

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ALAMEDA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH AND ALL IN ALAMEDA COUNTY LAUNCH FOOD AS MEDICINE
PILOT AT TIBURCIO VASQUEZ HEALTH CENTER**

The 'Food as Medicine' pilot aimed at addressing food insecurity and helping improve physical and behavioral health outcomes launched at Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center's clinic in San Leandro

San Leandro, CA – Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance) and ALL IN Alameda County (ALL IN) have partnered to launch and expand Food as Medicine efforts at local sites throughout Alameda County, beginning with the Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center (TVHC) primary care clinic in San Leandro, serving the Ashland and Cherryland districts. The Alliance invested \$275,000 to support strategies at local clinics, including TVHC that are aimed at improving the health of the Alameda County community by prescribing patients nutrient-dense foods, providing nutrition education, connecting individuals to behavioral supports, and integrating a Food as Medicine model with medical practices that address structural barriers. With funding support and partnership from the Alliance, ALL IN, Open Source Wellness, and Dig Deep Farms will partner to expand prevention and treatment strategies that improve patients' overall health and wellbeing. This first of its kind model provides patients food prescriptions that can be redeemed for organically grown, local and nutrient dense produce provided by Dig Deep Farms. In order to amplify the effect of the food prescriptions, participants will also have access to group medical visits facilitated by a TVHC provider and Open Source Wellness that provide support with physical activity, healthy snacks, stress reduction and social support in a culturally relevant and experiential manner.

"Through this innovative program, Alameda County has taken an important step towards ensuring that our most vulnerable families and communities have access to the healthy, fresh food necessary for beneficial long-term health outcomes," said Alameda County Supervisor, Wilma Chan. "I am grateful for this invaluable partnership with the Alliance and our other partners that demonstrates a collective commitment to the well-being of our County's residents."

Limited access to nutritious food has been linked to various adverse health outcomes. Today, 70 percent of all Americans are overweight or obese and over 100 million Americans are projected to be diabetic by the year 2050. Through the Food as Medicine pilot, primary care providers and staff will screen patients for food insecurity, and offer four months' worth of locally grown fresh and nutrient-dense vegetables that can be redeemed at an onsite Food Farmacy at TVHC. Additionally, patients will be offered a referral to a 16-week "Behavioral Pharmacy" group medical visit facilitated by Open Source Wellness at TVHC focused on nutrition, physical activity, mindfulness, stress reduction, and social connection.

“Today, more than 130 million Americans are affected by chronic diseases; many that are preventable and reversible,” said Dr. Steven Chen, Chief Medical Officer of ALL IN. “This partnership with the Alliance is the beginning of what we know will advance health equity by transforming our systems of care and addressing structural determinants of poor health.”

“The impacts of food insecurity and social isolation in our community are creating higher rates of health disparities including depression, diabetes, obesity, and hypertension,” said Alliance Chief Executive Officer, Scott Coffin. “The Food as Medicine program connects our members to locally grown, nutritious food, and combines with wellness coaching to create a unique experience that improves a person’s quality of life.”

The Alliance’s initial \$275,000 investment funds the Food as Medicine pilot this year at multiple locations across Alameda County, starting with TVHC’s San Leandro clinic. Locally grown produce that is harvested by Dig Deep Farms will be delivered to select primary care clinics for distribution to Alliance members. In addition, members are supported by the Open Source Wellness team to experience physical movement and stress reduction classes. The TVHC Farmacy is presently operating Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, and will ultimately operate five days a week. Currently, the Food as Medicine initiative has a site at Hayward Wellness Center and smaller Food Farmacies operate at Native American Health Center, La Clinica de La Raza, Roots Community Health Center and West Oakland Health Center, with efforts to expand at existing and future sites throughout Alameda County.

To learn more about Food as Medicine efforts, visit <http://www.acgov.org/allin/> or to learn more about the Alliance, visit us at <http://alamedaalliance.org/>.

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About Alameda Alliance for Health

Alameda Alliance for Health (Alliance) is a local, public, not-for-profit managed care health plan committed to making high quality health care services accessible and affordable to Alameda County residents. Established in 1996, the Alliance was created by and for Alameda County residents. The Alliance Board of Governors, leadership staff, and provider network reflect the county’s cultural and linguistic diversity. The Alliance provides health care coverage to nearly 250,000 low-income children and adults through National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) accredited Medi-Cal and Alliance Group Care programs.

About ALL IN Alameda County

In January 2014, on the 50th Anniversary of President Johnson’s War on Poverty, Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan launched the New War on Poverty in Alameda County. The Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution in support of the effort, which was named ALL IN Alameda County. ALL IN Alameda County was created to make significant progress towards the ambitious goal of ending poverty in our community. ALL IN’s primary strategies are collaboration and innovation. Through a stakeholder engagement process involving County staff and leadership and community leadership, everyone with a role in creating conditions for families

and individual residents in Alameda County to prosper are encouraged to work together to design and implement new solutions.

About Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center

Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center (TVHC) began over 48 years ago in Union City by a coalition of community members determined to provide health services to migrant workers and other marginalized groups who otherwise had little to no access to health care.

Today, TVHC continues to carry out its mission by providing access to quality medical, dental, optometry, podiatry, mental health care, youth health services, community health education, family support services, and WIC nutrition services to over 27,000 low-income, uninsured and underserved community members living in Alameda County.

For more information, please visit www.tvhc.org.