



07/11/07 - 1 PM 2:09

**Agenda Item No. 9**  
**November 7, 2007 Meeting**

**DATE:** October 29, 2007  
**TO:** Children and Families Commission of Orange County  
**FROM:** Michael M. Ruane, Executive Director *Michael M. Ruane*  
**SUBJECT:** 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County 2007

---

**SUMMARY:**

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County is now available. Your Commission has been a major funding partner of the Report, which is sponsored by the County of Orange, through the Children's Services Coordination Committee. The Report was formally presented to the Board of Supervisors at their October 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and was presented to the community at a forum which took place on October 29.

The Conditions of Children Report provides baseline and trend data on 39 historic indicators that describe the health, economic, educational, and safety status of Orange County's children. In addition, a 40<sup>th</sup> indicator was added last year in order to track progress on improving breastfeeding rates. Each section of the Report is prefaced by a detailed discussion of a topical issue. This year the discussion topics are on the developmental screenings, child support, community service learning programs, and gangs. The special section of this year's Report is on homeless and unstably housed children, a topic that is being covered for the first time in the Conditions of Children Report.

Also for the first time since the release of the Annual Report, a compendium report, 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the Conditions of Children - Call to Action will be developed. The Call to Action report highlights four indicators from the Conditions of Children Report and describes current efforts in Orange County along with promising practices to achieve the identified milestones. Following the presentation of the report at your meeting, we will provide an overview of the Call to Action report.

**STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:**

This action has specifically been reviewed in relation to the Strategic Plan, and is consistent with the Quality Services goal. The Commission funding contribution of \$25,000 for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conditions of Children Report was funded through the Performance Outcomes Measurement System line item of the Commission's FY 05/06 budget. This agenda item does not contain a funding request.

**PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:**

The Commission received the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County, 2006 on November 1, 2006.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

1. Receive presentation on the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County, 2007.
2. Receive the Call to Action Report and provide policy direction to staff.

**Attachment:**

Call to Action Report

**Contact:** Alyce Mastrianni

13th Annual  
Report on the  
Conditions of  
Children

# Call to Action

**F**or the past 14 years Orange County policymakers, service providers, researchers and advocates have collaborated to track the conditions of children in Orange County. The purpose of this document is to build policy recommendations based on that accumulated knowledge and expertise.

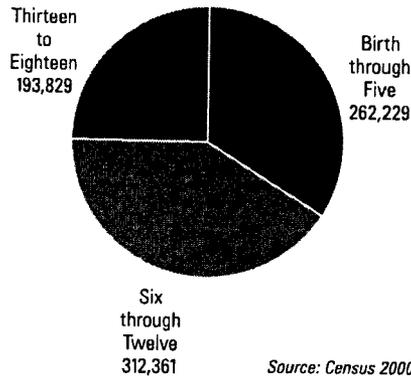
The specific objectives are to:

- Catalyze coordinated action by Orange County stakeholders;
- Focus attention on high-priority issues within each of the four topical areas of the report;
- Set attainable milestones;
- Identify current strategies in place to foster improvement by age group; and
- Recommend research-based strategies by age group.



# Background Characteristics of Orange County's 0-18 Population

Children by Age Group, Orange County, 2000

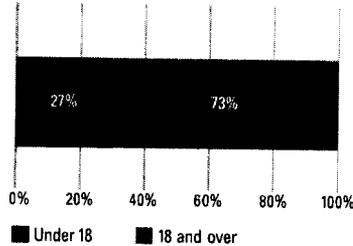


## Number of Children by Age Group

There are 768,419 children in Orange County:

Birth through Five: 262,229  
 Six through Twelve: 312,361  
 Thirteen to Eighteen: 193,829

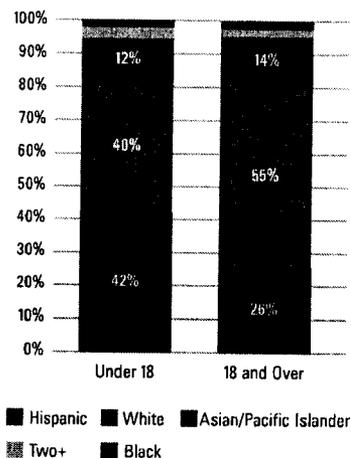
Population by Age, Proportion Children or Adults, Orange County, 2000



## Child Proportion of the Population

Children make up 27% of the total population of Orange County. Orange County has a slightly higher proportion of children than the national average (26%) and the same proportion as the California average.

