

ROOTED in COMMUNITY

2024 IMPACT REPORT



Salud Para La Gente

Working Together for a Healthy Community

HELLO FROM OUR CEO AND BOARD CHAIR



Donna Young, CEO

Dear Friends,

It is an honor to share **Salud Para La Gente's (Salud's)** achievements of the past year with you. As we look back, there are countless examples of outstanding patient care—stories of resilience, compassion, and lives we have touched.

Whether it was our Housing Navigators handing over the keys to their first client, students at our Fit and Healthy courses learning to cook, proud parents welcoming their new baby after a successful delivery, mammograms that saved lives, or a senior receiving their first pair of eyeglasses from our new Optometry clinic, **Salud** remained fiercely *rooted in community*.

No one summed up our hardworking staff and providers' dedication more clearly than **Theresa Merendon (she/her/ella)**, the Patient Access Manager at our Contact Center, who has been with **Salud** for over 31 years. When asked about building her career at **Salud**, Theresa said, "I am so proud to help because that [patient] could be my mom, it could be my tía." This is health equity at its finest.

Salud is committed to meeting people where they are, bringing care directly to those who need it most through clinics, mobile health services, and school-based programs that remove barriers to access. As the healthcare needs of our patients grow, so does our commitment. In 2024, we expanded services thoughtfully, in Optometry, Behavioral Health, and Specialty Care. Being "rooted in community" means learning from our patients and growing together. None of these achievements could have happened without you. Thank you for your partnership.

As you scroll through the stories that follow, we invite you to consider that nearly half of **Salud's** patients are younger than 25. What opportunities can we make possible so that their generation is happier and healthier? How can we navigate the challenges ahead to help them be more resilient and joyful? **Salud** is leading the way, and we look forward to continuing the journey with you, staying rooted in community.

With sincere gratitude,

Donna Young

Donna Young
CEO (she/her/hers)

Faris Sabbah

Faris Sabbah
Board Chair (he/him/his)

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*Advisory, not a board member, no voting rights.

WELCOME TO SALUD PARA LA GENTE

ABOUT US

Over 40 years ago, **Salud** began as a single free clinic offering healthcare primarily to farmworkers living and working on California's Central Coast. Since that time, **Salud** has grown to become a federally qualified health center (FQHC), providing affordable, high-quality healthcare to more than **27,000 patients**. **Salud** has 13 service sites, including seven clinic locations, three school-based health centers, and three mobile units.

Salud believes that health equity is the path to ensuring that all of our patients can lead a healthy, happy, and joyful life.

OUR ROOTS

Agricultural farm work nourishes our country, and yet, for decades, migrant farmworkers have endured unsafe working conditions, low wages, and limited access to education, community supports, and healthcare.

Salud recognizes that racism is a public health crisis plaguing our nation. We advocate for systems that promote justice and ensure access to comprehensive primary healthcare, safe housing, nutritious food, and academic opportunities.



WHO WE SERVE



Rooted in familismo, faith, and optimism, the community we serve is defined by hardworking and resilient people, including farmworkers and their families throughout **Santa Cruz and North Monterey Counties**.

BARRIERS TO HEALTH FOR SALUD'S PATIENTS

Economic instability: Extreme levels of poverty, immigration status (including undocumented), high unemployment and uninsured rates.

Barriers to Quality Education: In South Santa Cruz County, only 70% of people over 25 have a high school diploma or higher. Just 18% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Language access can also present education challenges (71% speak Spanish or a language other than English at home; 6–10% speak Indigenous languages such as Mixteco, an essentially spoken-only language unrelated to Spanish).

Lack of Health Insurance: While the Affordable Care Act (2010) substantially reduced the number of Americans without health insurance, health care costs are rising faster than wages, leaving many people unable to afford medical care. Lack of health insurance leads people to forgo preventive medical care, resulting not only in worse health outcomes but also in greater monetary costs. Limited access to transportation can also disrupt continuity of care.

Inadequate Work and Housing Conditions: Half of Salud's patients work in the fields where the work is inherently dangerous due to repetitive motions, working in extreme weather conditions and pesticide exposure. These challenges are exacerbated by social drivers such as inadequate housing conditions, food insecurity, and low wages. Our Indigenous community members face compounded difficulties due to language barriers, social isolation, and preventable racial health disparities.

