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Sequoia Healthcare District Approves Collaborative Grant of \$500,000 to StarVista in Partnership with Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital

Addressing Mental Health Support in Our Community

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. (Oct 15, 2024) – On October 9, 2024, the board of directors of the Sequoia Healthcare District approved a grant of **\$500,000**, to be distributed over two years (**\$250,000** annually) to support the **Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Center** at StarVista. This funding will enhance staffing, training coordination, management, and executive leadership for this essential program.

The StarVista Crisis Center stands as a beacon of hope for many, providing four essential components: a 24/7 crisis and suicide prevention hotline, a 988 chat and text service, mobile crisis response dispatch, and community outreach and postvention efforts. In the fiscal year 2023-24, the center managed over 11,100 calls and more than 1,500 chats and texts through the 988 service, each interaction a lifeline for someone in desperate need. Additionally, it trained 1,278 residents of San Mateo in suicide prevention, equipping them with the tools to save lives. It is one of the first in the nation to pass the higher standards of the newest edition of American Association of Suicidology accreditation. A testament to its outstanding dedication and quality of care.

“I am thrilled that the board has approved this new partnership with StarVista,” expressed Aaron Nayfack, SHD Board President. “As the mental health needs of our community have grown, StarVista has significantly intensified its efforts to assist residents, and I am proud that we can support their expansion. The collaboration among StarVista, the Sequoia Healthcare District, and Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital represents a longstanding commitment to the residents of San Mateo County and will substantially enhance the mental health safety net.”

This grant, leveraging collective resources, will sustain critical operations and staffing for the program. The crisis center team comprises 17 counselors and one volunteer, covering shifts of four to twelve hours. “We are proud to partner with Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital to ensure that StarVista’s crisis hotline is adequately funded to recruit, train, and retain this vital—and often lifesaving—community resource,” remarked Pamela Kurtzman, CEO of SHD.

“Sequoia Hospital is excited to collaborate with the Sequoia Healthcare District and StarVista to support the Crisis Intervention Center, ensuring that residents of San Mateo County have real-



time access to transformative mental health services,” stated Bill Graham, President of Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital.

StarVista’s crisis center emphasizes the use of least invasive interventions, such as safety planning and family or friend check-ins. “We are immensely grateful to the Sequoia Healthcare District and Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital for their extraordinary support and investment in our Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Center hotline,” stated Sara Mitchell, CEO of StarVista. “This partnership will profoundly impact the lives of individuals who reach out for assistance. On behalf of everyone at StarVista, thank you!”

With the increasing demand for the 988 service and local suicide hotline calls, we anticipate that this grant will help bolster this vital program.

About StarVista

StarVista is a nonprofit organization that has been helping people throughout San Mateo County navigate life’s challenges for over 55 years. Their counseling, case management, skill development, and crisis prevention programs reach tens of thousands of people in our community each year.

StarVista works closely with local governments to fill unmet needs, partner with schools to connect directly with young people, and collaborate with other non-profit organizations to share expertise and best practices. From substance abuse and thoughts of suicide to domestic traumas and homelessness, StarVista helps people persevere and transform some of life’s toughest situations into personal victories. To learn more, please visit star-vista.org.

About Sequoia Healthcare District

Sequoia Healthcare District (SHD) was formed in 1946 and was the first healthcare district in California. The District is committed to improving residents’ health by enhancing access to care and promoting wellness through responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. The District includes Atherton, Belmont, Menlo Park, Portola Valley, Redwood City, San Carlos, Woodside, and parts of Foster City. To learn more, please visit seqhd.org.

About Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital

Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital is an accredited, not-for-profit community hospital providing innovative and exceptional health care for generations of Bay Area residents. Sequoia’s Heart and Vascular Institute is a nationally known pioneer in advanced cardiac care. Sequoia has received national recognition from Healthgrades for superior patient safety and was named as



one of America's top 100 hospitals for cardiac care. Our Total Joint Replacement program is a designated Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip Replacement. Our Birth Center is consistently ranked as a favorite among Peninsula families. We are also known for our comprehensive emergency care and leading-edge tomosynthesis 3-D mammogram technology. Our state-of-the-art inpatient pavilion combines the most advanced medical and surgical services with a unique healing environment, including private, spacious rooms and inviting garden areas. To support programs at Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital, visit the Sequoia Hospital Foundation. To learn more about Sequoia Hospital, please visit dignityhealth.org/sequoia.