May 22, 2006
To submit comments or items (3 weeks in advance) for this e-newsletter, please contact Vivien Hao, Public Affairs officer, First 5 LA at vhao@first5la.org or (213) 482-7563.

Don't miss the next Monday Morning Report. If this was forwarded to you, sign up now!

IN THIS ISSUE

Children's Insurance Extended
Streamlining Accountability
Hector Ramirez Honored
Voter Survey on Uninsured
Carolina Reyes Honored
Norma Rosales Champion Profile
Mental Health Month

CALENDAR

May 26, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.: Sustainability Meeting on strategies for soliciting public support, basic grant writing skills, and insights from local funders. Presented by the Family Literacy Support Network, LA County Office of Education, Clark Building, 12830 Clark Ave., Downey 90242. To register, call Evelyn Lewis at (562) 922-5660.

May 26, 12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.: Family Information Fair, presented by Queen Anne Place Ready for School Center and Healthy Start, Queen Anne Place School Auditorium, 1212 Queen Anne Place, LA 90019. For information, call Nikki Dana at (323) 936-8506 or ndana@lausd.k12.ca.us.

L.A. Care Contribution Extends Healthy Kids Coverage for Children Aged 6-18

The 35,000 children aged 6-18 enrolled in the Healthy Kids insurance program will have comprehensive coverage until April 1, 2007, thanks to an additional $10.5 million contribution announced last week by L.A. Care Health Plan. The contribution was made to the Children’s Health Initiative of Greater Los Angeles (CHI), a coalition of more than 50 organizations, including First 5 LA, dedicated to providing health insurance options for all children in LA County.

L.A. Care’s latest contribution enables the CHI to fulfill its three-year commitment (April 2004-April 2007) to fund Healthy Kids coverage for children aged 6-18. Just a month ago, the CHI had projected that available funds would run out in October 2006.

While health coverage for children aged 6-18 is funded by private contributions from foundations and corporations such as L.A. Care, the same Healthy Kids insurance program for children aged 0-5 is funded by First 5 LA.

In 2002, First 5 LA made a $100 million commitment to fund Healthy Kids for children aged 0-5 through June 2008.

"At First 5 LA, we’re committed to funding Healthy Kids for younger children, and we applaud L.A. Care and others in the coalition who are helping to ensure that the older siblings of our youngsters have the same comprehensive health coverage," said First 5 LA Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez.

To pursue long-term sustainability, the CHI has joined with other coalitions across California to pursue a policy solution that would provide health coverage for all children in the state.

For information on Healthy Kids insurance, visit www.chigla.org or call (888) 4LA-KIDS.
June 3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.: A Family Book Fair, presented by LAUSD, City of LA, and Families in Schools at LA City Hall (outdoor steps). For information, contact info@familiesinschools.org or (213) 484-2870 x240.

June 5, 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m.: Quality of Life for Families X: Improving the Outcome of Pregnancy. Presented by the Perinatal Advisory Council, Hilton Los Angeles North/Glendale, 100 West Glendale Blvd., Glendale 91202. For information, call Jennifer Taylor at (818) 788-6850.

June 17, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.: 2nd Annual Kindergarten Transition Symposium to feature Los Solecitos with educational workshops, giveaways, entertainment, and food. Presented by Pasitos, Tweedy Elementary School, 9724 Pinehurst Ave., South Gate 90280. To register, call Silvia Cervantes at (562) 806-5400 X173.

June 21, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and 5 p.m.-6:30 p.m.: Importance of Early Attachment: Relationships and Resilience in the Development of the Brain. Presented by the Intercommunity Child Guidance Center, Radisson Hotel Whittier, 7320 Greenleaf Ave., Whittier 90602. For information, call Benny Garcia at (562) 692-0383 or visit www.intercommunity.org.

Accountability Legislation for First 5 County Commissions Clears Assembly

To streamline efforts to increase accountability for public funds, the California State Assembly recently voted unanimously to approve AB 2932, technical legislation that clarifies requirements on which state statutes on conflicts of interest and contracting/procurement procedures are applicable to First 5 county commissions.

AB 2932 was introduced by Assemblymember Wilma Chan (D-Oakland) at the request of the First 5 Association, the coalition of 58 First 5 county commissions, including First 5 LA.

"First 5 LA strongly supports efforts to enhance accountability for the public funds entrusted to us," said First 5 LA Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez. "We are eager to comply with the new regulations and look forward to implementing processes to increase transparency in everything we do to serve children and families."

AB 2932 will now be referred to the state senate for a vote, which is expected in the next several weeks before it arrives on the governor's desk to be signed into law.

For information on AB 2932, contact Patricia Alvarez-Sahagun, First 5 LA manager of government affairs, at palvarezsahagun@first5la.org or (213) 482-7532.

First 5 California Chair Hector Ramirez Honored by Los Angeles City Council

Hector Ramirez, chief operating officer of Para Los Niños, was honored recently week by the Los Angeles City Council for his appointment as chair of First 5 California.

Ramirez was appointed by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to head the seven-member commission after Rob Reiner's resignation in March. First 5 California and 58 First 5 county commissions were created in 1999 to improve the lives of young children and their families.

