



County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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PRESS RELEASE

DCFS Medical Hub Program Expands South Bay Facility to Address Health Needs of Foster Children

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has partnered with Los Angeles County Harbor-UCLA Medical Center to celebrate the re-opening of the newly expanded Kids in the Dependency System (KIDS) Clinic. An open house at the KIDS Clinic will be held on Monday, September 29, 2008, from 9 to 11 a.m. at 1000 West Carson Street, Building N-26C, in Torrance.

The KIDS Clinic is operated by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS). The KIDS Clinic, along with five other Medical Hubs in the County, provides mental health, forensic and medical screenings for children who are under the care of DCFS or at risk of entering the foster care system. By working in cooperation with other County departments, the complex medical and mental health concerns of children in the child welfare system are addressed through these Hubs.

The KIDS Clinic has received numerous community donations of funds, services and supplies to decorate and make it kid-friendly, as many of the children have incurred physical or emotional trauma. Among the donors to be honored at the open house will be Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe.

"The South Bay area has the highest caseloads of children and families involved in foster care in Los Angeles County. Identifying potential problems these children are experiencing - particularly mental health issues - must be done as quickly as possible. Expansion of this clinic will go a long way to helping us meet this critical need," said Supervisor Knabe.

Created in July 2006, Medical Hubs are designed to increase the safety of children, service families more effectively and decrease the re-entry of children into the foster care system with the standardization and coordination of high quality initial examinations. The Hubs facilitate streamlined information sharing with other County department's to ensure timely and complete follow-up for the children. Through the Medical Hub Program, the capacity exists to provide

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medical assessments and mental health screenings 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Additional Medical Hubs are located at High Desert Health System, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, Valleycare Olive View - UCLA Medical Center, MLK Jr. Multi-Service Ambulatory Care Center, and at the L.A. County/ USC Medical Center Violence Intervention Program.

“The Medical Hubs provide the children with a high level of medical assessment and care, as well as mental health screening in order to determine the best plan for their future. Through the medical hubs, we are better able to provide information that will assist in the best placement for a child entering foster care, as well as a more stable plan to keep families together,” said DCFS Medical Director Dr. Charles Sophy.

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Established in 1984, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services is the public agency charged with ensuring that children grow up safe, physically and emotionally healthy, educated and in permanent homes. DCFS works to ensure that all children have a connection to family, friends, schools and neighborhoods and provides services to children and their families when they are at-risk due to actual and potential child abuse, abandonment, neglect or exploitation. With an annual budget of over \$1.7 billion and a diverse staff of more than 7,000 employees, DCFS serves children and families through 18 offices located throughout Los Angeles County including Los Angeles, Lancaster, San Gabriel Valley, San Fernando Valley and the South Bay area.