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Ventura County Health Care Agency's CATCH Project Receives 2nd Year Funding

[Ventura, CA] – The Ventura County Health Care Agency's Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Access to Community Health (CATCH) project has been awarded a second year of funding through the Health Care Innovations Award (HCIA) program in the amount of \$1.3 million from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). The total grant award is \$4.1 million dollars over three years. Ventura County is honored to be one of only 39 organizations nationally to receive this prestigious award.

COPD is an umbrella term that includes chronic lung diseases such as emphysema, chronic bronchitis and asthma. The CATCH program has implemented new, evidence-based guidelines throughout the County for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of COPD because it is the third leading cause of death in the nation and the fourth leading cause of death in Ventura County. There are more than 28,000 people that suffer from COPD in Ventura County and many are unaware that they have it. A simple test called a *Pulmonary Function Test* (PFT) can be performed to determine if someone has COPD. Identifying and treating COPD in its early stages can drastically change/slow the progression of the disease.

"CATCH is also reforming the way in which we pay for the treatment of COPD, reducing costs by an estimated 22% over all. During the first year of the project, CATCH has been able to reduce Emergency Room visits by 18% and the number of critical vaccinations for COPD patients has increased by 25%. CATCH is improving the quality of life for COPD patients while reducing the costs of treatment," says Dr. Renee Higgins, CATCH Principal Investigator.

The CATCH team of specialists, led by Susan White Wood, CATCH Program Director, can travel county-wide to provide services. The team includes a Project Director, two Registered Nurses, two Respiratory Therapists, two Community Health Outreach Workers, a Medical Office Assistant and contracts with numerous specialists throughout the community. CATCH can be reached at (805) 677-5162 or catchgrant@ventura.org.

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