For Immediate Release
Contact: Jenna LeComte-Hinely, PhD
(760) 404-1945
jlecomte-hinely@harcdata.org

HARC | Health Assessment and Research for Communities

HARC Releases a Special Report on the Health of Young Children

(PALM DESERT, CA) – May 28, 2015…There are approximately 51,600 young children (birth, or age "0" to 10) living in the Coachella Valley. To address the health status and health needs of this important group, HARC, Inc. has released a special report that compares children 0 to 10 to older children ages 11 to 17. The report, funded by the Desert Healthcare District, highlights health issues that are more prominent in younger children.

Results show that most children 0 to 10 have the basis for a healthy life: the majority have health insurance, frequent healthcare visits, routine preventive screenings and generally healthy habits. However, there are some issues that must be addressed to ensure a healthy child population in the Coachella Valley. Some of these issues include:

- More than half of Coachella Valley children 0 to 10 are living in households that fall below the federal poverty level.
- Weight is a major problem for young Coachella Valley children—only about 38% of children 2 to 10 have a body mass index (BMI) that places them in the "healthy" range. In contrast, 18% are underweight, and 45% are overweight or obese.
- Approximately 30% of children 3 to 10 have a diagnosed mental health disorder and/or have difficulties with emotions, concentration, behavior, and getting along with others. This equates to over 11,800 children with mental health issues. However, only about 32% of these children are receiving mental health treatment. This means that approximately 8,000 young children with mental health issues have not received treatment for their issues, and may be struggling to cope.

The full report, found at www.HARCdata.org, contains additional data related to health status, major diseases, access, utilization of services and socio-economic needs of young children. It aims to deliver healthcare providers, cities, government agencies, and private interests a snapshot of the health of younger children in the Coachella Valley. This data can be used to facilitate decision-making on future issues concerning younger children such as program development, access, funding, utilization, and more. The report is supplemented with local and national resources for both younger and older children. HARC hopes that agencies will use this information to improve the health and wellness of younger children in the Coachella Valley.

About HARC

HARC, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing research and evaluation services related to health and wellness. HARC is funded by grants, donations, and customized research and evaluation services. HARC is located on the University of California, Riverside Palm Desert campus. More information can be obtained by calling HARC at (760) 404-1945, or visiting the organization's website at www.HARCdata.org.