Population by Race/Ethnicity: Children Compared to Adults, Orange County, 2000



## Racial and Ethnic Diversity: Children Compared to Adults

In Orange County, racial and ethnic diversity is more evenly distributed among the child population than the adult population. Racial and ethnic diversity among Orange County's child population is also more evenly distributed than the national average. The racial and ethnic breakdown of children nationwide is: 61% White, 17% Hispanic, 15% Black, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% more than one ethnicity, and 1% American Indian.

## Child Population by City

There are the most children per capita in the cities of Santa Ana and Rancho Santa Margarita, and the least in Laguna Woods (a seniors-only city), Seal Beach and Laguna Beach.

**Cities with the Largest and Smallest Proportion of Children, Orange County, 2000**

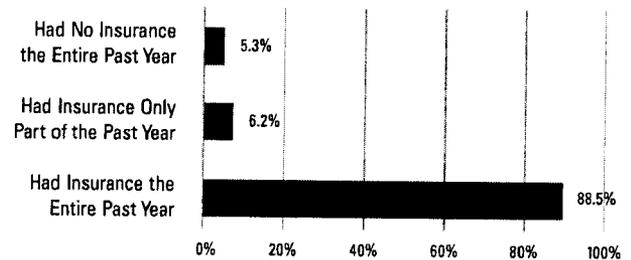
	City	Percent
Largest	Santa Ana	34.2%
	Rancho Santa Margarita	33.6%
	Stanton	30.4%
	Anaheim	30.2%
	Buena Park	29.4%
	Yorba Linda	29.3%
	La Habra	29.1%
	Garden Grove	28.5%
	Lake Forest	28.1%
	San Juan Capistrano	28.1%
Smallest	Dana Point	20.6%
	Newport Beach	16.3%
	Laguna Beach	15.8%
	Seal Beach	13.3%
	Laguna Woods	0.6%

Source: Census 2000

## Access to Health Care

Approximately 8%, or nearly 64,000, of Orange County children are currently uninsured. Approximately 50% of uninsured children are eligible for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families. In California, 90.6% of children were insured the entire year, 5.7% were insured part of the year, and 3.7% were not insured any part of the year.

**Consistency of Health Insurance Coverage for Children, Orange County, 2005**



Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2005

## Proportion in Poverty or Very Low Income

Census data indicate 13% of Orange County youth are living in poverty (American Community Survey, 2006). This is equivalent to more than 100,000 children living in families that earn about \$21,000 or less for a family of four. As many as 39% of Orange County school age children are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, a proxy for very low income families. To be eligible, family income must be 185% or less of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. This is equivalent to over 200,000 children living in families earning less than \$38,000 for a family of four.

**Districts with Highest and Lowest Percent of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunches, 2006/07**

School District	Percent	School District	Percent
Anaheim City Elementary	81%	Laguna Beach Unified	6%
Santa Ana Unified	75%	Irvine Unified	7%
La Habra City	67%	Los Alamitos Unified	10%
Westminster Elementary	63%	Huntington Beach City Elementary	11%
Magnolia Elementary	62%	Fullerton Joint Union High	11%

Source: California Department of Education

# Good Health

**GOAL** Orange County children maintain a healthy weight for their age.

## Birth through Five

### Why Is This Important?

One-third of overweight preschool children remain overweight as adults. Healthy activity and eating habits started young can lead to substantial preventative health benefits. Interventions for young children should be targeted at the whole family. The link between breastfeeding and obesity prevention is the driving interest in improving breastfeeding rates.

