

Senator Uresti's E-Newsletter

August 13, 2008

Contact: 512-463-0119

A message from Carlos...

Recently, I took part in a public service campaign that will air in San Antonio and the surrounding area. Thanks to Child Help, United Way, FOX 29 KABB TV, and Sylvia Rincon, we have two new positive parenting public service announcements for our community.

Every single one of us has needed help at some point. When I ran for senate, I needed the help of my friends, my family, the committed citizens of District 19, and I couldn't have done it without them. I don't think any one of us would be where we are now without help from others. The message of these two PSAs is no different—if you need help, don't be afraid to get it.

Both Child Help and United Way provide services that can be reached with a simple telephone call. The National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD) is a 24-hour hotline run by Child Help that offers callers the chance to talk to counselors about child abuse and neglect. Calls to Child Help are anonymous, so please don't hesitate to reach out if you're feeling angry or frustrated. Sometimes all we need as parents is a little time out and a friendly ear to listen.

Often, people don't know what to do when faced with the increased numbers of agencies and help-lines throughout our bureaucracy. What is worse is that many people forego necessary services because they do not know where to start looking. United Way offers a way for citizens to access vital community services through its 2-1-1 telephone number. Everything from finding an after-school program to securing adequate care for a child or an aging parent can be accessed by dialing 2-1-1.

I began my public service career with the goal of speaking out on behalf of my community and helping those who cannot help themselves. However, by publicizing these phone numbers, we can put the tools of prevention into the hands of every citizen. Under a common goal of improving the quality of life for all Texans, I believe that we can truly move Texas toward a better and brighter future.

Semper Fi!

- Carlos

Texas Tax Free Weekend August 15th-17th

Take advantage of back-to-school sales and tax-free shopping. View a list of tax exempt items [here](#).

Blue Ribbon Task Force "Strengthening Families" Blockwalk a Success

State Senator Carlos Uresti and the Blue Ribbon Task Force brought their message of parental support straight to the doors of San Antonio residents on July 19th. The "Strengthening Families Block Walk" provided information and tools for parental support. Volunteers helped distribute bags with parenting tips and bilingual literature with the central message of empowering children and strengthening families. Eager child advocates visited more than 100 households in the 78207 zip code.

This is the second Blue Ribbon Task Force Strengthening Families Block Walk. Senator Uresti plans on organizing consistent block walks throughout the city to support and strengthen communities with high instances of reported child abuse, drop out rates, and teenage pregnancy.

"These events give us a great avenue to communicate directly with young parents," said Uresti. "There are so many programs available for their support and a lot of people are not aware of them. These are significant tools that would help parents and children in a very tender time in their lives."

Senator Uresti is the founder and chair of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, a local coalition of community members. For more information on the organization, or to get involved, visit www.blueribbontaskforce.com.

Senator Uresti Welcomes His First Grandchild

State Senator Carlos Uresti is proud to announce the arrival of his first grandson, Benjamin Michael. The Uresti family welcomed the baby on Tuesday, July 22nd at 2:00pm.

Benjamin, the son of Senator Uresti's oldest son Michael and his wife Jennifer, weighed in at a whopping 9 lbs 10 oz and is reported to have a full head of hair.

"This is a very exciting time for Michael, Jennifer, and the entire Uresti family," Uresti said. "I'm so excited to see my family grow. Both mother and baby are doing well. Michael is doing 'so-so' as he adjusts to fatherhood."

Michael is a Code Compliance Officer for the City of San Antonio and attends the Saint Mary's University School of Law night program as a second-year student. Jennifer is a full-time mother.

Texas A&M Campus San Antonio: One Step Closer

Recently, staff from the Legislative Budget Board met with San Antonio community leaders and Texas A&M University officials and faculty to discuss progress on the Texas A&M University San Antonio campus. During that meeting, members of the Verano Land Group LP announced the completed transfer of nearly 700 acres of donated land for the new permanent campus near Highway 410 and Zarcamora. Verano also announced its funding of \$1 million in scholarships for future A&M San Antonio students.

In 1999, I joined together with the late Senator Frank Madla to plant the seeds of a Texas A&M University campus on the South Side of San Antonio. It has been my honor to continue this work toward the construction of a world-class university campus in an area that has long awaited these educational opportunities and facilities.

