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Con Alma Health Foundation Receives Grant to Improve Health National Grant to Increase Access to Healthy Food, Create Healthier Communities

(Santa Fe) - Con Alma Health Foundation is one of 13 foundations in the country to receive a national Convergence Partnership Innovation Fund grant that will increase access to healthy food and improve community health through policies and environmental changes in communities. Examples include supporting farmers markets, improving parks and making neighborhoods safe for walking and biking.

The three-year \$150,000 grant will further Con Alma's goals to improve health by partnering with organizations and supporting local efforts that will create lasting change in New Mexico. Promoting health equity - ensuring everyone has an equal chance at being healthy - is one of Con Alma's priorities.

"This grant is a perfect fit for our organization because everything we do looks at creating systemic change, preserving our state's cultural and spiritual traditions and partnering with organizations to make New Mexico a healthier place," said Dolores E. Roybal, Con Alma's executive director. "This project involves multiple partners who will help us advance health equity in low-income and rural communities."

Strategies will include:

- Award mini-grants to community-based nonprofits to support innovative strategies that will improve community health through food systems, policies and built environments, such as safe walking paths
- Support locally grown and culturally significant foods
- Increase support for preserving agricultural traditions
- Encourage elders and indigenous people to share cultural and traditional practices with children and families

The Convergence Partnership is a collaboration of eight of the nation's leading funders and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Con Alma's grant is part of \$1.85 million the partnership is spending to support building healthier, more equitable communities. The Innovation Fund grant requires a foundation match of \$2 for every \$1 awarded.

Con Alma will invest \$145,000 and other New Mexico foundations will provide \$155,000 to match the grant for a total of \$450,000 for the three-year project. Those organizations are McCune Foundation, New Mexico Community Foundation, Notah Begay III Foundation, PNM Resources Foundation, Santa Fe Community Foundation and the Simon Charitable Foundation.

Con Alma will establish an advisory council and steering committee to identify and support

specific opportunities that improve access to food and enhance built environments. That could involve zoning changes to make neighborhoods safe for outdoor recreation and policy changes that make it easier for people to get healthy food. Partners include the Santa Fe-based nonprofit, Farm to Table, which will help coordinate the advisory council and implement project goals.

Con Alma Health Foundations has pulled together an amazing team of New Mexico foundations and community partners to focus on systemic health change in New Mexico, said Pam Roy, executive director of Farm to Table.

"As a partner organization in this initiative, Farm to Table works with communities in some of the most isolated areas of the state who are ready to work together on policy and environmental change," Roy said. "They are looking for innovative approaches to create healthier food options in their communities, strengthen their built environment, and unite their voices for policy change."

Con Alma Health Foundation seeks to improve people's health status and access to health care services, and advocates for health policies to address the unmet health needs of New Mexico's culturally and demographically diverse population. Con Alma supports and partners with organizations to improve health in New Mexico. Visit www.conalma.org.

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