

UPDATE

A bi-monthly newsletter of the Solano County Health & Social Services Department.

Letter from the Director

Dear Reader:

This edition of **UPDATE** looks at how Solano County uses over \$4 million that it receives annually from the Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement (MSA). The MSA dates back to 1998 when California, along with 45 other states agreed to a settlement with the nation's major tobacco companies. The MSA sought to make tobacco companies accountable for the damage caused by tobacco and obtain compensation for public funds spent treating people with tobacco-related diseases.

In exchange for dropping its lawsuit and surrendering its right to sue in the future, California receives approximately \$1 billion per year. That money is split evenly between the state and its counties. County shares are based on population. Solano County receives about \$4.5 million annually and will receive MSA money through 2026.

There were no strings placed on how the money can be spent. For Solano County, the Board of Supervisors established two primary goals for MSA funds:

- **Improve access to primary care health services for low income, uninsured and other vulnerable residents of Solano County.**
- **Reduce the rates of tobacco, alcohol and other drug use in Solano County especially among youth.**

H&SS led the effort to develop a strategic plan for MSA funds. A key feature of Solano County's MSA strategic plan is the investment of funds and building of a permanent endowment to allow for a continuing revenue stream to support programs and services intended to improve access to health care and reduce substance abuse.

MSA expenditures and results are reviewed by an MSA Advisory Committee appointed by the Board of Supervisors. MSA funding has been instrumental in the success of a number of programs. During the first two years of the program, MSA funding has supported:

Outreach workers to help enroll children and adults in health insurance programs for which they are eligible;

Expanded hours at county and community clinics;

Development of local collaborations between police departments, schools, non-profit agencies and H&SS that are working together to reduce alcohol, tobacco and drug use in all of Solano County's cities; and

Expansion of tobacco cessation services. Services are now provided in Dixon, Fairfield, Vacaville, and Vallejo and are offered in English and Spanish with Tagalog soon to be in use.

H&SS provides staff support to the MSA Advisory Committee. In that role, the department recently concluded a progress report on MSA supported activities. Entitled *Health Improvement Initiatives Progress Report, March 2004*, it is available by email as a Word document. Parts of this report are highlighted in this edition of **UPDATE**. To receive a copy, contact Carmel Sniffen at (707) 784-8407 or CSniffen@SolanoCounty.com.

