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California HOPE Receives $1 Million Grant to Continue Beyond 2018

SANTA ROSA, CA – The Sonoma County Department of Health Services (DHS) has received a $1 million grant to continue the California Helping Outreach Possibilities Empowering (HOPE) program, which delivers mental health services targeting those affected by the wildfires in October 2017.

The grant, awarded from the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit, was critical for California HOPE to continue its work beyond the one year anniversary of the October 2017 fires. The grant will be used to create a field-based crisis counseling program that engages survivors wherever they are in the community—home, work or any other place.

“Providing ongoing access to crisis counseling and mental health resources is a vital element of our recovery from the wildfires of October 2017. As we near the anniversary of the fires, many of our fire survivors need that support more than ever and will for years to come,” said James Gore, Chairman of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

California HOPE was formed as part of the County’s recovery response to the October 2017 fires to help individuals and communities recover from natural and human-caused disasters through community outreach and access to mental health services. Initial recovery work through the program is supported by short-term disaster relief grants from FEMA.

Currently, California HOPE supports outreach events targeting vulnerable populations such as seniors, Latino residents, and families with children age five and under.

Crisis counselors from the Council on Aging, Petaluma People Services Center, West County Community Services and Goodwill Redwood Empire, provide specialized disaster-recovery interventions in the delivery of trauma-informed care by strengthening referrals to existing services for survivors of the October 2017 wildfires.

With the end-date of its original grant from FEMA looming in December 2018, DHS recognized the need to continue crisis counseling in the community to support ongoing recovery efforts well beyond 2018.

DHS saw an opportunity for continuing and expanding California HOPE and applied for a grant through the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit and was selected earlier this month.

“This grant is one of the ways we are demonstrating our commitment to some of the most vulnerable people in our community who continue to feel the effects of trauma after the wildfires,” said Judy Coffey, RN, Kaiser Permanente Sr. Vice President and Area Manager, Marin-Sonoma.
In the last three months California HOPE staff have reported making nearly 1,000 contacts per month, demonstrating the need is still great in the County.

Wendy Wheelwright, DHS Project Manager for California HOPE: Sonoma, said she is inspired by the stories of survivors and emphasized the need for ongoing mental health services post fire anniversary.

“Receiving this additional funding will allow us to continue this great work well into the next calendar year. But most importantly, it tells survivors that our community has not forgotten them and continues to walk with them in this recovery,” said Wheelwright.

To contact California HOPE about the services they provide in Sonoma County please refer to the following phone numbers:

Santa Rosa: (707) 608-8805
Por Español: (707) 608-8825
For adults ages 50 and older: (707) 608-8804
North County: (707) 608-8807
Sonoma Valley: (707) 608-8806
South County: (707) 608-8806
West County: (707) 608-8807

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