

## Readers' views

# Initiative aims to improve children's health care

To the Editor:

With 12.5 million children, or 12.8 percent, under the age of 21 who have special health-care needs and are consuming 80 percent of pediatric health-care dollars, a new approach to pediatric health-care delivery was developed. It's called the Medical Home Initiative, patterned after new standards of practice created by the American Academy of Pediatrics and adopted by the American Academy of Family Physicians.

The East Bay Community Action Pro-

gram manages and operates the Newport County Medical Home Initiative, funded by Newport Hospital and the state Department of Health, and based at Triplett School.

A "medical home" is a doctor's office that integrates all aspects of care — medical, sub-specialists, social, mental health, rehabilitative and other health and human services — into its practice. By having one primary-care physician as the focal point of, and resource for, all

health-care services, children receive more coordinated, comprehensive, family-centered and prevention-focused care. This is especially important for children with special medical needs such as asthma, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis and developmental disabilities.

A wide-reaching initiative, the Medical Home Initiative involves three constituents on behalf of the families and their children: doctors, parents and human-service agencies. The past year has

been spent training physician's offices to integrate all aspects of care into their routine; educating parents about the importance of preventive and coordinated care; and working with social service agencies to help families coordinate services. The value of the program is that by focusing on preventive care instead of waiting for a child to get sick, we can prevent illnesses, prevent small problems from becoming crises, and prevent the use of the emergency room as a

primary-care site. Also, by coordinating specialty care services through one primary care physician, we can ensure each child receives high quality, cost-effective and timely care.

For more information or to arrange a presentation, contact me at 847-2100, Ext. 223.

**James C. Sattel**

Newport County Medical Home Initiative  
coordinator  
Newport