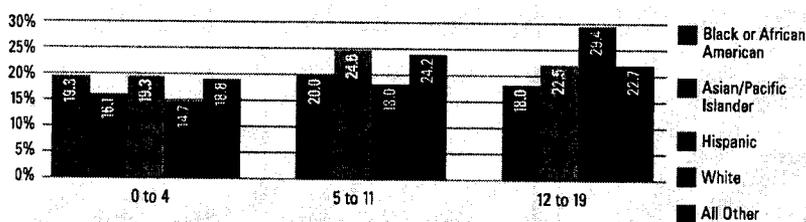
## Six through Twelve

One-half of school age children remain overweight as adults. Research indicates that prevention in this age group is key; it is difficult for children to lose weight once gained. When children enter school their activity levels may become more constrained and their social awareness leads them to be more heavily influenced by their peers or advertisements.

## Thirteen to Eighteen

Almost three-quarters of overweight teens remain overweight as adults. This age group is particularly at risk for developing or exacerbating habits that will negatively affect their long-term health. They are more fully engaged in the adult environment of dining out (particularly cheap fast food), driving as the primary means of transportation, and decreasing participation in sports.

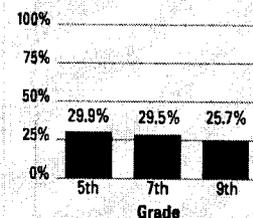
**Facts** Overweight Among Orange County Children by Race/Ethnicity, 2005



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System

- This data is obtained from routine health exams performed through the Child Health and Disability Program (CHDP), which serves low income families.

**Facts** Percent of Youth that are Overweight Orange County, 2005/06



Source: California Department of Education

- This data reflects all children enrolled in public school, regardless of income.

### Milestones

By 2010, stabilize or reduce the proportion of children ages birth through age 5 who are overweight.

By 2010, stabilize or reduce the proportion of children 6 through 12 who are overweight.

By 2010, stabilize or reduce the proportion of children 13 to 18 who are overweight.

### Promising Practices

- **Breastfeeding Initiative:** Partnership to facilitate designation of Baby-Friendly hospitals and support of breastfeeding in the community.
- **LEAN Start:** Wellness program at Boys and Girls Clubs focusing on the role of the family in developing healthy behaviors.
- **School Health Index:** Schools assess health needs and develop action plans to meet those needs.
- **Dr. Riba's Health Club:** Multi disciplinary approach to address obesity within low income families.

- **School Wellness Policy:** Locally developed plan that includes guidelines and goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities to promote student wellness.
- **Kid Healthy/Steps to Healthy Living:** Nutrition education and physical activity for youth at school and after school held annually in tandem with OC Register "Register in Education" section in the spring.
- **Safe Routes to Schools:** A national effort, implemented locally, to improve children's ability to walk to school.

- **PE 4 Me:** American Academy of Pediatrics sponsors for-credit high school physical education curriculum designed for overweight teens.
- **Governor's Challenge Teen Pass:** Teens can receive a free 30 day pass to use a 24 Hour Fitness facility.
- **Orange County's YMCAs:** A variety of low or no cost wellness services.
- **Health plan-sponsored or community clinic wellness programs:** Many offer health and lifestyle intervention and/or nutrition and physical activity education classes.

### Action Items

- Support school health planning including development of data to assess health needs and implementation of the School Health Index.
- Develop strategies to promote nutrition, physical activity and breastfeeding through existing community providers.
- Increase opportunities for parents/caregivers to increase their knowledge of nutrition and healthy eating and increase physical activity.

- Conduct a neighborhood walkability audit and implement techniques to encourage walking and biking.
- Ensure schools are meeting the state requirements for PE hours and advocate for more.
- Support joint use agreements to open school playgrounds after school.

- Use "point-of-decision" signs at stairs or in cafeteria lines to encourage a healthy choice.
- Include noncompetitive sports in offerings at schools (e.g. dance).
- Get teen input into the creation of a wellness program (e.g. computer based).

# Economic Well-Being

**GOAL** Orange County children are suitably and permanently housed for healthy growth and development.

## Birth through Five

### Why Is This Important?

Young children are the largest cohort of homeless children. They are more likely to show developmental delays. Low income, young and single parenthood, and domestic violence all contribute to homelessness among young children.

