

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West County Health Centers, Inc. Executive Director, Mary Szecsey Taking 3 month Sabbatical

Mary Szecsey, Executive Director of West County Health Centers, Inc., has been awarded a 3 month sabbatical by The California Wellness Foundation. Mary will begin her sabbatical August 1, 2008 and will return in November. Dr. Steve Bromer, West County Health Centers Medical Director, has been appointed as interim Executive Director.

Mary was one of eight nonprofit health sector executives in the state of California to be awarded a sabbatical by The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF). "Individuals leading and managing health –sector nonprofit organizations in California frequently work long hours for more than a decade without a break from these challenging positions." Gary L. Yates, TCWF president and CEO. "The health and well-being of a valuable executive leader not only affects the individual but the organization he or she runs."

Mary Szecsey has been the executive director at West County Health Centers since 1995. West County Health Centers, Inc. is a licensed Federally Qualified Health Center providing comprehensive health services at the Russian River Health Center in Guerneville, Occidental Area Health Center, Sebastopol Community Health Center, Forestville Teen Clinic, and the Russian River Dental Clinic and Mental Health Services. During her tenure, Szecsey successfully managed the merger of two rural health centers (to form the current West County Health centers) and several major capital projects to expand and improve health center facilities. Szecsey (pronounced SAY-Jay) received a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley. Through her work at WCHC, she has served on a variety of local and statewide health committees, and she was a member of the Harmony Union School District Board for 10 years. She was recognized as Woman of the Year in Assembly District One and received the Sonoma County Department of Health Service's Public Health Champion Award.

West County Health Centers, Inc., recently implemented an Electronic Health Record last month at both its Occidental Area Health Center and Russian River Health Center. "This has been by far the most complicated and the most critical project that we have ever undertaken in my thirteen years with the health centers. I am so proud of how we have managed our way through

this uncharted territory with such grace, humor, respect, intelligence, and courage.” Mary Szecsey, executive director West County Health Centers. Upon Szecsey’s return the newly opened satellite site, The Sebastopol Community Health Center, will prepare for licensing in 2009 and become fully operational in 2010. Mary’s sabbatical will be an opportunity for her to recharge through respite and reflection as well an opportunity for West County Health Centers to identify new policies procedures and staff responsibilities based on the sabbatical experience.

The California Wellness Foundation is one of the state’s largest private foundations, providing \$50 million in grants each year in pursuit of its mission which is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention. The Sabbatical Program was created to support nonprofit leaders and seeks to improve the long-term effectiveness of health-focused non profits by providing their executives with the rest they need to continue to direct their organizations’ missions.

West County Health Centers envisions a community where all residents have a medical home where patients and staff are empowered to build healthy lives and communities. We are a cohesive team of health care providers, support staff and volunteers dedicated to wellness, compassion, affordability and excellence of care. We believe in non-judgmental and equal care for all members of our diverse community. The mission of West County Health Centers is to provide comprehensive, quality and accessible health care services to the communities of West Sonoma County. For more information see www.wchealth.org .

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