Social and Community Context: Many patients contend with the stress of trying to support a family on a low income, fear of violence from a partner or boss, anxiety about immigration or relocating for farm work to another region or state. Language and cultural barriers make it difficult to seek support and services, and patients experience isolation in many forms, including separation from their other children and families across the border.



MISSION

To provide high quality comprehensive and cost-effective healthcare, responsive to the needs of the communities we serve.

VISION

To ensure quality healthcare to all in need.

VALUES

Service | Dignity | Equity

SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTH EQUITY

Salud has roots in the [Community Health Center movement](#), which began in the 1960s as a response to lack of health equity in poor and underserved communities. From the very beginning, our model of care has been grounded in health equity, the idea that *all* people, regardless of income, race, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation, disability, or socioeconomic status, deserve access to healthcare they need to thrive.

Many patients appear at the clinic with a specific or acute need, but there are a myriad of other factors that affect their health status. These factors are called [Social Drivers of Health](#). They include the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, as well as the systemic forces that shape daily life.

Health outcomes cannot improve until interventions shift “upstream” to address the root causes of health inequities.

BELOW

Left: Sigolène A. Ortega (she/her/ella, left), Director of Health Equity, pictured with Natasha Castro (she/her/hers), Education & Outreach Organizer at the California Work & Family Coalition. *Center:* Salud’s pronoun buttons. *Right:* Excerpt from Salud’s illustration for Spotlight on Health Equity.

Artist: Nevada Lane

HEALTH EQUITY IN ACTION

Salud successfully advocated for SB 951 alongside our partners at Watsonville Law Center, raising wage replacement rates on January 1, 2025, for Paid Family Leave (PFL) and State Disability Insurance (SDI) to up to 90% for low-income individuals taking time off for family health needs, medical conditions, or bonding with a new child.

Our Patient Advisory Council (PAC) provides monthly feedback on programs and Quality initiatives in order to improve care. The meetings are held in Spanish and the PAC has been invaluable in ensuring that our services are responsive to the needs of our community.

To improve language access for Mixteco speaking patients, **Salud** rolled out “video interpreting” within clinics. Staff have access to 3 Mixteco interpreters, improving the quality of care for Limited English Proficient (LEP) patients.

Salud Pride Campaign: In 2024, **Salud** developed a Pride Campaign highlighting our commitment to the LGBTQIA2S+ community by sharing resources to ensure that all staff and patients feel welcome. **Salud** is committed to cultivating an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and supported in accessing the care they need. We recognize that the LGBTQIA2S+ community, among others, has faced systemic barriers to healthcare. That is why we remain dedicated to ensuring equitable access, removing barriers, and promoting inclusive care for all.



2024 by the Numbers

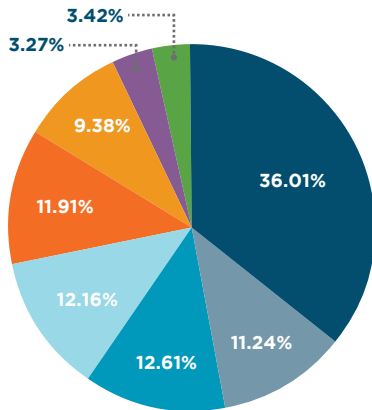
13 service sites
 7 clinic locations
 3 school-based health centers
 3 mobile units

182,186 total visits
 176,927 office visits
 5,259 school-based visits

27,480 patients

SALUD PATIENT PROFILE

Patient visits by type



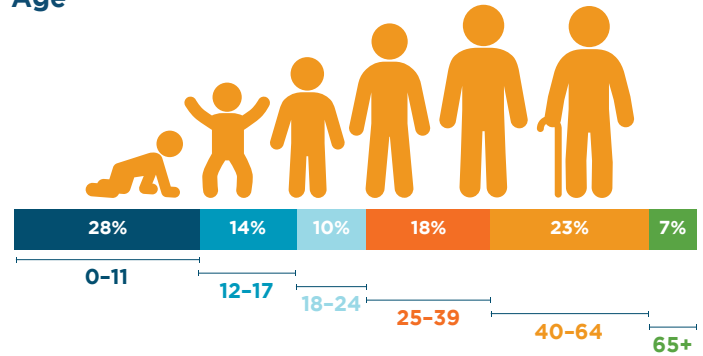
- Family Practice & RN visits
- Pediatric visits
- Dental visits
- Case Management visits
- Ob/Gyn visits (including 591 babies delivered)
- Wellness and Counseling visits
- Optometry visits
- Specialty Care visits (chiropractic, nephrology, psychiatry, and telehealth)

