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SALINAS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTED AS EXAMPLE OF WAY TO USE PROP. 63 MENTAL HEALTH FUNDS

State and local leaders applaud Adoption Preservation Program

State and local leaders held a press conference at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the Kinship Center in Salinas to applaud the work being done to support adoptive children in their new homes.

“It is critical to give adoptive families mental health support as they open their doors and their hearts to children who need homes,” said Wesley Chesbro, a commissioner of the state Mental Health Oversight and Accountability Commission. “Kinship Center is an example of the good that is being done with Proposition 63 dollars.”

The press conference kicks off Mental Health Month, and is the first of four statewide events that will highlight innovative new programs that are being funded by Prop. 63, (the Mental Health Services Act). Novel programs in Bakersfield, Sacramento and San Diego will also be visited. These programs are funded by Prop. 63, approved by voters in 2004, which expands mental health services statewide through a 1% tax on personal income above \$1 million. More than \$1.7 billion has been collected to date and is in the process of being distributed statewide.

In Monterey County, the Mental Health Services Act has provided nearly \$6.7 million to fund 28 programs which represent a wide range of mental health programs.

In the six months since it opened, the Kinship Center’s Adoption Preservation program has helped 33 adoptive parents through a series of classes and counseled 23 children in therapy sessions. Case managers and therapists also are working with six children and their families in an intensive, wrap-around program designed to aid families who are facing immediate, critical challenges that threaten to disrupt their adoption.

“These children and their families are the future of our community,” said Wayne Clark, Director of the Monterey County Behavioral Health Department. “Ensuring their mental well being is critical for all of us.”

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