



NEWS RELEASE

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Local health centers get \$14 million in federal recovery money Contra Costa set to receive \$12 million for West County Health Services

WASHINGTON, DC – A long standing plan to improve health services in West County got a major boost today, Rep. George Miller (D-Martinez) announced.

More than \$14 million in federal recovery funds is headed to communities represented by Miller to help rebuild and relocate health care services for 7th district residents.

Contra Costa Health Services was awarded an unprecedented \$12 million to relocate and rebuild Richmond Health Center, a plan that has been years in the making. Solano County Health and Social Services Dept was awarded nearly \$2.2 million. President Barack Obama is set to unveil the grant funding at an event with community health care leaders at the White House later today. Contra Costa Supervisor John Gioia and Contra Costa Health Services Director Dr. William Walker will attend the event.

The funds were awarded under the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that Miller and Congressional Democrats fought for this spring in response to the severe economic recession. Funds were awarded through a competitive grant process for a one-time facility improvement opportunity to address significant and pressing capital improvement needs in health centers, including construction and renovation.

“This is a huge shot in the arm for our communities as they work to provide much needed health care services,” said Miller. “Contra Costa’s plan to move the Richmond Health Services closer to Doctors’ Hospital is a win for our entire community. Patients will have access to comprehensive services at the hospital and health center, medical staff will be able to share resources and the community will have better access to the facility. Community health centers, like this one, are key to developing a national plan for comprehensive health care.”

“I don’t think this announcement could have come at a better time,” Miller continued. “As more families turn to community health centers as their primary source of health care, this investment will allow people in our community to access much needed services. This grant funding exemplifies the core goals of the Recovery Act - providing vital services in our communities while creating jobs to help move our local economy forward. I greatly appreciate the Obama Administration’s attention to the communities I represent.”

“This is the culmination of a partnership between the County and the community,” said Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, who advocated for the project. “The community has wanted this and supported the health department’s replacement efforts for years. This is an incredible opportunity to link the county health system to give the community the health services they need and deserve- and to create badly needed jobs.”

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“We think the partnership with the county is long overdue,” added Eric Zell, member of the West Contra Costa Healthcare District Board of Directors, which operates Doctors Hospital. “We welcome this grant and the opportunity it provides to better serve the entire West County community.”

The Richmond Health Center has served West Contra Costa County Residents since 1967, providing over one million visits. The Center provides primary and specialty care, well-baby visits, immunizations and other critical services. The Richmond Health Center is the one of eight Health Centers run by Contra Costa Health Services, and the only one never to be replaced. The building has exceeded its useful life, cannot be repaired and must be replaced. Currently, the Center has only 50,000 useable square feet and major systems, including the elevators and HVAC, break down frequently.

Doctors Medical Center in San Pablo is just a few miles from the current site of the Richmond Health Center. Locating the Health Center at Doctors Medical Center will allow medical personal to share services like x-ray and laboratory testing. In addition, Health Center patients can be easily referred to Doctors Medical Center and vice versa, improving patient access to all medical services. Doctors Medical Center location is large enough to accommodate the 1.6 acres needed to build a state-of-the-art health facility that would architecturally fit into the neighborhood.

Funds were made available by the Recovery Act to support health centers and expand their capacity to provide primary and preventive health services to medically underserved populations in addition to creating employment opportunities in underserved communities over the next two years. The Recovery Act has provided \$1.5 billion in grants to address health center needs, including major construction and renovation. In addition to the announcement made today, Bay Area health centers are in line to receive nearly \$6 million in Capital Improvement grants to update equipment and fund construction projects, some of which will benefit Miller’s district.

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