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**First 5 San Luis Obispo County Awards Funding to
3 Local Programs to Improve Children’s Oral Health**

(San Luis Obispo, CA) – First 5 San Luis Obispo County continued its commitment to local children and families by awarding \$175,725 to three local agencies that provide preventive oral health services to children, ages 0-5, and their families in San Luis Obispo County. The funding will support services in the community from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012.

“The funding allocations are a direct result of the two children’s oral health summits convened by First 5 San Luis Obispo County in 2008 and 2010,” said Susan Hughes, executive director of First 5 San Luis Obispo County. “During the summits, the community began the process of identifying service gaps and needs. These three projects go a long way in addressing those needs.”

The funding will support an expansion of children’s oral health services at La Clinica de Tolosa in Paso Robles and will provide services to approximately 600 children over the two-year funding period. At Community Health Centers of the Central Coast, dental clinics in Nipomo and Templeton will expand pediatric dental services as a result of new equipment purchased with First 5 San Luis Obispo County funding. At the County Public Health Department, an Oral Health Coordinator will be hired to coordinate children’s oral health services throughout the County, with the long term goal of establishing a centralized, coordinated and sustained effort to address this important and critical need.

(more)

“The children’s oral health awards will increase the safety net of services to families with young children in our community, especially during this difficult economic time,” said Katcho Achadjian, First 5 Chairperson. “It is very important to focus on stabilizing services for the most vulnerable residents of our community.” By approving the funds, First 5 has adhered to its vision that children in San Luis Obispo County thrive in nurturing, respectful environments and enter school healthy and ready to learn.

First 5 San Luis Obispo County was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, placing a 50-cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, child care and other programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. Including the new funding awards, the Commission has invested approximately \$21 million since 2000 to benefit local early child development programs and projects.

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