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ALARCÓN JOINS WITH COUNTY, STATE AND NORTHRIDGE HOSPITAL REPRESENTATIVES TO ANNOUNCE EFFORT TO BRING PEDIATRIC TRAUMA CARE TO THE VALLEY

Los Angeles, CA – This morning Los Angeles City Councilmember Richard Alarcón joined with representatives from the office of Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, the office of Sen. Alex Padilla, Cathy Chidester, Acting Director of the County Department of Health Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency, Los Angeles Fire Department Battalion Chief Timothy Ernst and Mike Wall, the President and CEO of Northridge Hospital to announce progress in the efforts to bring pediatric trauma care to the San Fernando Valley.

Today's announcement comes on the 21st anniversary of the death of Councilmember Alarcon's infant son, Richie, who was killed in a car crash in North Hollywood. For the last decade Councilmember Alarcon has worked to bring pediatric trauma care to the Valley, including authoring SB 1773 (when he was in the State Senate) which allows counties to levy a fine on certain violations, such as speeding tickets and domestic assault fines, with the revenue raised going towards emergency services. SB 1773 also includes a provision for 15% of the revenue to "Richie's Fund", named after Alarcón's son, which is dedicated solely to pediatric trauma care. In 2005, with the strong support of Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, the County Board of Supervisors voted to levy this additional fine. Today it was announced that the county has ear-marked \$2 million dollars from "Richie's Fund" to go toward the Northridge Hospital pediatric trauma care center. This year, Senator Alex Padilla introduced SB 1236 which extends the sunset that was placed on SB 1773, so if SB 1236 passes, the fund will go through at least 2014.

"When a parent loses such a young child, you struggle to find the purpose of the child's life," said Councilmember Alarcón. "For me, the creation of a pediatric trauma care center will give Richie's life a purpose and, because of this trauma care center, his death can give life to many other children. I cannot thank Northridge Hospital, the County of Los Angeles, the State Senate and all of the supporters of this effort enough – our joint efforts will save the lives of many children, but it could not be done without our strong coalition of advocates."

"We believe there's a genuine need for a Pediatric Trauma Center in the San Fernando Valley," said Mike Wall, President of Northridge Hospital Medical Center. "The two-million dollars which we are receiving from SB 1773, the 'Richie's fund', gives us the opportunity to pull together necessary requirements to support this endeavor. We're hopeful we will be able to meet all of the requirements necessary for a Pediatric Trauma Center designation. Without the 'Richie's Fund' and SB 1236, which was introduced by Senator Alex Padilla, this would never have been a possibility. We're grateful for Councilmember Alarcon's leadership and look forward to giving the residents of the San Fernando Valley what they deserve."

Today Councilmember Alarcón also announced his personal goal of raising \$100,000 a year for the next ten years to be dedicated to indigent pediatric trauma care at Northridge Hospital, pending their accreditation. The money would be raised by a non-profit that Councilmember Alarcon created, the George and Ann Lopez and Richie Alarcon "CARE" (Community and Arts Resources for Education) Foundation. He is hosting a dinner on June 5th at the Sheraton Universal to raise money for the CARE Foundation to go towards indigent pediatric trauma care.