June 26, 2012

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County Administration Building
1221 Oak Street
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Board Members;

SUBJECT: Approve the allocation of Tobacco Master Settlement Trust funds in the amount of $75,000 for the design and implementation of efforts to increase hospice and utilization in Alameda County

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Approve the allocation of Tobacco Master Settlement Trust funds in the amount of $75,000 for the design and implementation of efforts to increase hospice and end-of-life care utilization in Alameda County

DISCUSSION/FINDINGS:

Research shows that the onset of chronic disease occurs for many Americans between 50 and 60 years of age. Advanced care planning or end-of-life care involves myriad plans which result in an individual or family making decisions concerning preventive care, care giving, insurance, medical directives, power of attorney, physicians order for life sustaining treatment, etc. End of life planning should occur before a sudden illness, a serious illness or a terminal diagnosis occurs. Hospice is a service paid for by Medi-Cal, Medicare, private pay or charity provided at the final stages of a disease process when curative treatment ceases.

In 2009, the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency contracted with Comfort Homesake, Inc., a local nonprofit organization, with an established track record of providing and advocating for culturally competent care, to assist the County in its assessment of how it addresses end-of-life care. The scope of work in the study was to utilize demographic data, and to survey and interview HCSA indigent care network providers, hospice providers, the California HealthCare Foundation research, the Alameda County Medical Center and other resources to identify current and best practices for end-of-life care.
The resulting study provided the following recommendations regarding how HCSA and the County can improve its system of care to service populations who need palliative, hospice or end of life services:

- **Adopt policies and procedures that will establish palliative and hospice care as a part of Alameda County contracted service delivery.**
- **Establish a hospice facility with a palliative care and end-of-life information and training center.**
- **Expand partnerships through a social marketing campaign that involves faith-based organizations, advocates and community-based organizations.**
- **Leverage opportunities to generate a return on community assets that increase grant and formula funding, donations and volunteer resources for palliative and hospice care.**

In June 2011, findings and recommendations were presented to the Board of Supervisors Health Committee. Members of the Health Committee encouraged HCSA to continue exploring strategies to expand services. In December 2011 the Alameda County hospice project, called “Getting the Most Out of Life” (GML), began its work to increase hospice utilization with the following goals:

- **Develop outreach and communication tools:** brochures in English and Spanish, FAQ sheet, and a menu of hospice providers have been produced, with over 3000 packets distributed to-date.
- **Education about hospice utilization provided to Alameda County leaders, providers and citizens**
- **GML is collecting data, tracking trends and working with certified Alameda County hospice provider organizations to develop measurable results from Alameda County’s efforts to increase hospice utilization.** Participating organizations are: Angels Hospice, Asian Network, Crossroads Hospice, George Mark Children’s House, Hope Hospice, Hospice of the East Bay, Odyssey Hospice, Pathways Hospice, Pro Health Hospice, Sutter Hospice, and VITAS hospice.

To fund the ongoing research, public information and education, HCSA seeks approval of the allocation of $75,000 of Tobacco Master Settlement Funds.

**SELECTION CRITERIA:**

Not applicable

**FINANCING:**

Approval of this recommendation will have no impact on net county costs.

Sincerely,

Alex Briscoe, Director
Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

Cc: County Counsel
Auditor Controller
County Administrator