



Community Connections

A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER FROM THE
UCLA/RAND CENTER FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH PROMOTION

MAY 2009

GREETINGS FROM THE CENTER STAFF

On behalf of the UCLA/RAND Center, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to our community partners for your continued support of our efforts to address the health care needs of children, adolescents, young adults, and their families in Los Angeles County and beyond.

Since Dr. Mark Schuster founded this Prevention Research Center (PRC) almost 10 years ago, our community partners have been an integral partner in much of the research we conduct—through serving on our Community Advisory Boards, and through our collaborations with local community, school, parent, and youth organizations. Together, Dr. Schuster, the Center, and our diverse community partners developed a groundbreaking school-based nutrition and physical activity program called **Students for Nutrition and Exercise (or SNaX)**; a novel worksite-based program to help parents talk with teens about sensitive health topics called **Talking Parents, Healthy Teens; Healthy Passages**, a large, multi-city longitudinal study of adolescent health; and other community-based projects.

We could not have carried out our research activities without the inspiration, advice, ideas and insights of our community partners. We feel that our work is only beginning and that our community partnerships must continue to grow as together we help youth and families live healthier lives and reach their full potential.

Remarks from Paul J. Chung, MD, MS, Center Director

THE UCLA/RAND CENTER IS FUNDED FOR 5 MORE YEARS

We are very pleased to announce our Center has been re-funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for five more years (September 2009 – September 2014)! The CDC will not announce many of the funding details (including amounts) until later in the summer, so our planning remains preliminary at this point. Still, we are excited to embark on another five years of collaborative research to address the needs of children, adolescents, young adults, and their families, and to build empowering relationships with community partners in Carson, Wilmington, and greater Los Angeles. Our priorities for the next 5-year funding cycle and beyond are to:

1. Continue to implement high-quality prevention research that responds to community needs, can be incorporated into community practice, and builds community capacities.
2. Re-assess youth issues and youth policy priorities in Carson, Wilmington, and the greater South Bay to help guide the development and implementation of future collaborative studies.
3. Design and pilot-test a parent-focused companion intervention to one of the Center's ongoing school-based obesity prevention projects (SNaX).
4. Strengthen and expand our community partnerships in the South Bay; our government partnerships with local and state health departments; and our academic partnerships with other departments at UCLA and RAND.
5. Maximize active participation of our Community Advisory Board (CAB) and Youth CAB in Center projects and activities.
6. Strengthen ties with the CDC PRC's National Community Committee (NCC).
7. Increase training and educational opportunities on youth and family health and community-based participatory research (CBPR) for students, researchers, and community partners.

We look forward to the continued partnership between our Center and our diverse community partners as we embark on this ambitious 5-10 year plan.

PEDIATRICIAN'S CORNER

TUMAINI R. COKER, MD, MBA
UCLA/RAND RESEARCH AFFILIATE



A Primer on Well-Child Care Redesign

Well-child care, the system of routine visits that is the cornerstone of pediatrics, has been and continues to be an important and growing area of research at the UCLA/RAND Center. We are currently working with parents, providers (including the South Bay Family Health Care Center), and health plans to design and test a new and innovative model for the delivery of these preventive services to children ages 0-3.

1. What is well-child care?

Well-child care includes many different, but important, preventive health services that are recommended in national guidelines. These include some items you might expect to be a part of a regular “check-up” (physical examination, laboratory testing, immunizations) and other services that you might not be aware of but are just as important for healthy growth and development (guidance on parenting, behavioral and developmental screening and counseling, and screening and counseling for family concerns).

2. What are the major problems with well-child care now?

Parents typically have 10 well-child visits during their child’s first three years. These are generally one-on-one visits in the office or clinic averaging about 10-15 minutes each. With so many recommended services, and such a small amount of time per visit, it comes as no surprise that, despite having to come so often, most parents don’t receive all of the recommended services, even those that are the most evidence-based. Overall, 94% of parents report at least one unmet need (a service that would have been helpful to them, but was not received) in guidance, education, or screening. Many of these unmet needs are more frequently found among children who are African-American, Latino, or poor, or come from households with less-educated parents.

3. Are there different structures of care that might improve well-child care for children ages 0-3?

Researchers, clinicians, and advocates have proposed and even tested different ways to improve the receipt of high-quality, comprehensive, and family-centered well-child care. For example, many clinics are experimenting with reducing the physician’s role by combining physician and non-physician providers in order to provide higher-quality care. Physicians may be less prepared than specialized non-physicians (nurses, physician assistants, health educators, social workers, psychologists) to discuss behavioral, developmental, family, or parenting concerns. In fact, in a national study of pediatricians, a majority thought that behavioral or family concerns should be provided, but that they themselves did not have enough time, training, or confidence in their ability to do so. Other possible changes include non-traditional locations (i.e., homes, daycares/preschools) and formats (i.e., group visits, internet-based services). Non-traditional locations may allow easier access for families and a chance for clinicians to observe children and parents in home or school settings. Non-traditional formats may provide parents and clinicians more flexibility and convenience.