Sincerely,

Patrick O. Duterte



July, 2004
Volume 1, Issue 3

IN THIS ISSUE

Letter from the Director 1

Health & Social Services Index 2

Success Story: Working Together 3

Did you know? Smoking & Life Span 3

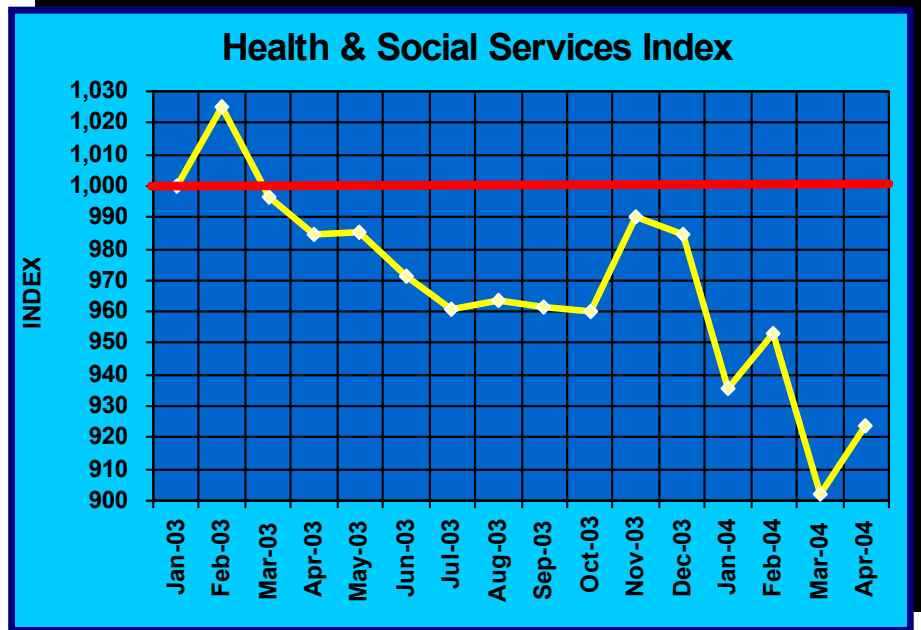
MSA Access to Health Care 4

MSA Substance Abuse 5

H&SS Trends 6

Financial Update 8





The **Health & Social Services (H&SS) Index** combines workload data from 15 key services provided by H&SS, along with data on unemployment in Solano County, to provide a monthly indicator of community demand for health and social services.

All of the monthly numbers – clients served, program caseloads, number of unemployed, referrals, etc. – are added together and then converted into an index score. The January 2003 total serves as the index bench line figure of 1,000. The index scores for subsequent months reflect change from the January level. Like the Dow Jones or NASDAQ, higher scores suggest positive developments – fewer people looking for work or requiring the services that H&SS provides, for example. Falling numbers suggest increasing need for H&SS’s safety net services.

Please note: The index is not a direct measure of need. Many socioeconomic factors influence need. At the same time, various factors, such as eligibility guidelines and available revenues, influence the amount of service that H&SS can provide regardless of need or demand for service.

INDICATOR	Jan-03	Mar-03	May-03	Jul-03	Sep-03	Nov-03	Jan-04	Feb-04	Mar-04	Apr-04
Number Unemployed	13,800	12,800	12,300	13,800	12,100	11,800	13,100	12,900	13,600	12,200
Number of I&R Calls	2,772	2,555	2,596	2,906	3,029	2,178	2,655	1,997	2,520	2,179
CalWORKs Cash Assistance Caseload	9,405	9,439	9,794	9,753	9,968	10,116	10,402	10,131	10,452	10,816
New CalWORKs Applications	385	337	330	403	396	394	469	357	567	366
Food Stamp Recipients	11,515	12,261	12,690	12,517	13,106	13,312	13,761	13,721	14,389	15,022
General Relief Recipients	256	320	323	325	359	394	385	354	367	372
Medi-Cal Enrollment	14,327	14,494	14,827	15,198	15,484	15,414	15,746	15,885	16,227	16,226
CMSP Enrollment	4,228	4,515	4,746	4,794	4,941	4,895	4,922	5,084	5,266	5,298
Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Referrals	98	115	123	110	90	82	106	73	95	93
Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Confirmed	40	27	35	20	31	16	36	29	29	26
In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Authorized Cases	2,254	2,254	2,226	2,231	2,278	2,299	2,237	2,324	2,243	2,257
Child Abuse Referrals	390	378	382	324	349	313	387	394	452	398
Medical Clinic Visits	2,595	2,752	2,664	2,496	2,721	2,024	2,615	2,331	3,025	2,437
Dental Clinic Visits	447	431	434	425	379	278	283	340	401	324
Mental Health Clients	2,701	2,833	2,793	2,754	2,784	2,559	2,756	2,652	2,804	2,732
Substance Abuse Clients	699	635	621	529	530	510	566	567	602	600

SUCCESS STORY: Working Together

In the fall of 2002, H&SS invited each of Solano County's seven cities, to participate in a county-wide effort to reduce alcohol and drug use among youth. National research has shown such local partnerships are effective in reducing substance abuse. H&SS wanted to replicate these successes throughout Solano County. H&SS offered to provide MSA funds to any city that built partnerships, conducted a local needs assessment, and developed promising interventions focused on reducing alcohol and drug use among youth.

Despite the requirement that each city provide a 100% match to the MSA, every city in Solano County is participating. The response has been stunningly successful. Projects include mentoring, after school services, alcohol and drug counseling, skill-building to refuse drugs, and interventions with families whose youth are most at-risk. In every city, schools, police departments, city government, and community groups are working as a team to implement projects, evaluate their effectiveness, and provide leadership in their community to increase awareness of potential solutions to alcohol and drug use.

