

October 14, 2003

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LIFE ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE
Oakland City Council

Chairperson Chang and Members of the Committee:

RE: Annual Report of the Health and Human Services Commission

We are pleased to present the annual report of the Health and Human Services Commission. Since our last report, the Commission has been active in supporting various initiatives of the Department of Human Services and other City agencies. The Commission is a strong and vibrant body with diverse expertise that reaches out to create collaborations and to add strength and expertise to key human service efforts and programs. We are pleased to have attracted new talent over the past year.

The following brief report outlines some of the efforts the Commission **has** undertaken over the past year and provides recommendations for the future. The Commission has focused its efforts on areas where there was an opportunity to truly make a difference in the quality of the human services support our residents receive.

- The Commission has undertaken a partnership with the City Manager's Equal Access Office in an effort to improve the accuracy and accessibility of the City's new phone information system. After research into and testing of the new phone system, it was quickly evident to Commissioners with community health expertise that the some information was in error, i.e., "AIDS Housing" positioning and other information could be improved in terms of connecting a caller more directly to services. In addition to improving accuracy and breadth, the Commission will be working on strategies for improving the public's awareness and access to the new phone number system. The Commission is looking forward to having a positive impact on the quality of this important service and to its new partnership with the Equal Access Office.
- The Commission actively supported City Council's review of the Alice Street Learning Center during the difficult **FY03-05** budget deliberations. The Commission is pleased that Council saw the value in this superb facility and the importance of preserving the investment the City has made in this joint venture. The one year extension in City support for the lease provides the partners with time to identify the best opportunity for sustaining this facility. The Commission considers it a priority over the next year to work with all partners so that this

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valuable facility serving lower income downtown families and workers remains open.

- Sustainability and Precautionary Principles. The Commission **has** been actively educating itself with presentations and dialogues regarding the City's sustainability initiative and the Precautionary Principles which were recently adopted in San Francisco. The Commission believes these initiatives are critical to the overall health of the community and fully support the Council's efforts in these areas. The Commission will continue to seek ways to support and further this work over the next year.
- The Commission has supported key community collaborative grants such as Alameda County's application for a comprehensive health promotion grant (STEPS). It has been participating in the development of the City's Violence Prevention **Plan**.
- Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS, (HOPWA) the addition of housing programs to the Department Human Services and work with the Oakland Housing Authority presents an opportunity to keep valuable federal funds in the city. Conversations are already underway.
- The Commission has **been** very active in providing a City of Oakland presence at community events and in health and human service forums. It has played a supportive and encouraging role **for** various innovative initiatives. The Commission has maintained a presence at key City events such as *Art* and Soul Festival and Domestic Violence Awareness Month (providing a presenter). It has encouraged innovative projects like **the Youth** Digital Video Stones in which high school filmmakers received a letter of commendation from the Commission. The Commission secured a Mayoral proclamation for World AIDS Day and supported the APEB and Black Men's Health Collective in finding space and resources for their **annual** conference.

In the coming year, the Health and Human Services Commission has already identified one new project and is initiating discussions regarding the overall organization and role of the body.

- The Commission is actively **seeking** funding to support a health and exercise awareness campaign aimed at Oakland school students. Given the Commission's focus on health disparities, identifying creative opportunities to promote healthy eating, exercise and thus a reduction in diabetes and other health conditions associated with obesity and inactivity is a top priority.
- The Commission **has** also been engaging in a dialogue to identify the most effective way to serve the City given the large number of Commissions **and the**

declining staff resources. The Commission is actively and openly exploring with City staff opportunities to coordinate its efforts with similarly focused Boards such as the Community Action Partnership and Community Development Block Grant District Boards. The Commission is truly open to reviewing how consolidating some of these governing entities might provide a clearer and more effective voice for human services in the City.

We are pleased to be able to support the Department of Human Services and other City efforts in the field of human services. We ask City Council to turn to and make use of the expertise of this body as the Council faces key decisions in related policy areas. The Commission would like to have a close and defined working relationship with the Life Enrichment Committee so that the Commission is truly a valuable resource for City Council.

Respectfully submitted,


R. J. Pittman, Chair
Health and Human Services Commission

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE
LIFE ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE


Office of the City Manager

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