendow.org).

Funding from the California Endowment will provide for the following: development of a community outreach plan to enhance information exchange and collaborative decision-making among partners; creation of a faith-based advisory council to assist in reaching and engaging underserved community residents and grassroots organizations in Initiative activities; build an advocacy agenda to work with grassroots community groups and institutional partners to advocate for environmental change related to strategies outlined in the *Action Plan*; conduct advocacy trainings for at least 100 community residents; adding an Initiative Coordinator to the team.

Working with Initiative director Moder will be JuliAnna E. Arnett of Columbus, Ohio, who will serve as Initiative Coordinator. Ms. Arnett most recently worked with the Children’s Hunger Alliance (Alliance)

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in Columbus, Ohio supporting the leadership and infrastructure of Ohio Action for Healthy Kids. While at the Alliance, she developed and presented physical activity and nutrition education resources for 400 student-led Ohio Family, Career and Community Leaders of America Chapters.

**San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative Leadership Council**

Dr. Nick Yphantides, Co-chair; County of San Diego Public Health Officer, Co-chair; Office of County Supervisor Pam Slater-Price; Office of County Supervisor Ron Roberts; San Diego County Office of Education; CA Project LEAN; County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency; Community Health Improvement Partners; American Academy of Pediatrics; YMCA of San Diego County; San Diego County Parks & Recreation Department; Children's Initiative; Paradise Valley Hospital; Scripps Health; UCSD Division of Community Pediatrics; Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego; San Diego & Imperial Nutrition Network and the San Diego Padres.

For more information, the public can refer to the Initiative's website at [www.ourcommunityourkids.org](http://www.ourcommunityourkids.org).

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