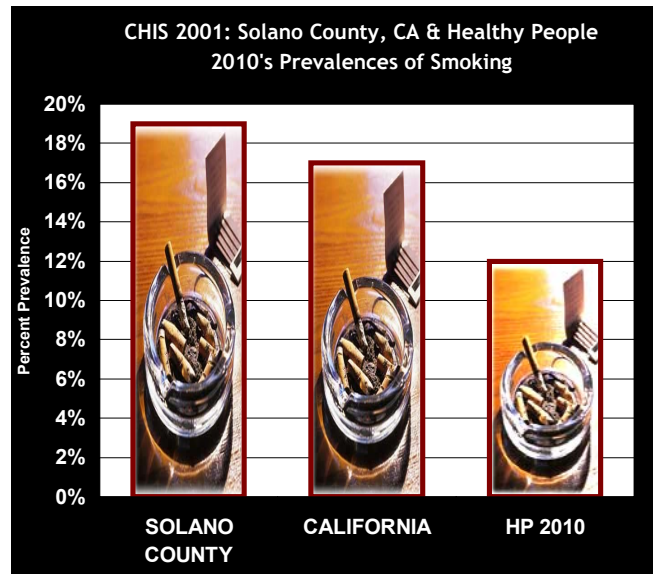
The cities are planning to showcase their work at a celebration event this fall.

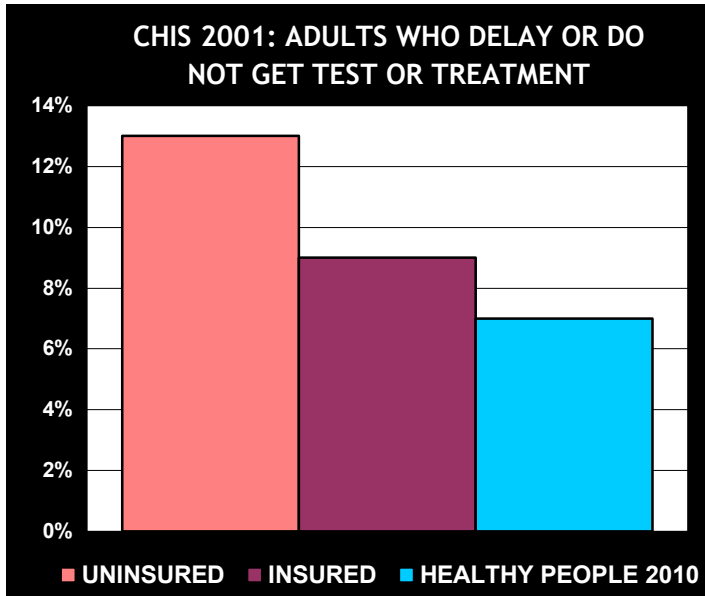
DID YOU KNOW? SMOKING & LIFE SPAN

Solano County has a higher prevalence (19%) of smokers than either California (15%) or the Healthy People 2010 target. (Solano's prevalence is almost 60 percent higher than the Healthy People 2010 goal).

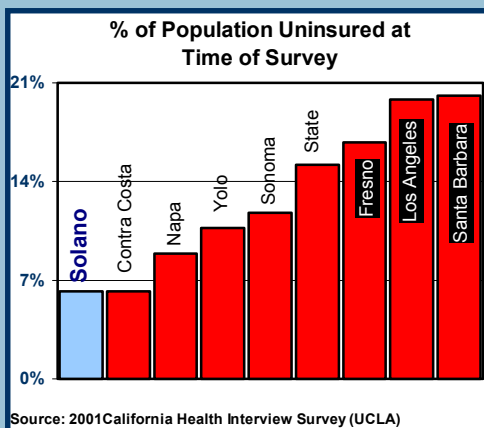
On average, smoking reduces a person's lifespan by 10 years according to a recently completed British study.

Every cigarette that a person smokes reduces life span by 11 minutes. Do the math. A carton of cigarettes represents a day and a half of lost life. If you smoke a pack a day, you potentially shorten your life by almost 2 months for each year that you continue smoking.



