



NEWS

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San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative Director Honored as 2007 Communicator of the Year by Health Care Communicators of San Diego

(San Diego, CA)****Cheryl Moder, director of the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative (Initiative), received the Communicator of the Year Award (COTY) by Health Care Communicators of San Diego (HCC) on February 7 at the annual HCC Finest Awards Show. The COTY award is the highest honor given each year to recognize outstanding leadership, innovation, accomplishment and community service in effectively communicating health care issues.

San Diego's childhood obesity rates are higher than the national average and Cheryl is leading the charge and rallying our community leaders to stamp out this health crisis facing our community. "Although childhood obesity is ultimately the result of the food and physical activity choices we make, not all families have the same opportunities to make a healthy choice and until the healthy choice becomes an easy choice, the rate of childhood obesity will continue to rise," states Dr. Wilma Wooten, public health officer, County of San Diego and co-chair of the Initiative. "It is our environmental and social norms that the Initiative is working to change and Cheryl is doing an outstanding job directing our efforts."

Cheryl has been successful in communicating this issue in simple, straightforward terms to key stakeholders in each of the seven domains outlined in the *San Diego County Childhood Obesity Action Plan*, to members of the media and general public. Through her leadership, the Initiative has created an infrastructure that allows professionals from multiple sectors to check their egos at the door and bring their best practices to the table.

"This is a solid public-private partnership creating and implementing strategies for the prevention and reduction of childhood obesity," states Dr. Nick Yphantides, co-chair of the Initiative. "Most of the Initiative's hundreds of partners donate their time each month to the cause and it is Cheryl's leadership that keeps this massive effort organized and on target."

Early on in the development of the Initiative's action plan, Cheryl was selected by a group of San Diego's health care, government and industry leaders to bring together formative research on childhood obesity efforts into a comprehensive countywide plan. Cheryl's extensive communication background spanning more than 20 years made her an ideal choice to bring the action plan to actualization and later direct the efforts of the Initiative. To learn more about the Initiative, please visit www.ourcommunityourkids.org.

In 2005, San Diego County Supervisors Ron Roberts & Pam Slater-Price led the effort with a host of health and nutrition experts, as well as educators and other community leaders, to create the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Action Plan. The plan calls for environmental, behavioral and policy changes to help families make healthy choices in their daily lives. Strategies include the development of walk-able communities and safe routes to schools, training healthcare providers in effective obesity prevention and treatment, increasing parks and natural open spaces, and improving access to affordable nutritious food, among others.