

**First 5 Commission of San Diego**  
November 7, 2011  
**Presentation on the KidSTART Program**

**Request**

The Commission will receive a summary report of the first year of implementation for the KidSTART initiative. KidSTART is a multiple agency initiative overseen by Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Children's Mental Health (CMH) with funds provided by the First 5 Commission. Today's summary will be presented by CWS Assistant Deputy Director, Roseann Myers, and CMH Supervising Psychiatrist, Dr. Jeff Rowe.

**Background**

Research is clear about the importance of the early years to a child's ability to grow, develop and succeed. For an infant with a developmental delay, time becomes a crucial factor for successfully intervening and minimizing the long-term effects that may drastically alter the course of that child's life. San Diego County currently has a range of developmental expertise and services. However, these services are often isolated from one another and restricted to specific referral and funding criteria. Once identified, a child with complex and severe developmental delays may take as long as a year to be evaluated and directed to the services they need. For a two-year-old, this is half of their young life.

KidSTART is a focused, comprehensive system to identify, assess and treat the most challenging children at the earliest age possible, when that treatment can be most effective and cost-efficient. The broader KidSTART system promotes a continuum of care model between First 5 San Diego's Healthy Development Services, HHSA Behavioral Health Services, Regional Center, CWS and other existing Health and Human Services programs. It targets at-risk children for treatment and care to reduce long-term dependency on public resources and improve overall health outcomes.

During the initial project phase, the KidSTART Center targeted children ages birth through 5 served by CWS. In the next phase, it will expand to include the general birth through 5 population. At full implementation, KidSTART will expand to serve all children (birth to age 18) in San Diego County with complex severe developmental delays.

The KidSTART is comprised of a Center Team that threads with existing public and community-based service providers to coordinate screening and referrals to the KidSTART Center. All children are triaged and, those identified with complex needs, are assessed by a multi-disciplinary team that develops a shared treatment plan, and then provides treatment and/or refers the child to appropriate treatment. The KidSTART Clinic provides diagnostic and mental health treatment services at multiple locations across the county.

**Benefits of KidSTART**

An integrated KidSTART system can address developmental delays early in a child's life, offering the opportunity to reduce utilization of the Special Education system resources, reduce the need for institutional care, and minimize use of "deep end" mental health services (e.g. Day Treatment, Intensive Case Management). In addition, KidSTART provides leveraging opportunities, previously unavailable for this population, for federal match funds such as Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) funding.

**Commission History**

- September 11, 2009 (Item 3), The Commission approved a funding agreement with the HHSA, Child Welfare Services for up to \$5.0 million for FY 2009-10 through FY 2014-15 for the KidSTART Program.
- January 14, 2008 (Item 10), The Commission approved amending the contract with the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) for \$129,132 to conduct planning for a children's SART project.
- September 17, 2007 (Item 13), The Commission approved up to \$30,000 to support initial planning of a children's SART project in San Diego County.

**Link to the Strategic Plan and *Live Well, San Diego!***

KidSTART aligns with the First 5 Strategic Plan by providing *early identification and treatment of developmental delays and social emotional issue with an integrated system for screening, triage, assessment, referral and treatment of children in the child welfare system*. Additionally, it aligns with *Live Well, San Diego!: Building Better Health* in that it focuses on *building a better system by providing quality and efficient care, improving access to quality care, and improving systems*.

**Staff Recommendation**

None. This item is for information only.

**Fiscal Impact**

None.