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INAUGURAL SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Senator Kamala Harris Joins Elected Officials and Key Stakeholders from Throughout the San Joaquin Valley to Focus on Issues of Jobs, Education, Health Care and the Economy

STOCKTON – Today, the Office of Mayor Michael Tubbs and The Center at Sierra Health Foundation co-hosted the inaugural San Joaquin Valley Leadership Conference in Stockton, bringing together community leaders and residents to identify policy opportunities to improve health, economic, educational, public safety and other quality of life outcomes for communities throughout the Valley. Conference participants also learned about a leadership committee that will be composed of elected officials who will use the policies discussed to advocate on behalf of valley residents. U.S. Senator Kamala Harris gave the keynote address.

Spanning nine counties from Stockton to Bakersfield, California's San Joaquin Valley is often overlooked by state policymakers. Although the San Joaquin Valley has abundant resources, strong leadership and great opportunities for many of its residents, it also has unique and interconnected challenges. These include access to educational opportunities; lack of accessible, affordable, and nutritious food; unhealthy living environments due to air pollution, unsafe drinking water and pesticide exposure; land use challenges such as a lack of parks, affordable housing and accessible transportation; and ongoing community safety concerns. These pressing problems call for collaborative solutions and a coming together of both community and elected leaders to help spur a unified agenda for all San Joaquin Valley residents.

"All of us—residents, community leaders, elected officials and funders—must work together to address the inequities in the San Joaquin Valley," said Chet P. Hewitt, President and CEO, The Center at Sierra Health Foundation. "As part of our ongoing partnership with Valley communities and funders, we are excited to host this important day with our Senator, Kamala Harris, and other community leaders to identify strategies that will help make California a golden state for all."

"In the Valley we are coming together regardless of our politics for the greater good of the region," said Michael Tubbs, Mayor of Stockton. "This is an historic moment as we build a common agenda to address critical issues of water, health, economics and education. The future of California lies in the future of the Valley and the success of the San Joaquin Valley equals the success of California."

Data from two research reports conducted by the UC Davis Center for Regional Change commissioned by the [San Joaquin Valley Health Fund](#) was used in the development of the policy platform: "[San Joaquin Valley: A Region and Its Children Under Stress](#)," funded by Sierra Health Foundation and W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and "[Kern County: Geography of Inequity and Opportunities for Action](#)," funded by Sierra Health Foundation and The California. The Center at Sierra Health Foundation manages the [San Joaquin Valley Health Fund](#), which receives funding from nine national and state foundations including Sierra Health Foundation, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, Rosenberg Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Blue Shield of California Foundation, Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, Dignity Health and Tides. The Fund works to strengthen the capacity of communities and organizations in the San Joaquin Valley to improve health and well-being by advancing programs and policy changes that promote community health and health and racial equity for all.

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