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Sacramento, CA – To encourage early literacy, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) drew attention to the "Reach Out and Read" Program at the UC Davis Children's Hospital. After touring the general pediatrics clinic, the Congresswoman read Mouse Count by Ellen Stoll and handed out age-appropriate books to the children, as well as discussed how Sacramentans could assist with the program. Through the "Reach Out and Read" Program (ROR) early literacy skills are encouraged so children enter school prepared for success in reading.

"It is still far too common to see children arrive at their first day of pre-school or kindergarten unprepared to learn," said Congresswoman Matsui. "However, using this creative and unique approach pediatricians and early educators have teamed up to address this challenge and ensure all children have the necessary building blocks to be successful in their educational career."

Sacramento has three ROR clinic locations: Ambulatory Pediatrics and CAARE Diagnostic and Treatment Center at the UC Davis Medical Center, as well as Pediatrics at the Kaiser Sacramento Point West Medical Office. Through these three locations, over 6,800 children in Sacramento participate annually. Additionally, volunteers in clinic waiting rooms read aloud to waiting children, showing parents and children the methods and pleasures of looking at books together. At UC Davis, apart from initial funding from the national ROR, which the U.S. Department of Education partially supports, the program is funded through private donations, grants from foundations, and employee contributions. Continued Matsui, "It is programs like ROR, with proven effectiveness, that I am pleased to support and work to increase funding for. I hope Sacramentans will take a moment to learn more about this program and how they can get involved." ROR is a national non-profit organization founded in 1989 at Boston City Hospital (now called Boston Medical Center), through a collaboration of pediatricians and early childhood educators. They discovered that pediatricians and pediatric nurses were able to promote literacy as they meet with their patients a number of times over several years for routine check-ups. In January 2005, ROR undertook a major two-year initiative to expand the reach of this program, with a goal of increasing by 50% the number of children reached by mid-2007.

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