



\$2 Million in Funds Dedicated to Behavioral Health

District/Foundation collaborative initiative fund to support and expand the growing effort to address this challenging issue in the Coachella Valley

COACHELLA VALLEY – April 24, 2018 – A \$2 million Collective Fund for Behavioral Health has been established by the Board of the Desert Healthcare District/Foundation, highlighting the need in the Coachella Valley to unite the community response to create change on this challenging health front. “One of our most critical Community Health Focus Areas is primary care and behavioral health access,” explained Board President Les Zendle, MD, noting that this is one of four focus areas in the District/Foundation’s Strategic Plan.

“We want to move forward, combining our unique ability and experience established over many decades as a healthcare district, in partnership with equally committed organizations to create change,” said District/Foundation CEO Herb K. Schultz, adding that there are many partners in the Valley working on this challenging issue. The District/Foundation will work to convene and expand partnerships to utilize resources and identify ways of leveraging funds and creating strategies that will focus on the current and future needs of the Valley residents.

In the Coachella Valley, there are not enough behavioral health providers, inpatient beds, outpatient service, and a limited workforce. According to HARC data from 2013, nearly 90,000 Coachella Valley adults reported some form of mental, emotional or behavioral concern, and nearly 19,000 parents reported similar concerns for their children.

In March 2017, Premier conducted a Market Analysis, on behalf of Desert Healthcare District/Foundation, that indicated a significant shortage of inpatient psychiatric beds and no inpatient/outpatient psychiatric providers for pediatric and adolescent patients.

- 25.9% of Coachella Valley adults had an emotional, mental or behavioral issue that concerned them in a year’s timeframe; over half of those (55.5%) felt that their problem was severe enough to require professional help – 19.4% of those did not know who to contact for help.
- 61.4% of children age 3 to 17 with mental health problems have not seen a mental health professional for treatment within a year’s timeframe.

“Modeled after the successful and ongoing Homelessness Collective Fund Initiative, and with the Board’s leadership, support and action this week, we can move forward and work toward establishing the new initiative’s priorities and planning for the longer-term,” added Chief Operating Officer, Lisa Houston, who with key staff members, will lead this effort for the District/Foundation.

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About Desert Healthcare District/Foundation

The Desert Healthcare District is a 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.