



NEWS RELEASE

BCHD Celebrates 25 Years of Preventive Health Success

BCHD programs and services mark Silver Anniversary of a healthy beach community

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REDONDO BEACH, Calif. (April 25, 2023) – Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) is commemorating “25 years of Preventive Health Success,” highlighting the numerous successes and accomplishments the health district has achieved on behalf of the residents of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach through its 40+ programs and services.

Established in 1955 as the South Bay Hospital District, the name of the organization was changed to Beach Cities Health District in 1998, due to California Senate Bill 1169, passed in 1994, which changed the designation “hospital district” to “health care district” for the 70+ special districts in the state at the time. The bill also addressed regulations regarding health care trade secrets and the public meeting act, which had made it difficult for public hospitals to compete with privately held medical facilities.

Also in 1998, South Bay Hospital closed, and the mission of the special district changed from treating illnesses and ailments to making residents healthier.

“More than the name changed in 1998, as we switched our focus from curative health to preventive health,” says Tom Bakaly, who joined BCHD as its CEO in 2016. “Focusing on wellness, not sickness, encourages people to make wiser healthcare decisions, and having healthy options available, like free fitness classes, nutrition education for kids, Blue Zones Project approved restaurants and more bike lanes and walkways encourage people to make healthy choices.”

For the past 25 years, BCHD’s wellness and healthy living programs and services have strived to make prevention an integral part of the classrooms, workplaces and homes of the Beach Cities.

Some of BCHD’s highlights from the last 25 years include:

Pandemic Pivot

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, BCHD activated its District Operations Center in March 2020 and the entire staff adapted to serve the community. BCHD was able to establish a COVID-19 testing site and vaccination site, assist at-risk older adults in the community, offer health and well-being tools to residents and disseminate accurate and timely COVID-19 information to the community.

During the pandemic, BCHD provided 155,684 COVID-19 tests and supported 74 vaccine clinics with more than 23,100 vaccine doses administered. BCHD also supported the community by completing 2,616 errands for residents and delivering 4,712 meals for those who remained “safer at home” during the 2020-21 fiscal year. More than 500 BCHD volunteers participated in these service activities for Beach Cities residents.

BCHD's pandemic response was a primary reason it was named the 2021 "Healthcare District of the Year" by the Association of California Healthcare Districts.

Success for Young People

BCHD's LiveWell Kids program was originally created in response to a high rate of obesity – 20 percent in 2007 among Redondo Beach Unified School District (RBUSD) elementary school students. Since the program's inception, with its focus on nutrition and increased physical activity, there has been a 60.5% decline in RBUSD student obesity and in 2020, the Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Health published a Community Health Report detailing the success of the LiveWell Kids program.

"Stopping obesity among our young people is a critical step and these findings are particularly impressive because they were sustained and observed across all public elementary schools, grade levels and demographic groups," said Paul Simon, M.D., M.P.H., Chief Science Officer for the LACDPH.

BCHD is also taking steps to improve the mental health and resources available for young people. Last fall, BCHD launched allcove Beach Cities, an innovative center offering mental and physical health resources, education and employment counseling, peer and family support, and substance use prevention programs. allcove Beach Cities is a safe place for youth that reduces stigma, embraces mental wellness and increases community connection.

The center is the result of a collaboration between the Stanford Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing, the State of California's Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) and Beach Cities Health District (BCHD).

Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

In 2010, BCHD brought the Blue Zones Project® to the Beach Cities, which was selected to be the first Blue Zones Project community in the United States. Blue Zones Project® by Sharecare is a community-wide approach to creating healthier and more productive citizens. It uses permanent, evidence-based environmental and policy changes to motivate residents to adopt and maintain healthier lifestyles.

Through the program, BCHD encouraged more than 22,000 residents to take "the Blue Zones Pledge," choosing to follow the Power 9 Principles established by the Blue Zones Project, and more than 100 area restaurants offered healthier dining options for residents, becoming Blue Zones Project Approved restaurants and contributing to improved health for Beach Cities residents.

"The Blue Zones Project surrounds people with healthy options — healthy menu items at local restaurants, policies that create infrastructures for active lifestyles like bike paths and walkways, and community programming to offer people opportunities to connect with others and find their life's purpose," said Dan Witters, research director for the Gallup National Health and Well-Being Index (WBI). "Residents of the Beach Cities experienced a significant increase in their well-being scores since 2015. Further, the WBI found that Beach Cities residents who engaged with the Blue Zones Project® have greater well-being overall."

A Plan To Age Successfully At Home

BCHD's Care Management program provides confidential in-home visits and assessment along with

recommended care plans and frequent follow-up to support independent living at home for older adults while staying connected to the community from a professional Care Manager.

Care Management is available for older adults (ages 60+) and adults with disabilities (ages 18-59) living in Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach or Redondo Beach. Care Management clients may also be eligible to receive services including Conversation Companions, Errand Assistance, Brain Buddies or Support Line Volunteers, who routinely call older adult clients.

A Million Dollar Backbone for BCHD

More than 1,000 strong, our network of **Volunteers** have formed the backbone of Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) since the 1950's. Diverse, motivated and talented, BCHD volunteers have the opportunity to work in a variety of community-focused programs and play an integral role in improving the health and well-being of Beach Cities residents.

In 2019, BCHD's team of volunteers surpassed a major milestone, when the collective value of service and time donated by our volunteers surpassed \$1 million. 1,125 BCHD volunteers provided \$1,082,872 worth of service for Beach Cities residents during the 2018-19 fiscal year.

About Beach Cities Health District

Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) is a healthcare district focused on preventive health and serves the communities of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach. Established in 1955 as a public agency, it offers an extensive range of dynamic health and wellness programs, with innovative services and facilities to promote health and prevent diseases across the lifespan. BCHD also operates AdventurePlex, a health and fitness facility where kids play their way to good health, and the Center for Health & Fitness, a comprehensive fitness center that is the only Medical Fitness Association-certified facility in California. Visit www.bchd.org or call (310) 374-3426 for more information.

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