

**FIRST 5 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION**  
**San Luis Obispo County**

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 28, 2008**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	Katcho Achadjian	SLO County Board of Supervisors
	René Bravo, M.D.	SLO County Medical Association
	Carol Capito	Child Care Planning Council
	Lee Collins	SLO County Social Services
	Julian Crocker	SLO County Office of Education
	Don Dennison	Children's Services Network
	Janet Murphy	Community at Large
	Rosalinda Rodriguez	Community at Large

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Greg Thomas, M.D. SLO County Public Health (back-up CHO)

**STAFF PRESENT** Susan Hughes, Jason Wells, Anne Tognazzini

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Achadjian called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Holifield, former clinical director of Martha's Place Children's Assessment Center, stated he has been hired as a school psychologist for San Luis Coastal Unified School District. He thanked First 5 for its strong support of Martha's Place.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- 1) Approval of April 23, 2008 minutes.
- 2) Approval of 2008-09 Commission Meeting Schedule

There were no comments from the Public. Commissioner Crocker made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Collins and passed unanimously.

**ELFA (EARLY LEARNING FOR ALL) PRESENTATION**

Commissioner Capito gave a presentation on San Luis Obispo County's "Early Learning For All" (ELFA), a countywide plan for universal access to high quality early learning opportunities. She noted the plan's final draft is ready for public review at the County Office of Education's website. Handouts of the presentation and of the ELFA Executive Summary were provided.

**HR STUDY: PROPOSED EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Susan Hughes, First 5 Executive Director, provided a brief overview of issues related to Health, Vision, and Dental benefits being proposed for First 5 staff when First 5 becomes an employer. She noted First 5 would need to cover a gap in health insurance coverage (with Cobra) because insurance companies require that First 5 be an employer for 90 days prior to providing coverage for existing First 5 employees who are currently insured through the County. She also mentioned life insurance and long-term disability benefits (two benefits which County management employees currently get) could be discussed later.

Ms. Hughes referred to the HR memo and attachments in the agenda packet and an additional handout with recommended actions regarding employee benefits, specifically in linking the Commission's benefit contribution to the County of SLO contribution amounts. Patricia Gomez, County Counsel, noted the monetary figures for health benefits were linked to specific bargaining units, rather than to categories of exempt and non-exempt employees. Susan Hughes explained the monetary linking was done based on the bargaining units of current employees. She also noted three of the four positions would be exempt.

In regards to vacation time balances of existing employees, Ms. Hughes explained existing employees would start with a maximum of one year's accrual rather than their entire County accrued balance. A discussion followed, and it was noted that current employees would get paid off by the County for vacation balances on leaving the County's employ, but that it also wouldn't be fair for them to start at First 5 with zero vacation hours. A suggested solution was that existing employees could start with a credit for a set number of vacation hours, but if those hours are used in advance of when accrued, and the employee then leaves First 5's employ, the employee must pay back First 5 for those hours.

Ms. Hughes also reported on a meeting with Tony Petruzzi of San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust regarding retirement benefits for First 5 employees. She noted First 5 employees could move over to a miscellaneous group within Pension Trust for a similar or equal cost. She also noted the draft contract in the agenda packet is actually LAFCO's Pension Trust contract, personalized for First 5. Patricia Gomez, County Counsel, noted First 5 can also elect to change Pension benefits from what the County currently offers.

Commissioner Crocker suggested that although First 5 can try to mirror the County as much as possible for the transition, employees need to understand the mirroring wouldn't continue automatically and each year is a new year.

The discussion was opened up for public comments, and there were none.

Chairperson Achadjian noted that any motion regarding employee benefits would include the vacation time changes discussed earlier in the meeting.

Commissioner Crocker made a motion to accept the recommended employee benefits. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Capito and passed 7-1, with Commissioner Collins opposing.

Ms. Hughes asked for input on a draft Employee Salaries and Benefits Policy. Patricia Gomez, County Counsel, noted one wording correction in the third paragraph of Section III: it should read that employees "must" (rather than "may") participate in the Pension plan. It was also confirmed that ALL employees would be "at will" employees. In regards to the collective bargaining situation, Ms. Gomez noted the employees would have to organize into a union if desired, but initially there would be no collective bargaining unit.

## **GENERAL PROGRESS UPDATE ON SETTING UP OPERATIONS**

Ms. Hughes provided an update regarding the search for office space and noted she will be working with Jeff Hamm regarding employee terminations and equipment transferring to First 5. She also reported on two significant cost savings in the 2008-09 budget: 1) She was able to negotiate the auditor's cost for services down from \$20,000 to \$10,000, and 2) A new outside auditor has been selected through an RFP process, reducing the 2008-09 audit cost from \$13,000 to \$8,000.

## CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH

Wendy Wendt, Planning Facilitator for First 5, did a presentation regarding First 5 staff's recommendation to fund an Oral Health Coordinator. The Oral Health Coordinator would be responsible for organizing collaborative efforts, coordinating existing oral health efforts, developing and implementing new efforts, pursuing grant opportunities to sustain programs, and advocating for changes in the system in order to better address Children's Oral Health in San Luis Obispo County. The Santa Barbara County model of oral health care was reviewed, as was a proposal for a similarly modeled option for SLO County.

