

# COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA

For the Agenda of:  
September 29, 2009

To: Board of Supervisors  
From: Department of Health and Human Services  
Subject: Report Back On Clearance Exams  
Contact: Ann Edwards-Buckley, Director, Health and Human Services, 875-2002

## **BACKGROUND**

During the September 16, 2009 Budget Hearing, the Board of Supervisors requested the Department of Health and Human Services report back with information regarding medical clearance exams and the status of the exams if the current contract with UC Davis Medical Center is terminated due to the proposed budget cuts.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Department provides medical services to abused and neglected children via several contracts with Regents of the University of California (for UC Davis Health System). The services include medical consultation for Emergency Response social workers trying to determine a child's safety, medical clearance exams for children taken into protective custody, comprehensive exams for foster children including medical, mental health, dental and hearing screenings, developmental assessments and forensic evidentiary exams to collect evidence of abuse and neglect.

The proposed budget cuts will result in the loss of all medical services listed above, except for evidentiary exams and medical consultation. CPS considers the medical clearance exams for children zero to five years of age as the highest priority among those medical services proposed for elimination. These exams are vitally important because these young children are CPS's most vulnerable population and often cannot verbalize medical problems or injuries. CPS implemented clearance exams in 1999 (before the initial First 5 funding cycle) because management recognized there was great need for these types of exams. The exams, although an excellent practice, are not mandated. Therefore, the CPS restoration request placed the mandated services in the Emergency Response program as the top priority for restoration.

Because this population often does not receive medical care and treatment as needed, and enters foster care with various medical problems and communicable conditions, the clearance exams provide a means for identifying medical problems requiring immediate treatment as well as signs of abuse and neglect. These medical concerns are ones that often cannot be detected by a social worker during their assessment process and, because of that, clearance exams provide more information regarding a child's safety in the parent's home. For instance, UCD medical

clearance exam data over the past nine years shows that 38% of all physical abuse injuries were found in children who were placed into custody for reasons other than physical abuse. In addition, among children receiving clearance exams, 81% with concerning exam findings for sexual trauma were not placed in foster care because of sexual abuse in the family.

The Board requested the Department identify alternative funding sources to continue providing the medical clearance exams. In response, Department staff has been in contact with representatives from UC Davis Medical Center, the Children's Receiving Home and the First 5 Sacramento Commission to develop a medical clearance exam program proposal. The First 5 Sacramento Commission has requested that CPS and/or a community partner submit a letter requesting funding. The funding request will be included in the Commission's agenda for their October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. CPS and partner agencies will work collaboratively over the next few days to develop the proposal, considering innovative and fiscally sound alternatives to continue providing these exams to children in CPS custody.

If the proposed cuts are approved with no restorations, the UCD contract for medical clearance exams will end on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Children will proceed directly to placement unless it is clear to non-medical social work staff that they are ill or have an injury requiring immediate attention. Although the Department is working collaboratively with community partners for a proposal to continue the exams, there will be a gap in services as there is no guarantee of alternative funding and even if funding is located, it will be months before the program can be reinstated. Additionally, due to the cuts, UCD CAARE Center will need to layoff or transfer the child abuse and neglect experts providing the exams and it may be difficult to resurrect the clearance exam program.

There are no staff restorations as a result of this item.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED:  
TERRY SCHUTTEN  
County Executive

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ANN EDWARDS-BUCKLEY, Director  
Department of Health and Human Services

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
JAMES W. HUNT, Acting Administrator  
Countywide Services Agency