

Health alliance gets federal grant money to bolster health care on coast

The Mendonoma Health Alliance has received grant funding to support its efforts to expand access, coordinate, and improve the quality of healthcare services on the Mendonoma coast. On July 1, the Alliance was notified of two grant awards by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, a department of the Health Resources and Services Administration. These funds will support core programs and initiatives focused on improving local access to wellness education, prevention services and quality healthcare access for locals.

In November 2016, three northern California healthcare organizations — Coast Life Support District, Redwood Coast Medical Services and Santa Rosa Memo-

rial Hospital formalized their relationships by forming a healthcare network, the Mendonoma Health Alliance. The grants provide funding to implement core programs and initiatives already identified in a yearlong strategic planning process.

“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,” she said.

MHA received a grant of \$299,769 for the first of three years from the HRSA Rural Health Network Development Program. The money will go toward four core projects: emergency care, wellness and prevention, chronic disease management, including care transitions, and access to specialty care.

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 care. 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, Tittle said.

RCMS serves as the lead applicant for the two federal grants and, as such, is responsible for providing administrative and direction.

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