

## **\$1 Million Study to Look at Region's Youth**

**May 6, 2009**

UC Davis researchers have received \$1 million from Sierra Health Foundation and The California Endowment for an ambitious two-year study that will yield recommendations for boosting the region's vitality by investing in its youth.

The "Healthy Youth, Healthy Regions" study will focus on disparities in four areas that affect the well-being of children, adolescents and young adults in the Sacramento region: education, health, employment and civic engagement.

"We are undertaking an unprecedented regional-scale analysis of youth well-being and disparities, and an unprecedented analysis of education, employment, civic engagement and health on a regional scale," said Jonathan London, professor of human and community development and director of the UC Davis Center for Regional Change.

The center will coordinate the efforts of more than 20 UC Davis researchers in sociology, medicine, education, environmental design, human and community development, and other disciplines. The research will be guided by a 13-member advisory committee that includes Edward Augustus, executive director of the Children's Defense Fund-California; Sacramento County Supervisor Roger Dickinson; David Gordon, superintendent of the Sacramento County Office of Education; Lyn Corbet, director of the City of Sacramento's Office of Youth Development; and Claire Pomeroy, vice chancellor for human health sciences at UC Davis and dean of the School of Medicine.

The study was commissioned by Sierra Health Foundation, which contributed \$700,000 in funding. The California Endowment contributed \$300,000.

"With this study, we look beyond the current economic downturn to more rigorously determine where investment in the development of young people is required to ensure that the region has the human capital needed to prosper in a global economy," said Chet Hewitt, president and CEO of Sierra Health Foundation. "We believe the region's long-term economic, social and cultural health may well depend on the investments we make in our youth today. Sierra Health is proud to have selected the UC Davis Center for Regional Change as its partner for this important project."

"How well the children and youth of a community are faring is a fairly accurate barometer for assessing the health of that community," said Will Nicholas, director of research for The California Endowment. "Low-income communities tend to have much fewer of the social, economic and systems supports critical to healthy youth development than wealthier communities. Through the action research of Healthy Youth/Healthy Regions, we can form an agenda to create a more equitable distribution of those supports at both the community and regional levels."

The UC Davis Center for Regional Change addresses the social, economic, cultural and political changes occurring in California's Central Valley and

foothills.

Sierra Health Foundation is a private philanthropy investing in and serving as a catalyst for ideas, partnerships and programs that improve health and quality of life in Northern California.

The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians.

### **About UC Davis**

For 100 years, UC Davis has engaged in teaching, research and public service that matter to California and transform the world. Located close to the state capital, UC Davis has 31,000 students, an annual research budget that exceeds \$500 million, a comprehensive health system and 13 specialized research centers. The university offers interdisciplinary graduate study and more than 100 undergraduate majors in four colleges — Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Biological Sciences, Engineering, and Letters and Science — and advanced degrees from six professional schools — Education, Law, Management, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing.

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