



# The HHSA Connection

FEBRUARY 2004

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

## AGENCY NEWS BRIEF

### Budget Basics

#### An overview of the impact

For months there has been much talk of the proposed state budget. The much-awaited document was released on January 9th. It included spending reductions, bond measures to borrow \$15 billion, shifting property taxes from local governments to the state and a variety of other accounting maneuvers to close the budget gap.

Although it may take months before we know what action the legislature will take, Agency staff should track the budget process as 90 percent of the Agency's funding comes from state and federal funds. Many Agency program and finance staff have spent the past few weeks combing through hundreds of pages of the proposed state budget, to determine what the proposals

mean to the Agency and the services we provide.

Following are some major issues in the proposed budget that could affect services and programs that the Agency administrators:

#### Health

- \$ Caps enrollment to Healthy Families, AIDS Drug Assistance Program, and California Children Services
- \$ Implements a 10% rate reduction to Medi-Cal providers
- \$ Reforms the Medi-Cal program



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## CLASSY CLASSIFICATIONS: CWS MILITARY LIAISON

### Serving the Service Families

#### New position created for local need

HHSA has had a long relationship with the more than 100,000 military families and service providers who reside in San Diego County. They have an important role in our neighborhoods and communities.

To better meet their special needs, Child Welfare Services has created a Military Liaison position. **Pamela Hurd** is a Protective Services Worker who has been working with Child Welfare Service for 14 years. She has taken on this new liaison position and will be coordinating efforts to ensure support services are organized and readily available. These services are especially critical during this time when so many military families are being impacted by loss and separation.

Pam is very enthusiastic about her new position. "I believe that building a strong collaboration between the military and their service provider will allow the Agency to provide better services and ultimately a better quality of life for the families we serve." ❖



*Hurd will apply years of experience to this new position.*

## PROGRAM PERSPECTIVE: MENTAL HEALTH

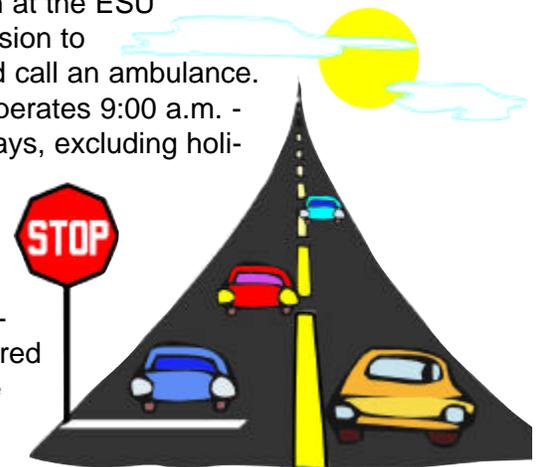
### Taking it to the Streets

#### Outreach services go to high risk youth

The Emergency Screening Unit (ESU) has initiated a pilot outreach program consisting of a Mobile Assessment Team of clinicians. This ESU team provides services to the highest risk youth in resident treatment centers (RTCs) such as Clark Devereux, San Diego Center for Children and New Alternatives Cabrillo.

The Mobile Assessment Team can provide emergency psychiatric assessments to determine the need for inpatient hospitalization. This staff has authority to arrange crisis stabilization at the ESU or arrange admission to UCSD-CAPS and call an ambulance.

The program operates 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. weekdays, excluding holidays. It responds to calls by the RTC as beds are available. Youths with private insurance will be referred to their insurance carrier. ❖



**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

# A San Diego County Riddle:

## What has touched one in three county residents?

It's not the flu, not telemarketers, not even low-carb diets...it's giving.

Every year, County workers like us provide much needed dollars that help our neighbors throughout the region. Last year, County employee payroll deductions through the County Employees Charitable Organization (CECO) and the United Way/CHAD raised more than \$350,000.

CECO's *Employee Emergency Fund* also gives one-time money to County employees with critical needs. This program even raised an additional \$30,000 to assist County employees affected by the October fires.



This year, Acting Director Jean Shepard is Chair of CECO's *Countywide Charitable Giving Campaign*. "Donating the price of a cup of coffee might not seem like it could make much of a difference," said Shepard, "but if each employee gave only \$2 a pay period, we would raise more than a million extra dollars. Our contributions could make a real difference to people in need."

Please consider filling out a pledge card when you are contacted by a campaign coordinator in your building. For questions, contact Lynn Eldred at (619) 685-2291. ❖



**A message from Acting Agency Director Jean Shepard**

**T**alk of the State budget is everywhere these days, but I want to urge each of you to stay focused on the tasks at hand. It may feel unsettling as we wonder how the State budget will roll out, but since it will be months before we know what action the legislature will take, I urge you to carry on with business as usual. After all, the work we do remains vital, and the people we serve still need our help.

Meanwhile, keep in mind the State's fiscal crisis, and know that we have a long road ahead of us until the \$14 billion State budget problem is resolved. Agency executives and I will be working with advisory boards, our contractors, and providers to plan ahead and, if needed to develop contingency plans.

I know that I can count on you to continue to provide excellent services in the coming months, as budget details get hammered out. And you can count on me to keep you informed of new developments and to advocate to the Chief Administrative Officer, for the services that we provide. ❖

*Jean Shepard*

**FROM THE REGIONS: SOUTH REGION**

## Focus on Therapy Safety

### Benefactor improves kids' resources

A private benefactor has made it possible for more than 1,900 children with disabilities served by the California Children Services Medical Therapy Unit in six public schools countywide to have new ergonomically safe equipment.

