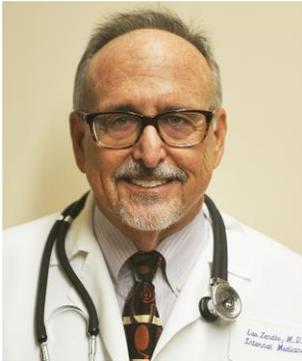


New Leadership Keeps the Focus on Transformation and Expansion

Les Zendle, MD, elected Desert Healthcare District/Foundation 2018 board president



District/Foundation President
Les Zendle, MD

COACHELLA VALLEY – January 4, 2018 – The New Year promises to be one of continuing transformation as Desert Healthcare District/Foundation Board Member Les Zendle, MD, takes the helm as president. “As I enter my second year on the Board, I am thrilled to lead the charge for the organization with a focus on services, programs and facilities, especially centered on behavioral health, and the proposed expansion of the District to encompass the East Valley,” said Zendle, adding, “Expanding access for all of our residents under our *One Coachella Valley* approach is essential.”

Building off significant work completed by the Board over the last two years, such as the 2017 Market Assessment that measured the current and future healthcare needs in the greater Coachella Valley, the Board of Directors, CEO Herb K. Schultz and executive staff undertook a rigorous strategic planning process. With substantial public and stakeholder input, the District/Foundation adopted a comprehensive three-year Strategic Plan last June.

The District/Foundation is entering 2018 with an emphasis on implementation of major priorities using wide-ranging strategies that include continued and significant public input. In addition to expansion, another major priority includes providing Coachella Valley residents with an extensive roadmap of current gaps and needs in health-related programs and services. This information and public feedback will be used to guide planning for the future to meet resident needs.

Upon his election, President Zendle emphasized the third Strategic Plan priority of the District/Foundation – Community Health and Wellness – by noting the positive impacts on health that the organization has made over its more than half-century of existence: providing major funding to community, provider, and local governments for health initiatives in the region. “We’re one of the largest philanthropic organizations in the Coachella Valley,” explained the former Kaiser Permanente physician and executive. Zendle recently stepped down as the volunteer medical director for the Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine (CVVIM) to concentrate his attention toward the District/Foundation; his focus is particularly directed on the year ahead in guiding the vision set with his fellow board members on implementation of District/Foundation strategic planning. He will continue to volunteer a portion of his time at the CVVIM, seeing patients and as a member of the board.

The District/Foundation’s four new Strategic Plan Community Health Focus Areas comprise its overall Resources and Philanthropy Program:

- Homelessness
- Primary Care and Behavioral Health Access
- Healthy Eating, Active Living
- Quality, Safety, Accountability, and Transparency

A prime example of the support the District/Foundation is noted for in the homelessness arena is the work done by Martha’s Village & Kitchen, which was awarded a \$186,000 grant in late 2017. Martha’s project to assist current

MORE ON PAGE 2

NEW LEADERSHIP CON'T

Page 2

District homeless residents – *“Health in Housing: Emergency Housing”*, concentrates efforts in transitional housing; a home environment dedicated to helping people transition from homelessness to independent lifestyles.

In this on-going strategy to help with homelessness initiatives, the District/Foundation has also strategically invested \$2 million in this Community Health Focus Area by matching funds in the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) initiative, *“West Valley Housing Navigation Program Addressing Homelessness”*. Collaborations such as this bring together local government officials, business and community leaders, and residents to effectively reduce the impact of homelessness in the West Valley in the short term and the entire Coachella Valley in the long term.

Rounding out the efforts on guiding the implementation of strategic priorities for the District/Foundation are fellow board members Vice President/Secretary Carole Rogers, RN; Treasurer Mark Matthews; and Directors Kay Hazen and Jennifer Wortham, Dr.PH.

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About Desert Healthcare District/Foundation

The Desert Healthcare District is local government agency formed in 1948 whose mission is to achieve optimal health at all stages of life for all District residents. The District includes more than 200,000 residents and encompasses the cities of Desert Hot Springs, Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert (west of Cook Street), and unincorporated areas of Riverside County. The District and its affiliated nonprofit Desert Healthcare Foundation, together, are one of the largest funders in the Coachella Valley, granting more than \$4 million annually to nonprofit, community-based and provider organizations. These funds are used to assist residents — especially the underserved — in accessing vitally needed resources, such as primary and behavioral health care, housing, food, and transportation resources.