**Tahoe Forest Community Partnerships:**

***Expanding Access to School-Required Vaccines***

Every summer the pediatrics outpatient clinic is inundated with patients who need their 4 year old vaccines, or other catch-up vaccines, to be eligible to start kindergarten. In the past two years, the Pediatric Clinic increased vaccine appointment availability 3 fold and it still wasn not sufficient to cover our community need. In 2023, Pediatrics and Community Health partnered in a school-based outreach program to support school-required vaccines for incoming kindergarteners.

The pilot program began at two local elementary schools, Glenshire and Truckee Elementary. During the kindergarten preview nights held at these schools, TFH staffed a table with a Pediatric RN, Pediatric MAs and Schedulers. The RN presented to parents about vaccines needed for Kindergarten and how to get them, while on-site schedulers helped parents schedule their children for vaccine only appointments or well child checks. During the pilot year, we reached over 150 families and scheduled nearly 20 patients for visits during these outreach events. This program helped increase awareness; helped parents schedule visits for their children; and started an important collaborative relationship between Tahoe Forest Pediatrics and the TTUSD School Nurses.

In 2024, our goal was to expand this program to include all local elementary schools and middle schools. TFH Pediatrics and Community Health participated in events at 7 local elementary schools and 2 middle schools. We reached over 420 families, providing valuable information about vaccines and timelines to keep kids up to date so they can attend school. We scheduled 62 appointments for well child checks and vaccines and educated parents and families on the importance of yearly preventative care. This program is one of the many community outreach events supported by TFH that continues to provide community health education and increase access to care.

*Article Provided by Jessica Lichtig-Groom, RN MSC Pediatrics Immunization Coordinator.*