



AGENDA ITEM 6

SEPTEMBER 5, 2012

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Subject	Authority to Negotiate with Children’s Fund Inc. for oversight of funds to support the Children’s Assessment Center (CAC)
Recommendations	Authorize First 5 staff to enter into negotiations with Children’s Fund Inc. for oversight of First 5 funding to support the Children’s Assessment Center (CAC). (Affected Districts: All) (Presenter: Karen E. Scott, Executive Director, 387-1502)
Background Information	<p>The First 5 Advisory Committee provided the Commission a list of recommended priority funding areas, established by using key indicator information and other sources of data to ensure alignment with the First 5 Strategic Plan. Since each strategy is directly linked to specific outcomes, this approach allowed the Advisory Committee to identify areas of relatively higher and lower need in the county. A high priority area identified was to reduce rates of abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and unintentional injuries and death of children ages 0 – 5.</p> <p>Recently, First 5 San Bernardino adopted the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework to ensure that all funded program services help strengthen families, promote optimal child development and prevent child abuse and neglect.</p> <p>A guiding principal within the First 5 Strategic Plan is to strengthen child-serving systems countywide.</p> <p>The Children’s Fund was created in 1986 and is the non-profit arm of the San Bernardino County’s Children’s Network. Children’s Fund’s purpose is to call to action private businesses, non-profit organizations, and concerned citizens to form a public/private partnership. The Children’s Fund mission is to prevent child abuse in our community; to ensure that at-risk children who are abused, neglected, impoverished, or abandoned receive adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical care and education; and to provide equal opportunity for social development for these children. First 5 San Bernardino’s mission closely mirrors that.</p> <p>A partnership between the County of San Bernardino and Loma Linda University Children's Hospital was formed to develop a one-stop Center where child victims of sexual and physical abuse or neglect could receive forensic interviews and evidentiary medical exams and referrals for treatment in a child-friendly setting. The Children's Assessment Center (CAC) was opened on January 24, 1994 and the number of children receiving services has increased steadily over the years.</p> <p>Child victims of alleged abuse are referred to the CAC by either a law enforcement agency, Family Law Court or the Department of Children's Services. Services at the center include forensic interviews by Children and Family Services (CFS) workers who have received specialized training in child forensic interviewing, making it one detailed, forensically sound and developmentally appropriate interview for court purposes. Evidentiary medical exams are performed by physicians who are Forensic Pediatric Specialists. Written reports are provided regarding the outcomes of the interview and medical appointment. Crisis intervention and referrals for counseling are provided to family members by a Victim Witness Advocate from the District Attorney’s office assigned to the Center. Parents receive crisis intervention services as well as referral services.</p> <p>Data provided by the CAC indicates that in 2011, the CAC served 894 children from the ages of 0-18 years. 407 or 46% were children between the ages of birth and 5 years old. There is a great need for supporting this service with the CAC for our</p>

youngest children as they can't always speak for themselves, and need the help of the doctors and staff to share what they have experienced. Each month the CAC sees approximately 34 children ages birth through 5.

As recommended by a Grand Jury report from 2010/2011, a Governing Board for the CAC was reinstated and includes members of the partner agencies who utilize the services such as San Bernardino County Children and Family Services, Department of Behavioral Health, Department of Public Health, Sheriff's Department, etc. An MOU outlines the roles and commitments to the ongoing services available at the CAC.

The Sheriff's Department made a financial commitment that offsets the cost for the medical exams, valued at more than \$900,000 annually. Currently, these costs are covered as follows:

- Loma Linda University Children's Hospital \$400,000
- SB Co. Sheriff's Department \$220,000
- SB Co. Children's Trust Fund \$200,000*

*This commitment may be up to \$200,000; contract is currently being negotiated. A gap of at least \$100,000 exists in the funding of these services.

LLUCH employs all medical staff and the Clinic Manager, and has committed \$400,000 towards these positions. Additionally, LLUCH provides medical supplies for use at the Center, as well as general fiscal support as needed.

For the 2011-12 Fiscal Year, Children's Fund contributed funds for the Clinic Manager position (\$60,000 for half of the year), as well as \$300,000 towards physician services in order to cover a budget shortfall. Additionally, Children's Fund fundraised and provided more than \$85,000 in equipment and items for the Center. For the 2012-13 Fiscal Year, Children's Fund is committed to fundraising for the Clinic Manager position (\$120,000 annually)

The CFS forensic interviewers are funded separately and eligible for federal allocation in the CFS budget. CFS funds their co-located staff and supports related expenses and materials for those staff members. Historically they funded a portion of the medical services contract, which the Sheriff's Department took over in 2011. CFS has also funded the building maintenance and utility cost in the current location.

The CAC is planning to move to a new facility (County owned in San Bernardino) that is much larger and will better serve the number of children and families they see on a daily basis. It is not uncommon for a child to spend much of a day at the center. The CAC has shared the need for "child friendly" spaces including a children's kitchen near the interview rooms where they can access snacks while taking a break from the interview and exams. The kitchen would also serve as the training area for Failure to Thrive education with parents, by medical staff for alleged neglect or concern referrals. The children also need a safe outdoor play area, which could be developed at the new CAC location, and peaceful places indoors, with age appropriate furnishings, where children can wait quietly and read, listen to music or audio programs, or color in order to calmly prepare for their interview. There also exists a need for "whole family" friendly spaces such as individual booths or rooms for privacy, 2-way mirrors for interaction therapy and interviews, etc.

And finally, CAC has shared the need for additional Forensic Pediatricians which can be "home grown" through an effective fellowship program. The objective of the fellowship program is to train pediatricians to become medical experts

knowledgeable in all areas of child abuse and neglect, including physical and sexual abuse, as well as neglect and psychological abuse. Fellows develop skills and expertise in providing legal testimony, and advocating for children through their work as members of the multidisciplinary team, didactics, rotations with other specialties, attendance at national and international conferences, and experiences with community agencies. There are currently fellowship programs related to child abuse prevention/intervention at approximately 20 hospitals across the United States that are accredited or pending accreditation. There are two fellowship programs in Southern California which include Chadwick Center in San Diego and Harbor UCLA in Los Angeles.

More than 45% of the children served at the CAC fall within First 5's targeted population. Focusing on the strategic priorities to strengthen systems as well as prevent, protect and reduce rates of abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and unintentional injuries and death of children ages 0 – 5, First 5 San Bernardino seeks to support the work of the CAC at an appropriate level in response to these victims of alleged child abuse and neglect of children throughout San Bernardino County.

With the Commission's approval to move forward, First 5 San Bernardino would negotiate for appropriate support to the Children's Assessment Center for program services and improvement to environment, that strengthens the system and ensures the best possible outcomes for children ages 0 -5. The recommended contract would be brought back before the Commission for final approval.

Financial Impact

Unknown at this time.

Review

Regina Coleman, Commission Counsel

Report on Action as taken
Action:
Moved: _____ Second: _____
In Favor:
Opposed:
Abstained:
Comments: _____
Witnessed: