

The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

August 2003

Serving the Cities of:
El Cajon
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the communities of:
Agua Caliente
Allied Gardens
Alpine
Barrett
Blossom Valley
Bostonia
Boulevard
Campo
Canebrake
Casa de Oro
Crest
Cuyamaca
Dehesa
Del Cerro
Descanso
Dulzura
Eucalyptus Hills
Fernbrook
Flinn Springs
Granite Hills
Grantville
Guatay
Harbison Canyon
Jacumba
Jamul
Julian
Lake Morena
Lakeside
Mount Helix
Pine Hills
Pine Valley
Potrero
Ramona
Rancho San Diego
Rolando
San Carlos
San Pasqual
Santa Ysabel
Shelter Valley
Spring Valley
Tecate
Tierra del Sol
Vallecitos
Wynola

Serving the Indian Reservations of:
Barona
Campo
Cosmit
Cuyapaipe
Inaja
Jamul
La Posta
Manzanita
Mesa Grande
Santa Ysabel
Sycuan
Viejas

ERs in Crisis:

Relief for Crowded Emergency Rooms

When someone you love is involved in a life-threatening accident, you want the finest emergency care in the blink of an eye. We all feel that way. That's why we owe it to each other to take seriously the problem of crowded emergency rooms, and to find out what each of us can do to ease wait times.

A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) comes as no surprise to doctors and nurses on the front lines of emergency care in San Diego County. The CDC reports that emergency rooms nationwide are at their breaking point. Over the past decade, emergency room use has climbed 20 percent while the total number of emergency rooms across the country has been slashed by 15 percent.

San Diego is reflective of this statistic. Locally, four emergency rooms have closed their doors in the last ten years including Scripps East, Mission Bay, Cabrillo and Physicians and Surgeons.

The decline in the number of emergency rooms is just one factor fueling what many in San Diego's medical community warn is

an emergency healthcare crisis.

Whether it's an exodus of physicians and nurses from California, the growing number of patients who use emergency rooms for non-emergencies or the thousands and thousands of uninsured patients with no place else to seek care, our County's emergency rooms are dangerously crowded.

While administrators and public health officials continue to debate the factors behind the overflow, no one is debating whether local facilities need a break. The County believes you can help by knowing your healthcare options.

Emergency rooms are not the only places

patients can find excellent medical care on short notice. Urgent care centers and community clinics can help bridge the gap between necessary medical treatment and crisis emergency care. These facilities are staffed with quality health professionals and offer timely medical services for everything from cuts to sprains to sore throats. You don't need an appointment and waits are remarkably shorter than in emergency rooms.

Urgent care centers are normally open late and on weekends. Many are less expensive than emergency rooms and offer reasonable co-payments for those with health insurance.

"Urgent care centers and community clinics can help bridge the gap between necessary medical treatment and crisis emergency care."

*-Supervisor
Dianne Jacob*



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Underage Booze Parties Put Teens At Risk

Giving booze to minors is illegal, and thanks to a new County Ordinance which goes into effect this month, throwing an underage booze party in a private home is illegal too.

Think it's okay to throw a drinking party for a group of teens because, as one parent recently put it, "It's better to know where kids are?" Think again.

Young people who drink alcohol dramatically increase their risk of injuries, getting into serious fights and trouble with the law and worse yet, dying in an alcohol-related car crash. That should make adults think twice before serving drinks to minors.

Too many law enforcement resources have been forced to respond to rowdy underage drinking parties. Too many young lives have been ruined by the risky behavior associated with underage drinking. The County believes its new ordinance, which is the toughest of any jurisdiction in the region, will help put a stop to these expensive and often deadly events.

Beginning this month, a person found guilty of hosting an underage drinking party will be charged with a misdemeanor, fined \$1,000 and can be sent to jail for up to six months. In addition, the adult must reimburse the County for the total cost of law enforcement resources needed to break up the party.

Behind every underage drinking party, there's an adult who broke the law by providing the alcohol. The City of Poway was the first to hold these adults accountable for hosting teen drinking parties. La Mesa and El Cajon followed closely behind. Santee and Lemon Grove are strengthening their rules too.

Does drunk driving make you MADD?

Become a member of Mothers Against Drunk Driving like Supervisor Jacob and help stop alcohol-related deaths. Visit www.maddsandiego.org for more information, or call (760) 746-6233 to speak to a MADD representative.

Emergency Rooms

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The Associate Medical Director of Sharp Rees-Stealy, Dr. Ranja Alexander, recently reported that waits in emergency rooms across the county have reached an average of four hours. In urgent care centers, however, waits average 27 minutes.

Like urgent care centers, community clinics exist in every region of the County, and are a low-cost alternative for people with non-life threatening conditions.

While the County would never suggest that you avoid the emergency room if you feel the situation is warranted, the County wants you to know you indeed have choices when it comes to immediate medical needs. Consider that the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development estimates that one out of three visits to emergency rooms in San Diego County are for non-emergencies, and it becomes even more important to spread the word about less-crowded alternatives.

If you think it's worth the hours waiting in an emergency room with a non-emergency health problem, please think of the heart attack patient whose life depends on immediate care. Then, consider using a community clinic or an urgent care center. The life you save might be your own.

What you can do:

- *Talk to your health care provider about urgent care centers.*
- *Visit ccc-sd.org to find a convenient community clinic.*
- *Call (800) 675-2229 to see if you qualify for health insurance.*



EAST COUNTY INTENSIFIES FIGHT AGAINST METH

The County of San Diego Methamphetamine Strike Force has East County in its sights and is hard at work on two new strategies specifically designed to drive out the dangerous narcotic.

First, the new federally-funded East County Coalition for Methamphetamine Solutions will operate under the auspices of the Strike Force. The Coalition already is reviewing current policies and programs in Lemon Grove, Lakeside, Santee, El Cajon, La Mesa and Spring Valley and prioritizing the needs of each community.

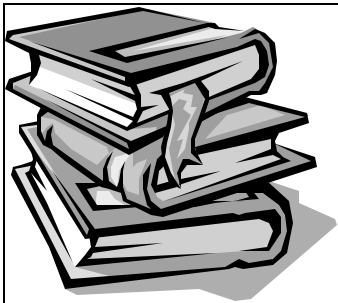
Second, the Coalition just launched a pre-cursor chemical reduction campaign to educate retailers about suspicious purchases of certain over-the-counter medicines that meth cooks often use to brew up the deadly product.

In the coming months, watch for additional activities aimed at eradicating meth in East County.

The Strike Force maintains a toll-free meth hotline, 1-877- No2Meth, and a web site, www.no2meth.org, for anonymous reporting of illegal drug activity or referral to treatment.



Meth Matters: Nancy Dennison of the East County Chamber of Commerce joined Supervisor Jacob last month to support the efforts of the Strike Force in East County.



Bookmark this

After years of hard work by folks in Spring Valley, the community's new 14,000 square foot library is about to open its doors. Be sure to join Supervisor Jacob for the grand opening on August 14, 2003 at 10:00 a.m.!

The celebration takes place at 836 Kempton Street in Spring Valley.

The library is just the beginning for Spring Valley families. Construction on a gym and teen center is underway. The facilities should open next May.

Join me for Coffee and Conversation

August 8, 2003 at 8:30 a.m.
Howard's Bakery
1097 Broadway
El Cajon

September 12, 2003 at 8:30 a.m.
Jimmy's Family Restaurant
9809 Campo Road
Spring Valley

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We hope to hear from you soon!

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