



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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LOCAL IMMUNIZATION COALITION LAUDED

Immunization Initiative Receiving Award For Efforts to Increase Immunization Rates

A coalition of public and private organizations, with the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency's (HHSA) Immunization Branch as the lead agency, has been presented with the American Public Health Association (APHA)/Glaxo Smith Kline Partnership for Healthy Children Award.

The San Diego County Immunization Initiative (I-3) was recognized for its community-based collaborative efforts to improve the health of children. The presentation took place at the APHA's annual meeting, held in Philadelphia from Dec. 10-14.

The Initiative is a coalition of about 150 partner organizations working together to reduce vaccine preventable disease by increasing immunization of San Diego's children, adolescents and adults. When it was formed in 1991, I-3's focus was on infants and toddlers. Since then, the coalition has broadened its mission to encompass improving immunization coverage for adults as well.

The coalition has successfully brought together a variety of public and private organizations, agencies and programs to work on increasing immunization coverage. Member organizations collaborate on strategic planning, community assessment and research. Coordinated efforts yield new initiatives to improve access, availability and quality of immunization services throughout the county.

I-3's collaborative successes include improved immunization rates for two-year-olds from 60 percent in 1991 to 86 percent in 2004 and an increased number of immunization clinics in the county. Local activists have praised I-3 for working with existing community groups to improve immunization coverage.

For instance, I-3 has collaborated extensively with local Head Start programs. One such program is the Alpha Kappa Alpha Head Start, which provides free preschool to low income San Diego families in East County. Agency Director Geneva Roberts said I-3 has provided her program with information, resources, rewards and stickers promoting and improving immunization coverage for the preschool population.

For more information about I-3, please visit the website at www.immunization-sd.org.

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