

FIRST 5 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION
San Luis Obispo County

Meeting Minutes, March 26, 2008

Members Present	Katcho Achadjian René Bravo, M.D. Julian Crocker Don Dennison Lee Collins Rosalinda Rodriguez Carol Capito Greg Thomas, M.D.	SLO County Board of Supervisors SLO County Medical Association SLO County Office of Education Children's Services Network SLO County Dept. of Social Services Community at Large Child Care Planning Council SLO County Dept. of Public Health (back-up Health Officer)
Members Absent/Excused	Janet Murphy	Community at Large
Staff Present	Susan Hughes, Jason Wells, Anne Tognazzini	
Call to Order	Chairperson Katcho Achadjian called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM.	

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Holifield, Martha's Place Clinical Director, provided follow-up on the Theraplay training that occurred in January and thanked the Commission for its support.

Lisa Fraser, SLO-CAP Executive Director, also thanked the Commission for its Theraplay training support and distributed a handout of testimonies from the training.

Joe Holifield also spoke on the issue of continuum prevention intervention and distributed some related research articles.

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES: Commissioner Collins moved, and Commissioner Dennison seconded that the minutes of January 23, 2008 be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION FOR MARTHA'S PLACE, FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2008, TO JUNE 30, 2009: Commissioner Collins asked questions regarding the mental health treatment for 15 children and families (mentioned in the scope of work), as it relates to First 5 funding and Medi-Cal reimbursement. Dr. Holifield provided clarification, as did Commissioner Thomas. A possible wording change was briefly discussed, but the decision was made to leave the wording as is.

There were no comments from the public. A motion to approve the agreement was made by Commissioner Collins, seconded by Commissioner Crocker, and passed unanimously.

+++++ 2007/08 STRATEGIC PLANNING +++++

Background: Discussion and decision on the next steps to be taken by staff to contract for personnel and other professional services. The options are: 1) enter into an agreement with the County for the 2008-2009 fiscal year for services, comparable to the agreement in preceding year or 2) do not enter into an agreement with the County for 2008-2009 fiscal year for services, and direct staff to take the necessary action, as outlined in the staff report, to set up administrative operations for First 5 beginning July 1, 2008.

Susan McGraw reflected on the 10-year history of First 5 SLO, noting that the initial focus was broad with the awarding and ministering of many small grants. Now it has narrowed and is more focused on key initiative areas. She explained that First 5 is becoming more involved in systems change, looking at barriers to service delivery and how to integrate service delivery more effectively. She noted that tonight's agenda items are related to this evolving concept of First 5 and what is going to best serve First 5 in the future.

Ms. McGraw noted that at the October meeting, staff was asked to come back with more detailed timeline and budget information, as it relates to the possibility of discontinuing to contract with the County for services.

Executive Director Susan Hughes reviewed a timeline she developed with the assistance of Patricia Gomez, County Counsel. She noted that tonight the Commission would be asked to make the basic decision re: whether to continue to purchase services from the County.

Ms. Hughes asked for questions on the timeline. Commissioner Crocker asked if Ms. Hughes had considered the use of a smaller committee of the Commission to work with First 5 in regards to personnel issues. Ms. Hughes indicated that she had previously suggested it, so she was very open to it, and felt the more involvement the better.

Ms. Hughes then reviewed a summary of budget details related to county costs, which are increasing significantly. She also reviewed a summary of four options for staffing: 1) Status quo, with 100% county services, 3.60 FTE's; 2) Status quo, but with no County MOU, 3.60 FTE's; 3) Full-time Executive Director, with no County MOU, 4.00 FTE's; and 4) Full-time Executive Director and a half-time accountant, with some Auditor's services but no County MOU, 3.50 FTEs. She noted that from a numbers point of view, options 2, 3, and 4 are all more cost effective than option 1. From a manager's point of view, she expressed a preference for option 4 (for at least the first year or two), as it would continue Auditor oversight while at the same time providing in-house accounting expertise with the knowledge of First 5 programs, which is critical.

Several Commissioners asked for clarification re: the staffing levels of option 4, as well as the timeline as it relates to not continuing with an MOU with the County, which would take effect at the end of the current fiscal year.

Chairperson Achadjian asked for comments from the public.

Jeff Hamm, Health Agency Director, noted that if the Commission wants to move in the direction of option 4, but ends up needing to continue with the current staffing model into July or August, the Health Agency would be happy to facilitate that.

