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Press Release

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Expanding health care services to residents of Watsonville, the new Santa Cruz County Watsonville Health & Dental Center was unveiled in a ribbon-cutting ceremony today by County Board of Supervisors Chairman Greg Caput and a host of dignitaries, including Congressman Sam Farr.

The facility will provide health and dental services and is a partnership between the County of Santa Cruz and Dientes Community Dental Care that serves a critical community need. It was built with funding from a federal grant available under the Affordable Care Act through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

“I am thrilled about the great good that our revamped Freedom Center will be providing. The additional clinic space and quality of care given will help meet the growing demand for health care and dental care amongst adults and families with children in South County. The Board of Supervisors and I are very proud of the tireless work of staff to better serve the community and its health care needs,” Chairman Caput said.

“I am proud of and appreciative of the work done by our clinic management team, our physicians, nurses, medical assistants, clerical and other support staff as well as the public health and behavioral health staff and for their commitment to serving our clinic patients,” added Michael Beaton, Director of Administrative Services of the Health Services Agency.

The Watsonville Health & Dental Center will include five medical exam rooms, four dental chairs, a small lab, counseling space, and a group education/meeting room. The outpatient center will provide integrated health services, including primary medical care, dental care, behavioral health care, and case management. An estimated 2,400 adults and children will be served, providing over 4,000 primary care visits per year. Dientes Community Dental Clinic will provide up to 6,000 dental care visits to adults and children annually.

Santa Cruz County Chief of Clinic Services Amy Peeler stated: “We are committed to embracing and utilizing evidence-based, best practices to further our quality improvement efforts. We are also committed to organizing our primary care so that it emphasizes care coordination and

communications. We are confident that these efforts will transform our primary care into what our patients want it to be.”

“We couldn’t be more thrilled to be providing comprehensive dentistry in the heart of the Pajaro Valley. This clinic represents a great example of integrated care, where patients can receive the breadth of services that they need in one location. We know that there is an overwhelming demand for more affordable dental care in our community and we are happy to be able to play an important part in addressing that need,” added Dientes Community Dental Care Executive Director Laura Marcus.

Under the Federal grant, the Center will provide integrated care to any individual seeking the services, including those who are uninsured or have Medi-Cal, and for those who might be homeless or at risk of homelessness. For patients who are uninsured, a sliding scale fee would be applied based on the patient’s income level.

The new facility is a renovation of a county-owned, 5,000-square-foot commercial building. Boulder Associates P.S. was the architect of the project, and it was built by Pickard and Butters Construction, which was awarded a \$1.5 million construction contract.

The total cost for the project was approximately \$2.64 million, including construction, furnishings and equipment. The Watsonville Health & Dental Center was constructed in 15 months, and is now open.