



PRESS RELEASE

El Dorado County **PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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Healthy People Living in Healthy Communities Throughout El Dorado County

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Healthy Families Program at Risk; **Parents Urged to Act Now**

As California lawmakers consider the potential statewide freeze of the Healthy Families medical insurance program within the next two months, El Dorado County health officials are encouraging parents to act quickly to get their children enrolled now. "It is urgent that children who qualify for this program get signed up as soon as possible, today is even better," explained Kirsten Rogers, Supervising Health Education Coordinator with the El Dorado County Public Health Department. "This very affordable and comprehensive health program could be gone as of June 30, 2004. We don't want to see any children go without this important health benefit."

According to Rogers, children enrolled in the Healthy Families program can have medical, dental and vision coverage for a small monthly premium of between \$0-9 per child per month. A family of four that earns \$3,800 or less per month qualifies. Rates are based on the family's size and monthly income. "There is even free assistance available through the Public Health Department to help families in El Dorado County determine if they qualify for Health Families and to get them signed up," said Rogers. "We try to make the process as easy as possible."

Statistics show that children without health insurance are more likely to have poor health outcomes; they generally wait until they are very sick before seeking medical care, often in hospital emergency rooms. "We know that there are families out there who qualify for existing health insurance programs, such as Healthy Families or Medi-Cal," said Rogers. "It would be a shame to see them go without health coverage." According to the California Department of Health Services, there are over

40,000 children between the ages of 0-17 in El Dorado County, and approximately 1,400 of those children have no health insurance. For questions about Healthy Families, or for assistance with enrollment, contact Hosanna at (530) 621-6234 or Lucille at (530) 621-6194 in Placerville, and Andrew at (530) 573-3171 in South Lake Tahoe.

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