As my constituents know, I focus much of my legislative attention on health and human services issues, as well as serious threats to our community like child abuse and neglect. But the A&M campus is a priority for me, in part, because I believe that education provides so many of the resources we need to cure these social ills. The expansion of Texas A&M in South San Antonio will lift an entire community to new heights, while providing the capabilities we need to tackle our challenges. It will also serve as a boon to our local economy and the overall quality of life in this region of San Antonio, Bexar County, and the fourteen county area that the campus will serve.

My constituents are anxious to see this new institution take root in their neighborhood -- especially because it will open the doors to a college education for so many members of our community who would otherwise be unable to afford it. Finally, one of the finest names in higher education will be available right on the South Side of San Antonio!

Last week's meeting was yet another exciting step in the building of the San Antonio metropolitan area's newest four-year university. And although the permanent campus is in the planning stages, classes and degrees are already available at A&M's temporary home on Gillette Boulevard in South San Antonio. Please visit the [Texas A&M San Antonio website](#) for more information on scholarships and academic programs. And spread the word about this great, affordable educational opportunity. I look forward to watching the students, and our community, flourish alongside this welcome addition to our neighborhood.

**Financial Assistance Available to Those With Leukemia, Lymphoma, or
Myeloma**

In a state where 24% of our population is without health insurance, every day Texans diagnosed with terminal illnesses find themselves in dire financial circumstances. Even those with insurance still face large health bills that are compounded by lost time at work. For those living with various blood cancers, there is an organization that can offer both emotional and financial support.

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is the world's largest voluntary health organization dedicated to funding blood cancer research, education, and patient services. The mission of LLS is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma, and to improve the quality of life for both patients and their families. Founded in 1949, LLS has invested more than \$600 million for research specifically targeting blood cancers.

Funded entirely by public contributions, LLS offers two assistance programs, only one of which is need-based. Their Patient Financial Aid program provides up to \$500 per year for patients diagnosed with leukemia, lymphoma, or myeloma to cover costs associated with treatment and control of the disease. Types of services covered include co-payments for doctor visits, hospital stays, and medicine to treat blood cancer; processing; typing; screening and cross-matching of blood components for transfusions; infusion of marrow; cord blood or stem cells; transportation to and from a medical office, hospital, treatment center, or Family Support Group; initial induction x-ray therapy; x-ray therapy; or other procedures.

Reimbursement requests for residents of Senate District 19 are processed through three separate Texas chapters of LLS, depending on what area of the district in which you live, and payments are issued directly to the patient. Patient financial aid is limited to residents of the United States or its territories, and U.S. military personnel stationed abroad. For more information on the Patient Financial Aid program, or to request a Patient Financial Aid application, please contact Gracie Guajardo at (512) 491-6610, ext. 26. Instructions on how to apply for patient financial aid, as well as an online application form in both English and Spanish, are also available at www.lls.org.

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society also offers up to \$5,000 in need-based financial assistance to patients with the following diagnoses: Hodgkin lymphoma, Non-Hodgkin lymphoma, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia, acute myelogenous leukemia, myeloma, and myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS). Patients who participate in the Co-Pay Assistance Program are eligible for the Society's Patient Financial Aid Program for reimbursement of additional treatment related expenses.

Society Co-Pay Assistance funds are currently available to patients whose household income is at or within 500 percent of the U.S. Federal Poverty guidelines. If you are unsure of whether or not you qualify, please visit the United States Department of Health & Human Services website to read the guidelines. The funds are available to assist co-pay obligations for private health insurance premiums and co-pay amounts, as well as Medicare Part B, Medicare Plan D, Medicare Supplementary Health Insurance, and Medicare Advantage premium or co-pay obligations. Prescription insurance coverage is also required to qualify for this program. This program is administered through the national LLS office. Any questions about the application process or the Co-Pay Assistance Program can be answered by the Co-Pay Assistance Program at (877) 557-2672 or via copay@LLS.org. A complete Co-Pay Assistance Program Application may be downloaded from www.lls.org/copay. The Co-Pay Assistance Program application includes information to be completed and signed by the patient and information to be

completed and signed by the patients' physician. Patients will also need to send documentation verifying household income. All documentation will be kept confidential and is viewed solely for approval into the program. All completed Co-Pay Assistance Program applications will be reviewed within 10-20 business days.