Ms. Hughes noted that her plan is to get it done by the beginning of the fiscal year as it would be easiest for everyone. She added that she would know better by the April meeting whether an extension into the next fiscal year might be necessary.

There were no other comments from the public.

Discussion was brought back to the Commission, and possible wording of a motion was briefly discussed. Commissioner Crocker asked Health Agency Director Hamm if the County or he (Director Hamm) had a position on the matter. Director Hamm stated the position was neutral.

Patricia Gomez from County Counsel clarified that the contract expires on June 30, 2008. She suggested that the motion could be to direct staff to take those steps necessary to implement the staffing model of option 4, with the caveat that if it isn't possible, then First 5 would negotiate month-to-month services with the County.

Chairperson Achadjian asked if there was a deadline for informing the County of First 5's intent. Ms. Gomez explained there would need to be sufficient time to get an agreement on the Board of Supervisor's agenda, so essentially, 2 weeks before the expiration of the contract.

Commissioner Collins asked who would become the legal employer of record and Ms. Gomez confirmed that First 5 would be, and added that First 5 is a statutorily created entity, and that "independent public entity" is the term used by the statute. It was clarified that First 5 is not a 501.c.3, but rather, is like a CSD (Community Services District). Commissioner Collins asked about insurance, and Ms. Hughes confirmed the insurance is already being purchased.

Commissioner Thomas asked whether, as an independent public entity, First 5 can receive tax-deductible donations. Ms. Gomez stated that her recollection was that it could, and Commissioner Thomas asked for confirmation, stating that if it can't, the matter needs to be brought back for discussion.

Commissioner Crocker asked for clarification re: retirement and health insurance options. Ms. Hughes explained that First 5 can contract directly with County Pension Trust for retirement benefits; and for health benefits, First 5 can become a group through CalPers since it is a public entity.

There were no additional questions or comments.

Chairperson Achadjian asked if the wording that Ms. Gomez suggested for the motion was available. Anne Tognazzini, First 5 staff (referring to her typed notes) advised that Ms. Gomez first clarified that the contract expires on June 30, 2008. Then Ms. Gomez had suggested the motion could be to direct staff to take those steps necessary to implement the staffing model of option 4, with the caveat that if that isn't possible, then First 5 would negotiate month-to-month services with the County as necessary. Commissioner Bravo moved to accept the motion as read, but added that it was First 5's intent not to renew the MOU with the County when it expires, except on a month-to-month basis if necessary.

Chairperson Achadjian asked Ms. Gomez if First 5 needed to send anything to the County at this time, and she replied that there was no provision in the contract to that effect.

Commissioner Thomas seconded Commissioner Bravo's motion, with the motion passing unanimously.

Commissioner Bravo thanked Ms. Hughes for the documents she prepared on the matter, and Commissioner Collins thanked Health Agency Director Hamm for being willing to consider a month-to-month renewal of the MOU if necessary.

Initial Review of an Amended Contracting and Procurement Policy

Susan Hughes presented an amended contracting and procurement policy as an information-only item, so that it could be brought back next month for approval. Ms. Gomez, of County Counsel, explained that in anticipation of the tasks First 5 will need to complete (as a result of the motion just made not to renew the MOU with the County) the contracting and procurement policy needs to be changed. Ms. Gomez asked that Commissioners contact Ms. Hughes with comments or possible changes between now and the next meeting, with a goal that the policy be approved then. Ms. Hughes noted that there were a few other policies that would need approval, but that they could wait until a later date.

Universal Home Visitation Study Results

Consultant Susan McGraw handed out the draft Universal Home Visitation Study. She added that it is not a final document, but rather an open-ended document because anything First 5 chooses to do in the area of Home Visitation would be to support and supplement existing programs.

Ms. McGraw reviewed pieces of the report where specific information had been requested, in regards to model programs and outcomes/evaluation research. She noted that there is tremendous diversity in the programs and reviewed the manners in which programs vary. She discussed outcomes and evaluations and why reviews have mixed results.

She pointed out a table in the study comparing eight Home Visitation models, and spoke about two programs that showed significant positive results: 1) First Time Mothers, targeted to high risk families, and 2) Touchpoints, which is the model of Santa Barbara's WEB program and First 5 San Mateo's program.

Discussion ensued, with questions being asked about 1) the accuracy of outcome measures, 2) the Touchpoint program visitors, 3) the professionals needed, and 4) whether our County has the programs in place for the children once problems are identified.

Commissioner Crocker asked why First 5 was exploring this now. Ms. McGraw gave the history of First 5 having asked for additional information on this topic over the years, starting with funding First Time Mothers in 2000 and most recently asking for information on model programs and what it would cost to fund them in this County.