The "LiteGait" suspension is used to improve a child's ability to walk by using a harness that secures the child over a treadmill. Daphne DeCoster, Physical Therapist, Escondido Medical Therapy Unit, stated, "one mother was thrilled" when her toddler-aged child, with a condition that prevented her from independent movement, walked for 10 minutes in the "LiteGait," then smiled and laughed when assisted to take her first three steps into her mother's arms. The "LiteGait" also allows therapists to single-handedly assist heavier children to walk, which in the past would have required several assistants.

An electrically adjustable treatment table has also been purchased that can be raised up or down to a desired height so pre-school through high-school age children can practice wheelchair to tub or car transfers, improving safety for therapists and patients during practice.

This state-of-the-art equipment not only minimizes injuries for both patient and therapist but most importantly, accelerates progress in therapy and permits more advanced activities, increasing the patient's independence and quality of life. ❖



Wendy Matthews helps Dakoda ("Cody") Thill practice walking, using new physical therapy equipment.

**FROM THE "PAT-ON-THE-BACK" DEPT.**

## In the Spotlight

**Jean Vukotich** has been appointed Interim Agency HR Director. **David Lindsay** was appointed Chair of the SanGIS Technical Advisory Committee.

AIS Director/East Regional Manager **Pam Smith** was recently honored as Individual Leader of the Year during the annual Channel 10 Leadership Awards. She was recognized for her initiative in helping to build intergenerational programs within our community. She is shown with other award winners and members of the Channel 10 staff. ❖



**County of San Diego**

Health and Human Services Agency

### Board of Supervisors

Greg Cox, District 1     Dianne Jacob, District 2  
Pam Slater, District 3     Ron Roberts, District 4  
Bill Horn, District 5

### Chief Administrative Officer

Walter F. Ekard

### Health and Human Services Agency

#### Acting Director

Jean M. Shepard

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Editor: Jennifer Mallory

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### CalWORKs

- \$ Reduces grants by 5% and suspends Cost of Living Adjustment
- \$ Implements stricter work requirements
- \$ Implements a 25% grant sanction for non-compliant families
- \$ Implements a 25% grant reduction to time-expired cases

### Child Care

- \$ Requires more families to pay co-payments
- \$ Imposes time limits for CalWORKs families
- \$ Reduces reimbursement rates and implements training-based rates
- \$ Eliminates services to 13-year olds and some 11 and 12-year olds

### In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

- \$ Eliminates the residual program
- \$ Reduces state's share of IHSS provider wages
- \$ Makes Employer of Record optional

### Foster Care

- \$ Restructures rate payments for foster care facilities
- \$ Institutes performance-based contracts for group homes and foster family agencies

### Mental Health

- \$ Adjusts the state's maximum rate payments
- \$ Transfers responsibility for the Children's System of Care program to counties

In May the Governor will release his revised budget proposal, which will give Agency analysts a better understanding of where we stand. However, until the legislature debates the issues and submits a budget bill to the Governor we cannot be certain of how the services we provide will be impacted. The June HHS Connection will outline the revised budget. ❖

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: POLICY & PROGRAM SUPPORT

## Taking Corrective Action Food Stamp Error Rate Report

While it may just feel like more work, a demand for higher expectations is actually a compliment. Just ask the folks in the food stamp program. Projections show that San Diego County will exceed accuracy goals for 2003. This definitely reflects improvement, and it also means higher goals for 2004.

In recent years, the food stamp error rate has been a hot topic. One reason is the hefty sanctions incurred due to eligibility and benefit amount determination errors. In 2002, San Diego County was penalized \$710,355, and in 2001, \$986,263. We are accountable to both state and federal guidelines and can earn either a financial penalty or bonus.

Why so many errors? In addition to complex rules, tight deadlines, and human error (workers or clients), processing is especially challenging in San Diego due to high immigration, multiple families sharing a single household, and families with earnings.

However, thanks to the concerted effort of all management and staff we can all be proud of their successful corrective action plan. Keep up the good work! ❖

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

## Making the Grade Frontline Leadership Development Program Graduation

S Sharon Adams-Clark, Marsha Bettis, Barbara Burke, Jeanne Conover, Bob Gerard, Rose M. Giordano, Patricia Jensen, Omar López, Alice McLennan, Irene Petropoulos, Helena Proctor, Carolina Salas, Steven Smith, and Yolanda Uriarte were presented with Certificates of Completion at the Manager's Forum on January 29, 2004, for successfully completing the Frontline Leadership Development Program (FLDP).

The FLDP is a self-directed development program for all HHS employees who are in supervisory or middle management positions, as well as those who hope to achieve such a position. This program expands the opportunities for all Agency employees to further their knowledge, skills, and abilities along with developing their talents while meeting the mission of the Agency.



The latest FLDP graduates

Since the program began in January 2002, twenty-two people have graduated. The program takes approximately two years to complete and is administered through the HHS Training and Development office.

Participants are required to complete a minimum of 8 out of 33 classes and participate in a mentoring program or complete a project. To find out more information about FLDP, please visit the Training & Development intranet site:

[http://hhsa\\_intranet/training/fldp/fldpguidelines.pdf](http://hhsa_intranet/training/fldp/fldpguidelines.pdf) ❖