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Sequoia Hospital, Sequoia Healthcare District Fund \$250,000 in Emergency Food Grants
Most-vulnerable Peninsula populations to receive food, meals from seven organizations

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. (Nov. 10, 2020) – [Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital](#) and the [Sequoia Healthcare District](#) have announced \$250,000 in funding for vulnerable populations on the Peninsula facing increased food insecurity due to the prolonged pandemic crisis. The 2020-2021 COVID-19 Emergency Food Grant Agreement supports the following seven organizations in their efforts to deliver food and meals to those who most need it:

- [City of San Carlos](#)
- [Friends of the Veterans Memorial Senior Center](#)
- [Peninsula Volunteers, Inc. – Meals on Wheels](#)
- [St. Anthony’s Padua Dining Room](#)
- [St. Francis Center of Redwood City](#)
- [Samaritan House Food and Nutrition Program](#)
- [Second Harvest Food Bank of Silicon Valley](#)

“In serving this community for the past 70 years, we know without a doubt that nutrition and health go hand in hand,” said Sequoia Hospital President Bill Graham. “These organizations are focused on sourcing and delivering not just food, but *nutritious* food. This means more than just making sure these populations don’t go hungry. It also means they don’t find themselves with health care costs they can’t afford—especially right now—from preventable diseases like obesity and type 2 diabetes.”

“The pandemic crisis has led to a critical rise in food insecurity and the financial destabilization of vulnerable and low-income community members,” said Pamela Kurtzman, CEO of Sequoia Healthcare District. “This help at this time from local organizations that provide groceries and hot meals to vulnerable residents of our shared communities is much-needed.”

The funds will also provide packaging supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE), and sanitizing supplies to ensure the safety of staff from organizations like Second Harvest Food Bank of Silicon Valley and community members during food delivery.

“Even before COVID-19, Second Harvest was already responding to a food insecurity crisis, providing groceries to a record number of clients—more than 250,000 people every month,” said Leslie Bacho, CEO of Second Harvest of Silicon Valley. “After the pandemic hit, that number increased to more than half a million people a month. With so many people in crisis all at once, it’s vital that nutritious food continue to flow into the community.”

Researchers anticipate many families will have an extraordinary level of need for another 12 to 18 months as San Mateo County recovers from the pandemic-induced economic crisis. The John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities—Stanford University Graduate School of Education is conducting pioneering research to identify the ways in which the pandemic is contributing to food insecurity. Their findings will inform both immediate and long-term strategies for addressing this significant issue.

“The challenges brought about by COVID-19 are manifold and demand an understanding of who in the community is struggling with unmet basic needs,” said Amy Gerstein, PhD, Executive Director of the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities—Stanford University Graduate School of Education. “Our survey study will gather systematic data to advise local, regional, and state leadership about the ways that COVID-19 has affected the lives of individuals and families in Redwood City and North Fair Oaks. We hope to provide a clear and responsive read of community wellbeing that will inform policymaking.”

More than 54 million Americans are facing ongoing food insecurity—as well as the host of detrimental health consequences that accompany it—according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. Collective, community-wide action, such as the 2020-2021 COVID-19 Emergency Food Grant Agreement, helps drive measurable improvements to wellness and quality of life for underserved populations most impacted by the pandemic and builds awareness of the growing need for support to address this urgent public health crisis.

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