

County of Santa Cruz

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HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
ADMINISTRATION

August 13, 2001

AGENDA: August 28, 2001

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Santa Cruz County
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Approval of Hepatitis C Prevention and Control Project Grant Application

Dear Members of the Board:

The Health Services Agency (HSA) requests your Board's approval to apply to the California Department of Health Services, Disease Investigations and Surveillance Branch (CDHS/DISB), for a grant in the amount of \$100,000 to design and implement a Hepatitis C Prevention and Control Project. Through its Hepatitis C Program, the CDHS/DISB is making available \$1.1 million in FY 2001 to fund eight to twelve projects. The project grant period will be from November 1, 2001, through October 31, 2002.

The goals of the Hepatitis C Program are to reduce the incidence of acute hepatitis C virus infection in California and to limit the progression and health complications of chronic hepatitis C-related liver disease in Californians who are already infected. The implementation of Hepatitis C Prevention and Control Projects is a critical first step in achieving these goals. These projects will provide outreach, education, counseling, testing and/or referrals to at-risk populations.

BACKGROUND. The hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection, first identified in 1988, is the most common chronic blood-borne viral infection in the United States with over 4 million carriers. In California, the virus affects approximately 600,000, or two percent of the population. In Santa Cruz County, an estimated 4,500 people are affected. Because symptoms are present in only 20 to 30 percent of acute cases, most infections go undiagnosed until liver disease develops 20 to 30 years later. About 20 percent of those infected with HCV will develop advanced liver disease and 1 to 5 percent will die from liver cancer. The current estimated mortality rate from hepatitis C is about 1,000 Californians per year; this rate is expected to double or triple over the next 20 years. The Hepatitis C Program provides one-time funding for education and outreach projects. Fifty percent of Hepatitis C Program efforts must target veterans who have been identified as an at-risk population.

The County of Santa Cruz has been an early initiator of efforts to prevent and control hepatitis C. The County's efforts began with the establishment of a Hepatitis C Task Force that included health providers, members of the infected community and their advocates. The County of Santa Cruz is one of the very few jurisdictions in California that secured local funds to develop a unique screening, counseling and hepatitis A & B vaccination program for injection drug users.

PROJECT. HSA is proposing a regional collaborative project that will involve HSA, the Santa Cruz AIDS Project, and the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Palo Alto. The project will: promote primary prevention by expanding testing to include additional high-risk sites, including drug treatment centers, detention facilities, and transitional housing facilities; improve data collection systems in order to gather more information about risk categories and veteran status; enhance secondary prevention by providing information and education to persons with known or newly-detected hepatitis C infection to help prevent or limit progression of the disease. The administrative structure to manage and direct the Hepatitis C Project is in place. The grant funds will be used to provide staff and materials necessary to expand testing and to work with the infected community.


HSA received notification from the State about the Hepatitis C Request for Application (RFA) at the end of July. A copy of the proposed Hepatitis C Prevention and Control Project grant application will be placed on file with the Clerk of the Board on or before August 27, 2001. The completed RFA has a required postmark date of August 29, 2001. Upon grant award, HSA will return to your Board for final approval and acceptance of the Hepatitis C Prevention and Control Project.

Establishment of the Hepatitis C Prevention and Control Project will assist our community in the realization of its goal for a comprehensive approach to hepatitis C education and outreach. These expanded components of our program will enhance on-going efforts to improve the prevention and treatment of hepatitis C in Santa Cruz County.

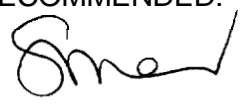
It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board:

1. Authorize submission of the funding application (on file with the Clerk of the Board) to the California Department of Health Services, Disease Investigations and Surveillance Branch, for the Hepatitis C Prevention and Control Project in the amount of \$100,000.

Sincerely,


 Rama Khalsa, Ph.D.,
 Health Services Administrator

RECOMMENDED:



 Susan A. Mauriello
 County Administrative Officer

- cc: County Administrative Office
 Auditor-Controller
 County Counsel
 HSA Administration
 Public Health Administration
 The Hepatitis C Task Force of Santa Cruz County