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Contact:

Rebecca Ellecamp
Studio PR
707-971-0242
rebecca@studiopr.com

Two Petaluma Health Care District Board Members Honored for Governance and Advocacy for Older Adults

Elece Hempel Wins Modern Governance 100 Distinction; Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Recognizes Crista Nelson for Senior Care and Advocacy

Petaluma, Calif. – December 14, 2020 – The [Petaluma Health Care District](#) (PHCD) Board President Elece Hempel and Vice President Crista Nelson have recently received significant honors for their work governing the board and championing senior care.

“How appropriate to see these two exceptional women honored at this time,” said PHCD CEO Ramona Faith. “Their tireless leadership and commitment to ensuring our residents have access to the services and programs they need to live healthy, safe lives is commendable. Both Elece and Crista foster and adhere to good governance practices, which played a critical role in the success of PHCD’s effort to secure the future of Petaluma Valley Hospital, resulting in an 85% voter approval to sell PVH to NorCal HealthConnect, an affiliate of Providence St. Joseph Health, guaranteeing local access to a community hospital for at least two more decades. I am extremely fortunate, as is our community, to be working with Elece and Crista, and very proud of the work and dedication of our entire board.”

Modern Governance 100 Recognition for Elece Hempel

Hempel was one of 100 Modern Governance 2020 honorees, a Diligent Corporation program intended to shine light on leaders across the nation who are helping their organizations thrive and who have “demonstrated resilience, dedication and empathy in the face of complex and challenging times, when good governance matters more than ever.”

“The Modern Governance 100 program reminds us that there is a very human side to governance,” said Diligent CEO Brian Stafford in announcing the awards last month in New York. “Every day, there are talented people working behind the scenes to ... navigate the complex realities of our world to make good governance decisions.”

Hempel has been PHCD’s board president, an elected volunteer position, since 2015. She has played a vital role in advancing the district’s investment in and management of community health programs and steering the board through the complex negotiations and sale of Petaluma Valley Hospital. 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.

Board of Supervisors Honor for Crista Nelson

On Nov. 17, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors honored Nelson with the Carroll L. Estes Older Adults Advocacy Award for 2020. The award recognizes a community champion who has

demonstrated exemplary advocacy and work in promoting or initiating programs and policies that benefit older adults. This is a significant recognition in this senior-heavy community.

The Supervisors' resolution bestowing the award referred to Nelson as "a fierce and extremely caring advocate" and noted, among much else, that during the Glass Fire, when she heard about the dire need of long term care facilities being evacuated with no place for residents to go, "at 3 o'clock in the morning she rushed to the shelters to help devise a plan with the facilities to best keep their vulnerable population safe. She kept at it for days until every resident had an alternative option."

In addition to her PHCD work, Nelson serves as executive director of the county's Senior Advocacy Services, whose programs — Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP), Elder Justice Initiative and Long Term Care Ombudsman — advance the rights and dignity of those facing health and aging challenges.

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 local access to comprehensive health and wellness services. PHCD has served the health and wellness needs of the community for more than 70 years and is a public agency managed by the community for the community. For more information, please visit www.phcd.org. Follow PHCD on [Facebook](#) and [@PHCDistrict](#) on Twitter.

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