Ms. Hughes noted that \$25,000 has been set aside for Universal Home Visitation Planning, and the Commission might incorporate some of the ideas and models into what First 5 might fund after 07-09. Ms. McGraw noted that Universal Home Visitation has been viewed as another possible initiative, along with Oral Health.

Ms. McGraw reviewed a handout (page 20 in the report) which showed potential linkages between Universal Home Visitation, SLO County funded initiative and programs, and other agency programs. She then reviewed options for implementation: 1) geographical targeting, and 2) "high risk" targeting.

Ms. McGraw then discussed potential costs, noting that it might cost 700-800K to implement the Universal model here, and approximately 800K for the Touchpoints model. She added that if First 5 wants to start small, and use a one-time assessment or geographical approach, those costs could be calculated.

Ms. McGraw then reported on a recent gathering of the original stakeholders, and provided a resulting summary of challenges/barriers and recommendations. One recommendation was to hire a coordinator and another was to start small, perhaps geographically (such as targeting the School Readiness communities).

Commissioner Crocker asked about the next step, and Ms. Hughes explained that the Commission needs to decide whether they want staff to bring back cost estimates, to be considered in strategic planning, for funding after 2009. Additionally, Commission needs to let staff know which of the models and target groups interest them. Commissioner Crocker asked whether this is part of the next strategic plan, and Ms. Hughes explained that it can be, if it is the desire of the Commission. She added that the strategic planning process for the next funding cycle would begin late this summer or early this fall.

Commissioner Bravo indicated he felt more discussion was warranted, and Commissioner Thomas agreed that the research raises more questions. He noted that money has been put into home visitation, but the question remains about how to do it most effectively with the resources available. Commissioner Rodriguez asked why other counties were doing home visitation, and Ms. McGraw noted that it is done because it has positive outcomes: it is an effective means of delivering many services.

Commissioner Dennison noted that the issue has been discussed over a period of time, and that there was value in moving forward, and in looking at a vehicle that would be more effective. He expressed a desire to continue the discussion and have more information gathered, even if the Commission is not ready to make a decision now.

Commissioner Collins asked about the recommendation from the stakeholders for a coordinator and whether they could do the coordination among themselves. Ms. McGraw indicated that was their original intent, but it has not happened.

Chairperson Achadjian asked for comments from the public.

Lisa Fraser, Director of the San Luis Obispo Child Abuse Prevention Council (SLO-CAP), expressed excitement over Santa Barbara County's WEB (Welcome Every Baby) program, and noted that all families are at risk. She also stated that having a coordinator/lead would assist and accelerate forward motion. She noted this modality is an excellent way to prevent child abuse.

Sharon Frederick spoke of her experience with the WEB program in Santa Barbara, and that it was clear there that everyone is at risk, regardless of income. She also mentioned later assessments of some conditions that aren't apparent at birth.

Joe Holifield, Clinical Director of Martha's Place, referred the Commissioners to the handouts he provided earlier in the meeting, re: the continuum of risk, noting that it's important to look at every family and every baby as much as possible. He also expressed concern because providers don't know who does what in terms of services, and he wonders if there is overlap, or parallel but not intertwined processes.

Biz Steinberg, Executive Director of EOC, noted that Early Head Start, Head Start, and teen parenting programs are all willing to be part of whatever collaborative effort develops. She also noted that building relationships between children/families and services in the community will build school readiness. She also requested that the focus go beyond Oceano and Paso Robles (the two School Readiness program sites).

Mary Bucher, Program Manager for the WEB program in Santa Barbara County (but a resident of SLO County), noted that they want to be as supportive as they possibly can, and that SLO County wouldn't have to reinvent the wheel. She also suggested it might be valuable to talk to the Commission in Santa Barbara County, including about why they have continued to fund the WEB program.

Lisa Fraser, SLO-CAP, thanked Susan McGraw for the report, and wanted to point out that Beginnings (which is already funded by First 5) was accidentally left off the handout re: linkages.

Chairperson Achadjian brought the discussion back to the Commissioners, and asked about the cost estimates. Ms. McGraw noted that the estimates were for Universal visitation, but that it certainly could be started on a smaller scale.

Commissioner Thomas made a motion to direct staff to continue to look at the costs and the most effective ways of increasing home visitation, to be as close to the goal of Universal as could be obtained with future resources, and to bring this information to the strategic planning process for the 2009 funding cycle. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dennison and passed unanimously. Chairperson Achadjian also reminded staff to contact the Commission in Santa Barbara, as suggested during Public Comment.

