History

The Los Angeles Trust for Children’s Health (hereafter referred to as “the Trust”) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization working to improve the health of the children of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Made up of educators, health professionals, and community members, the Trust works to:

- Provide strategic funding and support for LAUSD Wellness Networks, school health centers and other student health services
- Increase access to health services for LAUSD students
- Increase public awareness of and advocate for effective responses to critical health issues
- Promote the study and research of health issues and practices
- Promote collaboration among health organizations to address the needs of children.

The organization was formed through a 1991 resolution of the LAUSD Board of Education. The Trust has historically served as a source of logistical and financial support for school-based health centers and for health partnerships serving elementary, middle and senior high school students in LAUSD with a broad range of school-linked health services. The Trust provided substantial financial support to the direct operation of the six original LAUSD school based health clinics from 1994 to 2002. At the same time, the Trust worked to facilitate opening of new school based clinics (currently 34 clinics) with business plans that could be self-sufficient and sustainable without ongoing direct funding. By 2002, dissemination, of best practices, sustainable funding models and expertise in school health, were major foci of the Trust. In 2004, the organization officially became the Los Angeles Trust for Children’s Health to reflect the expansion of its strategic direction. The Trust retains an affiliation with LAUSD working integrally with the LAUSD Board of Education members and the LAUSD Student Health and Human Services Division.

The Trust serves the Los Angeles Unified School District which enrolls over 700,000 students at its 1,153 schools and centers, making it the second largest school district in the United States. Of LAUSD’s students: 73.2% are Latino; 11.4% are Black (non-Hispanic); 8.8% are White (non-Hispanic); 74% participate in the Free and Reduced Price Meals Program; 27% are uninsured; 44% are enrolled in Medi-Cal; 8% are enrolled in Healthy Families. Success in school requires that students be healthy enough to learn, but far too many students have little or no access to the healthcare they need. For many of these children, the only
healthcare services they will get are those that they access through school or community-based efforts.

The Challenges Our Children Face
Promoting and protecting the health of the children of Los Angeles is at best a difficult challenge and there are several critical problems in need of immediate attention.

- Each year nearly 8%, or 50,000, of LAUSD students report dental pain to school nurses; oral health problems lead to absenteeism, inability to concentrate, and poor academic performance.
- Approximately 10%, or 70,000, of students have been diagnosed with asthma; uncontrolled disease leads to thousands of school days missed every year. More than half of these children had to limit their activity because of their disease.
- Nearly 40 percent of school-age children in Los Angeles County are obese, contributing to poor health and posing the risk of serious health problems such as diabetes and heart disease.
- One in four teens contracts a sexually transmitted disease; one in three girls will get pregnant before age 20.

Another way of looking at the health of our children is to look at a typical classroom. In a typical LAUSD classroom in a high-need community, out of 30 students:

- 10 are obese, which can lead to diabetes and heart disease, and increase absences
- 1-2 will develop Type 2 diabetes before graduation
- 4 teenage girls will contract a sexually transmitted infection; 1 in 3 girls will get pregnant before age 20, leading to dropping out of school
- 10 are the direct or indirect victims of violence
- 76% participate in the free or reduced cost lunch program, which is an indication of economic difficulty at home

Why it Matters
Every day, more than 720,000 school children go to school in the Los Angeles Unified School District, but too many students miss school because of health related problems. Success in school requires that students be healthy enough to learn, but far too many students have little or no access to the healthcare they need. For many of these children, the only healthcare services they will get are those that they access through school or community-based efforts. The LA Trust is working with local schools, health providers and communities to improve these health outcomes for children.

The Trust plays a crucial leadership role in bringing together the diverse range of health organizations in Los Angeles to focus on improving health outcomes for children. For additional information concerning the ongoing activities of the Trust, please contact:

Maryjane Puffer BSN, MPA, Executive Director
Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health
333 South Beaudry Avenue, 29th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: 213 241 3846
email:mj4trust@gmail.com