

## Nevada Institute For Children's Research & Policy

# NICRP

Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy  
Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2009

## Letter from the Director: The 2009 Legislative Session and Beyond

Dear Friends,

The 2009 Legislative Session, which ended back at the beginning of June was one of the most difficult and unique sessions in State history. The economic downturn and accompanying state budget shortfalls resulted in some difficult decisions for state legislators at a time when the need for public services has been at it's greatest. Despite the budget difficulties, we did have some wins for children in the 2009 session, most notably the creation of the Legislative Committee on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice. This committee, currently chaired by Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie, was much needed to provide a focus on these issues and create a forum for addressing the problems, and potential solutions, in a detailed and focused manner.



Another big issue during the session was children's healthcare, partially fueled by the continuing efforts at the federal level to implement a solid healthcare reform package. Recent studies continue to show that Nevada has one of the highest rates of uninsured in the country. Despite these rankings, conservative efforts during the session to restore some pre-session cuts to the Nevada Check Up Program were successful (although, hopefully, not short lived) and SB4 was passed to help streamline the application process for Medicaid and NV Check Up. However, although the Medicaid budget was increased to meet new demand, actual eligibility has so far exceeded the budget projections. Rumors of additional budget cuts and a special session are still looming, however, as of the writing of this letter, no official announcements have been made.

Looking forward to the 2011 Legislature, it is important to keep a couple things in mind. First, the landscape of the Legislature is about to make a dramatic change. Term limits will prevent many long-standing legislators from returning to Carson City in 2011. This means that we will be seeing a lot of new faces in the next session, at a time when hopefully our State budget will be making a recovery. It is important to make sure that you know who is running for office and where they stand on children's issues prior to casting your vote. Don't be afraid to ask the

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### Upcoming Reports

#### **Clark County Child Death Review 2008 Annual Report -**

The 2008 Child Death Review Report will be available at <http://nic.unlv.edu> on October 6, 2009.



**Second Annual Kindergarten Health Survey Report** - In the fall of the 2008-2009 school year the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy partnered with the Clark County School District and the Southern Nevada Health District and the State Health Division to create a survey regarding the health of incoming kindergarten students in an effort to collect baseline information on children's health. This year, NICRP is again working with local

tough questions - these are the people who will be representing YOU in making policy decisions for our state.

Second, and most important, Nevada does NOT have to continue to rank at the bottom of every list when it comes to children's issues. We can make a difference and there is still a lot of work to do, not only in Carson City, but in our communities as well. We need to work together as a community, and as a State, to develop long-term, evidence-based solutions to improving the overall well-being of children in Nevada. Start the dialogue now to develop effective policies and communicate your ideas with our policymakers. YOU are the experts and your involvement is vital - our children do not have a voice, but you do.

Thank you,  
Denise Tanata Ashby  
Executive Director  
NICRP

school districts to administer the Kindergarten Health Survey for the 2009-2010 school year. A few new questions have been developed for this year's survey, including questions about oral health, type of daycare/preschool that the child attended, and the child's zip code of residence, allowing for a more in-depth regional analysis. At this time, approximately 9,000 surveys have been collected and data entry is in progress. NICRP anticipates that the 2009 Kindergarten Health Survey Report will be complete by early 2010.

## *Second Annual "Step Up for Kids" Events*

### **NORTHERN NEVADA PRESS CONFERENCE & COMMUNITY MIXER**

**Wednesday October 7th, 6:30pm**

**Boys and Girls Club of Truckee Meadows**

**Guest Speakers: Sheriff Mike Haley,  
Senator Maurice Washington**

Please join us for a community meet and greet with catering and entertainment from local high school programs, information on community faith-based groups, medical providers, law enforcement, social service, local policy makers and other community partners and a free drawing for passes to local family entertainment.

### **SOUTHERN NEVADA "A FAMILY AFFAIR" WITH GOSHEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**Saturday October 10th, 10am- 12pm**

**@ West Las Vegas Library**

**Press Conference: Noon featuring Commissioner Weekly and Assemblywoman Pierce**

Join us for free food, music, activities for kids, art and craft vendors, information and networking booths for faith based groups, medical providers, law enforcement, social service, local policy makers, and other community partners.

We also invite children of all ages to help us tell the community what children need to be healthy and safe. The deadline for Submission is October 9th. Rules can be found on our website and winners are announced at the press conference.

More details can be found on our website at <http://www.everychildmatters.org/Nevada/About/Step-Up-for-Kids-Week.html>

Please join us at both or either event to demonstrate that in Nevada, Every Child Matters.

CONTACT: Amanda Haboush, Every Child Matters in Nevada, [amanda.haboush@unlv.edu](mailto:amanda.haboush@unlv.edu) or 702-217-3614.



