

Providing Care for Uninsured Children

I read with great interest the letter by Dr. Oscar E. Valenzuela, published in the September 2005 issue of the *Journal of the California Dental Association*, about “remembering the children” and the problem of addressing health care needs for poor and uninsured people in our communities.

I’m writing this letter to let Dr. Valenzuela and other health care providers know of an organization I’ve been involved with for the past 11 years. In 1994, Glendale Memorial Hospital, Glendale Adventist Medical Center, and Verdugo Hills Hospital (the three hospitals in the Glendale area) funded the startup of Glendale Healthy Kids. Glendale Healthy Kids helps provide medical, dental, and mental health services to low-income, uninsured children living in the Glendale area, and health education to families in Glendale.

There are approximately 60 dentists

and 80 physicians who provide services in their offices at no cost to children who are referred through school nurses to Glendale Healthy Kids. We also staff and train an annual in-school dental hygiene education program. Glendale Healthy Kids is staffed by two full-time administrators and utilizes the services of a part-time grant writer.

The neighboring cities of Burbank and Pasadena have similar programs in place to help provide care for uninsured children. Glendale Healthy Kids has a large, about 25 members, board of directors and raises funds throughout the year via community fund raisers and grants. Parents of children referred to GHK are required to complete a financial statement to confirm they qualify for the program.

I would urge all communities to consider a similar organization to help meet the health care needs of the poor.

Gary S. Finer, DDS
President-elect

Glendale Healthy Kids Board of Directors

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