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CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH CREATES GRANT PROGRAM TO EXPAND MEDI-CAL CAPACITY

In Santa Cruz County, 28,000 residents have gained Medi-Cal coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This increased coverage enables better health for many, but has also put new demands on provider capacity in an area already challenged by a shortage of health care providers.

To ensure that their members are able to receive the care they need, the Central California Alliance for Health (the Alliance), a non-profit Medi-Cal managed care health plan, has awarded \$10M in capacity-building grants since July 2015 to increase the number of health care providers in Santa Cruz, Monterey and Merced counties. The goal of these investments is to relieve stress on the health care system, reduce appointment wait times and unnecessary emergency room use, and improve health outcomes for patients. “The Board and staff are pleased to partner with local health care providers with capacity grants to improve access to much-needed services,” said Alan McKay, CEO of the Alliance.

In Santa Cruz County, grants from the Alliance will help 15 health care organizations recruit 27 new primary care, specialty care and mental health providers. The newly recruited primary care providers will be able to serve at least 7,500 Medi-Cal patients. For example, Salud

Para La Gente, a health care organization based in Watsonville, received \$405,000 to recruit a new pediatrician and two OB-GYNs. They also received grants for health care equipment to help them expand services and practice coaching to increase the efficiency and patient experience at their clinics. “The Medi-Cal Capacity Grant funds are allowing Salud to shift from being a safety net provider to a true health home, meeting the expanding needs of our community while ensuring the highest quality healthcare. With the Alliance grant funds, Salud can focus on partnering with the patient so that a visit with Salud affords the care, education and strategies for a patient to make changes in their day to day lives to improve their overall health,” said Dori Rose Inda, CEO of Salud Para La Gente.

The Alliance will continue to make investments to build provider capacity, expand access to behavioral health and substance use disorder services, and support members with complex physical, psychological and social needs. For more information about the Alliance’s Medi-Cal Capacity Grant Program, please visit www.ccah-alliance.org/grantprogram.html.

Established in 1996, the Alliance was created to improve access to health care for lower income residents who often lacked a primary care medical home and frequently relied on the emergency room for all care. The Alliance links its members to primary care physicians and clinics that deliver services and preventive care, and arranges referrals to specialists. Today, over 4,700 health care providers participate in the Alliance’s regional network and deliver cost-effective care to over 345,000 health plan members with improved quality and at a lower cost than the State-operated Medi-Cal program.

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