## Six through Twelve

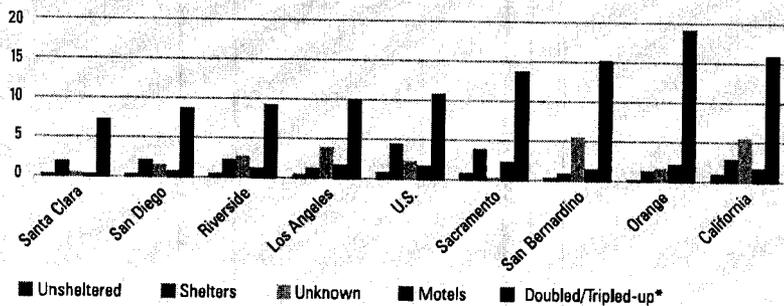
Children who move from school to school due to homelessness fare worse academically. Homeless children are more likely to have worse health, behavior, and emotional problems than low income housed children.

## Thirteen to Eighteen

Unaccompanied homeless teens face increased risk of sexual or physical abuse, participation in crime, and contracting HIV. Teens aging out of foster care or released from juvenile detention risk becoming homeless.

### Facts

Homeless and Unstably Housed Children (K-12) per 1,000 Students Enrolled, by Primary Nighttime Residence, County Comparison, 2005/06



- Nationwide it is estimated that children under age 18 comprise 39% of the entire homeless population.
- 42% of sheltered homeless children are under age five.

Source: California Department of Education

\*Families 'doubled- and tripled-up' refers to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition, which includes children and youths who are sharing housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

### Milestones

By 2010, the number of homeless children birth to age 5 stabilizes or falls.

By 2010, the number of homeless children ages 6 – 12 stabilizes or falls.

By 2010, the number of homeless children ages 13 – 18 stabilizes or falls.

### Promising Practices

- **Motel Families Referral Partnership:** Case management services for families living in motels to promote service accessibility and utilization and strengthen families.
- **Transitional Shelter Programs:** Shelter programs such as Precious Life Shelter, Casa Teresa, Village of Hope, Hope Family Housing, and Fullerton Interfaith Emergency Services, Heritage House, and Colette's Children's Home that provide life skills training, case management, job skill training, linkage to medical, dental, and psychological support.

- **CalWORKS, Food Stamps, and health insurance programs:** Multi-agency outreach to enroll all eligible families.
- **Motel Families Referral Partnership:** Case management service coordinating numerous agencies working with families living in motels.
- **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Program:** Homeless students have a right to attend school, and continue in the school they attended before they became homeless (school of origin). Possible services available to homeless students include: tutoring, after school programs, free lunch, transportation, school supplies and school uniforms.

- **Transitional Housing Placement Program:** Places foster youth in a supervised apartment complex and supports their completion of high school, getting and keeping a job, and developing independent living skills prior to leaving foster care.
- **Transitional Housing Program – Plus:** Funds foster parents to continue to house foster children aging out of the system at age 18.
- **Orangewood Children's Foundation, Rising Tide:** Offers emancipating foster youth a subsidized apartment, career guidance, life skills training, counseling and mentoring.

### Action Items

- Support more transitional housing in cooperation with Home Aid or other building industry participants.
- Expand transitional housing support and coordination of services for motel families', families in need of transitional housing placement, and families at risk of being homeless..
- Enhance comprehensive medical services for homeless families including developmental screenings and follow up treatment.

- Enact policies that increase the collection of child support payments.
- Substantially increase rental assistance programs with support services.
- Support schools to fully implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Program (e.g., hire highly-skilled, experienced teachers to work in schools with high proportions of homeless youth).

- Support the development of more transitional housing following the HomeAid Orange County model. HomeAid Orange County, the charitable arm of the Building Industry Association, acts as the shelter developer and liaison between county homeless care providers, the community at large, volunteers, residential builders and their partners.

# Educational Achievement

**GOAL** Orange County children have the opportunity for academic excellence.

## Birth through Five

### Why Is This Important?

Educational success starts with school readiness. Developmental assessments for all children ensures children who need help get the early intervention services that improve outcomes in school and life.

