



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

April 14, 2016

The Honorable Tony Thurmond, Chair
Assembly Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittee No. 1
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Foster Care Public Health Nurses: \$1.65 Million for Staffing Support

Dear Chairman Thurmond:

San Bernardino County requests your consideration and support of a budget item to increase the state allocation for Public Health Nurses (PHNs). Specifically, we request your support for a budget augmentation of \$1.65 million to ensure there are sufficient PHNs to oversee and monitor psychotropic medication and mental health service provisions for children and youth in foster care.

More than 9,000 California foster children are being administered psychotropic medication. As of March 2016, San Bernardino County had 6,002 dependent children/youth being served by Children and Family Services. Of these children, 9.5% have been prescribed psychotropic medication in 2016.

The State has a responsibility to monitor the administration of psychotropic medications and to ensure the health and well-being of foster children. Recognizing this responsibility fifteen years ago, the legislature created the Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care (HCPCFC). California child welfare agencies provide oversight of health care services for foster children primarily through the program.

Since HCPCFC began, the state has expanded the role of PHNs beyond such activities as conducting home visits, providing home-based nursing interventions, and participating in multidisciplinary case consultations to also include servicing non-minor dependents and managing oversight of psychotropic medications. However, these program expansions were undertaken without additional funding.

PHNs are a great resource to our child welfare system. Recently passed legislation, SB 319 and SB 238, allow PHNs to review and monitor psychotropic medication and treatment, assist in scheduling and monitoring appointments and support court review of treatments. Adequate staffing is necessary to ensure that there is appropriate psychotropic medication case management.

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For these reasons, the County of San Bernardino urges your support for \$1.65 million or more to ensure there is sufficient number of PHNs who work to improve the health outcomes of children and youth in foster care. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcounty.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Ramos', written in a cursive style.

JAMES RAMOS
Board of Supervisors Chairman
Third District Supervisor
County of San Bernardino

c: Members and Consultants, Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittee 1
County of San Bernardino Legislative Delegation