

Stone Soup Gazette

Orange County Health Needs Assessment

Volume 11, June 1999

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Patient Respect: A Small Piece of Solving the Puzzle of Access to Health Care

By: Heather Clifford-Dale, Project Coordinator - OCHNA



Results found in the Orange County Health Needs Assessment focus groups, indicates that some people feel as though they do not have the respect of their physician or provider. The issue of respect in relationships is

oftentimes a touchy one. The situation is no different when applying to physicians or providers and their patient. Some even cite this feeling of not being respected as a reason for not accessing care. The truth is that the vast majority of providers probably not only care for and treat their patients, but also respect them as people and would be shocked to hear that some of their patients felt otherwise. Given the opportunity, many physicians would jump at the chance to make their patients more at ease and more willing to access care.

Focus group participants by no means expressed that their physicians were unprofessional, but rather they sometimes felt prematurely dismissed. In today's hustle and bustle atmosphere health care providers may feel pressured to see six or more patients each hour, making it difficult to add that personal touch or offer patients in depth explanations of their condition. This problem is compounded by the fact that some cultures view doctors in the same light as teachers or priests, and consider it rude to question them. The result is that although they may really want to understand what is happening with their bodies, they wait for the doctor to take the initiative to explain their problem rather than simply asking questions. One focus group participant had the following to say, "My daughter's pediatrician, he does cure her. I have doubt, however. I know that he knows what is wrong with my daughter but for some reason he doesn't want to tell me what it is or...I don't know." Even in situations where a language barrier is present, taking a few extra minutes to explain to the patient their condition not only allays their fears about their problem but also helps foster trust in their relationship with their physician.

Another important factor to remember is that the doctor isn't the only person that a patient has contact with in the doctor/patient relationship.

The process by which they get to their medical visit involves a number of steps and interactions with other people and in some cases, machines. A common complaint from focus group participants is the endless phone tree system that seems to prevent them from ever speaking to a real person. Anyone who has tried to contact their bank recently knows exactly how frustrating and powerless this situation can leave one feeling.

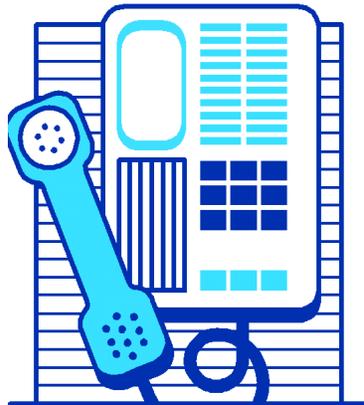
Participants also voiced frustrations with the long waits some encounter at their health service provider's office. Most offered understanding of wait times of twenty or thirty minutes due to the high volume of patients that doctors must see, but simply could not afford to miss half a day of work waiting for their appointment. Additionally some patients who rely on public transportation such as OCTD or Access mentioned that they sometimes encounter situations in which they arrive ten to fifteen minutes late for their appointment, and have been told that they can't be seen and must schedule another appointment.

The puzzle of accessing care has many pieces, of which the respect between providers and patients is only one piece. That piece, however, is integral to ensuring access to health care, and a good place to start improving since it is one that we all have the power to impact.

INFO LINK: ORANGE COUNTY'S INSIDE LINE TO FINDING HELP

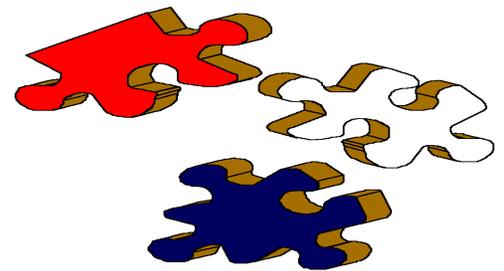
By: Mary Ellen Hadley

How do I find help? Where do I look? Everyday INFO LINK Orange County, a nonprofit organization, assists people in need as they search for health and human services resources serving Orange County residents. This free, and confidential telephone information line with over 4000 resources, serves as the "official information line for United Way," and also provides resources to the County of Orange. Long recognized as the most comprehensive information and referral line serving anyone in need, INFO LINK connects callers with food, shelter, health care, support groups, counseling, victim assistance, child care, senior services, programs for persons with disabilities, and other services. Trained information specialists receive calls between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and a voice mail system with many resources is available for after hours. The toll free number is (888) 600-4357.