Jason Wells, First 5 staff, did a presentation regarding South County options for increasing access to care, including 1) La Clinica De Tolosa establishing a South County clinic, and 2) Community Health Center's (CHC) Mobile Clinic operating full-time. He also spoke about the possibility of a Dental School residency program partnership between CHC and University of Southern California (USC).

Chairperson Achadjian asked Mary Gallegos, CHDP Deputy Director, to report on USC's interest in providing services locally. Ms. Gallegos reported that Arroyo Grande Hospital was interested in having the USC mobile clinic set up at their location. Suzanne Russell, Executive Director of Clinica de Tolosa, noted that typically their operations include two days of screening, followed by treatments (over the course of five days) of 100 children. Ms. Gallegos noted it would be a one time event, not a sustainable practice. Ms. Gallegos mentioned another possibility was a partnership between CHC and USC School of Dentistry, with a satellite location in SLO County. She noted it could draw pediatric dentists who might settle in this area permanently. She added that such a program might involve teledentistry, with a pediatric oral surgeon guiding a procedure via a video connection.

Commissioner Murphy asked whether the USC mobile clinic would provide patient information for follow-up. Suzanne Russell noted that USC provides some information to the hosting group, but that follow-up is sometimes difficult due to living situations of the population served. She reported that Clinica de Tolosa ended up seeing about 50% of the children USC had treated.

Commissioner Crocker indicated concern that the contract Coordinator's first tasks and emphasis were a bit thin on prevention. He stated he was also unclear on what authority the Coordinator would have. Susan Hughes noted that in the short term the position would be supported out of the First 5 office, and that the best long term placement could be decided during the pilot year.

Joel Diringer, Diringer and Associates, noted that it is clear from his research that when we fail at prevention, an intense need for intervention follows. He expressed support for staff recommendations regarding the coordination of both prevention and access to care. He noted that in a study of CHI programs across the state, Santa Barbara County has the best utilization of the dental component of Healthy Kids, and SLO County has the lowest. In regards to establishing another clinic, he noted that reimbursements are an issue, because simply having more fundraisers (which Clinica does to cover their funding gap) is not sustainable. He also reminded that First 5 can only fund the 0-5 portion, and that beyond funding start-up costs for a clinic, First 5 shouldn't be paying for direct services year in and year out. He suggested the approach of First 5 staff seems to be an appropriate balance of both prevention and increasing access to services, and that all efforts require coordination.

There were no additional comments from the public.

Commissioner Rodriguez suggested there might be a way to influence the visiting USC students' commitment to community, such as by requiring a related course. She also noted if parents have dental disease, they can pass it on to their children.

Commissioner Dennison noted that one of the Coordinator's first assignments needs to be to start building sustainability for the position. He also expressed concern that a part-time position isn't adequate, especially in regards to writing grants. Jason Wells noted the position would have to be supported by First 5 staff in the first year. He also mentioned the possibility of receiving Cal Endow funds, and that First 5 staff envisioned a collaborative grant writing process.

Susan Hughes noted Cal Endow is looking for a proposal from First 5 within the next two months. She noted it was through such collaboration that CHI got started. Wendy Wendt added that in Santa Barbara, the Coordinator position received new sources of funding specific to additional responsibilities.

Commissioner Murphy noted that bringing in USC dental students is the first step in getting them to stay, as happens with Cal Poly students. She also supported an emphasis on prevention, noting there also has to be a focus on educating parents prior to a child's birth.

Commissioner Capito asked whether Cal Endow funds might be lost if First 5 funds a coordinator position, since Cal Endow had expressed interest in funding such a position. Susan Hughes indicated First 5 could divert funding if Cal Endow provides funding later.

Commissioner Bravo stated that hiring a coordinator is a good place to start, but noted that there are profound needs that continue to go unmet. He expressed concern that the coordinator might waste too much time gaining credibility and that the position might not be sustainable. He agreed that prevention is important, but noted we need to address manpower shortages immediately. He added that he thinks we can do both.

Commissioner Crocker made a motion to follow staff recommendation to hire a Children's Oral Health Coordinator, with the provision that in a month or two, staff reports back on issues raised in the discussion about the position, including placement, emphasis on prevention, and building sustainability. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bravo and passed unanimously.

## **STAFF REPORT**

Susan Hughes reported on First 5 California State Conference, including specific information from the preconference Finance session she attended. Commissioner Rodriguez, Commissioner Murphy, Jason Wells, Anne Tognazzini, and Tom Keifer also gave brief reports on Conference sessions they attended.

Ms. Hughes also provided an update on the Cox bill, which would eliminate First 5 entirely, including First 5 CA, the Association, and all the county Commissions. She noted it would have to get on the ballot for a statewide vote by the people. She spoke about the need to educate people, especially legislators and community leaders, about the work First 5 does.

Ms. Hughes reported on a new project which First 5 helped fund, a "Born Learning Trail" at Mitchell Park, in partnership with United Way and Bank of America. The Trail consists of interactive signs that engage children in early learning and physical activities. She stated that First 5 provided \$2250, from the FY 2007-08 Administration budget. She promised a follow-up email to Commissioners regarding the installation ceremony.

Chairperson Achadjian asked for information about the Cox bill as soon as possible, so that First 5 and the County of San Luis Obispo can get involved.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other announcements or comments, Chairperson Achadjian adjourned the meeting at 6:42 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:  
June 25, 2008, 4:00 – 6:30 p.m.  
2975 McMillan Ave., Room MM1, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401**