4. What should I be looking for with respect to well-child care services for my child?

Research points to a few general principles that might help you decide whether a clinic is likely to provide high-quality well-child care:

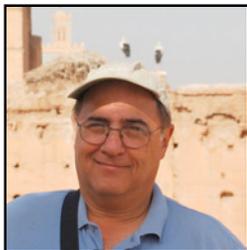
- Longer time slots for well-child visits with more time for communication – More time usually means better care.
- More emphasis on behavior, development, and parenting – These are the issues that may have the most impact on your child’s long-term health.
- More attention to parents’ concerns – Most parents are actually pretty good at sensing when their child isn’t behaving as normally or developing as quickly as other children.
- More ability to connect with social workers, behavioral and developmental specialists, and other types of providers and services – Strong provider networks can mean better access to needed experts.

Even without changes to the structure of well-child care, many clinics can still provide high-quality care. Your experience with well-child care at your clinic will help you decide if your clinic makes the grade.

FEATURED COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD (CAB) MEMBER

STEVEN GOLDSMITH

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCE AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT CENTINELA YOUTH SERVICES



Mr. Steven Goldsmith is the Director of Resource and Program Development, as well as former Executive Director, of Centinela Youth Services (CYS). Mr. Goldsmith is a certified mediator. He began his career as an activist in the civil rights and peace movements of the 1960s, as well as a community organizer in the steel communities of South Chicago. He has served on the Vice President's Safe Cities Partnership (1999-2000) and the Attorney General's Task Force on Safe Schools (2002). In 2002, he was selected to be part of the national focus group on restorative justice organized by the National Institute of Justice, a subsidiary of the Department of Justice. In addition, Mr. Goldsmith has presented at many prestigious conferences, including the World Health Organization (WHO) conference on youth violence in 2005, and LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's Peer Mediation Summit in 2006. In 2007, Mr. Goldsmith capped his achievements with the Most Outstanding Staff Award from LA County Dispute Resolution Program.

In Mr. Goldsmith's 14 years as Executive Director of CYS, he built the agency to a 10-fold increase, now serving over 4,000 youths with programs in 40 schools. His agency works closely with school districts, the Juvenile Justice System and County Department of Children and Family Service, and is recognized locally and nationally as a leader in the area of youth mediation in the inner city. The mission of Centinela Youth Services is to help high-risk youth (ages 7-21) overcome obstacles that hinder them from becoming successful students and contributing adults. CYS has placed special focus on youth mediation, and teaching inner-city youth how to resolve conflicts without aggression, as an effective method to reduce youth violence and help create school campuses that are conducive to learning. Today CYS operates core mediation programs that facilitate youth mediation, conflict resolution, peer mediator training, parenting classes, counseling and other services to underserved youth and their families. Some of the core programs include:

- 1. Victim Offender Restitution Service (VORS)** gives young people the opportunity to "make right" their wrong and become accountable for their actions. The VORS program facilitates mediations between victims of crime and young offenders. In VORS mediations, an agreement is reached in 98% cases and nearly 70% of the cases fulfill their agreements. Overall the VORS program has helped victims receive \$160,000 in restitution for personal property damage. A study conducted by the California Judicial Courts concluded that 85% of youth offenders who participate in VORS related programs have not been re-arrested within one year.
- 2. Families Able to Resolve Situations (FARS)** applies to mediation involving youth in conflict with their family. Often the youth is ready to runaway from home or parents are ready to "kick them out." FARS reports that 95% of participating families return after the first mediation with an agreement. Surveyed 3 to 6 months later, over 70% reported reduced family conflict and increased communication skills. Over 80% reported no further conflict with authorities. These encouraging results demonstrate that families in severe conflict when engaged in parent/child mediation (FARS) are able to communicate more effectively.
- 3. Students Able to Resolve Situations (STARS)** helps Los Angeles schools by resolving student conflict. The STARS program teaches children and youth (ages 7-17) how to deal with conflicts at school through peer mediation instead of aggression. Key students are trained on school campuses to become peer mediators and last year CYS trained 500 new Peer Mediators across 43 local schools in five districts. Peer mediation supports the learning environment by reducing the tension between students and allows teachers to focus on classroom instruction instead of student discipline. It has been shown that conflict/resolution education also improves students' academic progress, especially among the peer mediators. For example, at Washington Preparatory High School there was a 40% increase in graduation among students who were involved in the program.

