



Move to Zone-based Elections in 2018 Offers Opportunity for Best Representation of the Communities Served by the District

Initial Public Hearing set for April 24

COACHELLA VALLEY – April 9, 2018 – The Desert Healthcare District Board of Directors has taken the first step to voluntarily move away from an at-large election system for its board makeup and transition to a five zone-based election system for the 2018 election this November to help strengthen community representation.

The District chose to go through this zone-based election process this year; with the potential passage of an expansion measure on the 2018 ballot, the District would be doing so again in early 2019, to add an additional 2 board seats to ensure that the Board of Directors best represents the residents of a “*One Coachella Valley*” healthcare district expanded boundaries. “Community engagement has been a focal point of the District’s strategic planning and expansion work, which began in earnest more than two years ago. The Board’s decision ramps up the process that was essentially already underway,” explained District CEO Herb K. Schultz.

This process to zone-based elections will begin this month with initial Public Hearings, which are to be conducted prior to map drafting of the proposed transition to zones. The first Public Hearing will be held in conjunction with the District’s Board Meeting on April 24, 6 p.m. at the Cathedral City Senior Center, 37171 W. Buddy Rogers Avenue. More Public Hearings are planned for May 8, 6 p.m.; June 19, 6 p.m.; and June 26, 6 p.m. – locations will be finalized, and the information will be posted on the [District’s website](#) and [Facebook page](#). The public is invited and encouraged to attend the Public Hearings.

Prior to July 3, the Board of Directors will vote on a final map that divides the District into the five new zones to go into effect for the November 2018 elections.

The District has contracted with National Demographics Corporation (NDC) in support of the Board of Directors approval of the zoning process. NDC, which has done similar work for Indio, Cathedral City and many cities and districts in California, will provide comprehensive services in addition to the draft mapping such as assistance with effective public engagement in the process.

“The decision was made based on what was best for the community. Listening to the voice of the people and having representation from communities served are key elements to the success of the Desert Healthcare District,” said Board President Les Zendle MD.

###

CONTACT: Andrea S. Hayles, Board Clerk, ahayles@dhcd.org; 760-323-6110.

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 healthcare, housing, food, and transportation resources.