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### **Introducing All-New IEHP Superhero to Battle Childhood Obesity**

**San Bernardino, CA, August 19, 2009**— Swooping in to save the kids from the evils of the junk food junkies, the all new comic book superhero, Super Nutricia, created by Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) will help fight childhood obesity and unhealthy eating among children. This is the first ever female superhero from IEHP's squad of masked avengers that already includes Rad Rider and Eradicator.

Super Nutricia is scheduled to launch her first mission at the annual Route 66 Rendezvous event on September 19 in downtown San Bernardino, complete with a live showdown including an array of villains like Munchie Maven, Fast Food Freddy and Soda Jerk.

Super Nutricia will lead a year-round educational campaign to promote the danger of childhood obesity and unhealthy eating. The campaign features appearances by Super Nutricia at numerous IEHP supported community events, where children and families can meet her in person and receive free comic books, posters, brochures and other nutrition education materials. In addition, the IEHP Health Education team will also be on site at the events to talk to parents and children on the importance of healthy eating and wise food choices.

Childhood obesity rates in California and nationwide continue to rise at an alarming rate. According to *California Obesity Prevention Plan: A Vision for Tomorrow, Strategic Actions for Today*, a report from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), 33 percent of California children are overweight or obese while 25 percent of teens are overweight or obese.

“With the sharp rise of overweight and obese children and teens we felt it was critical to be proactive by reaching out to children in the communities to provide nutrition education and resources,” said Dr. Brad Gilbert, IEHP chief executive officer. “Super Nutricia will be key to IEHP's goal of promoting healthy eating habits and encouraging exercise.”

There are many factors that contribute to the growth of childhood obesity, according to Dr. Sue Gengler, IEHP health education manager. These factors include social, economic and family patterns; however, poor nutrition habits and lack of physical activity remain consistent with each case.

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“We have learned that kids really do connect to superheroes with the success of Rad Rider and Eradicator,” said Susan Arcidiacono, IEHP chief marketing officer. “We knew the importance of the nutrition education we planned to provide with this campaign and we understood that a fun and kid-friendly superhero like Super Nutricia would get our message across. “

The campaign will work in conjunction with the IEHP Weight Loss Program, a program for adults and children, which was recently expanded to address the issues of childhood obesity. Nutrition, healthy food choices, and physical activity, are all covered in the program.

IEHP Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Programs:

**Adult and Children’s Weight Loss Program** helps adults and children lose weight in a supportive environment. The program covers how to lose weight and keep it off, nutrition, making healthy food choices and how to create a workout plan.

**Health Education** produces a variety of nutrition materials to help IEHP members live healthier lives. For example, the Healthy Eating Cookbook offers members healthy recipes that are low in fat and are full of vegetables, fruit, fiber and protein. In addition, the Health Education team travels to numerous events in the many communities IEHP serves to spread the message of healthy eating and physical activity.

**IEHP Member Newsletters** provide useful tips and information on eating healthy and staying active.

**Provider Education** offers a variety of resources on childhood obesity and nutrition for over 700 primary care physicians in the IEHP network including newsletters, hosted Continuing Medical Education events and childhood obesity medical information.

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#### **About IEHP:**

IEHP, Inland Empire Health Plan, a Knox-Keene licensed Health Plan located in San Bernardino, California, is a not-for-profit public agency. The IEHP service area includes San Bernardino and Riverside Counties and currently serves over 420,000 Members in the following Programs: Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, Healthy Kids, and a Medicare Advantage Special Needs Program.

#### **About Route 66 Rendezvous:**

The San Bernardino Convention & Visitors Bureau (SBCVB), producers of the Route 66 Rendezvous®, is a private, non-profit corporation providing destination sales and marketing services for the City of San Bernardino. As a sales and marketing organization, the main objective of the San Bernardino CVB is to promote and market the San Bernardino area as a tourism destination and meeting site.