



For Immediate Release

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Mendonoma Health Alliance receives federal grants for local wellness education, prevention services, and quality healthcare access

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The Mendonoma Health Alliance (MHA) has received grant funding to support its efforts to expand access, coordinate, and improve the quality of healthcare services for residents in our isolated Mendonoma coast. On July 1, 2017, MHA was notified of two grant awards by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, a department of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). These funds will support core programs and initiatives focused on improving local access to wellness education, prevention services and quality healthcare access for residents of rural areas in coastal Southwest Mendocino County and Northwest Sonoma County.

You may not have heard of the Mendonoma Health Alliance. In November 2016, three northern California healthcare organizations: Coast Life Support District, Redwood Coast Medical Services (RCMS), and Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital formalized their already strong relationships in to a “healthcare network,” the MHA. This integrated network provides the infrastructure to expand access, coordinate, and improve the quality of healthcare services. Without the resources and ability to draw a large cadre of medical professionals, our region must find creative, innovative ways to meet our community’s health and wellness needs.

The HRSA grants provide funding to implement core programs and initiatives already identified in a yearlong strategic planning process. As a founding member of MHA, RCMS also serves as the lead applicant for the two federal grants and, as such, is responsible for providing administrative and programmatic direction. This funding will allow for implementation of identified core programs and initiatives that were developed during MHA’s year-long strategic planning process, also partially funded by HRSA.

MHA received a grant of \$299,769 for the first of three years from the HRSA Rural Health Network Development Program, which is designed to support rural integrated health care networks to combine systems of care. The goals of MHA’s grant project are to:

1. Improve the quality of health care services which are accessible locally;
2. Improve population health by implementing evidence-based practices; and
3. Expand the use of technology to support coordination of services and patient engagement.



MHA will achieve these goals by working with its partners on four Core Projects:

- ▶ Emergency Care Services
- ▶ Wellness & Prevention
- ▶ Chronic Disease Management including Care Transitions
- ▶ Access to Specialty Care

MHA has developed three major initiatives to support these Core Projects: Telehealth; Health Information Exchange; and Community Outreach & Needs Assessment.

In addition, MHA received a one-year grant of \$99,734 for the planning and development of a Telemedicine Program to help expand access to specialty medical. The use of telemedicine will increase the availability of specialists, provide support by specialist physicians in a quicker time frame than transfers, and will also help primary care physicians avoid transferring patients when they have access to specialists through telemedicine technologies.

“We live in a federally-designated Health Professional Shortage Area and are in critical need of funding to build our local infrastructure to support our residents, especially those who are aging in place and/or have chronic medical needs,” said Leslie Tittle, MHA Governing Body Chairperson.

“These two grants are the first step in building our community’s resources and capacity to provide innovative care using technology, which makes sense for our geographically isolated region,” said Tittle.

For more information on the Mendonoma Health Alliance, please contact Bonnie Noble, MHA Network Director, at bonnie@mendonomahealth.org

About Redwood Coast Medical Services

Redwood Coast Medical Services (RCMS) a Federally Qualified Health Center and the sole provider of medical care in a sixty-mile coastal section of Mendocino and Sonoma counties. In addition to the health center in Gualala, RCMS operates a health center and a dental clinic in Point Arena. RCMS delivers more than 22,000 medical, dental, and behavioral health visits per year at its three facilities and cares for approximately 4,500 individual patients each year. Designated by the state of California as an ambulance receiving facility, RCMS also provides urgent care services in collaboration with Coast Life Support District.

About Coast Life Support District

Coast Life Support District (CLSD) is a public agency health care district operating paramedic and ground ambulance with one of the longest transports in California. The primary purpose of the District is to ensure the availability of emergency ambulance services to a sixty-mile coastal



section of Mendocino and Sonoma counties. The District is also authorized by legislation to provide a broad range of other health care services, and in 1997 began an After Hours Urgent Care program to complement primary care service provided by RCMS.

About Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital

Located approximately 50 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge, Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital is a state-of-the-art, 338-bed acute care hospital. As the designated Level II Regional Trauma Center for Sonoma, Mendocino, Napa, and Lake Counties, Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital provides a wide range of specialty services including critical care, cardiovascular care, stroke care, women's and children's services, cancer care and orthopedics. The hospital is home to the Norma & Evert Person Heart & Vascular Institute and the UCSF Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery. Santa Rosa Memorial is part of St. Joseph Health, a not-for-profit provider of integrated health care with facilities throughout California, New Mexico, and West Texas.

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