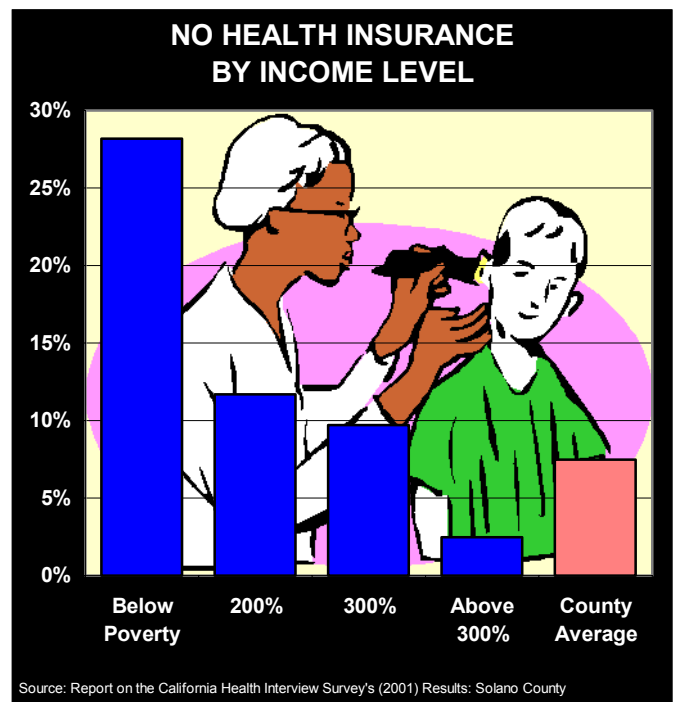


- The uninsured were less likely to seek medical treatment than the insured. Even those with insurance sought help at rates below the Healthy People 2010 goal.
- Although Solano County has one of the best records in the state and nation for insuring its residents, disparities continue to exist. The 2001 CHIS survey found that 25% of those living below poverty did not have health insurance – three times the county average.



The four principles behind the MSA goal to improve health care access in Solano County:

1. People need a way to pay for health care or they may not seek treatment when it is needed.
2. A primary care based delivery system offers the best chance for prevention of disease, early diagnosis and treatment, and comprehensive, integrated services.
3. Even when there is a payment source, and a delivery system, other practical, cultural, language, and psychosocial barriers must be addressed to ensure full access.
4. Only a well-informed community can fully support efforts toward full access to health care for all its residents.



Four strategies to help Solano County meet the Healthy People 2010 goals for use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

1. Prevent initial use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs among children and youth in Solano County.

A large body of research indicates that delaying onset of experimentation with substances significantly reduces the risk of addiction and problem use. Due to its highly addictive nature, preventing experimentation with tobacco is critical. Healthy People 2010 suggests targets of increasing average age of initial use to 14 years of age for tobacco, to 16.1 years of age for alcohol, and to 17.4 years of age for marijuana.

2. Reduce the overall proportion of youth 12-18 years old in Solano County using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Research indicates that intervening to prevent further use and reduce harm and risks associated with use among youth who have begun experimenting with or regularly using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is essential. Healthy People 2010 suggest targets of 11% of 12-17 year olds reporting use of alcohol or other drugs in the past 30 days.