Race and Ethnicity



92% Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latine
4.84% White
2.48% unreported
0.53% Asian
0.16% Black/African American
0.03% Native Hawaiian
0.02% American Indian/Alaska Native

Age



Income Level



94% patients live below 200% of the federal poverty line
 In 2024, the FPL for a family of four was \$31,200

Housing



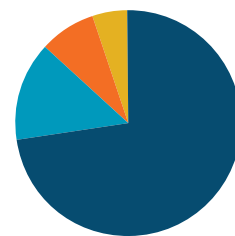
39% patients experienced homelessness

Language and Translations



71% patients best served in a language other than English

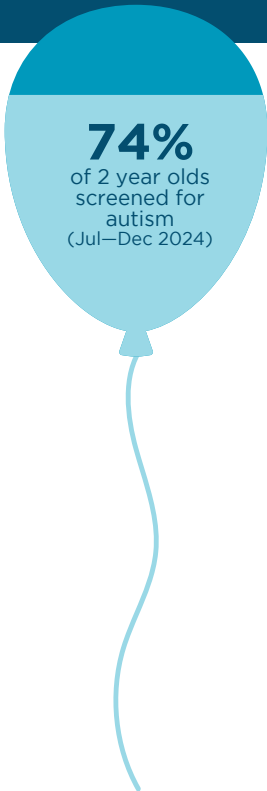
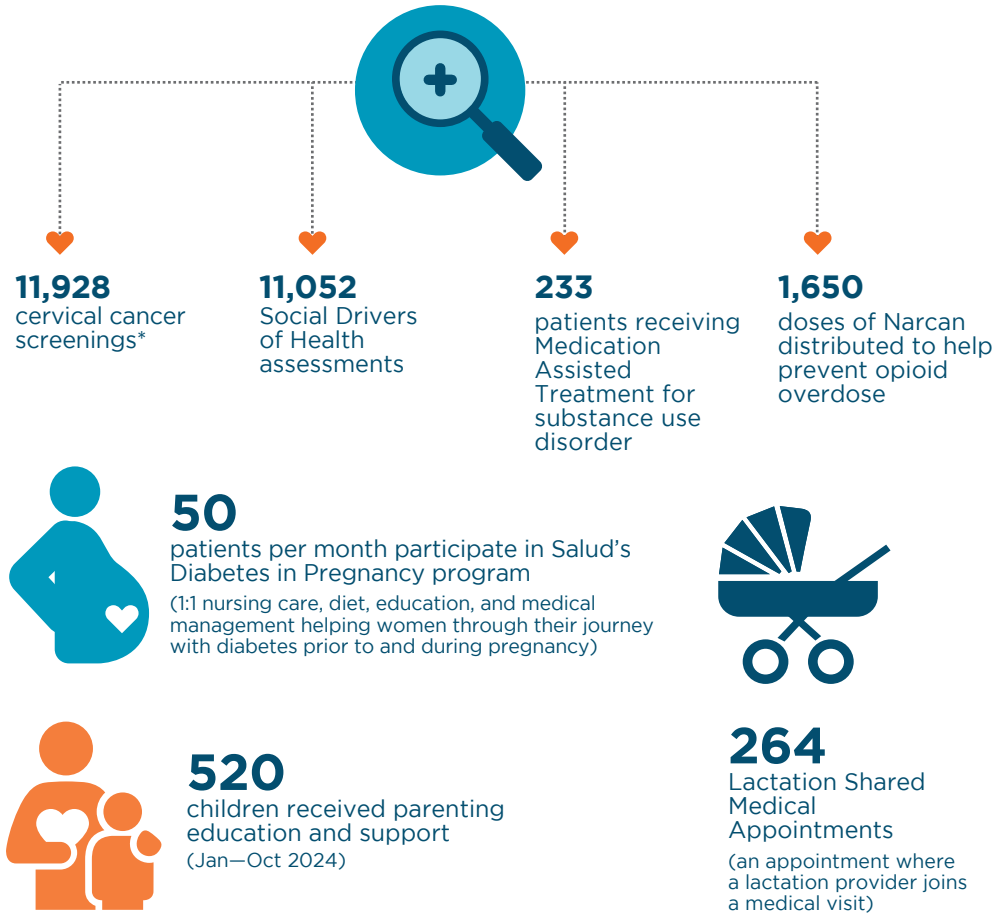
Payor Mix



