

## For Immediate Release

### **Ritter Center Announces Plans for New Health Center in San Rafael** ***\$14.5 million project will transform existing building into new health center***

**SAN RAFAEL, April 11, 2023**– Ritter Center, a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center, announced plans to transform an existing office building in Downtown San Rafael into a new health center of excellence. This will enhance its housing, healthcare, food pantry, safety net, and client services through expanded programs like pediatrics and supportive employment, capacity to serve more individuals, and healthcare equity for marginalized people.

“Housing, healthcare, and food security are human rights; no one should have to choose between paying rent and buying food,” said Mark Shotwell, Ritter Center’s CEO. “Yet, Marin has seen a 35.2% increase in family homelessness and a 10.5% increase in chronic homelessness since 2019. We *must* build for the future with the entire community in mind.”

As a partner of Marin County, Ritter Center administered over 40,000 COVID vaccines during the pandemic and provides diverse wraparound services to those living on the streets, in their cars, and struggling with economic insecurity. Ritter Center has programs that help prepare children for school with backpacks and school supplies, ensures seniors who can’t afford nutritious food on their fixed income don’t go hungry, and people in-need have extra resources and gifts for their children around the holidays.

Marin Community Foundation contributed \$1 million to Ritter Center’s future home. This gift illustrates their dedication to resolving and preventing homelessness in Marin, along with the many years it has helped support Ritter Center’s growth and impact.

“The vulnerable in our community should be treated with dignity and our nonprofits should benefit from modern, warm, and professional spaces in which to work. Ritter Center’s new headquarters will achieve both of these.

Our decision to support them in acquiring and renovating the location was not a difficult one. Ritter Center is a critical partner in our county and will soon be able to enjoy the surroundings it deserves,” said Marin Community Foundation President and CEO Rhea Suh.

Currently, due to limited space, many services are provided in trailers. Clients must often wait outside in the rain or bright sun and heat, and staff members are divided by two offices over two miles apart. There is no parking.

Working with INDE Architecture and GMH Builders, Ritter Center has created a vision for generations to come. The health center will have 6 exam rooms, new medical equipment, dedicated individual and group therapy rooms, comfortable waiting areas for clients, and off-street parking. The food pantry, currently serving over 1,800 households and individuals experiencing homelessness, will double in size. With a dedicated meditation and lactation room, clients and staff will have a space to self-regulate and observe spiritual or religious customs. Staff can privately employ positive skills such as meditation to cope with workplace stress and secondary trauma from client-facing work. New mothers can breastfeed with privacy.

Adding to its conveniences for clients, the new health center will be more accessible. The 2nd Street area is a major transportation corridor and in close proximity to St. Vincent de Paul. With all staff on one campus, team members can collaborate and guide clients seamlessly from one department to another to meet more of their needs in one visit. This will better support social determinants of health and positive outcomes in our communities.

The total project cost of \$14.5M includes the \$6.6M building purchase. Renovation will begin in early summer 2023 and is slated for completion in mid-2024.

To learn more about the project, contact Jessica Hansen, Chief Development Officer, at (415) 730-4268 or [jhansen@rittercenter.org](mailto:jhansen@rittercenter.org)

For visuals of the future health center, [visit](#).

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## Ritter Center

Ritter Center's mission is to prevent and resolve homelessness and improve the health, dignity and well-being of people living in poverty in Marin County by providing high-quality, culturally sensitive, easily accessible medical care and social services. People in need can visit Ritter Center and receive high-quality medical and behavioral health care regardless of their ability to pay. Its highly trained team combines national clinical best practices with a whole-person care approach to solving each person's health, food, and housing needs. With over 40 years of experience, Ritter Center has built industry-leading knowledge and collaborative partnerships with County agencies, health partners, and like-minded organizations to help people overcome barriers to aid and create complete support solutions that sustainably improve people's lives.