



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT

Jessica Gelzer

igelzer@childrenspartnership.org

w: (424) 203-1646 c: (818) 399-4088

Jenny Kattlove Responds to Little Hoover Commission Report on Dental Care for Children in Medi-Cal

SANTA MONICA, CA (April 1, 2016) – Today, the Little Hoover Commission, an independent state oversight agency, released a report addressing the crisis in dental care for children enrolled in Medi-Cal. The report presents recommendations for the California Legislature and Administration to implement to make sure that the 5.6 million children in California enrolled in Medi-Cal get the dental care they are entitled to and need.

Senator Richard Pan, MD, and Assemblymember Jim Wood, DDS, requested the Commission's review of Medi-Cal's dental program in response to [a 2014 audit of California's Medi-Cal dental care program](#), which found that poor access to care and a lack of oversight put children enrolled in the program at higher risk for dental disease.

Jenny Kattlove, Senior Director of Programs at The Children's Partnership (TCP), testified before the Commission last September, outlining several ways the State could improve the oral health of its most vulnerable children. She responds to the report released today:

“The Little Hoover Commission's report includes many recommendations that will improve the dental health and, as a result, the overall health of children in California. We are pleased that the first recommendation urges the Legislature to set a target of 66 percent of children with Denti-Cal coverage making annual dental visits. By doing so, the rate of low-income children using dental services, especially preventive services, would be comparable to those enrolled in commercial insurance. Preventive dental care for children is an essential part of growing up healthy.

“It is also particularly encouraging to see that the report urges the Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign AB 648 (Low), co-sponsored by The Children's Partnership and the California Dental Association. The bill would invest in upfront costs to expand the Virtual Dental Home, an evidence-based innovative model that would bring dental care to where children are, such as at schools and Head Start sites. Many families face financial, transportation, and other barriers to taking their children to the traditional dental office. With new technology and innovations in workforce, we can bring dental care to where children live, learn, and play. Parents won't have to miss work and lose pay and children won't have to miss school to get needed dental care.

“We are also pleased that the report calls on the State to reduce barriers for providers to see Medi-Cal-enrolled children. With more than half of all children in California enrolled in Medi-Cal, we must have enough providers in the right places to treat our children, especially our most vulnerable.

“The Children's Partnership urged the California Legislature to require the California State Auditor to conduct its review of Medi-Cal's dental program and provided input to the Little Hoover Commission as it developed its report. We now look forward to working with the Legislature and Administration to put these recommendations into action. Together, we can close the dental care gap faced by California's children.”

[View the report released by the Little Hoover Commission.](#)

[Read TCP's testimony before the Little Hoover Commission.](#)

[Learn more about TCP's efforts to improve the oral health of California's underserved children.](#)

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ABOUT THE CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP

The Children's Partnership is a children's advocacy organization working to ensure that all children, no matter their background, have the opportunities and resources they need to grow up healthy and lead productive lives. We develop bold ideas, create scalable programs, and drive meaningful action to help all children thrive. Led by Mayra E. Alvarez and our Board of Directors, The Children's Partnership works in California and nationally, with staff in Santa Monica, CA; Sacramento, CA; and Washington, DC. For more information, please visit www.childrenspartnership.org.