CALAVERAS COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY HONORED FOR ITS HEALTH EQUITY PRACTICES BY CALIFORNIA’S LARGEST HEALTH FOUNDATION

LOS ANGELES (December 5, 2019) – The California Endowment announced at a December 3rd ceremony in Oakland that the Calaveras County Health Services Agency Public Health Division was the recipient of the 2019 Advancing Health Equity Awards Catalyst Health Equity Practice Award for its work to improve oral health in the underserved, rural county. Eight public health departments and health human service agencies from across California were honored by The Endowment at the December 3rd ceremony for their work that goes beyond the traditional scope of public health to positively impact the health of poor and marginalized communities.

“Bringing health equity to all Californians requires public health departments to think outside of traditional medical interventions and practices to reduce and eradicate health disparities experienced by California’s poor and marginalized communities,” said Anthony Iton, MD, JD, MPH, senior vice president, The California Endowment. “Through Calaveras County Public Health Division’s efforts to execute a data collection plan they were able to identify gaps in services and help address the unmet oral health needs of the residents of this underserved, rural county.”

Launched in 2014 by The Endowment, the Advancing Health Equity Awards are meant to bring attention to and reward public health department practices that can inform and inspire the future work of others committed to improving health equity. This year’s awards ceremony at The California Endowment’s Oakland conference center featured a fireside chat with California’s Surgeon General Nadine Burke Harris.

“Understanding the science of toxic stress is an important addition to all the work we are doing on health equity,” said California Surgeon General Nadine Burke Harris. “Because when we deploy all the science and resources that we have, including all of the resources of health care to be part of the solution, that gets us to achieving a health equity agenda faster and more effectively.”

A complete description of the award is below:

- **Catalyst Health Equity Practice Award** was given to the Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency’s Public Health Division (CCHHSAPHD) for the creation and ongoing implementation of The Calaveras Oral Health Program. Calaveras County is often stymied by the lack of data on health issues impacting Calaveras County residents. Due to the rural nature of the County, health data is often aggregated along with other smaller counties, if it’s captured at all. This lack of data makes it especially difficult to address public health issues in rural counties resulting in poor health outcomes for California’s residents of rural communities. CCHHSAPHD conducted a Calaveras County Oral Health Community Needs Assessment and used the findings to create the Calaveras County Oral Health improvement Plan. The needs assessment and improvement plan demonstrate how communities can use knowledge to give voice to an issue, gain resources and positively affect the health of the community.

“The lack of health data for rural communities is a very real problem because we can’t access resources without data,” said Kelsey Holmes, Health Education Specialist for the Calaveras County Health & Human Services Agency. “Through the
Oral Health Needs Assessment, we’ve been able to connect with the community, identify need and take action to improve the oral health of Calaveras County’s underserved residents.”

Click here to view and download a photo of Kelsey Holmes, Health Education Specialist for the Calaveras County Health & Human Services Agency, accepting the award.

Photo caption: Kelsey Holmes, Health Education Specialist for the Calaveras County Health & Human Services Agency, accepts Advancing Health Equity Award at a Dec. 3 ceremony in Oakland, CA. Photo courtesy of The California Endowment.

About The California Endowment
The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. Headquartered in downtown Los Angeles, The Endowment has regional offices in Sacramento, Oakland, Fresno and San Diego, with program staff working throughout the state. The Endowment challenges the conventional wisdom that medical settings and individual choices are solely responsible for people's health. The Endowment believes that health happens in neighborhoods, schools, and with prevention. For more information, visit The Endowment’s Web site at www.calendow.org.

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