



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

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PAJARO VALLEY HEALTH CARE DISTRICT BOARD ESTABLISHED

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday unanimously approved the inaugural five-member Board of the Pajaro Valley Health Care District (PVHCD).

The five members possess the experience, skills, and geographical and cultural diversity necessary to support the formation and operations of PVHCD (see www.pvhcd.org) and the future acquisition and operation of Watsonville Community Hospital as a premier, equitable and stable health provider in our community. The Board members are:

- John Friel, a former CEO of Watsonville Community Hospital (when it was publicly owned) who has overseen multiple California health care district hospitals. Aptos resident.
- Jasmine Nájera, a licensed clinical social worker with 20 years experience working for the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency. Watsonville resident.
- Dr. Katherine (Katie) Gabriel-Cox, OB/GYN Chief of Watsonville Community Hospital and with Salud Para La Gente. Aptos resident.
- Jose A. (Tony) Nuñez, managing editor of the Register-Pajaronian and Press-Banner newspapers. Watsonville resident.
- Marcus Pimentel, a fiscal expert and a Board member of Salud Para La Gente currently serving as Budget Manager for Santa Cruz County. Monterey County resident.

“As a former board member of Watsonville Community Hospital when it was a public hospital, I believe this diverse group has the experience needed to establish the Pajaro Valley Health Care District now and into the future,” said S. John Martinelli, chairman of S. Martinelli & Co. “I worked closely with John Friel during his time as hospital CEO, and I know he and the rest of the Board have the expertise needed to make this project a success for generations to come.”

“Our vision of a long-term, sustainable health care solution for the Pajaro Valley is in capable hands,” said Mimi Hall, a Board member of the Pajaro Valley Healthcare District Project. “The breadth of experience and community connections demonstrated by this Board will serve Pajaro Valley residents well.”

The PVHCD Board was made possible by SB 418 (Laird). All members will stand for public elections within the next 5 years. To make a donation to the project, visit www.pvhdp.org.