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# Healthcare Network creates Community Outreach Team from expanded COVID-19 Response Team

*The expansion is funded by a three-year grant from Collier County funded by the CDC*

April 19, 2022 – Recognizing the importance of the COVID-19 Response Team in reaching the community with critical healthcare information and care, Healthcare Network is expanding the size and work of that team into the Healthcare Network Community Outreach Team.

“During the pandemic, Healthcare Network recognized early the need to build trust by providing culturally and language-appropriate information about COVID-19, particularly in remote, vulnerable communities,” said Julie Pedretti, vice president of external affairs, who was originally hired to organize the five-member response team. “When we saw success of the door-to-door efforts during the pandemic, we knew we could continue to make a significant impact in preventative healthcare beyond our walls in the remote corners of our community.”

A three-year grant funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention administered by Collier County’s Community and Human Services Division has allowed the COVID-19 Response Team to expand from nine to 15 team members. The team will continue to provide COVID-19 support as needed, as well as address other conditions in the community such as hypertension, diabetes and heart disease.

The grant allows Healthcare Network to hire six additional full-time community health workers with the goal of reaching the underserved in areas including:

- Everglades City/Chokoloskee
- Golden Gate Estates/Orange Tree/Oil Well Road
- East Naples (Lely)
- Naples Manor/Bayshore/Shadowlawn
- North Naples

The team will continue door-to-door visits and work with the Healthcare Network’s Chronic Care Management team and other professionals with referrals for healthcare and social support services. In addition, the team will plan mini-health fairs, health education events and workshops, and continue to manage a resource line to answer questions from the community and provide information. Home visits also allow the team to address some issues that impact health by connecting families with local resources for physical and mental health,

transportation, food and housing assistance.

## About Healthcare Network

In 2022, Healthcare Network is celebrating its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since its founding, the organization's mission has been to provide quality healthcare accessible to everyone, regardless of job, income, or insurance status. The organization has grown from two small trailers in Immokalee to a comprehensive network of providers located throughout Collier County. Primary healthcare services include family care, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, senior care, and pharmacy as well as dental care and integrated behavioral health for both adults and children. Additionally, the organization's community health workers bring health and social services directly to underserved families. For more information, visit [www.HealthcareSWFL.org](http://www.HealthcareSWFL.org), or to schedule an appointment, please call 239-658-3000.

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