



YOLO COUNTY

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Yolo Coalition Kicks Off Expansive Outreach Campaign and New Medical Coverage for Kids**

#### *Children's Health Initiative Aims to Insure Every Yolo Child*

(West Sacramento, CA) The Yolo County Children's Health Initiative (Yolo CHI) will outline its medical coverage enrollment program and introduce its new *Healthy Kids* insurance product at a community celebration this evening at the West Sacramento City Hall Galleria. The event will officially kick off Yolo CHI's outreach efforts aimed at insuring the estimated 3,600 uninsured children in Yolo County. Approximately two-thirds of these children are eligible for existing public health insurance such as Medi-Cal or Healthy Families, but are not currently enrolled due to linguistic and cultural barriers as well as confusing and complicated eligibility requirements. *Healthy Kids* is designed to cover the children of families with incomes of up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level, without regard to immigration status.

Yolo CHI is a collaborative program of First 5 Yolo and the Yolo County Children's Alliance. The coalition also includes participants from Yolo County agencies, community-based organizations, schools, clinics and health systems that are working together to increase access to quality health care for underserved children in Yolo County. "We want to reduce parents' fears and confusion by offering client-friendly locations where families can meet with application assistants who are trained to help enroll children in health coverage programs available for low- and middle-income families," states Yolo County Supervisor Helen Thomson, chair of First 5 Yolo and Yolo County Children's Alliance. "Parents and guardians also will be educated on how to use the health system to best meet the needs of their children."

*Healthy Kids* fills in the gap for children whose parents or guardians are unable to purchase insurance and do not qualify for Medi-Cal, Healthy Families and Kaiser's Child Health Plan. *Healthy Kids* provides low-cost medical, dental, vision and mental health coverage for children through age 18 living in Yolo County. For *Healthy Kids*, immigration status does not affect eligibility. This insurance product is new to Yolo County and funded through both public and private grants as well as individual donations. "We've raised \$850,000 to start Yolo CHI and *Healthy Kids*," reports Katie Villegas, executive director of Yolo County Children's Alliance, "but Yolo CHI will need to bring in a minimum of \$1.5 million each year to fully achieve our goal of providing insurance to the estimated 1,254 county children eligible for *Healthy Kids*."

In keeping with its mandate to serve the youngest children of Yolo County, First 5 Yolo has pledged \$625,000 a year for five years to Yolo CHI, specifically to pay for health premiums and outreach and enrollment for children ages 0 to 5 years. “First 5 Yolo money will provide insurance coverage for the estimated 284 uninsured children under age six who are not eligible for existing programs,” says Jackie Hausman, Yolo CHI coordinator for First 5 Yolo. “In addition, we will be providing outreach support services through many of the agencies and programs we fund.”

Yolo CHI is seeking private donations to help meet its goal of making certain 100 percent of the county’s low- and middle-income families have medical coverage for their children. Says Thomson, “It makes good sense for all of us. We know that children’s regular access to necessary medical care cuts down on communicable disease as well as the need for emergency and specialized services. It can only lead to better health for all of us in Yolo County.”

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*Yolo CHI is a collaborative program of First 5 Yolo and the Yolo County Children’s Alliance. Formed in 2005, Yolo CHI’s goal is to make certain all Yolo County children have health insurance, including medical, dental, vision and behavioral health coverage, so they grow up healthy and able to achieve their full potential in life. For more information, visit Yolo CHI’s web site at [www.yolohealthykids.org](http://www.yolohealthykids.org).*