



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### SANTA CRUZ COUNTY NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP UNDERWAY

The County of Santa Cruz' Nurse-Family Partnership has begun accepting up to 100 first-time expectant mothers into this highly anticipated inaugural program.

Approved by the Board of Supervisors and supported by the County and a coalition of local health care providers, the Nurse-Family Partnership is a program where nurses work side-by-side with first-time, low-income mothers in their homes during pregnancy and up to the first two years of an infant's life. Santa Cruz County is the 23<sup>rd</sup> county in California to implement the program.

Started as a demonstration project in Elmira, N.Y. in 1977, Nurse-Family Partnership Programs are in place in eight countries and 43 U.S. states. The nationally-renowned program has been shown to improve maternal health and pregnancy outcomes, improve newborn health outcomes, reduce childhood illness and injuries, increase school readiness, Increase intervals between subsequent pregnancies and increase maternal employment. and family economic security.

"I sought to establish the Nurse-Family Partnership because it provides tremendous benefits to moms, babies and the entire community," said Supervisor Ryan Coonerty, whose leadership led to the creation of the program. "The results are clear—investing in these children now will pay dividends to them and to the rest of us down the road."

"We are very excited to be implementing the Nurse-Family Partnership in Santa Cruz County. This program is aligned with serving our community, and has years of data behind it clearly demonstrating the positive life changes for first-time moms and their



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families”, said Anita Alvarez, Director of Nursing for Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency.

Under the program, Public Health Nurses make home visits with program participants, helping new mothers become knowledgeable parents able to better prepare children for successful futures, focusing on personal health, environmental health, quality of care-giving, maternal life course development, family and friend support and health and human service utilization. According to according to a RAND Corporation study, for every dollar invested in Nurse-Family Partnership, a community can see as much as five dollars returned on investment.

To be eligible for the Santa Cruz County Nurse-Family Partnership, expectant mothers need to reside in Santa Cruz County, meet low-income eligibility requirements, be a first-time mom, and be in their 2nd trimester or earlier (no more than 28 weeks pregnant). Referrals to the program are currently being made through a network of community organizations, but interested parties may also call the Public Health Nurse Information Line at 831-454-4339 for more information or to make a referral.

While eligibility for the Nurse-Family Partnership is limited, soon-to-be mothers who are not eligible may have access to a range of beneficial County services and are encouraged to call the Information Line to learn more.

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.