*Coming Up!*

*Early Childhood Summit on Comprehensive Services for*

## *Homeless Children and their Families*

On October 23rd from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM the Nevada Head Start State Collaboration Office in partnership with the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy at UNLV, the Head Start State Training and Technical Assistance Office for Nevada, and the Nevada Public Health Foundation will be sponsoring the Early Childhood Summit on Comprehensive Services for Homeless Children and their Families at the Tuscany Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.



### **Attendees at this Summit will come away with:**

(1) Knowledge about local and state resources available to assist homeless families, (2) Strategies about best practices for recruiting, enrolling, and retaining homeless children and their families in community programs, (3) Successful approaches to serving homeless children and their families - including addressing stigma attached to homelessness and how to be sensitive to their special needs.

This Summit will serve as a venue to bring together professionals serving the young homeless populations in Nevada to help connect service providers with those in contact with these populations as well as provide a forum for discussing the issues associated with homelessness in very young children and their families.

For more information please contact Tara Phebus at [tara.phebus@unlv.edu](mailto:tara.phebus@unlv.edu) or to register for the Summit click [HERE](#).



## *New Community Based Campaign to Raise Awareness for Child Welfare*



The *Community We Will* is a community based coalition of citizens, advocates, parents and providers, partnering with local youth, parents, families, faith based groups, service providers, business, philanthropy, schools, policy makers, legislators, media organizations, advocates and concerned citizens in every step of the design, launch and implementation of the campaign. The goal of the coalition is to safely reduce the number of children in foster care by ensuring that every child in Southern Nevada has a safe, permanent home. The coalition is generously funded and supported by Casey Family Programs, the nation's premier funder of foster care and

adoption in the United States.

The coalition was created to bring together the best of public policy research, data, and models across the nation with the local resources, talents and passions that Southern Nevadans have to benefit children and families in the community. The campaign will address gaps in our service system, and the way we approach the problems families have. To get to the answers, and come up with local solutions to local problems, The Community We Will was formed, after two years of meeting with individuals and working with advocates to determine what was needed to move the political dial, and change the way we invest in our families.

For more information and to learn how you can get involved, contact the project lead, Cyndy Ortiz Gustafson at [cyndy@strategicprogress.com](mailto:cyndy@strategicprogress.com) or visit the website at [www.thecommunitywewill.org](http://www.thecommunitywewill.org)

## *New Coalition to Address Maternal and Child Health in*

## *Southern Nevada*

The Southern Nevada Maternal Child Health Coalition (SNMCH) was recently established to address issues of maternal and child health in Southern Nevada. The Coalition is a voluntary, non-profit group of individuals and public and private agencies that advocate for perinatal, maternal and child health services by promoting:

- Equal access to health care with continuous quality improvement and cost containment
- Inter-agency networking and collaboration
- Public awareness, education and prevention of adverse health outcomes
- Data collection and analysis
- Policy development, advocacy, and legislative education

The Coalition meets monthly and reports quarterly to the State Maternal and Child Health Advisory Board, providing updates and advise on related issues for the Southern Nevada area. If you are interested in joining the Coalition or would like more information, please contact the Chair, Denise Tanata Ashby, at [denise.tanata@unlv.edu](mailto:denise.tanata@unlv.edu).



## *WIC Immunization Linkages Project Evaluation Complete*

The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy is working with the Southern Nevada Immunization Coalition (SNIC) on a process evaluation of their WIC Linkages project. The WIC Linkages Project is a collaboration between nine local WIC office locations and SNIC to provide parents education about immunizations and no-cost immunization clinics for WIC recipient children. The SNIC WIC Linkages project is one of a number of projects implemented by SNIC in an effort to raise Nevada's immunization rate of 19 to 35 months old children to 75%. NICRP has completed the data collection for a process and outcome evaluation for the first year of the project. Preliminary results show that the project is well-received by parents and staff who are involved. For more information contact NICRP at (702)895-1040.



## *NICRP Welcomes New Research Analyst:*

Kari Wolkwitz, MPP



Kari received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology in 2001 and her Masters of Public Policy degree in 2004 from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. For several years, Kari evaluated areas of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), using microsimulation modeling to assess the impact of legislative changes on SNAP eligibility and participation. She also has experience in evaluating state Medicaid policies, as well as policies affecting family caregivers and long-term care and home and community-based services. As a graduate student, she worked as a teaching assistant for statistics and sociology courses. Kari is interested in child food security and nutrition, juvenile justice and incarceration services, youth homelessness, and general social welfare policy.

## *Community Partnerships*

For more information about how to sponsor a project, collaborate with NICRP or make a donation or gift, please contact our Executive Director, Denise Tanata Ashby, at (702) 895-1040 or via email at [denise.tanata@unlv.edu](mailto:denise.tanata@unlv.edu). You can also donate directly to NICRP online by clicking on the link below and selecting Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy from the drop down menu.

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE TODAY](#)

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### Contact Information

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