

Health and housing complex breaks ground in Santa Cruz





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Stephanie Aceves May 22, 2021

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. (KION) The Santa Cruz Community Health, Dientes Community Dental Care and MidPen Housing are partnering to create a 3.7-acre health and housing campus in Live Oak.

The health centers will open in 2022. They will include an 11-chair dental clinic that will serve 6,000 low-income patients a year, and a 20,000 sq. ft. primary care center that can serve up to 10,000 patients a year.

Diana Valadez, a patient for Dientes and Santa Cruz Community Health, says she first went to the center when they discovered a lump in her breast, since then she says they've helped her recover but most importantly treated her with respect.

"It's such an important factor for people. If someone goes to the clinic and they don't trust them or have the confidence to go to their doctor because they're too embarrassed to ask questions, their patients will never feel at ease," said Valadez.

Valadez tells KION that she walks 30 to 40 minutes to get to her appointments on time, she says building a new complex like this means more mothers and seniors have easier access to health and dental care.

"It's just 5 to 7 minutes away from my house and not only does it benefit me but the entire community because the majority of the community, from the group where my kids go to school, a lot of mothers don't drive and so this is fantastic," said Valadez.

The CEO of the Santa Cruz Community Health says this project has been in the works for about five years with the creation of the new health clinic, dental headquarters and dental clinic, and a new campus for affordable housing. Hopefully, the CEO says this addresses the community's critical needs.

"Access to health and affordable housing are two of the biggest issues of our time. People can't be healthy without a roof over their heads and if they don't have access to holistic care so medical, social, and emotional care, then they're not going to be healthy. And so this is a response to those critical needs," said Leslie Conner.

57 affordable housing residential units will also be constructed as part of the project.

Dientes and Santa Cruz Community Health plan to open their clinics in 2022 while the housing component is expected to open in 2023.

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