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Visit our web page and check out what is new and exciting, as we venture forth on our quest for a healthier community. If you have questions, suggestions or wish to get involved, please contact Pamela Austin, Director, at (714) 547-3631, or e-mail her directly at paustin@hasc.org



Stone Soup Gazette

The Stone Soup Gazette is the official Newsletter of the Orange County Health Needs Assessment Project. This is a monthly publication. We welcome your comments, concerns or suggestion. Deadline for articles is the 10th of the month.

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Community Health Improvement Corner

As results of the Orange County Health Needs Assessment indicate, access to health care is definitely a problem for a number of Orange County residents. Participants in focus groups conveyed that oftentimes they simply don't know where to go to access care. This month the Health Improvement Corner is highlighting several clinics offering low or no cost health care services in the community. Spread the word!



NHAN HOA COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE CLINIC IN GARDEN GROVE

The Nhan Hoa Clinic offers family based health services to people who may not otherwise have access to them due to financial, language, cultural, lifestyle, or psychological barriers, regardless of their ability to pay. Services provided include: Physical exam & vaccinations, chronic illness treatment, minor surgery, acute & minor emergency care, mammography, pap smears, and family PACT. They also offer a variety of health education classes on smoking cessation, diabetes, hypertension, and prenatal care. **Beginning in mid July, the Nhan Hoa Clinic will also be offering dental services to their clients.** For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call **(714) 539-9999**.

Clinic Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00a.m. – 5:30p.m.

Saturday 9:00a.m. – 12:30p.m.

(Please call for appointment)

CLINICA PARA HOMBRES (CLINIC FOR MEN) – 2209 S. MAIN STREET, SANTA ANA

Free Health Plan, a nonprofit organization, provides a community medical clinic for low income men, who often go without basic medical care. As findings of the Orange County Health Needs Assessment indicate, men are less likely to have visited a health care provider than women. Services offered include basic check-ups, prostate and testicular cancer screenings, and family planning information. The clinic provides treatment to all people who need help, regardless of citizenship status. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call **(714)668-1750**.

Clinic Hours: Wednesdays 6:00p.m. – 9:00p.m.

(Regular clinic hours take place daily and weekends. Please call for an appointment.)

ST. JUDE DENTAL CENTER - 7758 KNOTT AVENUE, BUENA PARK

Effective July 1, 1999 St. Jude Medical Center will take over operation of the The Boys and Girls Club Dental Center, Which has been in operation since 1978. The Center primarily provides dental care and oral hygiene education to qualified low income children, ages four to fourteen, living in Buena Park, Fullerton, and some areas of Anaheim. The program accepts Healthy Families, Dental-Cal, and California Children's Services (CCS), and has a sliding scale fee schedule based on income. Procedures performed include: endodontics, restorations, periodontics, oral hygiene and prosthodontics. For more information on the St. Jude Dental Center, please call Sue Lien Chen, DDS, Dental Director at **(714) 522-0270**.

Clinic Hours: Tuesday through Friday 8:00a.m. - 4:30p.m.

Some Saturdays (Hours Vary)

(Please call for an appointment)

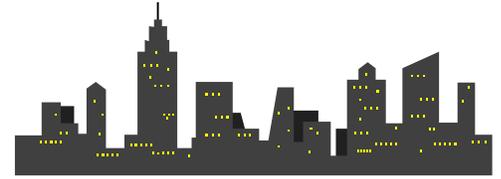
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Community Highlight



CALIFORNIA KIDS TO PROVIDE BENEFITS TO 2000 CHILDREN

By: Heather Clifford-Dale

The Orange County Health Needs Assessment survey results indicate that nearly 90,000 children in Orange County are uninsured. In the true spirit of the story of Stone Soup and collaboration, five local hospitals recently took action to help increase access to health care for our county's children.

Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian, Mission Hospital Regional Medical Center, St. Joseph Hospital, and St. Jude Medical Center have contributed funds totaling \$500,000 to California Kids, a nonprofit organization that provides health coverage. Children's Hospital of Orange County will contribute most of the doctors to the program which will provide outpatient medical, dental, and visual benefits to 2000 low income children, regardless of their immigration status. Children age two to eighteen with a family income below three times the federal poverty level, approximately \$50,000 for a family of four, are eligible.

Although other programs providing coverage to low income children such as Healthy Families do provide some help, many immigrants are not eligible and many legal immigrants fear signing up their children in fear of it affecting their chance of gaining citizenship. With California Kids, with the help of 70 volunteers and employees at schools, churches, and community centers children will be evaluated for their Medi-Cal or Healthy Families eligibility and offered California Kids if they don't qualify. For more information on the California Kids program call, (800)374-4543.

OCHNA

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