- **73%** Medi-Cal
- **14%** Private Insurance
- **8%** None/Uninsured
- **5%** Medicare

2024 by the Numbers

PREVENTION SERVICES



450+

dedicated staff members provide bilingual (including access to indigenous language interpreters) and culturally competent care

**Hispanic women have higher rates of cervical cancer than non-Hispanic women, even though non-Hispanic women are more likely to have insurance coverage, which is associated with earlier diagnosis. Early screening for Salud's patient population is particularly critical and life-saving.*

EXPANDING CARE IN 2024

In order to provide even more comprehensive care to our community, Salud expanded services in Optometry, Behavioral Health, and Specialty Care.



As the only provider in South County that accepts Medi-Cal for optometry visits, "Salud at Valle Verde Optometry Clinic" opened to meet heightened demand and expanded Salud's physical capacity for optometry care by nearly 70%. The Valley Verde location also positions the department for future growth.



In order to better meet demand for in-person behavioral health appointments, Salud opened a new space at 150 Carnation Drive. Patients can now access behavioral health in a more therapeutic setting.



Specialty Care includes podiatry, chiropractic, nephrology, neurology, cardiology, and acupuncture. Many of these services were first made available in 2024.

BEYOND OUR CLINIC WALLS

A PATIENT STORY



“I became a physician because I wanted to provide care to those who needed it most. I feel humbled and honored to care for our patients and to work alongside so many hardworking and inspiring people at Salud.”

—Dr. Devon Francis
(she/her/hers),
Chief Medical Officer

A father brought his 8 year old son, Manny, into our clinic for a routine well-child visit. Everything seemed fine, but as the appointment wrapped up, Dr. Devon Francis noticed that Manny’s dad still had some papers in his hand—his son’s ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) screening. Hesitantly, he admitted that they needed help. The screenings came back positive; Manny’s parents had recently separated, leaving his dad struggling to care for Manny.

Dr. Francis discussed the impact of stress on health with Manny and his father, and suggested some “stress busters” like nutrition and exercise. Referrals were made to our Community Health Services for food and to Behavioral Health for counseling. At the follow-up, Manny was doing okay in school, and his dad was more relaxed, expressing gratitude for the support. **Salud’s** holistic approach helped Manny and his dad address negative social drivers of health, putting them on the path to resiliency, despite their challenges.



2024 AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

PARTNERSHIPS

- Eight medical school graduates began their post-graduate residency training at the **Morehouse School of Medicine** at Dominican Hospital [Family Medicine Residency](#), with rotations at **Salud**, Watsonville Community Hospital, and Santa Cruz Community Health Center.



QUALITY

- **Salud** was awarded the **Health Resources & Services Administration Addressing Social Risk Factors** badge for excellence in collecting data on patient social risk factors.
- **Cervical cancer screening rates** consistently hit **Salud's 80% target** for 7 quarters in a row!

ABOVE

Morehouse School of Medicine residents left to right: Stanislava Matejin, Daniel Bishop, Christopher Romo, Jyotan Sahni, Dara Lopes, Chrissa Karagiannis, Francisco Arrieta, Farah Tiab

Photo: Ian Chin Photography

RIGHT

Rachel Sandobal (she/her/ella) and Dr. Sung Sohn (she/her/hers) with Salud Board Chair, Faris Sabbah (he/him/his)

Photo: Kevin Painchaud

AWARDS

- **Rachel Sandobal** (she/her/hers), Dental Program Manager, and **Dr. Sung Sohn** (she/her/hers), Dental Director, received the **Oral Health Hero award** at the 2024 [Oral Health Summit](#). Awardees demonstrated outstanding personal commitment to improving oral health for low-income patients, a great recognition of **Salud's** continued push for access to senior dental care.
- **Salud** started and currently manages the OB hospitalist program at Watsonville Community Hospital. The hospital received two awards from the **California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative**: the Quality & Sustainability Award and the Superstar Awards.
- **Alicia Potes** (she/her/hers), Director of Adolescent and Young Adult Health, and **Esmeralda Aguilera** (she/her/ella), Director of Behavioral Health and Case Management, received a 2024 "PVUSD Heroes in Prevention" honorable mention award for addressing youth mental health and case management.





