



For Immediate Release – December 5, 2005

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**CHILDREN'S COMMISSION LAUNCHES LOCAL CAMPAIGN
TO RESPOND TO AVIAN FLU THREAT**

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County approved \$900,000 to fund both prevention and community response effort.

IRVINE, Calif. – (December 5, 2005) – A local response plan to prepare for a potential flu pandemic has been funded by the Children and Families Commission of Orange County. The commission approved spending \$900,000 which can be used to implement community awareness and provider education activities over the next 90 days and to purchase and store influenza anti-viral treatments as necessary.

The first provider education event is scheduled for December 13, 2005 and will include front-line organizations, funded by the commission, that serve young children including hospitals, community clinics, elementary school districts and family resource centers. Additional outreach and community awareness activities are being planned to support the local response plan for a potential avian flu pandemic.

The bird flu is a concern because of its rapid spread and the serious concerns that the disease will morph into untreatable strains and become a pandemic. The Orange County Health Officer, Dr. Mark Horton who was recently appointed the Health Officer for the State of California warned that young children are particularly vulnerable to this type of flu. The commission's involvement in this effort is intended to underscore both the seriousness of this potential threat to the 250,000 children under five years of age, as well as provide additional resources and support to prevent an outbreak in Orange County. The commission's investment in response and preparedness actions will help not only in countering a potential pandemic but will greatly improve Orange County's ability to respond to the more common health needs of children and families.

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County oversees the allocation of funds from Proposition 10 that adds a 50-cent sales tax on tobacco products sold in California to fund education, health and child development programs for children from the prenatal stage to age five and their families. The commission identified children's health as a major funding priority and spends almost \$20 million annually on programs to improve the health of young children so they can be healthy and ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

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