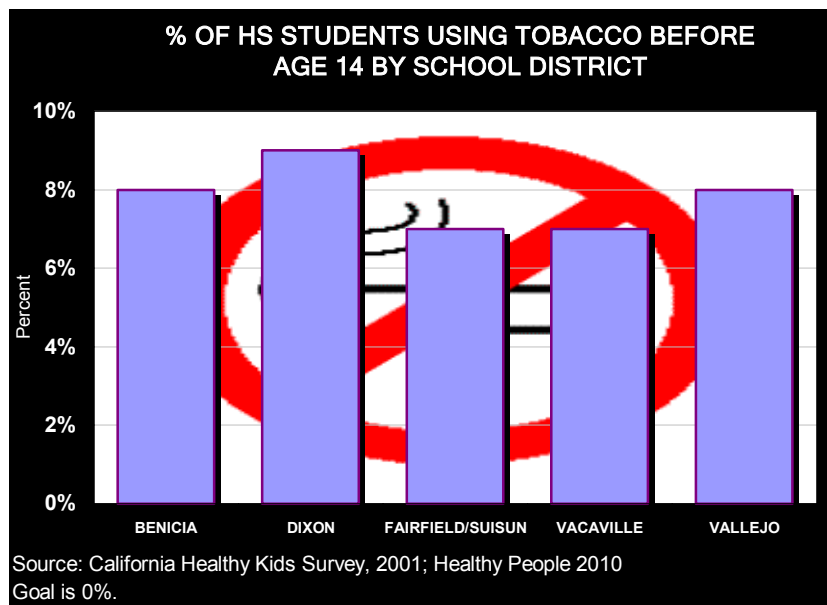
3. Reduce rates of tobacco use and alcohol and drug abuse among adults in Solano County.

Research indicates that adult use negatively influences children and creates unsafe homes and community environments. Treatment and cessation programs have been demonstrated to work. Nineteen percent of adults reported smoking in 2001 (California Health Interview Survey); the Healthy People target is 10%. Seventeen percent of Solano County adults reported binge drinking (Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 2000); the Healthy People target is 6%. Nine percent of Solano County adults reported use of illicit drugs (Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 2000); the Healthy People 2010 target is 2%.

4. Reduce effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs on communities, families and individuals.

Health, quality of life, criminal and other social problems related to use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs carry huge costs and are disproportionately high among various population groups. Smoking is responsible for 22% of all deaths in Solano County.

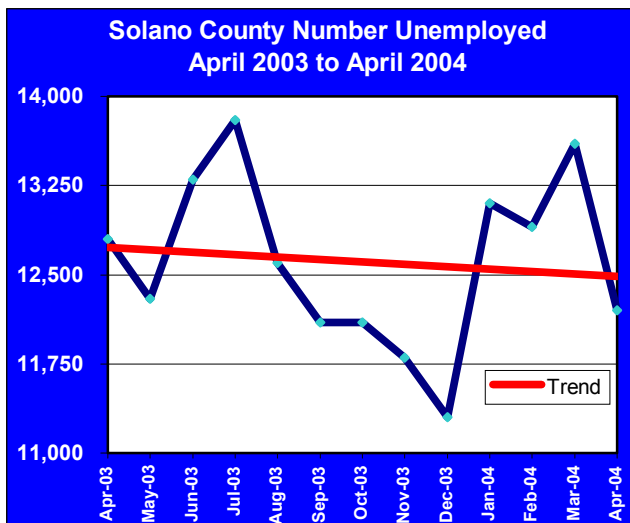
MSA GOAL: REDUCE USE OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO & OTHER DRUGS.



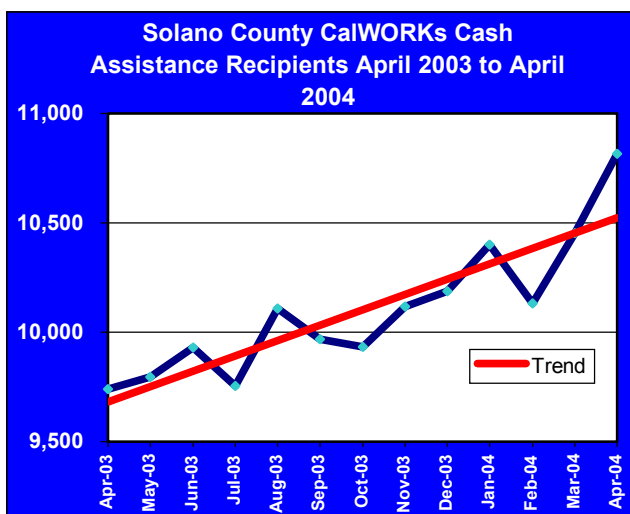
Healthy People 2010's goal is to increase the age at which youth first try tobacco. The goal is to have no youth reporting tobacco use prior to age 14. The chart at left reflects the percentage who reported having used tobacco prior to age 14 by school district. There is very little difference among the County's five largest school districts.

