



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

NEWS RELEASE



Date: April 25, 2025

Contact: Jason Hoppin

Jason.Hoppin@santacruzcountyca.gov

HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTOR TO DEPART

Santa Cruz County Health Services Director Mónica Morales has announced she is leaving County services to pursue opportunities elsewhere. Her last day will be June 3.

A native of Watsonville, Morales has accomplished much since returning to Santa Cruz County in 2021. She helped lead the drive to save Watsonville Community Hospital; expanded mental health services through the construction of the Children's Crisis Stabilization Center, establishment of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Consortium and launch of 24/7 mobile crisis response teams; and centered equity in the delivery of health and behavioral health services countywide.

"Returning to my hometown over the past three-and-a-half years to help improve health outcomes for all County residents has been an immensely rewarding experience," Morales said. "I've decided to pursue new opportunities in order to be closer to my family. I will always cherish my time here and the partnerships we helped build."

"Mónica is a powerful health care advocate and helped oversee crucial improvements to our system of care benefitting all County residents," Santa Cruz County Chief Executive Officer Carlos Palacios said. "We will miss her greatly."

Morales will remain with the County through Health Services' scheduled budget hearing before the Board of Supervisors in early June. The County will launch a national search for a new director and is expected to name an acting director soon.

The Health Services Agency serves as a community safety net by providing a broad spectrum of services that address and promote health and equity, including meeting basic needs of health care for low-income and uninsured residents.