



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 25 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

500 West Temple Street, Hall of Administration, Room B-22, Los Angeles, CA 90012
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April 7, 2010

First Lady Michelle Obama
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington D.C., 20500

Dear First Lady Obama,

The Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families (Commission) applauds your personal involvement to raise awareness to the importance of being physically active and eating right in your "Let's Move" Initiative. In addition, your invitation to school-age children to become involved in the White House organic garden brought the benefits of home- and locally-grown produce to the forefront. These efforts promote the health and well-being of our children. Your appointment by President Obama to the Childhood Obesity Task Force to provide "optimal coordination" between the private sector companies, not-for-profits, agencies within the government and other agencies to address the problem of childhood obesity will greatly assist the goal to eliminate childhood obesity in a generation.

The Commission is responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and providing oversight of the Department of Children and Family Services regarding the health and well-being of children in Los Angeles County. Four years ago the Commission began review of the daunting data indicating mounting evidence that links childhood overweight/obesity with cardiovascular risk factors such as hypertension, high cholesterol levels, and abnormal glucose tolerance. We were especially concerned with the prediction that this may be the first generation that will not outlive their parents.

Following the involvement of public and private partners, in December 2008, the Commission recommended that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors develop a policy to address childhood obesity. This policy was adopted by the County in 2009. The Board of Supervisors recognizes that effectively combating this epidemic requires a coordinated policy agenda that addresses all of the contributing factors and keeps policy makers on target to achieve a comprehensive solution that includes children

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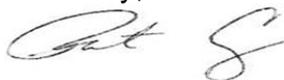
from age two to twenty-one. We still need to address many factors, including but not limited to finding safe places to exercise and providing greater access to healthy food.

Beginning in December 2009, the Commission partnered with the Department of Children and Family Services, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the City of Pasadena Public Health Department to conduct Healthy Lifestyle Trainings at the various faith-based facilities in each of the Service Planning Areas of the County. At this time, we have provided these trainings to a number of relative caregivers who care for approximately 50 percent of the children in out-of-home care.

The program is comprehensive. Training is didactic and interactive in which caregivers are provided with information on how to make healthy choices especially in light of a tight economy. Utilizing the new MyPyramid, participants learn that the largest sector of the pyramid is the steps that represent the importance of being physically active. Following a PowerPoint presentation, participants are engaged in the game *The Price is Life*. In this activity, participants are asked to identify the healthiest choice based on sugar, fat, and salt content. At the close of the training, each participant is given a canvas bag with material including useful items such as a recipe book and measuring cups to help determine portion size. Participants are also able to taste healthy and flavorful snacks. Should you be in the Los Angeles area, we invite you to attend one of our Healthy Lifestyle Trainings.

Your leadership in this national public awareness effort on childhood obesity is commended and highly encouraged. By bringing this issue to national attention, our efforts to positively change behaviors will become more effective.

Sincerely,



Patricia Curry, Chair
Los Angeles County
Commission for Children and Families

PC:AS:ma

c: Board of Supervisors
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Director, Children and Family Services
Director, Public Health
City of Pasadena Public Health Department