Healthy People 2010 has also established a goal to have no youth reporting alcohol or drug use prior to age 17.

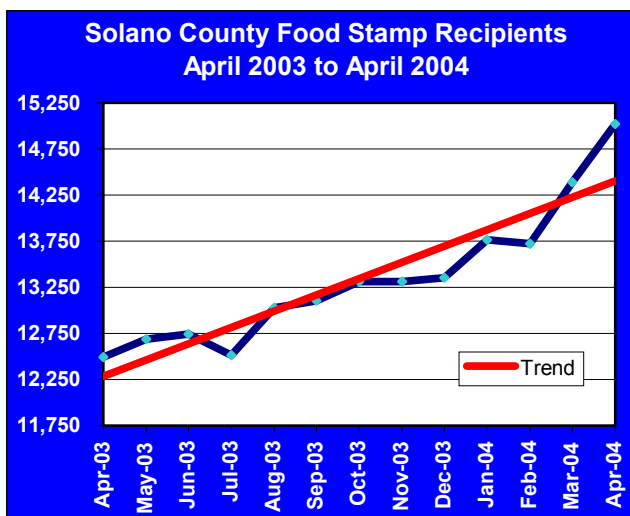
ECONOMY/EMPLOYMENT



- The number of unemployed in Solano County declined by 1,500 in April compared to March. The unemployment rate fell from 6.3 percent of the labor force in March to 5.7 percent in April.
- The April decrease in unemployment was the first substantial decrease since January.
- Preliminary figures for May show continued improvement with an increase of 1,400 new jobs and a drop in the unemployment rate to 5.4 percent. The County's unemployment rate remains below the rate for the state as a whole (5.8 percent) but slightly above the 5.3 percent national rate.



PUBLIC ASSISTANCE



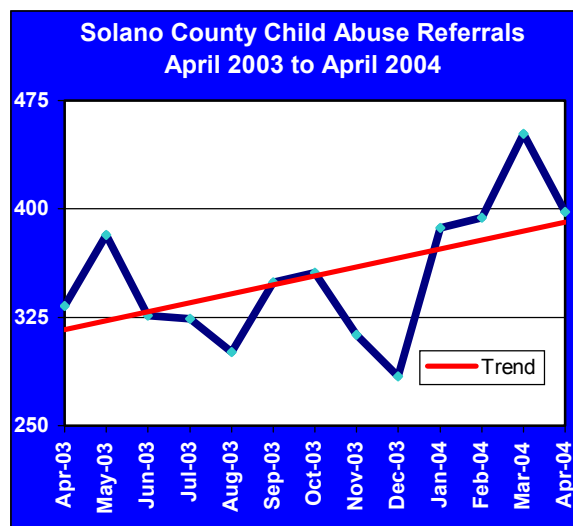
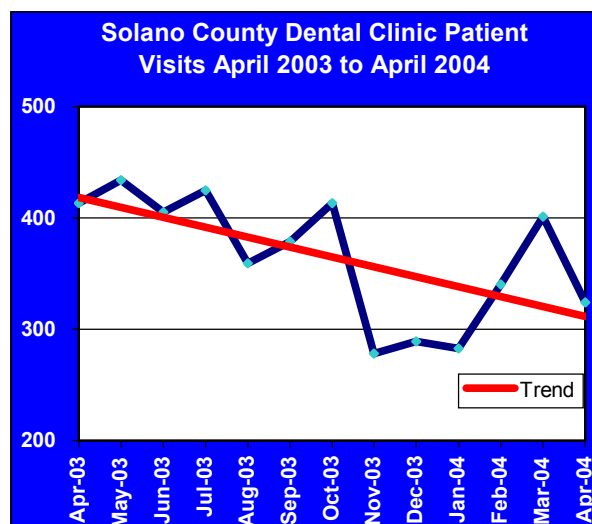
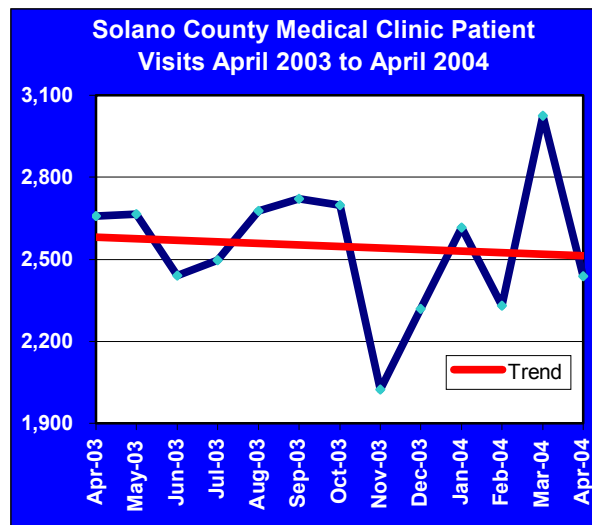
- Public assistance programs continued to rise sharply over the past year. There were over 1,100 new CalWORKs cash recipients in April 2004 as compared to April 2003.
- The number of food stamp recipients were 20 percent higher in March 2004 than in March 2003.
- Since December, the number of food stamp recipients has increased by 12.5 percent. During the same period, CalWORKs cash assistance recipients increased by only 6.2 percent. This suggests that more households are in need of supplemental assistance to help make ends meet than full scale assistance.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- Visits to the two Solano County health clinics – Fairfield and Vallejo – in April 2004 were down 8.3 percent compared to April 2003. Visits to the Fairfield dental clinic were down 21 percent for the same period.
- The decrease in patient visits may be more a reflection of lack of capacity than lack of demand.
- There was a spike in demand for both medical and dental service in March that was probably due to pent up demand for service left over from February. There were only 18 business days in February compared to 23 for March.

