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Federal Grant Helps Senior and Disabled Patients Get Rides for Medical Care

OCEANSIDE, Calif. _ A partnership between Tri-City Medical Center; SANDAG; and FACT Inc., or Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation, a regional nonprofit serving seniors and disabled people; has resulted in a \$200,000 federal grant to provide lifts home and to follow up appointments to qualifying patients being discharged from the hospital.

The Federal Transit Administration awarded the \$200,000 grant for “Rides to Wellness,” a medical transportation initiative administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). SANDAG was the lead agency on the competitive grant application and Tri-City Medical Center agreed to provide a 20 percent match through in-kind contributions which was a condition of the grant application.

The North County initiative was one of 19 agencies awarded a “Rides to Wellness” grant nationally. Only two of the 19 grants were awarded in California.

“Ensuring ease of access to medical care is a priority. The ‘Rides to Wellness’ program and grant is an excellent option to help us serve our senior and disabled patients who have unique transportation needs and obstacles. We were very pleased to support the successful grant application with SANDAG and FACT and make medical care more accessible to this population,” explained Tri-City Medical Center CEO Steve Dietlin.

The grant will allow Tri-City Medical Center and FACT to pilot a new process for providing rides expeditiously for patients who are discharged from the hospital and for their follow up visits. The pilot project will launch during late 2016 and last 18 months. The objective of the grant is to improve patient outcomes, improve transportation availability and reduce the cost of transportation, as well as overall spending on healthcare by reducing hospital readmissions.

FACT operates RideFACT, a next-day, dial-a-ride service for people age 60 or above. The service connects all 18 cities within the county and is the only program with subsidized, low-cost fares for passengers traveling from their homes to distant locations for medical appointments and other vital services. RideFACT has expanded throughout the county since its launch in 2012 in Rancho Bernardo, Poway and Escondido.

FACT receives its funding from TransNet funds and the federal and state departments of transportation. One-way fares on RideFACT transportation begin at \$2.50 for travel up to five miles and are capped at \$10 for trips longer than 20 miles one-way.

To learn more, call (760) 754-1252 or visit www.factsd.org

About Tri-City Medical Center

Tri-City Medical Center has served its community for over 50 years and is a 397 bed full service, acute-care hospital in Oceanside, Calif. with a primary care clinic and over 700 physicians practicing in 60 specialties. Its Gold Seal of Approval® from the Joint Commission recognizes its commitment to safe and effective patient care for the residents of the community it serves. It operates the only Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in North County as well as an Orthopedic & Spine Institute, a Cardiovascular Health Institute and a Neuroscience Institute along with the Tri-City Wellness Center in Carlsbad, Calif., recognized as one of the best wellness centers in San Diego County. It also specializes in women's health, robotic surgery, cancer and emergency care. Tri-City Medical Center has received its sixth consecutive "A" rating from the national hospital safety scoring organization, The Leapfrog Group.

For more information about Tri-City Medical Center and Tri-City Healthcare District, please visit www.tricitymed.org.

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