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March of Dimes Supports Oakland Area Expectant Mothers Via Three-Year Alameda Health System Grant

Oakland, Calif. (February 18, 2015) – Alameda Health System (AHS) announced that the March of Dimes California Chapter is supporting its CenteringPregnancy® program with a three-year grant, which will be administered by the Alameda Health System Foundation. In 2015, the AHS Foundation will receive close to \$50,000 to support this program at Highland Wellness. AHS will increase the number of patients participating in the CenteringPregnancy® program, which integrates three major components of care—health assessment, education and support—to improve pregnancy outcomes. In subsequent grant years, the program will be expanded to AHS’s prenatal clinics at Eastmont Wellness and Hayward Wellness. The Certified Nurse-Midwives of AHS will spearhead this expansion.

“The expansion of AHS’s CenteringPregnancy® program is an important step in reducing the number of premature births in the East Bay community,” said Dr. Johara Chapman, Chair of Maternal Child Health at AHS. “With the support of March of Dimes, we will be able to provide comprehensive prenatal support to even more mothers in Alameda County so they can deliver healthy, full-term babies.”

AHS will group ten to twelve women with similar delivery dates into monthly and semi-monthly two-hour visits. In addition to receiving prenatal care, they will learn self-care and parenting skills, participate in facilitated discussions, and develop a support network, as well as receive prenatal care. Groups will be offered in English and Spanish at a variety of times throughout the week.

AHS Foundation President Debra A. Barnes added: “March of Dimes’ focus on eliminating health inequities and reducing the occurrence of birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality is consistent with AHS’s goals. We are grateful to those who support the March of Dimes, as their volunteer efforts and generous donations helped make this grant possible.”

Located on the campus of AHS’s flagship Highland Hospital in Oakland, Highland Wellness gives local residents ready access to primary and specialized care delivered by world-class physicians, Certified Nurse-Midwives, nurses and other caregivers. It also provides patients preventive care and referrals for specialized care throughout the broad AHS network and in other community-based clinics.

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About Alameda Health System (AHS)

Alameda Health System, a major public health care provider headquartered in Oakland, California, is recognized as a world-class patient and family centered system of care with more than 4,500 employees, 1,000 physicians and 480 volunteers. Their facilities include Highland Hospital, a major regional trauma center and teaching hospital; Alameda Hospital, an acute care facility providing emergency, in-patient and outpatient services in Alameda; San Leandro Hospital, which provides emergency and in-patient hospital care services; John George Psychiatric Hospital, an acute and emergency care facility in San Leandro; Fairmont Hospital, an acute rehabilitation hospital and skilled nursing facility, also in San Leandro; and four ambulatory wellness centers in Oakland as well as in Newark and Hayward.

About March of Dimes

Each year nearly 4,000,000 babies are born in the United States and March of Dimes touches each one of them through research, education, support, and advocacy. March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide, March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. Premature birth and its complications are now the leading global cause of death for children under 5 years old. Premature birth costs the United States more than \$26 billion annually, according to the Institute of Medicine. For the latest resources and information, visit the [March of Dimes website](#) or for resources in Spanish, nacersano.org. Find us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#). A wealth of educational video resources are available on our [YouTube channel](#).

About March of Dimes California

In 2014 the March of Dimes funded \$8 million to California research institutions and \$4 million to the March of Dimes Prematurity Research Center at Stanford University, the first of five national trans-disciplinary research centers. In 2015 more than \$300,000 in community service grant funds will be given to local California organizations in support of the March of Dimes mission. Fundraising special events held in California, such as: the annual *March for Babies*® walks (celebrating 45 years in 2015); Signature Chefs Auction foodie events; and, the March of Dimes *Celebration of Babies*® event; raise millions of dollars to fund research, advocacy, community programs, education, and support for moms, babies and families in our communities. Our legislative advocacy efforts in 2014 resulted in 10 new bills being passed with a focus on helping all babies have a healthy start in life. California is one of only five states to receive an ‘A’ grade on the Preterm Birth Report Card, hitting a 24-year low in the rate of premature birth. Still, there is more work to be done, as one in eleven babies are born too soon in California. Follow our California social media outlets for the latest information. [Facebook](#). [Twitter](#).