

# COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA

For the Agenda of  
June 17, 2008

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Health and Human Services

Subject: Report Back on Continuation of Birth & Beyond/Differential Response Services with Decrease in Funding

Contact: Lynn Frank, Director, 875-2002

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Birth & Beyond**

Birth & Beyond, a Family Resource Center-based program, is an effective service delivery strategy designed to reduce adverse health, social, and economic outcomes for families. With the primary goal of prevention, Birth & Beyond (B&B) is focused on protecting children and improving family functioning and self-sufficiency. Through a home visitor, a family gains access to a wide range of supportive services directed toward the family's own goals and vision of the future. The target population is families expecting babies, or with new babies 0 to 6 months of age, especially first time mothers, teen mothers, single parents, and those struggling with challenges of poverty and isolation. B&B has been offering Family Resource Center (FRC) activities and home visitation services to Sacramento families in eight communities since 1999. Since its inception, home visitation has been offered to over 21,746 families; families have attended over 68,854 classes and activities in the Family Resource Centers, and the Centers have hosted over 113,358 community members at local community events.

### **Differential Response**

Not all families meet state or local criteria for formal Child Welfare Services intervention. Yet, these families are often in need of some level of support or services to maintain child safety and family stability. Differential Response (DR) bridges this gap. Eligible families come to the attention of the County through the Child Abuse Hotline. If they reside in one of the target regions and can benefit from community resources and home visitation support, they receive DR. Currently both B&B and DR services are available in three regions on a pilot basis. A family receives one of three service paths:

- **Path 1** families use only contractor services. It is for families that do not meet any of the definitions of child abuse or neglect and whose allegation(s) do not include any known or suspected safety concerns. In addition, the family or child voluntarily presents with a

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- need that could be addressed through neighborhood-based B&B Family Resource Centers.
- **Path 2** families receive joint contractor and County response services. The allegations meet the definitions of abuse or neglect. There may or may not be suspected safety concerns, but they do not indicate a need for immediate removal and/or court intervention. The family is likely to benefit from early linkage to voluntary neighborhood-based services or a Family Resource Center.
- **Path 3** families are served by the County. These families need more intense services and court intervention may be appropriate. The allegations meet the definitions of abuse or neglect and may include one or more safety concerns. A joint response may occur between the contractor and CPS after initial Path 3 response.

Through CPS Quality Assurance Review, it has been demonstrated that the recurrence rate for those families linked through DR home visitation services has been reduced by approximately 24%. Research and best practice indicate that family engagement activities increase families' participation in culturally appropriate, community-based resources that provide early intervention and prevention services.

**Birth and Beyond Community Response**

The Division has been working with the current B&B and DR providers, to create Birth& Beyond Community Response (B&BCR.) B&BCR will combine the two approaches, serve both target populations, and expand the new B&BCR model to eight regions in the County. Contracts containing this approach will be before the Board on June 17, 2008.

**DISCUSSION**

The Division had decided to combine B&B and DR into B&BCR as an improved service delivery model well before the current budget cuts were proposed. Once the need for budget cuts became clear, the Division and providers agreed to scale back funding in the three DR pilot areas and extend the B&BCR model to eight communities. In the old model, eight regions had a B&B program. Three of these eight also piloted DR. Now all eight regions will implement the B&BCR model. However, there is insufficient money to implement B&BCR at the desired level. In the old model, each region had two team leaders and 10 home visitors. In the B&BCR model, each region will have one team leader and 6 home visitors. While the B&BCR program will be more widely available, each region will have fewer home visitors. The staff will be cross trained to respond to both B&B families (primary prevention approach) and DR families (Path 2 CPS Community Joint Response).

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED:  
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County Executive

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