Results and Initial Staff Recommendation from the Children's Oral Health Summit

Wendy Wendt, Children's Oral Health Summit facilitator, and Jason Wells, First 5 staff, provided a review of the Children's Oral Health Summit, including the history leading up to the Summit and the concepts discussed during the three afternoon break-out groups. They also discussed the major needs that emerged.

Mr. Wells then reviewed the Summit call to action for First 5 investment consideration: 1) Create and fund a Children's Oral Health Coordinator position, 2) Launch a countywide children's fluoride varnish program, and 3) Produce preventive children's oral health media messages aimed at caregivers of young children.

Mr. Wells reviewed the possible duties of an Oral Health Coordinator, and Ms. Wendt gave two examples of oral health coordinator positions in other counties being funded by First 5 dollars. Commissioner Thomas noted that the CCDDPP state funding program requires a local coalition and local coordination. Ms. Wendt added that there are lots of funding opportunities which require monitoring for future grant development.

Mr. Wells and Ms. Wendt then reviewed the fluoride varnish program concept and the children's oral health media concept.

Ms. Wendt noted the other consistent message from the Summit evaluations and comments was the importance of taking immediate action to show that First 5 is assuming a leadership role in funding something concrete and doable. Ms. Hughes noted First 5 staff would be talking to CA Endowment about their possible interest in partnering and funding in the area of oral health policy/advocacy and systems change.

Mr. Wells then distributed a memo from Mary Gallegos, Children's Medical Services (CMS) Administrator, about an additional oral health need that has been identified since the Summit. The memo detailed the need for a case manager to coordinate the screening and scheduling of children's oral health surgeries.

Ms. Gallegos explained she had met with Drs. Smith and Walker [local dentists] in January about Children's Health and Disability Prevention program (CHDP) staff being unable to continue to provide case management after July 1. Drs. Smith and Walker asked her to investigate other funding sources for this critical position in order for them to continue to provide surgical services. Ms. Gallegos explained the position would serve approximately 250 children needing surgery in the next 12 months. It would be a temporary position while systems change was taking place.

Ms. Hughes noted that First 5's current strategic plan has unallocated funds for emerging issues in the approximate amount of \$158,000. She offered that First 5 might fund the case manager @ \$40,000 (as a stop-gap measure) and then allocate the balance (\$118,000) toward some variations of the three Summit recommendations. She noted this funding proposal would fill the gap that has occurred with CHDP, plus move toward the future in regards to an oral health systems building project. Funding could be explored for a larger oral health initiative for the next round of strategic planning (for 2009).

Commissioner Bravo noted that prevention is important, but there are also lots of low income children needing dental care who aren't getting it. He noted that Clinica de Tolosa, in the north county, works, and he would like to see the First 5 Commission expand that model of health care access to the south county.

Chairperson Achadjian also expressed support of finding a way to serve the needs of children in the south county and suggested First 5 might partner with an organization, such as CHCCC or Tolosa.

Commissioner Collins concurred with Commissioner Bravo and Chairperson Achadjian and expressed an interest in receiving more information on cost estimates. Commissioner Collins stated that sometimes children come to the attention of the Dept. of Social Services because they are in need of dental work. He noted there are some dentists who will provide it pro-bono, but it's a stop-gap measure, and doesn't address the needs of children outside of the Social Services/foster care system.

Commissioner Dennison gave his support to possibly replicating the north county clinic in the south county, and stated he wanted to see more of a side-by-side comparison of the recommendations being

made. He also noted he doesn't want to abandon the recommendations from Summit without further consideration.

Commissioner Capito noted problems with hospitals giving too short notice to families, in order to utilize unallocated time for dental surgeries. She agreed the south county does need the services of a clinic such as Tolosa.

Commissioner Rodriguez noted a need to look at resources, and agreed with the idea of another clinic, but also noted the need to look at preventive measures. She questioned whether First 5 should take on funding a clinic or in providing leadership to make it happen, and asked for more dollars and cents data. She suggested that other related issues need to be considered, such as the shortage of dentists, and the USC mobile van might be a way to introduce dentists to this area.

Commissioner Crocker asked about the funding cycles relative to the unallocated funds and also asked how the suggestion of a south county dental clinic fit with the Children's Oral Health Summit recommendations. Ms. Hughes indicated that although access to care is important, she wasn't sure First 5 should be funding a full clinic. However, First 5 could be leading, convening, and orchestrating. She stated she sees the potential for making systems change and would hope that a clinic would be just one of the components of a coordinated effort in the next funding cycle.

