



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

Date: June 3, 2019
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NEWEL SELECTED AS NEXT COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce that Dr. Gail Newel has been selected as the next Health Officer for Santa Cruz County, pending approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Newel is an obstetrician-gynecologist with a background in public health, including serving as San Benito County's Health Officer and as Medical Director for Maternal Child and Adolescent Health in Fresno County's Department of Public Health. She has worked in clinical practice for over 30 years in a variety of settings, as well as serving as clinical faculty with the UCSF training program and as Associate Clinical Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

"Dr. Newel brings a wealth of public health experience including a deep background in child health and welfare," Health Services Agency Director Mimi Hall said. "She has a proven track record working to improve the health of whole communities, starting with the youngest and most vulnerable members. I'm very excited to have her join our team."

"I'm honored by the opportunity to serve the residents of Santa Cruz County," Newel said. "Santa Cruz County has a history of progressive public health policies that have made this one of the healthiest communities in California. I look forward to the challenges ahead."

Newel would replace Dr. Arnold Leff, who is retiring May 31. If confirmed by the Board, she would begin July 1.

Newel received her undergraduate degree from UC Berkeley and attended UC Irvine School of Medicine. After beginning her career at UC San Francisco-Fresno OB-GYN residency program, she returned to UC Berkeley for a Master of Public Health degree, with an emphasis in maternal child health.



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Newel's background includes private practice, HMOs, clinical faculty and public health. Dr. Newel formed and co-chaired the San Benito County Opioid Task Force, and has worked as an OB-GYN hospitalist at both the Sutter Maternity and Surgical Center and Dominican Hospital.

While working in Fresno County, Newel was instrumental in establishing the UCSF Preterm Birth Initiative there. For the past five years she has served as an expert advisor to Fresno County's Collective Impact effort and helped lead a research project involving a unique model of group prenatal care, which was recently awarded a \$5.6 million grant from the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute to expand its services throughout Fresno County.

Dr. Newel moved to Santa Cruz five years ago when her wife joined the Palo Alto Foundation Medical Group as an obstetrician-gynecologist. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Coalition of California Health Officers (CCLHO) and is Chair of the CCLHO Maternal Child and Adolescent Health Committee. She also serves on the Legislative Committee for the Health Officers Association of California, and chairs the Committee on Healthcare for Underserved Women for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District IX (California), and serves on their Legislative Committee and Advisory Council.

Dr. David Ghilarducci has been named interim Health Officer.