For more information about Centinela Youth Services, please visit www.cys-la.org/

YCAB AND CAB CONNECT ON PRESSING ADOLESCENT HEALTH ISSUES

Since 2003, the Center has maintained a strong Youth Community Advisory Board (YCAB) in addition to the Center's Community Advisory Board (CAB). Although the two Advisory Boards serve vital roles to the Center and our research projects, they have seldom had the opportunity to interact with one another. That all changed this year with our 2008-09 YCAB, which is predominately comprised of new members from Carson, Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, and Palisades Charter High Schools. This year's YCAB has worked together to identify the important health issues faced by teens today. Guided by the Center Youth Liaisons, Camillia Lui and Burt Cowgill, YCAB members engaged in different methodologies to identify health issues that affect teens the most. One strategy they employed was to speak with experts working in the health field, such as our CAB members. The YCAB members learned about qualitative interviewing during one of the quarterly meetings and put their skills to work by interviewing select CAB members about their involvement with the CAB and their views on adolescent health.



During the first YCAB meeting of the year, members identified nutrition and physical activity as two of the most vital health issues faced by Los Angeles teens. To compare YCAB members' opinions with our CAB members' views, here are some of the excerpts from their interviews.

Natasha Lipson interviewed CAB member, Jessica Marshall, from the Curtis Tucker Health Center. "Jessica is a health educator; she assesses community needs and develops programs that will further address those issues. She finds teens need to be educated and healthy in their nutrition and physical activity."

Connie Bufkin, Assistant Principal at White Middle School in Carson, was interviewed by Rachel Levitan. "She works with young people every day, and from this daily interaction has found obesity and a healthy diet to be the more pressing health problems facing today's youth. She hopes that the YCAB will be successful in stressing the importance of diet and exercise for all."

Albert Lee talked with long-time CAB member Michael Shannon from the LAUSD Early Childhood Education Division. "Having encountered countless students, Shannon believes the most common health issue among youth to be obesity and poor nutrition. Children are not getting sufficient exercise, and their diet often lacks healthful foods."

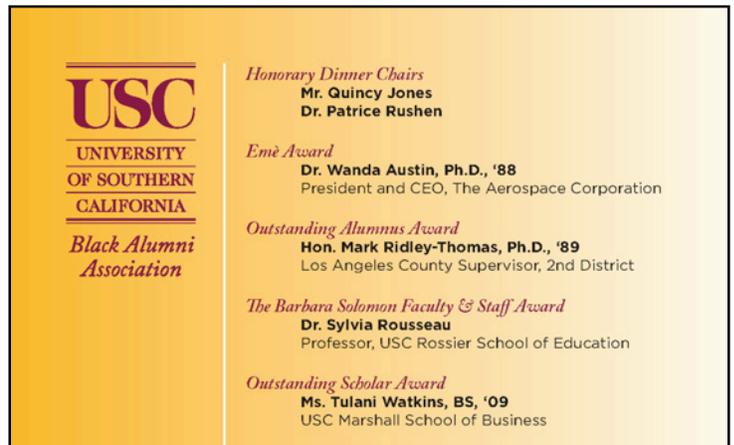
Alina Bueno Nadsady with the Little Company of Mary Hospital, Department of Community Health was interviewed by Cynthia Alvarez. "One major health issue is the lack of physical activity, obesity and lack of proper nutrition. Some kids aren't getting P.E. in school when they should. Also, they aren't being properly educated and exposed to important nutritional information."

Monet Flenbaugh had a discussion with Kristie Garrison, Healthy Start Program Coordinator, about the role of education in addressing health. "Health issues are best overcome through education—whether it is from teachers, programs, or parents. Our children need education to avoid an unhealthy living style encouraged by the media. Health constitutes not only what you eat, but also how you mentally and emotionally function as a person."

After having connected the commonalities between YCAB and CAB responses, the YCAB will next learn about quantitative research. They have developed a short survey about nutrition and physical activity to administer among their peers. By triangulating the findings from CAB interviews, peer surveys, and their own experiences, YCAB members will have conducted a mini-research project this year to identify key health issues faced by teens today. In addition to interviewing CAB members and conducting the peer surveys, the YCAB has provided feedback on the Center's school-based obesity prevention program, Students for Nutrition and eXercise (SNaX), kick-off video and the YCAB portion of the Center website. We wish all our graduating YCAB members the best of luck in the next stage of their lives and look forward to continuing our work with our new and returning members next year.

FORMER YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER RECEIVES OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR AWARD AT USC

Tulani Watkins was one of the original members of our Center's Youth Advisory Board from 2003-2005. She is from Carson and graduated from King Drew Magnet High School in 2005. She went on to study at the University of Southern California (USC) where this year she will be graduating with her bachelor's degree in business administration. We are proud to announce that Tulani was honored with an Outstanding Scholar Award by the USC Black Alumni Association. The award was presented to her at the 31st Annual Scholarship Benefit and Alumni Awards Dinner on April 16, 2009 in Beverly Hills, CA. For more information about the USC Black Alumni Association please visit: <http://alumni.usc.edu/baa>.



