



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY, SCHOOLS JOIN TO STRESS IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH EXAMS

Partnership With School Districts Results in Improved Compliance With State Law

A partnership with the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and local school districts has resulted in improved compliance at two school districts with a California law requiring all children to receive a comprehensive health exam before or after entering first grade.

Children in both public and private schools must receive the exam 18 months before or 90 days after entering first grade. San Diego County typically maintains 95 percent compliance with this law. By providing more information to parents, both the San Diego Unified School District and the Lemon Grove Unified School District improved their numbers from last year.

“The exam is important because it helps identify health problems that may result in frequent absences,” said Pam Slater-Price, Chairwoman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. “The Board of Supervisors applauds this extra effort to make certain parents understand the importance of their children getting these exams, and paying attention to the results, thereby giving their children a better shot at success.”

Both districts worked with HHSA to address the unique challenges facing them. The San Diego Unified School District, which enrolls more than 10,000 first graders annually, focused on training front office staff and health staff to inform parents about and motivate parents to obtain preventive health care. The number of preventive health exams increased from 91 percent to 95 percent in school year 2004-2005. This translates to an additional 400 children receiving preventive care prior to school entry in the district.

The Lemon Grove Unified School District concentrated on decreasing parents' waiver of the health exam, which they can sign if they can't take their child to the doctor for preventive care. Lemon Grove nursing and health staff provided information about the importance of preventive care as well as low- and no-cost health care resources for families. The district decreased its waiver percentage from 26 percent to 0 percent, or by approximately 100 children during the 2004-2005 school year.

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