### Facts

**Percent of Orange County Parents Concerned about their Child's Development (Birth-5)**

15.9%

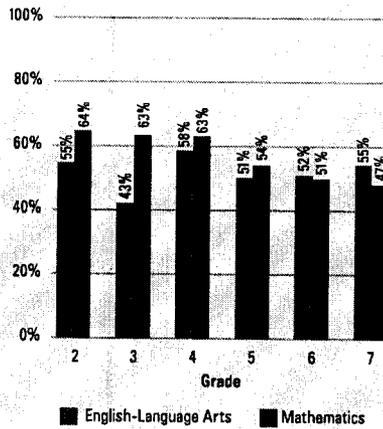
Source: Orange County Health Needs Assessment, 2005

- Children with developmental disabilities are more likely to be abused than typically developing children.

## Six through Twelve

Elementary school provides the foundation for success in high school and beyond. Family involvement, teacher quality, and teacher's practice all contribute to increased academic performance.

**Orange County Students at or Above Proficient Level, 2006/07**

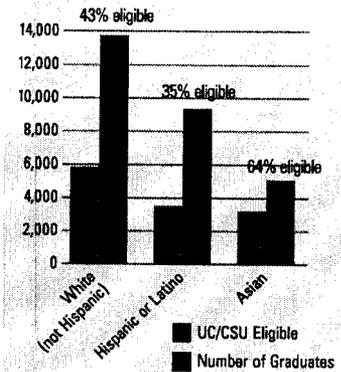


Source: California Department of Education

## Thirteen to Eighteen

Teens face barriers to educational achievement including increased incidence of risk-taking behaviors (e.g., drug use and sexual activity), depression and suicide, and negative peer influences.

**UC/CSU Eligibility Among Orange County High School Graduates, 2005/06**



Source: California Department of Education

### Milestones

By 2010, 100% of children have had a developmental screening by age 2.

By 2010, 80% of students are at the Proficient level on the California standard tests.

By 2010, more students in under-represented ethnic groups are graduating college-ready.

### Promising Practices

- **Reach Out and Read:** Pediatricians prescribe books to children at their well child visits and volunteers read to children in the waiting rooms modeling techniques to parents.
- **School Readiness Program:** Developmentally appropriate early learning programs implemented at the county's school districts to prepare young children entering kindergarten.
- **School Nurse Program:** School district based Nurses identify health and developmental needs in young children and assist to access health services.

- **Response to Intervention (RtI):** For children with early academic and/or behavioral issues, school districts provide specialized services, such as high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need with frequent monitoring to allow changes to goals or services, as needed
- **Parenting classes:** School districts promote parental awareness of classroom goals and train parents to assist and support their children at home.

- **Alternative Education:** Orange County Department of Education service providing a variety of schooling options aimed at increasing graduation rates and student achievement for students with varying educational needs.
- **Advance via Individual Determination (AVID) program:** Assists students to succeed in a rigorous academic program and enroll in a four-year college, through mentoring and assistance with college and financial aid applications, SAT prep, note taking strategies, and test taking.

### Action Items

- Expand early literacy services, such as Reach Out and Read and Family Literacy programs, to ensure children are exposed to books and reading before they enter kindergarten.
- Promote early learning activities within the home or preschool classes using tools such as Kid Builders and Sesame Workshop materials.
- Support and expand programs to provide developmental and health screenings to young children in preparation for entering school

- Develop school-based "Child-Parent Centers" which provide educational and family support to low-income children and their parents.
- Expand alternative academic options that support multiple learning styles.
- Develop partnerships to "adopt" a sixth-grade classroom in which students are guaranteed college tuition assistance.

- Implement "small schools" design in existing high schools.
- Support Coordinated School Health (CHS), the coordination of the multiple school health program and policy initiatives. The American Cancer Society provides training materials and technical support for schools interested in CHS.

# Safe Homes & Communities

**GOAL** Orange County children and youth are safe from threats at home and in the community.

## Why Is This Important?

**Birth through Five** Parental substance abuse is often a factor in reports of abuse and neglect against infants and young children; 70% of children under 2 removed from their homes in Orange County were prenatally exposed to drugs or alcohol.

