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VISTA COMMUNITY CLINIC EMPLOYEE RECOGNIZED
FOR MIGRANT WORKER DENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH

Ana Palomo-Zerfas One of Only Seven People Nationwide Recognized by DentaQuest
for Work on Oral Health

VISTA, CA—Ana Palomo-Zerfas, Migrant Health and Community Engagement Program Manager at Vista Community Clinic (VCC), has been named Oral Equity Hero by DentaQuest, one of the largest dental benefits administrators in the United States. The inaugural Health Equity Hero awards were given to seven people nationwide for their contributions to removing barriers to oral health.

Palomo-Zerfas designs and administers VCC’s migrant health programs that connect more than 5,700 migrant agricultural workers and their family members with medical and dental services each year in San Diego North County.

“Vista Community Clinic is committed to helping migrant farm workers and their families gain access to high quality medical and dental services,” said Fernando Sañudo, Chief Executive Officer. “Ana Palomo-Zerfas has been instrumental in the success of our migrant health programs. She brings great passion and dedication to her job. Thanks to her efforts, farm workers in San Diego North County are receiving the care that they need and deserve. I thank DentaQuest for recognizing her remarkable work.”

Presently, more than 83 million people in the United States face barriers to dental care. The difficulties in accessing care can be traced to factors such as race, age, income level, language, health literacy and geographic isolation. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), nearly 56 percent of those eligible for California’s Medi-Cal dental benefits did not utilize it. The California Institute for Rural Studies identifies dental problems as the most common health complaint among migrant agricultural workers, with nearly half never having been to a dentist.

“Ana Palomo-Zerfas is doing impressive work to ensure that some of the most vulnerable among us receive the care that is so critical to long-term health, economic opportunity, and quality of life,” said Steve Pollock, President and CEO of DentaQuest. “She is connecting historically-underserved migrant workers and their families with health care by employing the skills that have marked her career - innovation, strategic outreach and compassion for the communities she works with every day. The people of San Diego County are lucky to have her as a health advocate and ally.”

As Migrant Health and Community Engagement Program Manager at VCC, Palomo-Zerfas leads the health clinic’s efforts to reach farm laborers and their families, and helps them overcome cultural and language barriers that would otherwise prevent them from getting the health care and preventive services they need. VCC’s migrant health programs also improve the living, working and health conditions of migrant farm workers through a community collaborative. Palomo-Zerfas trains community organizers, manages advocacy efforts and develops health education programs. VCC connects more than 5,700 migrant workers and their family members to care each year.
About Vista Community Clinic
With five locations in the cities of Vista and Oceanside, VCC provides affordable, high quality health care to more than 57,000 residents of North San Diego County. Services offered by VCC include primary care, pediatrics, prenatal and women’s health, optometry, dental care and behavioral health services. VCC also offers a wide array of innovative health education programs for all community residents. VCC is recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Level 3 (highest) Patient-Centered Medical Home. For more information, please call (760) 631-5000 or visit www.vistacommunityclinic.org.

About DentaQuest
Based in Boston, Mass., DentaQuest (www.dentaquest.com) is the second largest oral health company in the United States and the largest in the Medicaid space. Along with its charitable DentaQuest Foundation and its educational DentaQuest Institute, its mission is to improve the oral health of all. Follow DentaQuest on Twitter @dentaquest and Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/DentaQuest, and subscribe to our blog, Oral Health Matters at: http://oralhealthmatters.blogspot.com/.

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