

For Immediate Release

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CANCER PATIENTS/SURVIVORS/CAREGIVERS, HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS/PROFESSIONALS, AND CANCER-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SOUTHWEST RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGION ARE BEING ASKED TO COMPLETE A CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY

Temecula, CA (August 21, 2017) – Cancer services, treatment options and related resources are being assessed in Southwest Riverside County in relationship to demand. Excellent cancer care in Southwest Riverside County is readily available; however, sometimes patients travel outside the region seeking specialized care or treatment options, such as certain clinical studies, that may not be offered locally. The effort spent coordinating and traveling to cancer care facilities in San Diego, Orange County, or Los Angeles places a significant amount of stress on cancer patients and their families, who are already burdened with the challenges of battling a major illness. A Regional Cancer Services Task Force has been formed to better understand this issue, and is currently undertaking a survey to assess community needs.

Initiated by the City of Temecula, the Southwest Riverside County Regional Cancer Services Task Force is comprised of elected officials and representatives from the County of Riverside (Third District), City of Murrieta, City of Lake Elsinore, City of Menifee, City of Temecula, City of Wildomar, and City of Canyon Lake, as well as Riverside County Public Health (Riverside University Health System), Temecula Valley Hospital, Loma Linda Medical Center, Menifee Valley Medical Center, IEHP (Inland Empire Health Plan), UC Riverside School of Medicine, Scripps Health, Michelle’s Place, American Cancer Society, and local oncologists. Stakeholders and other participants include interested health care professionals, cancer patients/survivors and caregivers, and the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Riverside County. The Task Force strives to understand what gaps exist in local cancer care, and what can be done to ease the burden of suffering on cancer patients and their loved ones. The Task Force aims to ensure that obstacles to obtaining excellent cancer care for patients be minimized as much as possible.

Temecula Mayor Maryann Edwards stated, “Our Valley has grown tremendously along with the availability of quality healthcare and cancer treatment options. But many residents faced with a cancer diagnosis still drive several hours for specialized treatment.” Mayor Edwards added, “The Task Force was formed in partnership with six cities, the County, IEHP, nonprofit organizations and healthcare leaders throughout Southwest Riverside County to gather information on the availability of local specialized cancer treatment and resources. This was done in an effort to ease the burden on local cancer patients and their caregivers.”

To better understand the state of cancer care in the region, the Task Force is conducting two surveys:

A survey designed for cancer patients, survivors, and/or their caregivers:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SW-Riv-Cancer-Community>

A survey designed for healthcare professionals such as physicians, nurses, lab techs, etc.:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SW-Riv-Cancer-Provider>

“These surveys will gather valuable information that will help us to better understand how cancer treatment can be improved in our region,” says Dr. Jenna LeComte-Hinely, the Task Force facilitator. Results will be used to document and prioritize needs, and to lay the groundwork for efforts to address these issues.

Anyone living in Southwest Riverside County (Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Murrieta, Temecula, Wildomar, Canyon Lake, and the surrounding unincorporated County areas) who has had cancer, been a caregiver for someone with cancer, or who works in the health profession in this region is encouraged to take the survey. Any person who wishes to contribute to improving the accessibility of cancer care to cancer patients in the area is encouraged to share these surveys with applicable individuals. Surveys are available online and in paper format at various locations. Data collection will wrap up at the end of September, so time is of the essence. Anyone with questions or concerns about the survey should contact HARC, the nonprofit research organization that’s been retained to conduct the study at staff@HARCdata.org.

The surveys are completely confidential, and participants are given the option to enter a drawing to win one of five \$100 Visa cards.

About the Task Force

The Task Force is collaboratively funded by the Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) and a joint regional grant awarded by the Western Riverside Council of Governments to the County of Riverside, City of Temecula, City of Lake Elsinore, City of Menifee, and City of Murrieta. For more information about the Task Force, visit <https://www.temeculaca.gov/1149/Regional-Cancer-Treatment-Task-Force>.

About HARC

HARC is a nonprofit research organization that has been hired to facilitate Task Force meetings and conduct the needs assessment. HARC provides research and evaluation services in the field of health, wellness, and quality of life. To learn more about HARC, visit www.HARCdata.org.