



## MEMO

**TO:** Commissioners

**FROM:** Kathi Walker, Executive Director

**DATE:** December 21, 2011

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve expanding eligibility for the El Dorado Children’s Dental Van services with a priority to serve all children 0-5 years of age with MediCal.

### BACKGROUND:

In October 2009, First 5 El Dorado Commission convened partners to discuss a mobile dental clinic to address the oral health needs of young children in the county. The priority for service for the Children’s Dental Van is children between 0-5 years of age that are MediCal eligible. Three partners were engaged in the planning and implementation process:

- Shingle Springs Tribal Health Program (SSTHP) for clinic operations
- El Dorado County Health Services Department (EDCHSD) for outreach and enrollment
- El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) for site delivery and van maintenance

It was the vision of the Commission and partners that the Children’s Dental Van become sustainable through revenue generated by clinic services and that ownership eventually be transferred to SSTHP. Ownership would be transferred with the assurance that children 0-5 years of age remain the priority for service and that the target population be expanded as the work shifted from intervention to prevention.

### DISCUSSION:

The El Dorado Children’s Dental Van (CDV) was delivered and began providing services in October 2010. Since that time, there have been significant start-up issues in licensing, staffing, connectivity and service schedule.

SSTHP operates their primary health clinic on tribal property, legally exempt from state public health licensure. The CA Department of Public Health Licensing does not have policies and procedures in place to address licensing a satellite clinic, such as the CDV, off tribal property. The primary question is whether the CDV is also legally exempt from licensing or, because the van operates off of tribal property, is it subject to state licensing. These questions have twice delayed licensing. Partners met in mid November to discuss these issues and have a two pronged approach: attempt to obtain a license (in print) while we negotiate the appropriate

application process with the State and work for a legislative “fix” to close the loophole for Tribal Clinics to operate satellites. To date, the CDV is licensed through November 19, 2012, giving partners a year to work on a permanent solution.

The CDV Clinic has experienced turnover in staff, reducing services in the months of August and September 2011. As of October 2011, the CDV is fully staffed.

Connectivity for electronic recordkeeping has been a challenge in the rural areas of the county. Slow internet speeds greatly impact the ability to operate the clinic software and download x-rays. Internet speed can be increased by relocating the van closer to the signal and improving connections at the elementary school sites. The El Dorado County Office of Education has agreed to take the lead in optimizing connections.

Originally the CDV provided services at eight elementary school sites: Al Tahoe, Bijou Community, Camerado, Camino, Georgetown, Ken Lowry, Pinewood and Schnell School. After the first year of operation, schools were consolidated due to the small number of eligible children and optimizing connectivity:

- Camerado services were moved to Rescue School to serve a larger number of children.
- Schnell School services were moved to Charles Brown as connectivity was poor and early childhood classrooms were consolidated to the Brown Site.
- Services at Camino School were consolidated with Pinewood due to the small number of children at that location.
- Services at Bijou Community School were consolidated with Al Tahoe school due to construction at that site and connectivity issues.

Services are now provided at six sites: Al Tahoe, Charles Brown, Georgetown, Ken Lowry, Pinewood and Rescue Schools. Schedules are extended at Al Tahoe and Ken Lowry sites to serve as primary clinics. Changes in locations have impacted service delivery schedules at school sites and ultimately the scheduling of patients. The 2011-12 schedule was adjusted in October 2011 and patients are being scheduled in advance of the CDV arrival.

The combination of challenges has impacted the number patients seen on the CDV and the revenue generated by those services. Partners are committed to the CDV and support successful implementation. In order to support self sufficiency, partners are recommending an expansion of CDV service priorities and eligibility for services:

**Priorities:**

1. Serve children 0-5 years of age who are MediCal eligible.
2. Serve pregnant women who are MediCal eligible.
3. Serve all children 0-5 years of age with dental insurance.
4. Serve children 6-14 years of age who are MediCal eligible.
5. Serve children 6-14 years of age with dental insurance

As the Children's Dental Van continues to meet the needs of the target population, partners will transition ownership from the Commission to SSTHP.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

Staff is recommends expanding eligibility for the El Dorado Children's Dental Van services with a priority to serve all children 0-5 years of age with MediCal. Expanding eligibility allow the Clinic to increase services and revenue while continuing to prioritize the target populations. Ultimately, the clinic will achieve successful implementation and a plan for transferring ownership of the CDV to SSTHP can be developed.