“Working with Salud patients fills my cup. When they walk out of any team member’s office knowing that everything is going to be ok...that makes me so proud.”

—Darlene Torres (she/her/ella), Director of Community Health Services

SALUD ON STAGE

- **Sigolène A. Ortega (she/her/ella)**, Director of Health Equity, co-presented a session called, “Interrogating Our Work: Perspectives on Social Drivers of Health and Disability,” at the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved in Washington, DC. Joined by David ‘Buddy’ Orange, former Senior VP of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the California Primary Care Association, the presentation elevated **Salud’s** efforts to inspire systemic change and eliminate health inequities in the Pajaro Valley.
- **Dr. Devon Francis (she/her/ella)**, Chief Medical Officer, addressed a press conference for the release of the annual [Santa Cruz County health rankings](#). Dr. Francis spoke about health equity, emphasizing how partnerships between South County Triage Group, California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative, Second Harvest Food Bank, Watsonville Community Hospital, and Pajaro Valley Unified School District help the community thrive.
- **Dr. Cristina Gamboa (she/her/ella)**, OB/Gyn, Director of Ambulatory Women’s Health, and **Adriana Melgoza (she/her/ella)**, Watsonville Law Center, presented a talk at the Agricultural Worker Health Conference in Atlanta, GA, called, “Improving Access to Health Care and Benefits for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers”.
- **Danielle Obinger (she/her/hers)**, Associate Director of Nursing, spoke about preventing overdose on a panel with the Santa Cruz County Office of Education at the “[Fentanyl High](#)” documentary screening.



ABOVE

Dr. Cristina Gamboa (she/her/ella), OB/GYN and Director of Ambulatory Women’s Health Services, speaks about maternal health at the [Aspen Ideas Festival](#).

Photo: The Aspen Institute

SHINING A LIGHT ON OUR PARTNERS

“The Wellness Center is a very important service for parents and students because it can provide social emotional services and medical, as well as picking up food.”

—Pajaro Valley Unified School District Parent

As part of the recovery efforts following the Pajaro floods of 2023, **Salud** teamed up with Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) to bring medical care closer to the community. These efforts include our school-based clinics at Pajaro Middle School, our Medical Mobile unit, and services at the PVUSD Wellness Center.

Our Medical Mobile unit brings services directly to patients and it travels between Casa de la Cultura in Pajaro and the PVUSD Wellness Center. The unit is fully equipped to provide everything from child physicals to addressing acute conditions like serious illness or injuries.

Our Community Health Services team works with the Wellness Center to connect patients to resources, enroll them in health insurance, and hold classes and activities for youth. For example, **Salud’s** “Fit and Healthy” class is a collaboration with Community Health Services, Parks Rx, and our pediatrics department where kids participate in nutrition education, cooking classes, and outdoor exercise to foster agency in establishing a healthy lifestyle.



“The Medical Mobile unit helps us remove barriers to care, whether that’s transportation or language. It’s been 2 years since the floods, and Salud stands out to people because of the medical services we provided during that time.”

—Leticia Salazar (she/her/ella), Physician Assistant (pictured right) with Norma Sanchez (she/her/ella), MA

Photo: Kaiser Permanente

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance Sheet

Assets

Current Assets	23,956,623
Long Term Receivables	377,999
Property & Equipment, Net	6,769,876
Other Assets	4,528,438
Total Assets	\$35,632,936

Liabilities

Current Liabilities	6,232,052
Long-Term Debt	1,614,630
Other Liabilities	3,730,529
Total Liabilities	\$11,577,211

Net Assets

Unrestricted	22,858,050
Temporarily Restricted	1,197,675
Total Net Assets	\$24,055,725

Statement of Operations



■ Net Patient Service Revenues	48,450,619
■ Grants and Contributions Revenue	8,464,345
■ Other Income	1,436,972
Total Revenues	\$58,351,936



■ Healthcare Services	52,185,677
■ General & Administrative	7,911,554
Total Expenses	60,097,231
Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets*	(\$1,745,295)

Source: Audited Financial Statements 6/30/24
 *The loss in 2024 is attributable to amounts typically received annually and budgeted, but were not received in 2024, due to reasons beyond Salud's control. This is an anomaly, and we do anticipate this funding will be received in our current fiscal year.

