

GCYF Pre-Conference Institute

Early Screening & Intervention: The Final Frontier in School Readiness

Sunday, September 24, 2006

At least 15% of all children have special health care needs and more than 11% of school-age children have problems serious enough to be in special education programs. In other words, almost every family is touched by **someone** – their child, or a brother, sister, grandchild, nephew, cousin or neighbor – who has a disability, developmental delay, or mental health, behavioral or learning problem.

Early detection and intervention work. As the National Academy of Sciences said in *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*: “Compensating for missed opportunities, such as the failure to detect early difficulties or the lack of environments rich in language, often requires extensive intervention, if not heroic efforts, later in life.” Further, even though we have highly accurate screening instruments, almost no pediatricians or other health care providers use these quick, simple and inexpensive tools.

As a result, the problems of infants and toddlers too-often fester unattended, missing the critical womb-to-five window of opportunity when a child’s brain, body and behavior change at the most astonishing rate. Ironically, our costly systems for older children and youth – from juvenile justice to child welfare – are largely populated by girls and boys who needed early intervention, but never got it. Clearly, early screening and intervention is about a lot more than “special education.”

This interactive pre-conference institute will explore:

- What we **know** vs. what we **do** as a country in terms of early identification and effective interventions for problems in young children;
- How two very different places – Los Angeles County and Hartford, Connecticut – are working to make high-quality developmental screening and follow-up a reality for families across the socio-economic spectrum;
- How smart investments in early identification and intervention could dramatically improve the lives of children and their families; and
- The role of philanthropy in leveraging change.

Session Coordinators:

- Dorothy Fleisher, Program Director, W.M. Keck Foundation
- Rena Large, Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families

Speakers:

- Margaret Dunkle, Convener of the Los Angeles County Early Identification and Intervention Group, and Senior Fellow at the George Washington University Center for Health Services Research and Policy.
- Madeline Hill, Director, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Education Foundation
- Judy Higelin, Early Advantage school readiness and early identification initiative, Los Angeles County Office of Education.
- Virginia Martínez Victorín, Vice President for Corporate & Employee Giving at Washington Mutual
- MaryAnn O’Brien Venice Family Clinic, Program Administrator for Pediatric, Teen and Women’s Services
- Norma F. Rosales M.D. FAAP, Venice Family Clinic

SPEAKER BIOS

MARGARET DUNKLE

Margaret Dunkle is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Health Service Research and Policy at George Washington University. She convenes the Los Angeles County Early Identification and Intervention Group, a multi-sector collaborative with the goal of assuring that all children receive high-quality developmental screenings and needed follow up. A graduate of Syracuse University, Ms. Dunkle has more than 100 publications to her credit and has testified nine times before the U.S. Congress. Her honors and accomplishments include:

- Receiving the 2004 American Academy of Pediatrics' Dale Richmond Award for outstanding contributions in the field of child development;
- Negotiating, on behalf of the Los Angeles Children's Planning Council, a partnership between L.A. County and the Census Bureau to get annual data for the eight Countywide Service Planning Areas (SPAs) and 69 sub-SPA areas of 100,000 to 150,000 people;
- Conducting bipartisan Capitol Hill seminars on children and families (including a hands-on hearing that put policymakers in the roles of a low-income family applying for more than 20 different federal, state and local programs);
- Receiving the "Hammer Award" from Vice President Al Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government;
- Designing and commissioning the landmark 1992 study, *How Schools Shortchange Girls*;
- Conceiving and drafting a 1986 federal amendment that enabled women to receive federal student financial assistance without losing eligibility for AFDC ("welfare") or Medicaid (health care); and
- Writing the first comprehensive analysis on Title IX and women's athletics. In his least-read book, *Sports in America*, James A. Michener said this report "is a model of restraint, persuasion and good sense. But it also has a sharp bite."

DOROTHY FLEISHER, PH.D., MPA, MSW

Dorothy Fleisher is a Program Director with the W. M. Keck Foundation's Southern California Program, where her primary responsibility is overseeing grantmaking in the areas of arts and cultural, civic and community services, health care, precollegiate education, and early childhood development. She has been with the Foundation since 1999.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Dr. Fleisher worked for United Way for fourteen years, where she oversaw allocations to a network of organizations and launched several major initiatives. She is a member of the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council, representing the Southern California Association for Philanthropy, and has been actively involved in community planning projects, serving as a member of First 5 LA's Universal Pre-K Master Plan Advisory Committee and Facilities Task Force.