## Six through Twelve

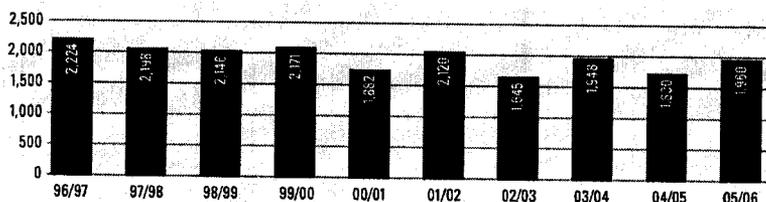
As adults, victims of child abuse are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, be homeless, engage in violence against others, and be incarcerated. Parental substance abuse is a contributor to abuse and neglect.

## Thirteen to Eighteen

Probation referrals are an indicator of more serious crimes committed by youth. Tracking, evaluating, and responding to youth referred to probation can prevent delinquency and escalation into chronic criminality.

## Facts

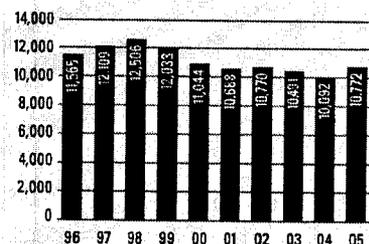
**Number of Dependency Petitions Filed, 96/97-05/06**



Source: Orange County Social Services Agency

- Dependency petitions indicate an allegation of abuse or neglect has been substantiated and is serious enough to require a protective order from the Juvenile Court.
- In Orange County, each day, 1 child under 5 years old is seriously injured. Each month, 2 die as a result of injury. Assault is a leading cause of death among children less than 1 year of age. (State of California, Department of Health Services, Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control Branch)

## Youth Ages 10-18 Referred to Probation, 1996-2005



Source: Orange County Probation Department

- Felony-related referrals (38% of all referrals) rose substantially between 2004 and 2005.

## Milestones

By 2010, the percentage of dependency petitions filed from child abuse reports remains at or below current levels.

## Promising Practices

- **Bridges for Newborns:** Greets babies born at high birth hospitals and identifies families who could benefit from additional services and support.
- **Nurse Family Partnership:** A home visitation program serving low-income, single, first-time mothers.
- **Perinatal Substance Abuse Services Initiative:** Home visiting nurses who provide case management services for pregnant women that are affected by substance abuse and/or HIV.
- **Safe from the Start:** A statewide campaign to reduce the effects of children's exposure to violence.
- **Differential Response:** Program engages families in community-based services without bringing them into the child welfare system.
- **Families and Communities Together (FACT):** Promotes FRCs as the platform for abuse prevention and family-support services.
- **Domestic Abuse Services Unit:** Help for CalWORKs recipients who are victims of abuse.
- **Domestic Violence Coordination Team:** Works within courts to reduce reoccurrence.
- **Wraparound:** A partnership among Child Welfare, Probation and Mental Health to develop family-driven intervention plans for children in group homes or whose behavior puts them at risk of group home placement.
- **Independent Living Program:** Prepares foster youth for self-sufficiency; supports Probation youth residing in foster care.
- **Permanency for Youth:** Connects Probation youth to extended family members located through the Internet.
- **Employment training programs:** Sponsored by Social Services Agency and Probation for youth in the juvenile justice system.

## Action Items

- Provide parent education programs and opportunities for developing positive social networks.
- Increase early identification of developmental disabilities and special health care needs.
- Increase high quality early childhood education programs.
- Identify family strengths and stressors and provide appropriate support services, such as respite care and behavioral, psychological, educational, and medical services.
- Educate professionals and service providers on identifying and alleviating abuse/neglect risk factors.
- Support mentoring programs for at-risk youth such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters.
- Adopt Therapeutic Foster Care model in which delinquent youth are placed with a trained foster family as an alternative to incarceration or institutional care.



13th Annual Report on the  
Conditions of Children  
**Call to Action**



Children and Families Commission of Orange County  
To obtain additional copies of the Call to Action report, contact the  
Children and Families Commission of Orange County at (714) 834-5310.