NEW CENTER CAB REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CDC PRC'S NATIONAL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE (NCC)



Community Advisory Board (CAB) member **Sheila Lamb, LCSW** will be replacing Josie Dhungana, who resigned due to a job relocation, as our Center's new NCC representative. Sheila is a psychiatric social worker with the Los Angeles Unified School District. She is currently the project coordinator for the Healthy Start Student Support Center (SSC) serving Carnegie and Curtiss Middle Schools in Carson, California. She has been an active member of the CAB for the past six years and has played an instrumental role in helping our Center establish strong partnerships with middle schools in Carson.

At least one representative is selected from each of the 33 Prevention Research Centers (PRC) in the US. The PRC's National Community Committee is dedicated to helping build capacity in communities within local PRCs that are not traditionally involved in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of prevention research initiatives by:

- Developing and facilitating education, training, resource sharing, and technical assistance opportunities that encourage and enhance community members' participation in research activities.
- Creating a supportive and culturally relevant environment in which representatives can share successes, concerns, and other lessons learned.
- Advocating for policy change.
- Making recommendations to advance the work of individual community representatives, local centers, and the national PRC Program.

As our Center's NCC representative, Sheila participates in (1) monthly conference calls with other NCC representatives from across the US; (2) annual NCC training retreats (fall, summer); (3) yearly PRC Director's Meeting hosted by the CDC; and (4) other NCC activities based on her availability and interest. In addition, Sheila has monthly meetings with our Center's Community Liaison (Jennifer Hawes-Dawson) to facilitate communication and information sharing among between the NCC and the Center leadership team. More information about the NCC mission, goals, and activities can be found online at http://www.cdc.gov/prc/news/national_community_committee.htm.

UCLA/RAND CENTER HONORED BY CARSON CITY COUNCIL

The UCLA/RAND Center for Adolescent Health Promotion was presented with a special award from Carson City Mayor Jim Dear and members of the City Council at a ceremony on April 7, 2009. The Center was recognized for its outstanding research in addressing the health needs of children, adolescents and their families in Los Angeles County and surrounding areas, and for actively conducting many of these research projects within the Carson community and local schools. Jennifer Hawes-Dawson, Community Liaison, Burt Cowgill, Youth CAB Coordinator, and Anisha Patel, Doctoral Fellow, accepted the plaque on behalf of the Center. The awards ceremony was well attended and televised locally on Channel 35.



AWARD TO CAB PARENT REPRESENTATIVE AND HER COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Paz Velasquez, a long time Carson resident and active member of our Center CAB received a special presentation from the Carson City Mayor and City Council members at the April 7, 2009 awards ceremony at City Hall. She and her community partners were recognized for their efforts to improve the quality of life of Carson residents. Certificates and awards were given to several school and community groups in Carson: Harbor Teacher's Preparatory Academy, LAUSD District 8 Parent Involvement Office; Carson High School Parent Center, Girl Scout Troop 505, Boys Scouts of America and the Youth, Family, School, and Community Partnership.

CENTER MONTHLY GUEST SPEAKER SERIES

November 2008: Dr. Robert Kaplan, Principal Investigator, UCLA/RAND Center and Professor and Chair, Dept. Health Services, UCLA SPH, presented results from a recently published manuscript entitled *"Disease, Diagnosis, and Dollars"*.

January 2009: Dr. Joan Tucker, Center Deputy Director, presented an overview of her research titled, *"Select Overview of RAND Adolescent Health Projects."* Dr. Tucker gave a brief overview of 4 projects that she is currently working on at RAND that focus on adolescent health issues.

February 2009: Dr. Bergen Nelson, a RWJF Clinical Scholar, presented her work titled, *"An Analysis of the Developmental Screening and Referral Processes at a Local Head Start Preschool Program,"*

March 2009: Dr. Megan Beckett, RAND Behavioral/Social Scientist presented results from her work titled, *"Current-Generation Youth Programs: What Works, What Doesn't Work, and At What Cost?"* Her talk summarized what youth programs, including after-school programs, look like, how much they cost, and what the evidence says about their impacts

April 2009: Dr. Steven Teutsch, Chief Science Officer; Los Angeles County Public Health presented his work titled, *"Evidence-Based Prevention: From Evidence to Policy to Practice."*

ABOUT OUR PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Center's mission is to conduct prevention research that addresses the needs of children, adolescents, young adults, and their families; build empowering relationships with community partners in Los Angeles and beyond; and directly benefit communities and/or transform local, state, and national policies. **For more information:** Please visit us on the web at www.rand.org/health/centers/adolescent. Or contact Jennifer Hawes-Dawson, Community Liaison, via email at hawes@rand.org or at (310) 393-0411, extension 7238.

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