

# University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center Child Maltreatment Program

Presentation to the NM Courts,  
Corrections and Justice Committee

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**Mission:** Establish a sustainable program to provide excellent clinical service, professional collaboration, education, and advocacy to children affected by maltreatment and professionals who respond to maltreatment statewide.

# Why are Medical Evaluations Important?

- Child maltreatment is a costly public health epidemic that adversely affects families in New Mexico.
- The stakes are high
  - Unfounded allegations of abuse have devastating consequences for families.
  - Failure to recognize abuse places children at significant risk for ongoing and escalating maltreatment.

# Challenges to health care providers

- Inadequate training in recognition and reporting of suspected child maltreatment
- Emotionally and professionally difficult subject
- Time limitations: Medical evaluations, multidisciplinary collaboration, and legal testimony are lengthy processes
- Limited resources for specialty medical referral



# Current Specialty Services

- UNM houses the only multidisciplinary clinical services in New Mexico dedicated to the medical evaluation of child abuse and neglect.
- There are 2 board certified child abuse pediatricians in New Mexico, both at UNM.

# Current Specialty Services

- The UNM Child Abuse Response Team (CART)
  - Provides medical evaluation for alleged victims of physical abuse or neglect
  - 300-350 evaluations annually
  - Approximately 75% of patients are from the Albuquerque metropolitan area

# Current Specialty Services

- UNM Para los Ninos
  - Provides medical evaluation for alleged victims of sexual abuse.
  - 300-400 evaluations annually
  - Approximately 75% of patients are from the Albuquerque metropolitan area

# Specialty Service Need

- CYFD investigated 9,042 referrals alleging physical abuse and 929 referrals alleging sexual abuse statewide in 2012-2013.
- Only 1/3 of these referrals are from the Albuquerque Metropolitan area.

# Specialty Service Need

- A substantial number of children in the metropolitan region, and far more children outside the metropolitan area are in need of expert guided medical evaluations in the response to allegations of child maltreatment

# Professional Collaboration

- Accept referrals for evaluation from health care providers, CYFD, and law enforcement.
- Assist non-medical professionals in identification and interpretation of the medical presentations of child maltreatment.
- Provide expert testimony in civil and legal matters.

# Education

- Teaching for students at the UNM School of Medicine and all UNM Allied Professional Schools (NP, PA, nursing)
- Education for medical professionals in practice statewide
  - Local education
  - Outreach via invited lectures and telehealth
- Education for non-medical professionals who respond to child maltreatment
  - CYFD staff, attorneys, law enforcement, judicial professionals

# Advocacy

- Promote advocacy for policy and services to protect children from maltreatment based on expertise and epidemiologic data
- Child Fatality Review
- John Paul Taylor Task Force
- NM-Child Abuse Prevention Partnership
- Albuquerque Child Abuse Prevention Taskforce

# Challenges to Child Maltreatment Providers

- Small programs have limited capability to sustain local service and extend service to patients and stakeholders outside the metropolitan area.
- Goals are to increase the number of patients seen, volume of educational outreach, availability for legal proceedings, efforts directed to primary prevention and advocacy

# Future Vision

- Expand clinical and educational services statewide through telehealth models with a primary goal to train health care providers to perform high quality medical assessment with guidance from child abuse pediatricians.
- Increase efforts in statewide multidisciplinary education, collaboration, and advocacy.

# Budgetary Needs

- Request FY 2016: \$779,000
  - Funds new staff positions (program management, nursing, social work, administrative support) dedicated to child maltreatment services
  - Increases the number of funded physician salaries which is essential to sustain local service and implement statewide service