



**SUBJECT: Approval of Comprehensive Child Abuse Medical Program**  
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**BACKGROUND (Continued):**

Many of these thousands of children in our County require specialized medical care and assessment services as a result of the abuse and neglect. In order to adequately demonstrate to the Courts, both Juvenile and Criminal, that intervention is needed, forensic evidentiary collection is critical.

Under Penal Code 13823.9, the County is required to provide child abuse examinations. These services have been provided through the Child Abuse & Neglect (CAN) Team at Riverside County Regional Medical Center. However, since the departure of a lead physician in January 2003, RCRMC has been unable to fully meet the needs of the community in the provision of these critical medical forensic services for child abuse victims.

The hospital replaced this physician with a part-time child abuse fellow, however, this staffing has been insufficient to meet the demands of our community for qualified child abuse examiners. The lack of services at RCRMC has resulted in abused children being transported out of the County for examinations. Some victims have not received timely examinations due to the unavailability of services.

During the month of October 2004, three children under the age of thirteen had to be transported by the Riverside Police Department to San Diego for examinations.

The Chadwick Center of San Diego Children's Hospital is prepared to assist the County hospital through recruiting, training and providing peer review for an additional fellow as well as a full-time nurse practitioner who will examine abused children. In addition, RCRMC requests a Clinical therapist II to assist with counseling of these victims and a one-time upgrade of their video equipment to provide telemedicine capabilities with the Chadwick Center. DPSS is prepared to contribute \$300,000 in one-time funding to assist with the reinstatement of the child abuse and neglect program at the hospital to service the needs of abused children in our community. This plan will triple the services of qualified medical experts who are currently available in our community to examine abused children.

Abused children are entitled to have qualified medical experts perform examinations. Prosecution of child abusers depends upon the expertise and availability of qualified examiners. In addition, children deserve to have qualified examiners available locally, to avoid the additional trauma of being transported out-of-county for examinations. The partnership with the Chadwick Center and additional resources and equipment for RCRMC will enable the County to provide these critical services. The annual cost associated with this arrangement is approximately \$500,000. This is a high health and public safety priority.

DPSS has committed one-time funding in the amount of \$300,000 to support the reinstatement of the CAN program. General Fund support is requested to maintain the program on an ongoing basis.