



Wednesday, April 29, 2020

Dear ICAN Friends and Partners,

As we enter another month of shelter-at-home, I hope you are adjusting to this quarantine as safely and comfortably as possible. Although it comes with so many professional, personal and social limitations, we see how important these restrictions are in flattening the curve and preventing extreme overload to our health care system. Again, I want to acknowledge the bravery and commitment of the champions who continue to provide the essential services we all need to survive. And, I join DCFS, law enforcement and all child advocates in expressing concern for children rendered invisible and isolated by restrictions that separate them from schools, parks, friends and extended family.

While it is clearly challenging to do our work within these restrictions, it is more important than ever to continue our collaborative efforts to protect children and other victims from abuse and family violence. Child abuse reports are down significantly, here and in other counties and states, highlighting the danger to children when fewer eyes are upon them. The Sheriff is expanding Wellness visits, DCFS is responding to the calls they do receive, and Public Health and Mental Health are reaching out with information, helplines and home visits.

Many have suggested that ICAN develop social media messages to reach families stressed by confinement, income loss, fear, anxiety and added stressors from isolation. We've drafted potential messages to be delivered by our ICAN Associates who have major social media followings. We welcome your suggestions, - messages that reach families, bring hope, and also messages that inspire communities to be aware of signs of abuse and report.

ICAN's work continues and below are some updates and committee reports.

- **April was Child Abuse Prevention Month.** The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS) proclaimed April as Child Abuse Prevention Month to raise public awareness on the devastating impact of child abuse and neglect. Art from ICAN's Children's Poster Art Contest was recognized during the presentation.
- ICAN is working to introduce a **No Hit Zone Campaign** in Los Angeles County. No Hit Zones set a precedent within the county to commit to developing and promoting alternative responses for interacting with children to avoid physical hitting. We are working with Dr. Randall Alexander, national expert on No Hit Zones and professionals from Harbor UCLA Medical Center, including child abuse pediatric specialist, Dr. Carol Berkowitz, to develop a pilot for this campaign.





- ICAN staff are busy finalizing our **3 annual reports, The Child Death Review Team Report, The State of Child Abuse Report, and the Safely Surrendered and Abandoned Infants Report.** Data from these reports will be released at a press conference and our annual ICAN Policy Committee meeting to be scheduled when shelter-at-home directives have been lifted. To review prior year reports, please visit the ICAN Website at: [ican4kids.org](http://ican4kids.org) and click on our ICAN Reports tab.
- We have **5 events** planned in the upcoming months of 2020 and early 2021. Given COVID-19 restrictions, we are unable to provide dates at this time, but will ensure these dates will be widely disseminated once they have been set. Our 5 events, in expected order of occurrence, are our **annual Grief and Traumatic Loss Conference, annual Child Abduction Training Seminar for Law Enforcement, a Child Death Review and Critical Incidents Symposium, the annual Cyber Crimes Prevention Symposium, and the annual Nexus Conference.**
- Our **12 Child Abuse Councils** located throughout the County continue to provide resources and online trainings to families. ICAN committees and taskforces are utilizing online meetings when feasible, with the exception of confidential team meetings. Importantly, we continue to update the **ICAN Website ([ican4kids.org](http://ican4kids.org))** adding resources for families including food banks, educational and mental health support.
- **ICAN Child Death and Child and Adolescent Suicide Review Teams (CDRT and CASRT):** As CDRT and CASRT meetings are confidential, they have been temporarily suspended until further notice. Work continues on the Child Death Review Team Report for 2018 and it is expected to be finalized in the coming weeks.
- The **ICAN Data Committee** has continued to move forward with its work on completion the Annual State of Child Abuse publication for 2019. From remote work locations, the committee has reviewed and finalized a number of agency reports, keeping us on track for a release date over the summer.
- **The ICAN Hospital Network Project** has been busy working on a large and complex hospital reporting data set. The data includes hospital and medical reporting data for the period 2015–2019 in Los Angeles County. Specific categories include: age, gender, ethnicity, allegation type, reporting hospital, injury type, etc. The project is underway with numerous data



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extractions and analyses that will be used to inform hospitals of their reporting status, trends and performance over the 5-year period. The goal is to improve hospital connections to the child protection system and to each other.

- **The ICAN Child Abduction Task Force** has been enjoying a reinvigorated period of engagement and collaboration with the new leadership of chairperson, Alyssa Skolnick, Senior Deputy County Counsel. ICAN has temporarily suspended the monthly Task Force meetings and postponed the May 19<sup>th</sup> Training Seminar for Law Enforcement. However, the work continues on the Child Abduction Task Force data report as part of the larger Annual State of Child Abuse publication.
- **Guidelines for Effective Response to Domestic Abuse (GERDA):** The GERDA Executive Committee continues to meet via conference call. Tremendous progress has been made in developing a training PowerPoint highlighting Core Values, Agency Roles, Coercive Control and key points the committee believes staff need to understand. This PowerPoint will be used by the departments directed to implement GERDA, with the addition of departmental-specific training as determined by each agency. We are currently developing trainer notes with the goal of presenting the GERDA training via Webinar in the near future. As things begin to normalize, we will continue our work to support in-person trainings by each department.
- **Safe Sleep Campaign:** ICAN is working on setting up a Zoom/Skype call for the next Safe Sleep Campaign meeting and committee members will be notified when a date has been determined.
- **Safe Surrender:** Since 2001, we have tracked data on the safe surrender and abandonment of new born infants. In 2019, there were 15 safely surrendered infants, two of whom were later reclaimed. We do not know of any abandoned newborns from last year. Since the implementation of the Safe Haven/Safe Surrendered program, we have been able to confirm 189 safely surrendered infants.
- **AB 2994 (County Children's Trust Fund):** In ICAN's role as the Los Angeles County Child Abuse Council designated to make funding recommendations for specialized programs to be funded through fees on birth certificates, ICAN continues its work on the development and monitoring of DCFS contracts providing these services. We are able to work on current contracts and one pending program that has already been vetted through ICAN's multidisciplinary Ad-Hoc group. New program proposals can be considered



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when we are able to conduct in-person meetings to thoroughly vet them.  
We look forward to identifying additional services in the future.

On a personal note, ICAN staff person, Kenneth Rios, will be leaving ICAN to begin service as a new member of the Azusa Police Department. Kenneth has been a tremendous asset to ICAN. Many of you may know him through your registration and attendance at ICAN conferences. Kenneth has capably handled his work even during high stress periods. While we will certainly miss Kenneth, we are excited for him to begin a new chapter in his life.

Have a great month and in the words of Walt Whitman, **"Keep your face towards the sunshine-and the shadows will fall behind you."**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deanne Tilton-Durfee".

Deanne Tilton-Durfee, Doc.hc  
Executive Director of the Los Angeles County  
Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN)

