

Gravenstein Health Action Coalition – Community Health Needs Assessment

Sonoma County's Health Action program, is under the County's Department of Health Services, and is a framework for community health improvement and health equity, that mobilizes community partnerships and resources to focus on key factors that influence health, including health system effectiveness, the built environment, and social determinants such as education and income. There are nine local Health Action Chapters in Sonoma County including the Gravenstein Health Action Coalition (GHAC). Countywide Health Action coordinates partners (such as GHAC) to **establish shared goals and outcomes** and **implement policy, systems and environmental change strategies** focused on the health and overall wellness of Sonoma County residents. The Gravenstein Health Action Coalition (GHAC) is a newly incorporated nonprofit organization that has formed to replace the previous Health Action that was housed under the Palm Drive Health Care District.

The newly convened Gravenstein Health Action Coalition (GHAC) is focusing more on building a coalition of critical stakeholders to identify public health issues in west county, explore solutions to these issues through collaboration among GHAC stakeholders, and work together as advocates to fund identified solutions. With the dissolution of the Palm Drive Health Care District there is no specific funding mechanism for West County centric public health initiatives. It is critical to Sebastopol and West County that non-profit providers and stakeholders have a venue to work in coalition on addressing west county needs. The GHAC is that venue.

The GHAC has, and is continuing to recruit, Board Members and advisors from the leadership of health and social service-oriented non-profits, schools, faith-based organizations, Latinx and minority communities, business, and emergency services. Major partners from Sebastopol's non-profit community are part of the coalition including West County Community Services and West County Health Centers.

GHAC originally developed a submittal for a Community Grant to the City of Sebastopol in early March just as the GHAC was forming. The original proposal, for a Community Health Needs Assessment, was written before the extent and duration of the COVID emergency had become clear. The proposal was asking the City to partially fund the needs assessment, with GHAC also planning to secure funding from the County and private foundations.

The Needs Assessment proposed is even more important than when GHAC first applied for funding from the City. The health, mental health and economic fallout from the COVID pandemic cannot be exaggerated. GHAC members have been meeting to begin planning the assessment and solicit input from the Coalition partners. To address the fallout from COVID and assess the overall health and wellness needs of Sebastopol and West County, data is required. At present most public health data available is county-wide and out of date, making it difficult to identify and plan for how to address needs AND difficult to apply for Federal, State, County and private funding to address these needs. The Health Needs Assessment project will bring together major health and wellness providers such as West County Health Centers and West County Community Services as well as public agencies such as Sebastopol's Police and Fire Departments, to identify existing data and what further data is needed to profile our public health needs. Then the Assessment will collect the additional data identified as needed and currently unavailable, particularly that related to the Covid pandemic.

The GHAC recognizes that the City of Sebastopol has very limited funding and understands that its original request of \$20,000 is not feasible at this time. However, GHAC believes it is very important that the City show its support and participate in the Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment is vital to the City's ability to plan for its future and will provide important quantitative information about emergency service needs, mental health needs, homelessness, and the impact of losing many health services including our hospital. The City cannot adequately address these kinds of issues, much less apply for grant funding to address them, without adequate data. The bulk of the assessment expenses will go toward paying a Public Health professional to coordinate, conduct and analyze the assessment. GHAC would appreciate the City's support of this time sensitive initiative and is also pursuing funding from the County and other sources. The original proposal envisions that planning the assessment would start in October (which is already underway) with completion in April. The completion date will likely be somewhat later.