

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Petaluma Health Care District Board President Elece Hempel Honored as Trustee of the Year by Association of California Health Care Districts**

**PETALUMA, Calif., October 18, 2019** – The Association of California Health Care Districts (ACHD) honored [Petaluma Health Care District](#) (PHCD) Board President Elece Hempel as Trustee of the Year at a ceremony on October 10. The award recognizes the health care district trustee — chosen from the entire state — who has most notably impacted his or her district with outstanding governance, strategic planning and constituent partnerships.

“Anyone who has worked with or benefited from the countless community programs Elece has coordinated knows she is a force to be reckoned with,” said PHCD CEO Ramona Faith. “She has been a priceless asset to our board, providing superlative governance and drive for our district’s vision and goals.”

“I am humbled and honored to be selected for this recognition,” said Hempel. “Striving for a healthier community is a team effort, and the accomplishments for which I’ve been recognized would not have been possible without our focused board, employees and those in our community who are always looking for solutions to build a healthier, more equitable Southern Sonoma County. It is all about community!”

A 25-year Petaluma resident, Hempel became PHCD president, an elected volunteer position, in 2015. Since then she has played a vital role in advancing its investment in and management of community health programs. Particularly noteworthy is the critical role she has been playing in supporting the complex negotiations for a new lease for Petaluma Valley Hospital – which PHCD owns. Hempel also leads the nonprofit Petaluma People Services Center (PPSC) as executive director. PPSC works to improve the social and economic health of the community with programs that strengthen the dignity and self-sufficiency of those it serves.

“Elece brings extensive credibility to our board thanks to the relationships she has forged and respect she has earned over the years from business and community leaders, nonprofits and local residents,” added Faith. “She is fiercely committed to our community and uses her many platforms to advocate for a local hospital and improving the health and well-being for all.”

Throughout her service on the PHCD board, Hempel’s support and advocacy have strengthened many PHCD initiatives, including the launch of the hugely successful Petaluma Sober Circle, creation of the Petaluma East Side Farmers’ Market and the Local Incentive for Food and Economy (LIFE) program, and partnering with the City of Petaluma to debrief the community’s emergency response to the October 2017 wildfires when nearly 2,500 people fled to Petaluma to find shelter.

### **About Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD)**

The Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD) represents Healthcare Districts throughout the state. The Association serves the diverse needs of California's Healthcare Districts by enhancing public awareness, training and educating its members and advocating for legislation and regulatory policies that allow Healthcare Districts to deliver the best possible health services to Californians. To learn more, visit [www.achd.org](http://www.achd.org).

### **About Petaluma Health Care District**

The Petaluma Health Care District (PHCD) is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the southern Sonoma County community through leadership, advocacy, support, partnerships and education. Its vision is to foster a healthier community, a thriving hospital and equitable access to comprehensive health and wellness services. PHCD, a public agency managed by the community for the community, has served southern Sonoma County's health and wellness needs for more than 70 years. For more information, please visit [www.phcd.org](http://www.phcd.org).

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