BELOW

Contact Center team (left to right): Daniela Pavon-Avalos, Jessica Ramirez, Valeria Pavon-Avalos, Marilyn Villalobos, Monica Valtierra, Wendy Quintero, Theresa Merendon, Adalia Ramirez, Valerie Herrera, Claudia Ramos-Morales, Lizbeth Gonzalez-Barrera, Stephanie Rosales, Leslie Rivera-Serrano, Emily Fernandez, Belen Vargas-Abarca, Aleishai Casanova

Photo: Kevin Painchaud



GRATITUDE FOR OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Salud Para La Gente is grateful to every funder, supporter, and community partner who share our commitment to health equity.

FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

Asian Pacific Fund A
Community Foundation
Barbara Bannan, MD
Mariela Barba
Anna Bohbot
Matthew Brennan
Bright Horizon Fund
Scotty Brookie
California Department of
Health Care Access and
Information
California Department of
Health Care Services
California Health Care
Foundation
Central California
Alliance for Health
Jeffrey Cherniss
Bud Colligan
Community Foundation
for Monterey County
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Gloria De Ocampo
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Ashlee Tatum
Nancy Trevino
Rita Tuzon
University of California
Santa Cruz
Voucher Ventures
Grace Voss
Sara Wainer
Esther Walker
Jon Walsh
Emily Wood
Sarah Yorba

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Cabrillo College
California State University
Monterey Bay
California WIC (Women,
Infants and Children)
Association
California Work & Family
Coalition
Campesina Womb Justice
Carrington College
Casa de la Cultura
Center for Employment
Training
Center for Farm Worker
Families
Central Coast College
CoGenerate
Community Action Board
of Santa Cruz County, Inc.
Community Bridges
Community Health Trust
of Pajaro Valley
Congressman Jimmy
Panetta
Congresswoman Zoe
Lofgren
County of Monterey
County of Santa Cruz
Dientes Community
Dental Care
Dignity Health—
Dominican Hospital

Dominican University of
California
Duncan Hulbert
Eat for the Earth
El Pajaro Community
Development Corporation
Encompass Community
Services
Families in Transition
Family Services Agency
First 5 Santa Cruz County
Georgetown University
Go Kids
Hartnell College
Health Improvement
Partnership of Santa Cruz
County
HealthySteps
Hope's Closet
Institute for Business &
Technology
Kaiser Permanente
Monarch Services—
Servicios Monarca
Monsbey College
NAMI Santa Cruz
County
Pajaro Valley
Collaborative
Pajaro Valley Prevention
and Student Assistance
Pajaro Valley Unified
School District (PVUSD)
Parks RX
Pesticide Epidemiology
Section, California
Environmental Protection
Agency
Positive Discipline
Community Resources
PVUSD—Family
Engagement Team
PVUSD Migrant &
Seasonal Head Start
Program
Raices y Carinos
San Jose State University
Santa Cruz Community
Health Centers

Santa Cruz County
Breastfeeding Coalition
Santa Cruz County Farm
Bureau
Santa Cruz County
Homeless Action
Partnership
Santa Cruz County Office
of Education
Second Harvest Food
Bank Santa Cruz County
SEIU Local 521
Senator John Laird
Shine a Light Counseling
Center
SPIN
Stanford University
School of Medicine
Sutter Maternity and
Surgery Center
Touro University
United Way of Monterey
County
University of California,
San Diego
University of California,
San Francisco; School of
Medicine, School of
Pharmacy; School of
Nursing; and School of
Dentistry
University of California,
Santa Cruz
University of Cincinnati
College of Nursing
Vanderbilt University
Ventures
Watsonville Community
Hospital
Watsonville Law Center
Western Governors
University

LEFT TO RIGHT

Margarita Marines-Pantzlouff (she/her/hers), RN,
BSN, Jeannette Corral (she/her/hers), CMA, and
Elizabeth Rivera (she/her/hers), CMA

Photo: Kevin Painchaud





JOIN US to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality healthcare!

Scan the QR code to make a donation via Paypal.

Or by mail, please make checks payable to Salud Para La Gente and send to:

Salud Para La Gente
P.O. Box 1870
Watsonville, CA 95077-1870

VISIT US: www.splg.org

Above and cover photography (patient and provider) by Kevin Painchaud