

END-OF-LIFE CARE

Hospice plans South County expansion

New center expected to open in early March at Watsonville Community Hospital

By **DONNA JONES**

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WATSONVILLE Hospice of Santa Cruz County plans to open a center in Watsonville in early March, and is seeking funding to offset costs.

The expansion aims to meet the need for end-of-life care in South County, home to nearly a third of the Scotts Valley-based nonprofit's patients.

The center, located on the campus of Watsonville Community Hospital, will serve as a base for a team of nurses, physicians, social workers, hospice aides, chaplains, clinical team leaders and volunteers to provide in-home and facility-based care. Grief support services for adults, teens and children also will be offered, as well as transitional care for those not ready or eligible for hospice care.

Michael Milward, chief executive officer, said the expansion is "a natural progression of our growing services. It provides an opportunity to be more visibly present in our community and to really be neighbors with those we serve."

Pajaro Valley resident Diane Porter Cooley said though Hospice has been serving South County residents, having the organization be more part of the community is important during a "very tenuous time of life."

"To feel the support of your friends, relatives and community is the last sus-



A team of nurses, physicians, social workers, hospice aides, chaplains, clinical team leaders and volunteers will be based at the new Watsonville office of Hospice of Santa Cruz County to provide in-home and facility-based care and grief support.

CONTRIBUTED

AT A GLANCE

HOW TO HELP

WHAT: Hospice of Santa Cruz County plans expansion to serve South County patients and their families.

WHERE: Campus of Watsonville Community Hospital, 75 Nielson St., Watsonville

WHEN: Early March

COST: \$600,000

DONATIONS: To donate, visit www.hospicesantacruz.org or call 831-430-3033

ongoing with naming opportunities available.

Cathy Conway, director of community services, said the center is ready to go as soon as the nonprofit receives the final approval from federal and state officials, who oversee end-of-life care.

Since its founding in 1978, Hospice has cared for more than 14,000 people facing serious illness and their families.

taining thing we have and that we can offer, and we should offer it everyone

equally," she said.

The center will cost \$600,000, and fundraising is

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