In 1996 she was honored by the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers as Social Worker of the Year, and in 1998 she was a recipient of the YWCA of Greater Los Angeles' Incredible Woman Making History Award. She earned her doctorate in Social Work from the University of Southern California with a focus on social policy and administration and is the mother of three.

MADLINE HALL

Madeline serves as director of the Los Angeles County Education Foundation, the nonprofit partner of the Los Angeles County Office of Education. The Foundation's priorities include school readiness (with a focus on early learning and intervention), science and environmental education, and services to children who are disadvantaged, disabled or under court supervision. Her prior experience includes establishing funding processes for a new health care foundation and monitoring federally-funded social services projects. Earlier in her career, she served as editor for a nonprofit publication on government aid programs and was a classroom teacher for seven years. She received her Masters in Public Administration from California State University, Fullerton, and secondary teaching credential through Loyola Marymount University.

JUDY HIGELIN

Judy Higelin has over 25 years of experience as a special education teacher and administrator. She has taught at all levels, from early childhood to the university, where she prepared teachers to recognize the signs and symptoms of children with special needs. She has developed and administered both publicly and privately funded grants, including an information “helpline” for parents and professionals focused on the needs of exceptional children and adults. She currently administers the Early Advantage school readiness and early identification initiative for the Los Angeles County Office of Education. She is the mother of a successful adult with ADD and learning disabilities.

VIRGINIA MARTÍNEZ VICTORÍN

Virginia Martínez Victorín is Vice President for Corporate & Employee Giving at Washington Mutual. Her extensive background in philanthropy includes work as Senior Program Officer for the ARCO Foundation, Program Officer at the California Community Foundation, and designer of the giving program for the Thelma Pearl Howard Donor Fund for children. Virginia’s diverse professional experience and expertise range from scholarship programs and teacher professional development to community organizing and minority physician recruitment. She is passionate about improved services for persons with disabilities. With husband Andres, she parents a growing and lovable son, Gabriel, who was diagnosed with autism when he was nearly three years old. Virginia volunteers her time as a parent advocate, special advisor and speaker for Fiesta Educativa – a nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of families with children with special needs, and serves on the National Advisory Board for PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Education Rights – a nonprofit providing technical assistance for parents raising special needs children). Virginia was a panelist for the 2005 Governor’s Women’s Conference speaking on parent leadership in the disability community.

MARYANN O’BRIEN

MaryAnn O’Brien, Venice Family Clinic’s Program Administrator for Pediatric, Teen and Women’s Services, joined the Clinic in July 2002. She oversees all programmatic and budgetary functions for the prenatal, cancer detection, and family planning programs, including special projects such as the Youth Health Initiative. She manages several grants in support of women’s services, submitting applications, complying with reporting requirements, and maintaining relationships with funders such as Title X, First 5 LA, Partnered for Progress and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc. After earning a BS Cum Laude from Providence College and moving to Los Angeles, Ms. O’Brien became a Program Coordinator at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, where she managed several outpatient departments and participated in multiple strategic planning projects during her eight-year tenure there.

NORMA F. ROSALES M.D. FAAP

Dr. Rosales is a native bi-lingual bi-cultural Californian who received her Medical Degree from Boston University School of Medicine in 1987. She returned to Los Angeles and completed her residency training at Kaiser Sunset Pediatric program in 1990. Since then she has worked at the Venice Family Clinic, the largest free clinic in the nation. While at the Venice Family Clinic she has been the leader of the pediatric program, and the primary supervisor for the pediatric residents from Cedar Sinai as well of other training sites. She has pioneered programs that have helped make the clinic one of the leading agencies dealing with children with chronic disease. She developed the Lead tracking system, The Chronic Kids Program that helps educate children with Asthma, and she is currently working on a new Developmental program/ model. Dr. Rosales is an advocate for children’s rights and is a frequent speaker in both English and Spanish throughout Los Angeles regarding the needs and concerns of children, and is currently participating in the CHCF leadership fellowship program to continue her quest for innovative health initiatives.