



**For Immediate Release**

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## **CenCal Health Presents Dignity Health with *Healthcare Innovation Award* for Outstanding Care and Service**



*Members of the Dignity Health team were presented with the Healthcare Innovation Award from CenCal Health on May 18. Photo by Sean Kirkpatrick.*

**Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo, Calif., May 19, 2016** – [CenCal Health](#), the health care program serving low-income residents of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, presented a [Healthcare Innovation Award](#) to [Dignity Health](#) at their board meeting on May 18.

The award recognizes Dignity Health's Marian Regional Medical Center, French Hospital Medical Center and Arroyo Grande Community Hospital, for partnering with CenCal Health in successfully integrating into the local health care system those formally uninsured individuals that obtained Medi-Cal coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

All area hospitals and many physicians also participated in the CenCal Health program; named the Access to Care for the Expansion Population program (ACE). The ACE program aims to coordinate the many health care needs of thousands of formerly uninsured individuals that now have health coverage through the ACA. The program helps identify, address and coordinate the medical and social needs of these individuals to successfully transition them into seeking appropriate care in the appropriate setting – as opposed to utilizing hospital emergency departments.

“The Affordable Care Act provided health coverage to 50,000 formally uninsured individuals in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties – which is a great accomplishment in itself,” said Bob Freeman, CEO of CenCal Health. “However, integrating these 50,000 people into the local health care system – linking them with physicians, conducting health assessments, treating untreated conditions, etc, -- was another challenge altogether and of significant proportions,” continued Freeman.

“Since the beginning of our collaboration more than a year ago, Dignity Health has shown a particular and exceptional dedication to meeting this challenge and in doing so have served to make a positive difference in the lives of thousands of Central Coast residents,” Freeman concluded.

“It is an honor to receive this recognition as we work together with CenCal Health to successfully transition these individuals from the fear and uncertainty of having no health coverage to the peace-of-mind in knowing they now have a physician, can get the medications they need, and can otherwise know they’re no longer alone in relation to their health,” said Alan Iftiniuk President & CEO, French Hospital Medical Center.

“By directing people in need to a medical home, (a team-based health care delivery model) rather than the emergency room, where patients are able to receive quality medical care, and maximize health outcomes at a lower cost. That’s good for all of us,” said Kerin Mase, President & CEO Marian Regional Medical Center.

### **About CenCal Health**

CenCal Health is the largest local insurer in the region, providing health coverage for approximately 20 percent of residents in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. CenCal Health coverage is accepted by the vast majority of local health providers. CenCal Health also provides education and assistance to its members in order to reduce potential health problems from chronic illness such as diabetes and asthma. For more information, visit [www.cencalhealth.org](http://www.cencalhealth.org). Find CenCal Health on [Facebook](#).

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