For people with a diagnosis of cancer, medication coverage can quickly become quite costly, particularly for those who do not have insurance to cover the cost of lifesaving prescription medications. Below are a few additional financial resources worth exploring:

PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America) maintains a directory of patient assistance programs for prescription drugs. Through these programs, PhRMA member companies supply free medicines to millions of eligible low-income patients. Call (800) 762-4636. (<http://www.phrma.org/>)

[Medicare's web site](#) offers information on public and private programs that offer discounted or free medication as well as Medicare health plans that include prescription coverage.

Pharmaceutical manufacturers discount cards offer substantial discounts on widely prescribed medications to Medicare enrollees who have no other prescription coverage. Lists of these programs are available at www.rxassist.org (click on drug discount cards) or www.needymeds.com.

NeedyMeds.com is an information source designed to help those who cannot afford their medication. They provide detailed and current information on patient assistance programs sponsored by major pharmaceutical manufacturers that provide free or reduced-cost medications to patients. They include information on the requirements for assistance.

Nurse-Family Partnership Extends to More Families

AUSTIN, TX -- Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is awarding nine Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) grants totaling \$7.8 million. Two of the nine recipients are San Antonio based organizations: The Children's Shelter will receive \$875,822 and University Health System will receive \$808,154.

Senator Carlos Uresti co-authored Senate Bill 156 with Senator Florence Shapiro to expand NFP's proven child abuse prevention program throughout the State of Texas. NFP targets young, single, first-time mothers. The participants learn preventive health practices and prenatal care. In-home visits with registered nurses help link first-time mothers with community resources that can reduce the stress of motherhood and help them obtain both education and job training.

"This program reaches children and young mothers at their most vulnerable stages in life," Uresti said. "I have been working to make the Nurse-Family Partnership one of Texas' tools to fight child abuse and neglect since I served in the Texas House. It is very encouraging that San Antonians will have greater access to NFP through these two excellent organizations."

According to NFP, the program benefits children by creating a 48 percent reduction in child abuse and neglect; a 59 percent reduction in arrests of children; and a 90 percent reduction in adjudications for incorrigible behavior. Participant mothers benefit as well, with 61 percent fewer arrests; 72 percent fewer convictions; and 98 percent fewer days in jail.

"The return on each dollar we spend on the Nurse-Family Partnership is \$2.88, but saving a child from the abuse and neglect is the true value," Senator Uresti stated.

To learn more about the Nurse-Family Partnership, please visit www.nursefamilypartnership.org.

Summer Returns

Texas is blessed with three sunny and mild seasons. But there is another face to our state's climate, and it shows itself from April through October. Summer's annual visit brings joy to many Texas families, but deadly heat can be along for the ride.

It's important to beat the heat by paying close attention to "Heat Advisories" and "Excessive Heat Warnings" issued by weather services and news stations. These warnings should help you schedule your day's activities whenever possible.

The Red Cross offers suggestions on how to manage in a heat wave. Check their website at www.sarecross.org, or call 2-1-1 for more information.

Tips include slowing down, avoiding strenuous activity, especially during the middle of the day, and staying indoors as much as possible. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing, and drink plenty of water throughout the day to help your body naturally cool itself. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, as they lead to dehydration. Eat lighter, more frequent meals that do not require the use of a stove or oven.

Don't forget that many public facilities in your area are also great places to stay cool. Libraries, local swimming pools, and public computer labs all offer relief from the heat while allowing you to read, exercise, or keep up to speed with your computer skills.

Many elderly individuals on a fixed or low income worry about air conditioning costs during hot weather. Don't sacrifice air conditioning when temperatures become extreme! Several assistance programs can help seniors and the disabled with this need, including the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP). To find CEAP services nearest you, call toll free at (877) 399-8939 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. You will be directly connected to the CEAP service provider in your county, so please use a landline phone when dialing the toll free number.

As always, my office stands ready to assist you at (210) 932-2568. If you are not in the San Antonio metropolitan area, please call toll free at (800) 459-0119.

[Click here](#) for more news releases from Senator Uresti.