



**PHOENIX
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL**

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**Phoenix Children's Hospital Present
Endorsement of Proposition 203 to Nadine Basha**

[Phoenix, October 16, 2006] -- More than 100 Phoenix Children's Hospital physicians and administrators gathered this morning to present their endorsement of Proposition 203 to sponsor Nadine Basha. The physicians call "First Things First" a bold step forward in caring for Arizona's vulnerable pediatric population.

Proposition 203 will raise \$150 million annually to fund voluntary early health screenings and education programs for children birth to five years old throughout our state. The goal is to provide the training and resources so that all of Arizona's children are healthy and ready to succeed in school by the time they are age five. This initiative will create a single, well-organized department and guarantees that 90 percent of the funding will go directly to programs for children.

"Studies show 90 percent of a child's brain has developed before the age of three, when skills, thought processes, self-confidence and values are formed," said DeAnn Davies, a child development specialist at Phoenix Children's Hospital and director of the Hospital's Healthy Steps program. "In order for these kids to succeed both physically and emotionally in school, we believe the key lies in not only evaluating them early, but educating their parents in the process."

For Phoenix Children's Hospital, funding could mean building on successful existing early intervention programs and expanding them throughout Arizona. Educating pediatric residents in early child development is an important step that has been implemented at Phoenix Children's. Residents, with the help of a Healthy Steps specialist, add child development evaluations to every well-child clinic visit at Children's. The success of the program is well documented in a study by the American Medical Association, and has proved that parents in the program come away with better parenting skills, receive timely prevention services, and are less likely to use the emergency room. In addition, mothers' use of safety practices is higher than average and parents regularly read books with their child as a result of participating in the program.

(more)

Phoenix Children's Hospital Endorses Proposition 203
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"It is critical for pediatricians to receive child developmental training during residency, and it's a way to reach thousands of families throughout Arizona," says Randy Christensen, MD, a pediatrician at Phoenix Children's Hospital. "All children visit their doctor so providing physicians with this training will allow them to optimally support parents, to better insure children are healthy and reach their developmental milestones. Giving funds to early childhood health saves thousands if not millions of dollars down the line in a child's life. Nadine Basha and all the organizations endorsing 'First Things First' understand the dire need for medical screening and early interventional programs for kids."

Another successful early interventional program already working at Phoenix Children's is the Neuro-Developmental Evaluation Program (NDEP). Infants who are born premature, who stay in a NICU for more than 8 days, or have other developmental concerns are referred to this program to receive input from specialists trained in a variety of areas including Neurology, Psychology, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Audiology, Social work and Developmental Pediatrics. Treatment is focused on periodic evaluations with active parental teaching. The goal is to help parents maximize each child's potential.

"We are extremely appreciative to Phoenix Children's for endorsing Proposition 203," said Nadine Basha, sponsor of First Things First. "Phoenix Children's Hospital has proven its commitment to children over the years by providing the best healthcare for kids in Arizona. We're happy to have them on the growing list of prestigious institutions that are supporting this initiative. We encourage everyone to vote 'yes' in November for Proposition 203, a proposition that will empower parents and invest in the future of our children."

Phoenix Children's Hospital is Arizona's leader in pediatric care and is one of the 10 largest free-standing children's hospitals in the nation. The most comprehensive array of pediatric specialists in the State practice at this one organization. The outstanding clinical expertise, as well as high patient volume, and an unwavering commitment to caring only for children, all contribute to Children's leadership position. For information about Phoenix Children's, visit the Hospital's award-winning website at www.phoenixchildrens.com.