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Coachella Valley Health Collaborative is re-formed to improve the health of Coachella Valley residents

PALM DESERT, Calif. (July 22, 2009) – After a several year hiatus, **The Coachella Valley Health Collaborative** has been re-formed, under the umbrella of Cal State San Bernardino’s Palm Desert Campus, in order to serve the multiple and diverse communities of the Coachella Valley. Through education and public advocacy and by acting as a catalyst to improve the health status of all residents and their accessibility to quality, state-of-the art health, their goal is to improve health by increasing community collaboration and decreasing duplication and fragmentation of services.

The organization’s mission is “to provide a meaningful forum for individuals, agencies, and organizations to improve health and well-being of Eastern Riverside County residents.” Its hope is that residents of Eastern Riverside County enjoy optimal health.

The Collaborative has many purposes:

- To encourage a regional focus for addressing health-related problems in the community defined as eastern Riverside County
- To promote an intergenerational process in the nature of solutions created
- To focus collaborative efforts on solving critical health issues with increased access
- To focus attention and solutions on increasing the health services infrastructure of the community (increased capacity)
- To provide a platform/framework for bringing together local community based groups, government agencies, service providers and interested community

Their goal is to address a system of un-met health needs such as:

- Intergenerational health
- Creating a healthy environment
- Population health
- Community health

“The Coachella Valley Association of Governments and its Human and Community Resources Committee, is pleased to see one of its star projects, the Coachella Valley Health Collaborative, move forward. Under the new leadership of Gary Jeandron and a new home at the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, we look forward to the pivotal role it will take in changing the face of health in our desert communities,” said Aurora Wilson, Director of Community Resources at the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG).

In June 2007, the CVHC released a critical report funded by the California Endowment which was divided into three parts: 1) an analysis of previous health surveys done in the Coachella Valley over the last six years; 2) the results of focus group meetings with community leaders, services providers, grassroots organizations and area leaders; and, 3) results of a Service Provider Survey done with 350 service providers to identify the major health needs of the residents and provides insight from the local health and social service providers perspective. Since then, many agencies have made good use of this data relative to their own services and grant applications. The CVHC is also very involved with the Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC). HARC has provided the first ever, community-based scientific study of the health needs in our region. HARC’s job is to maintain objectivity and be the provider of the data but not participate in advocacy or setting community priorities. HARC has, however, advocated for the CVHC to be the structure from which to foster change based on the HARC data.

The Collaborative will be producing two upcoming events this fall. The first, titled, “Coachella Valley’s Healthy Menu for Change,” will take place this September. Panelists will discuss hunger/food insecurities and nutrition as it relates to healthcare. The event will target local non-profit organizations and businesses. The second event, taking place this October, will focus on fitness and award local non-profits and businesses for the exceptional work they are doing in this field. Well-known fitness icon, Jake Steinfeld - known for his “Body by Jake” workouts - will speak at the event. In November 2005, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger named Jake as Council Chairman of the California Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

Recently, Dean Fred Jandt from Cal State San Bernardino’s Palm Desert Campus has been working with the CVHC on a partnership with the university.

“This is an incredible opportunity for the CVHC to finally secure a permanent home under the umbrella of CSUSB with many advantages for both organizations,” said Jandt.

The Coachella Valley Health Collaborative is supported by grants from the Regional Access Project Foundation and Kaiser Permanente. The Palm Desert Campus of California State University, San Bernardino provides professional oversight, financial services, office space and other services.

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