



Central California Alliance for Health Opens Doors to Health Care for Medi-Cal Members

Health plan pioneers multifaceted grant program that includes funding to build or expand health facilities, increasing access and improving health outcomes for its members

Scotts Valley, Calif., April 30, 2019 – The Central California Alliance for Health (the Alliance), the nonprofit, Medi-Cal managed health care plan for Santa Cruz, Monterey and Merced counties, announced that funding through its Medi-Cal Capacity Grant Program has supported nine new or expanded health care facilities that recently opened in the three counties it serves. These facilities will improve access to an array of health services for the people who rely on the Alliance for their health care – approximately one-third of the overall population of the three counties.

Since the grant program’s launch four years ago, funds from the program have been awarded to 30 capital projects to construct or expand health care facilities, such as primary care and specialty care clinics, behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment centers, and supportive housing in the Alliance service area. Of capital projects funded — nine facilities have been expanded or built and are now serving Medi-Cal members.

“The Medi-Cal Capacity Grant Program is symbolic of our partnership with the communities we serve and the providers and clinics who deliver health care for our members,” said Stephanie Sonnenshine, Alliance CEO. “By investing in new or improved medical facilities, we’re supporting communities to improve access to quality health care, with a lower long-term cost.”

The grant program kicked-off in 2015 after the Affordable Care Act’s implementation the previous year, which placed sudden growth demands on the health care delivery system. To meet heightened demand – a 58 percent increase in the number of Alliance members within three years – the Alliance looked to its communities for solutions, resulting in the development of the grant program to increase the availability, quality and access of health care and supportive services for Medi-Cal members in the Alliance service area.

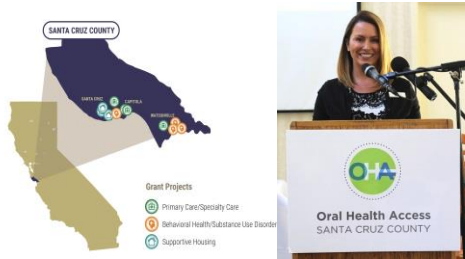
To date, \$80.6M has been awarded from the grant program to community organizations wishing to expand capacity to serve Alliance members, with the largest portion of those funds, \$42.1M, going toward capital projects. Funding from the program has also supported the hiring of 140 new providers and the installation of more than 1,000 pieces of medical equipment in existing clinics. These efforts are already helping provide access to the right care at the right time for patients in need of care, including those with complex medical conditions.

“The Alliance’s investments are filling needs in the communities we serve, allowing projects to move forward that otherwise wouldn’t,” said Kathleen McCarthy, Strategic Development Director at the Alliance. “Grant recipients report that Alliance funding can also often be leveraged to solicit support from other donors, and for supportive housing projects, our grants allow organizations to be competitive for tax credits.”

Community organizations must meet certain criteria to be eligible for grants, and the funded activities must benefit Medi-Cal beneficiaries in the Alliance service area.



- **Santa Cruz County:** The Alliance has supported 11 capital projects in Santa Cruz County, including a new dental facility with Dientes Community Dental Care in Santa Cruz. “With the Alliance’s grant to support capital project planning, Dientes was able to plan for expansion to better meet the demand for dental care in our community,” says Laura Marcus, CEO of Dientes. “With Medi-Cal patients struggling to access the dentist, this will greatly benefit our organizational capacity to see more patients and provide specialist care for children.”



- **Monterey County:** The Alliance has supported 13 capital projects in Monterey County, including MidPen Housing’s Moon Gate Plaza, an 88-unit affordable housing complex in Salinas. The development will set aside 20 units for Alliance members that have complex physical, psychological, and social needs and often lack the ability and support to use the health care system effectively. “We’re forging a community model that brings together the health care and affordable housing sectors in new ways, to create a solution that benefits those whose health will improve with access to affordable housing while decreasing public health care costs,” says Matt Franklin, CEO of MidPen, of the project.



- **Merced County:** The Alliance has supported six capital projects in Merced County, and continues to do outreach to seek out other organizations with which to partner. One of the projects is the relocation and expansion of the Winton Clinic within the Castle Family

Health Center. In addition to exam rooms, the new clinic will also have a five lane dental care suite, health education space, laboratory, x-ray services and an on-site pharmacy. “As we continue to meet the increased demands for health care within our community, and with our new facility in Winton which opened in March 2019, Castle is preparing to meet those demands by increasing our provider staffing,” says Ed Lujano, CEO of Castle Family Health Center.



The Alliance has seen other successes from the grant program, including expanded use of health information technology to improve quality of care, care management for complex patients, and addressing food insecurity in the community. In Santa Cruz County, the program funded the implementation of Smart Path, a coordinated entry system for housing placement that placed 47 individuals with complex needs into housing in 2018.

“We are building today for the future of our members’ health,” said Sonnenshine.

Opportunities for health care providers to apply for grants from the Alliance program will continue to be shared with the communities served in the months ahead.

About the Alliance

Central California Alliance for Health, the Alliance, established in 1996, serves approximately 340,000 members in Santa Cruz, Monterey and Merced counties. Using the state's County Organized Health System (COHS) model, the Alliance delivers innovative community-based health care services with the goal to improve medical outcomes and cost savings. The award-winning plan employs nearly 600 staff members in the three counties and manages a budget of \$1.1 billion. The Alliance prides itself on its close partnership with contracted providers to promote prevention, early detection and effective treatment, and overall to improve access to quality health care for its members. For more information, visit www.ccah-alliance.org.

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