

Public Awareness Report to the VICC June 12, 2002

Press Conference:

The Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Jane H. Woods, kicked off the new public awareness campaign to increase awareness of early intervention services through a press conference on Wednesday, April 24, 2002 at 10:00AM at the children's Museum of Richmond, 2626 West Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia. There were approximately 45 persons in attendance at the press conference. Represented among these attendees were family members, Commissioner Reinhard, council coordinators, public and private providers, members of the press, DMHMRSAS and Part C Staff. Press kits were available for all members of the press in attendance.

Early Intervention Month Proclamation:

The Governor has signed the Early Intervention Awareness Month proclamation. The proclamation will be available on the web site (www.infantva.org).

Public Awareness Campaign Materials:

Public awareness materials were distributed at the press conference. These materials included two posters (both in English and Spanish), brochures (also in English and Spanish), magazines, a name change card, pocket folders, and letterhead paper. Council coordinators were also given a public awareness kit that included a variety of public awareness ideas. For those councils not able to attend the conference, the materials were mailed.

Press Release:

The Governor's office made the following press release on April 24th.

GOVERNOR WARNER ANNOUNCES EARLY INTERVENTION PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

RICHMOND – Governor Mark R. Warner today announced the new “Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia” campaign to find and treat children with developmental delays and disabilities. This announcement coincides with Governor Warner’s Action Plan to Improve Access for Children through early intervention, and his proclamation of May as Early Intervention Month.

“We know that children who are developmentally delayed or disabled have the potential to achieve greater skills if somebody identifies the need and provides the help,” said Governor Warner. “Only half of the 7,200 infants and toddlers eligible for services are currently receiving them. Our goal is to reach all of Virginia’s infants and toddlers who need help.”

“This new campaign targets parents and others who work with children from birth until age three, to bring attention to the signs of developmental delay and

disabilities and help them realize the long-term benefits of early intervention services for their child,” said Secretary of Health and Human Resources Jane H. Woods.

Starting today, posters, radio public service announcements, a magazine, brochures and special public events will help parents – often the first to recognize that there may be a developmental delay – understand the early signs and how to get a free evaluation. The campaign slogan: “The Sooner. The Better.” communicates the message that infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities who are identified and receive services early will have a greater chance of reaching their greatest potential. Early intervention for children will lead to better outcomes, a better quality of life, and greater success in school and in the labor force. The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services is sponsoring this effort.

Developmental delays often result in the need for extra help with things like sitting, crawling, walking or talking. The Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia is a system of services that helps to identify and treat young children who have developmental delays or disabilities and their families. Treatment may be provided by physicians, social workers, physical therapists, or mental health therapists, and be based upon the individual needs of the child and family. Funds for the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia are provided through a federal grant provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Community Service Boards and other providers throughout the Commonwealth will be hosting health fairs and other community events throughout the month of May to share the message of early intervention and services available through the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia.

Early Intervention Web Site:

The Part C early intervention web site is undergoing a major redesign. The website redesign is being done to coincide with the new public awareness campaign to ensure that the design theme of the campaign is carried out in the website. Additionally, a shorter URL for the web site has been purchased. The new web site URL will be www.infantva.org.