



# County of Santa Cruz

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **BOARD ESTABLISHES PROGRAM TO SUPPORT MOTHERS AND CHILDREN**

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday authorized the implementation of the Nurse-Family Partnership program, a nationally-renowned, evidence-based effort to match Public Health Nurses with low-income, first time mothers. The program has been shown to improve maternal health and pregnancy outcomes, child health and family economic security.

Under the program, nurses would make home visits with approximately 100 first-time, low-income mothers, beginning during pregnancy and continuing through the critical first years of life. Nurses help new mothers become knowledgeable parents able to better prepare children for successful futures.

“Supporting mothers and kids in these critical years is essential,” said Supervisor Ryan Coonerty, who advocated for the Nurse-Family Partnership program after learning about it at a White House Conference on Innovation in Government. “The data shows the Nurse-Family Partnership program is one of the best investments we can make to benefit kids, children, families and the community.”

“I am pleased to have worked with Supervisor Coonerty to implement this important program,” Health Services Agency Director Giang Nguyen said. “We worked tirelessly with the local medical community to provide funding for the Nurse-Family Partnership. Because everyone worked together, we can make a difference in the lives of local children.”

Founded in Elmira, N.Y. in 1977, Nurse-Family Partnerships are now in place in eight countries and 43 U.S. states. Santa Cruz County is the 23<sup>rd</sup> county in California to implement the program, which helps reduce childhood illness and injuries, increase school readiness, decrease subsequent pregnancies and increase maternal employment. These outcomes also have been shown to reduce long-term health care, education and criminal justice expenditures.

The Board authorized three new Public Health Nurses and one support staff to create the program, and authorized the County to begin recruitment for the positions immediately.

The Nurse-Family Partnership program would not be possible without generous donations from the local medical community, including the Central California Alliance for Health, Kaiser Permanente, Dignity Health Dominican Hospital, Sutter Maternity and Surgery Center, Watsonville Hospital and the Santa Cruz Community Foundation.