

News Release Sample



SFCHC SWITCHES ON SOLAR POWER IN HONOR OF NATIONAL HEALTH CENTER WEEK

(San Fernando, Calif. – August 8, 2024) – San Fernando Community Health Center (SFCHC) today joined with local elected leaders and community partners to inaugurate its new solar panel project in celebration of National Health Center Week Stakeholder Appreciation Day. The theme of this year’s national campaign is “Powering Communities Through Caring Connections,” focusing on the essential role community health centers play in improving public health and advancing health equity. The event included remarks, a ceremonial switch-on of the solar power system and facility tours.

The 247-panel, \$298,000 solar installation will support the clinic’s mission to provide comprehensive, compassionate healthcare to the most vulnerable and underserved, while reducing its carbon footprint and promoting sustainable practices. With an estimated annual production of 169,100 kilowatt-hours, the solar installation will provide 60% of the clinic’s energy and eliminate 130 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually. This is the equivalent of 302,000 vehicle miles driven and the carbon sequestered by 138 acres of forest every year.

SFCHC CEO Audrey Simons expressed enthusiasm about the project, stating, “San Fernando Community Health Center is delighted to switch on solar power during National Health Center Week alongside our valued community, government and industry partners. As a federally qualified health center, we hold a special responsibility to protect the planet we all share. Improving the health of our community and preserving the environment are intrinsically linked.”

The solar project was developed and financed by Collective Energy Co. at no upfront cost to the center through an energy services agreement (ESA). This funding solution enables Collective Energy Co. to claim the tax rebate and depreciation benefits of the solar system and SFCHC to receive power at a fixed, low rate. The center will own the system after a 15-year term. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, this project was eligible for a 50% tax credit, making the project much more affordable to the health center.

“Collective Energy understands that health centers are busy taking care of their patients and don’t always have the time or spare resources to dedicate to managing or financing these critical clean energy projects,” said Andrew MacCalla, the company’s co-founder and CEO. “We were founded to make it

easier for health centers like San Fernando to make this important decision to transition to cleaner and more reliable power, which will benefit their patients, their community and our planet for decades to come.”

Solar projects can help community health centers and other non-profit organizations lower their utility costs, advance environmental sustainability and have the option to install battery storage for back-up power during outage emergencies. However, few have the capacity or budget to pursue solar benefits on their own. The solar project was made possible by SFCHC’s close partnership with the City of San Fernando, which owns the building that houses the center and provided swift approval for work to commence.

“Powering the San Fernando Community Health Center with solar energy marks a key step in our commitment to environmental justice,” said City of San Fernando Mayor Celeste Rodriguez. “We’re proud to partner with SFCHC on our city’s first-ever solar panel project at a city facility, as we make progress toward a sustainable future. This is the first of many efforts of our Climate Action and Resilience Planning and we will continue building a greener, more equitable community now and for the next generation.”

Additionally, the solar panels were mounted by GRID Alternatives, a non-profit solar installer that provides workforce training opportunities in disadvantaged communities. During project work, community members preparing for jobs in the clean energy sector received hands-on training and installation experience. A [2022 National Solar Jobs Census](#) shows the U.S. solar industry employs over 260,000 people, creating a pathway out of poverty for thousands of workers who might otherwise experience barriers to entry.

“We are proud to be a part of this collaboration to bring an impactful solar and storage project to the San Fernando Community Health Center,” said Alex Turek, deputy director at GRID Alternatives Greater Los Angeles. “This marks GRID’s fifth resilience center project in L.A. County, furthering our mission to help provide safe refuge for our communities in the face of the very real impacts of climate change.”

The SFCHC project also was made possible by the technical assistance provider American Microgrid Solutions, and support from The Kresge Foundation and Capital Link. The Kresge Foundation supports the Community Health Access to Resilient Green Energy (CHARGE) partnership, which helps federally qualified health centers transition to clean, affordable and reliable energy. The partnership is a collaboration between the National Association of Community Health Centers, Capital Link and Collective Energy.

“We need to urgently work at the intersection of health equity, environmental justice, and financial and operational resiliency,” said Joe Evans, Kresge social investment officer. “The CHARGE partnership provides energy options for health centers supporting communities most impacted by poverty and racial and ethnic health inequities and those disproportionately burdened by chronic disease, and most vulnerable to grid outages. CHARGE offers education, assessment, design, installation and financing

options to help health centers operate during grid outages, reduce their carbon footprint, generate energy savings and act amidst climate change.”

VIDEO LINK

[Click here](#) to view a four-minute video describing how the SFCHC clean energy project became a reality, how health centers can be leaders in the clean energy transition and why these projects can mean so much to the community.

MEDIA CONTACT

Stacy Geere, 661.253.1059 or stacy@thegeeregroup.com

About San Fernando Community Health Center (SFCHC)

Serving patients throughout the San Fernando Valley, SFCHC has been a trusted, patient-centered healthcare home for the community since 1924. Its designation as a federally qualified health center allows it to provide state-of-the art health care services, prevention and education regardless of income, insurance status or ability to pay. For more information, visit <http://www.sfhealthcenter.org/>