CHILD WELFARE

- The number of referrals for child abuse or neglect has increased consistently over the past year. There were 20 percent more referrals in April 2004 than in April 2003.
- On average, about 15 percent of referrals are substantiated.



Financial Update:

At the start of Fiscal Year 2003-04, H&SS made a commitment to the CAO that it would erase its accumulated \$4.3 million deficit. It will be several months before the books are closed on FY 2004, but, as the fiscal year concludes, it now appears that the department will achieve this important goal. The deficit was created over a number of years and reducing or erasing the outstanding amount is a crucial step towards providing H&SS with maximum financial flexibility to meet increasing client demands.

A major part of the success was due to efforts to improve operational efficiency. More than ever, H&SS needs to cost align its operations so that the department makes the most cost-effective use of available resources in order to maximize client outcomes. H&SS submitted, and received approval for, a 3rd quarter revised budget that reflected unanticipated revenues and expenditures of approximately \$6.5 million to support client growth and related services attributable to Solano County's steady population growth. In addition, every manager was requested to submit cost savings objectives and/or come up with revenue maximization strategies for both the revised 3rd quarter budget and FY 2004-05 budget. It appears that this extra effort during the 3rd quarter and for the Fiscal Year 2004-05 budget process generated the needed commitment from the department's management and staff to be able to hit the department's current budget and balance the FY 04-05 operating budget.

Significant Highlights of the Year-To-Date Results. The Department's Year-To-Date budget performance (July 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004) is characterized by a \$35 million outstanding receivable (unpaid services) from the State and other payor sources that touches every H&SS division. Although the State has recently improved its ability to start paying counties, Solano County has not yet benefited from the faster payment schedule. We are hopeful that Sacramento will be able to catch up quickly between now and the end of the year: Through May 31:

- H&SS achieved 81% of its Year-to-Date Budgeted revenue target of \$208,959,000 - or \$169,625,000.
- Expenditures incurred by H&SS were at 90% of its Year-to-Date budgeted appropriations of \$205,016,000 - or \$185,376,000.
- Cash Position - negative Department Cash Balance of - (\$10,134,584)

Stephen Chu - Chief Financial Officer