Presenting the resolution was Councilmember Jan Perry, who represents many of the central and south LA neighborhoods served by Para Los Niños, a nationally accredited community-based family services agency.
Since May is National Mental Health Month, I want to take this opportunity to remind parents of the mind/body connection for ourselves and our children. Just as we fulfill our youngsters' physical needs—nutrition, shelter, clothing, and rest—we should not forget about their mental well-being.

Following are some basic mental health tips for parents:

- **Give children unconditional love**—judge the behavior, not the person.
- **Nurture children's confidence** and esteem by praising and encouraging them constantly.
- **Encourage playtime** as a way to develop creativity, as well as problem-solving and social interaction skills.
- **Give guidance and discipline** when needed. Don’t try to control your children but help them learn self-control.
- **Communicate** by making time each day to listen to your children and talk about their interests and concerns.
- **Get help** if you’re concerned about your child’s mental health. Early identification and treatment are key.

For information, contact the National Mental Health Association at (800) 969-NMHA or visit www.nmha.org.

Evelyn V. Martinez  
Executive Director  
First 5 LA

"Today, with the adoption of this resolution, the Los Angeles City Council recognizes Hector Ramirez as a leader in ensuring that children and their families have a clear and compassionate voice in Sacramento and throughout the state. We commend his outstanding contribution to the mission of Para Los Niños—helping children succeed."

A First 5 LA grantee, Para Los Niños serves 2,500 LA County preschoolers a day and 4,000 families a year.

**United Way Survey Shows Strong Voter Support for Children's Health Insurance**

The United Ways of California last week released results of a statewide survey that showed California voters are deeply concerned about the number of uninsured children in this state, and voters overwhelmingly support proposals to cover all kids in the state.

At a time when Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the legislature have proposed additional funding for local county health initiatives (CHI), the poll also found strong voter support for the local CHI model, including support for additional state funding for CHIs. Survey results include:

- 68 percent said they are extremely or very concerned about children not having health insurance.
- 83 percent said they support a state proposal to "ensure every child has health insurance," ranking it higher than any other proposal tested in the survey, including "increase funding for K-12 education" (75 percent support).
- After being read a description of a specific proposal that included a $400 million annual cost, 67 percent continued to support a proposal to cover all kids.
- 75 percent of voters agree with the statement "one million children in California without health insurance is too many and we should make sure every child in California has health insurance."
Health Center Recognizes Dr. Carolina Reyes' Work in Addressing Disparities

Dr. Carolina Reyes, executive director of First 5 LA’s Los Angeles Best Babies Network, was recently honored by the Arroyo Vista Family Health Center at its 25th Anniversary Dinner at the Millennium Biltmore in Los Angeles.

Nationally recognized for her work to improve maternal health and birth outcomes, Dr. Reyes was honored for her commitment to address health care disparities and advocate quality care for all in LA County.

With health clinics throughout northeast LA, Arroyo Vista’s team of bilingual doctors, nurses, and staff serves thousands of low-income families.

In addition to heading the network of providers and advocates dedicated to improving birth outcomes in LA County, Dr. Reyes is also a visiting associate professor at USC’s Keck School of Medicine and director of the Obstetrics Diabetes Clinic at Women’s and Children’s Hospital.

A board-certified ob-gyn and a former scholar with the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, she has published widely on issues of maternal health quality of care.

Dr. Reyes recently served on the Institute of Medicine Committee on Unequal Treatment and is formerly vice president for evaluation and planning at The California Endowment.

She also serves on the California Community Foundation board, California Hospital Medical Center Community board, the Alliance for a Better Community board, the California March of Dimes Program Committee, and the State of California Department of Health’s Black-Infant Health Program Advisory Board.

CHAMPION PROFILE

Dr. Norma Rosales Advocates for Culturally Competent Health Care

Champion Profile features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA’s tagline: “Champions for Our Children.”

Dr. Norma Rosales, director of Pediatric Services at Venice Family Clinic, has been a leader in advocating culturally competent health care for underserved children for more than 15 years.

Raised in East Los Angeles by immigrant parents, she is the lead physician in LA County’s Lead Tracking Program, which monitors lead levels in young children living in low-income areas.
Dr. Rosales is also director of the Asthma Chronic Care program and the Child Development Pilot Project, aimed at engaging parents as partners with physicians to identify developmental delays earlier.

She serves on the board of the California Coalition for Childhood Immunizations, and advises the UCLA Community Health Advocacy Training program, which trains doctors to serve children in low-income areas.

A graduate of Immaculate Heart College, she received her MD from Boston University and completed her pediatric residency at Kaiser Permanente Sunset.

*Which book has most influenced your life?*
*Touchpoints* by T. Berry Brazelton, MD.

*What makes you happy? Angry?*
I'm happy to see my 8-year-old daughter, Alejandra, laughing. I'm angry when I see injustice.

*Which historical figure do you most admire?*
All the women of the suffrage movement because without them, I could not do what I do today.

*What is your idea of a perfect world?*
A place where people are judged by their merit and hard work, not by the color of their skin.

*What is the greatest challenge faced by LA County children and families today?*
Schools are not preparing children for college and the future.

*Which living person do you most admire?*
My mother, Frances Rosales, who traveled by horseback in Mexico teaching farmers and their children how to read and write. She instilled in her five children the importance of education, and all of us went to college.

*What is your motto?*
"Ask for forgiveness, not permission."