



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 1, 2012

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION AWARDS \$45 MILLION TO PROTECT  
AND EXPAND CRITICAL COMMUNITY HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES**

***The One-Time ‘Catalytic Investments’ Provides Expanded  
Children’s Dental Care, Autism Diagnosis and Treatment, Early Literacy, Year-Round  
Emergency Shelter And Other Critical Services***

**Irvine, Calif., February 1, 2012** — The Children and Families Commission of Orange County approved \$45 million today in one-time funding that will be used to sustain and expand a comprehensive range of community-based services and programs to serve children, from birth to age five, and their families.

From children’s dental care to autism diagnosis and treatment, and a year-round emergency shelter for homeless families, the major allocation of funds will help ensure a breadth of health- and education-related services that are vital to the well-being of children and their families.

The Commission’s action comes on the heels of a judgment implementing the November Superior Court ruling against Assembly Bill 99, which diverted county commission funds that were generated statewide by a 50-cent tax on tobacco products. Approved by California voters in 1998, Proposition 10 levied the tax for the express purpose of funding a broad range of effective, life-changing programs and services designed to ensure children are healthy and ready to enter school. But for the past year, AB 99 had tied up more than \$51 million intended for Orange County.

Once the court ruled against AB 99, the Children and Families Commission of Orange County acted diligently to get the much-needed money into community programs and services. As the use of tobacco products declines in California, so does the funding the Commission receives. With that in mind, Commission members allocated the \$45 million as part of a strategy to reduce its long-term financial obligations, while ensuring the continuation of critical services for children and families.

“Several years ago, when Prop 1D was defeated, Orange County’s residents made it clear that they stand behind the most vulnerable among us – our youngest children,” said Sandra Barry, Chair of the Children and Families Commission of Orange County. “The Commission’s, goal for the past 12 years has been to do everything possible to prepare children for healthy, successful lives. This wise investment of funds will play a major role in that long-term effort.”

Barry described the \$45 million in allocations as “catalytic investments,” because they are intended to be used by their recipients to create self-sustaining, long-term financial models that will not be solely dependent on future Commission monies.

Commission members allocated the one-time catalytic investments for the following programs:

**Children’s Dental Program:** In the Santa Ana Unified School District alone, more than \$500,000 in revenue is lost each year due to oral health issues; with that in mind, the Commission helped launch and sponsors the Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County and the Pediatric Dental Care Collaborative. The organizations provide urgent, preventative and operative dental care through six community clinics, including a mobile dental van. Commission members approved a catalytic investment of up to \$20 million to protect current successful programs and expand the capacity and ability to reach greater numbers of children over the next 10 years.

**Autism/Early Developmental Program:** Growing research is showing that early identification and intervention results in significant positive outcomes, including children born with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Commission supports several integrated community programs that address a range of developmental needs that require specialty services for children diagnosed with autism. Commissioners approved a one-time challenge grant of \$7 million to be matched by other community funders; monies will be used to sustain and expand clinical and diagnostic services and treatments, community outreach and fund permanent facility needs, among others.

**Year-Round Emergency Shelter, HomeAid Orange County:** Acknowledging that homeless children are at greater risk for health, behavior and academic problems, the Commission has long supported HomeAid Orange County. The non-profit organization builds transitional shelters for temporarily homeless families: During the Commission’s 10-year partnership with HomeAid, eight transitional shelter programs have expanded. Commission members approved two endowments totaling \$7 million that will be used to significantly expand the number of emergency-shelter beds available year-round -- currently fewer than 25 beds are available for families in need of emergency shelter, when the county’s Armory Program is closed.

**Early Literacy and Math:** Studies have shown how vitally important early literacy and math skills are to children’s long-term academic success. Throughout its history, the Commission has supported numerous early literacy programs, including “Reach Out and Read,” “Raising a Reader,” and “Read for the Record.” The Commission approved a one-time \$5 million contribution to THINK

Together – one of the top leaders in after-school programs which is now managing the Commission’s early literacy programs– to significantly expand early literacy and math programs throughout the county.

**Healthy Child Development Resources:** There is strong evidence that early screening leads to early identification of developmental delays that can hinder children’s academic and social growth. The Commission approved a \$5.5 million catalytic investment that will leverage existing partnerships with service providers who perform development screenings for young children. This investment will expand the Commission’s multi-year partnership with Pretend City Children’s Museum; the partnership includes programs that promote healthy child development through developmental screenings, immunizations and other services. This investment will enable Pretend City to establish a permanent facility from which expanded services can be offered to children and families; it currently operates in leased space in Irvine.

**Establish an Orange County VISTA Program:** Since 2002, the Commission has served as the statewide lead for a program known as Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). The program – part of a national volunteer program through the Corporation for National and Community Services – places volunteers with community organizations and provides living stipends and educational awards. The Commission spends nearly \$800,000 annually to oversee the program. Commission members approved a \$500,000 investment that will be used to jump-start the transition of the program and to the community-based program with the participation and direct support from the organization that benefit from the VISTA program.

### **About the Children and Families Commission of Orange County**

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County oversees the allocation of funds from Proposition 10, which added a 50-cent tax on tobacco products sold in California. Almost \$47 million was allocated last year to fund 170 programs that served more than 165,800 young children. Funds help pay for early education, pediatric primary and specialty health care, children’s dental, homeless prevention, and child development programs for children from the prenatal stage to age 5 and their families. The Commission’s goal is to ensure all children are healthy and ready to learn when they enter school. For more information, please visit [www.occhildrenandfamilies.com](http://www.occhildrenandfamilies.com).

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