Commissioner Crocker asked about the case manager position and the availability of providers. Ms. Gallegos confirmed that Drs. Smith and Walker would not be able to provide their services without a case manager, and that there is provider gap in the south county.

Commissioner Bravo mentioned that with the availability of clinics to do full mouth restorations, the hospitals issues could be decompressed.

Chairperson Achadjian noted the needs of Smith and Walker can't be ignored, because it's important that hospitals realize there is a need for them to continue to open their doors.

Commissioner Crocker requested information on other options to address the problem of lack of services to low-income children in the south county, as well as more info on a fluoride varnish program.

Commissioner Thomas agreed there needs to be a side-by-side comparison of various models and of various options, such as increasing coordination, finding other providers, and working on transportation issues. He noted he believed the grant to start Tolosa was \$450,000. He also stated that he thinks the Coordinator position is incredibly important, in addition to the case manager position. He suggested funding the Coordinator position, and asking staff to come back with financial information on a south county clinic. He also noted that perhaps staff could have outside help in looking at business plans.

Chairperson Achadjian opened the discussion to the public.

Kena Burke, Executive Director, Children's Health Initiative (CHI), noted it is the Denti-Cal children who are lacking providers because Healthy Kids and Healthy Families have a network of providers, but Denti-Cal does not have any local providers. She supported the idea of having a south county clinic, because of the value of having a dental home. She also spoke of grant opportunities.

Biz Steinberg, Executive Director, EOC, expressed concern that children won't be able to have surgeries and dentists won't be willing to do surgeries at local hospitals without a case manager. She also suggested providing First 5 staff with local expertise to assist in looking at all the options.

Maureen Titus, dental hygienist and Vice President of Partnership for Children (the Board for Clinica de Tolosa), mentioned they recently completed some strategic planning and the south county need had come up. She suggested the possibility of a collaborative effort.

Joseph Mercardante, Dental Director at CHCCC, encouraged contact with ADA, noting they have a model for an oral health coordinator position. He also noted that case management improves utilization and revenues. He mentioned that the grant for Tolosa was one million, with the initial money being a \$125,000 federal grant. He said CHCCC had investigated south county clinic services, but anticipating budget cuts, were told to put the project on hold. He added that CHCCC would like to offer collaboration and support.

Chairperson Achadjian asked Maureen Titus how serious Tolosa was about starting a clinic in the south county, and she replied that she couldn't answer, but she would check with their Board. She stated that if she couldn't be at the next meeting, she would have someone come in her place.

There were no other comments from the public.

Ms. Hughes noted that because of HR work to be done, April will be a very impacted month, and staff suggested coming back in May for possible action re: oral health. Chairperson Achadjian asked that staff put the CHDP case manager position on the April agenda instead. Chairperson Achadjian stated that the discussion in May could deal with the possibility of a south county clinic. Commissioner Thomas suggested Dr. Dunne be contacted as a possible source of information on business models.

Ms. Hughes asked for clarification on what staff is being asked to bring back to the May Commission meeting, noting that partnership with Tolosa and with CHCCC have both been mentioned. Commissioner Bravo asked for information on feasibility, a potential timeline, potential partners and stakeholders, and funding for a south county clinic. Commissioner Crocker asked for information on the various options to address the lack of dental services to low income children in the south county, rather than just a business plan for a clinic. He also asked for more information about the three Oral Health Summit outcome recommendations presented by staff.

Commissioner Thomas mentioned that the First 5 Executive Director may be authorized to spend up to \$10,000 for consulting (without coming back for Commission approval) and suggested she do that to get the information needed by May.

Commissioner Bravo stated he felt the bottom line was to get a clinic in the south county, some way, some shape, some how. Ms. Hughes reminded that it would require using other resources, because First 5 can't fund for other than the 0-5 age group.

Presentation: Early Learning For All (ELFA) Task Force

Chairperson Achadjian noted the ELFA presentation by Commissioner Capito would be rescheduled to the May meeting.

Adjournment

With no other announcements or comments, Chairperson Achadjian adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM

All materials referred to in these minutes are available at the First 5 Children & Families Commission office. For a more detailed account, recordings of the meeting are available by calling 781-4058.

**The next regular Commission meeting will be:
April 23, 2008, 4:00 – 6:30 p.m.
2975 McMillan Ave., Room MM1, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401**