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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: **TEMECULA TO FORM A "REGIONAL CANCER TREATMENT TASK FORCE" WITH A GOAL TO ATTRACT SPECIALIZED CANCER TREATMENT OPTIONS AND MEDICAL RESOURCES TO THE REGION**

TEMECULA, CA - Earlier today, City of Temecula Mayor Mike Naggar and Mayor Pro-Tem Maryann Edwards, both Members of the City of Temecula Human Services Committee, hosted a "Regional Cancer Treatment Resources" roundtable meeting. In attendance with Mayor Naggar and Mayor Pro-Tem Edwards was the City Manager of Temecula, and City Managers for surrounding municipalities including the Cities of Lake Elsinore, Menifee, and Murrieta. Also present was Riverside County Supervisor Chuck Washington and his Chief of Staff as well as Riverside County Public Health, Temecula Valley Hospital, UCR Medical School, local doctors, medical students, EDC of Southwest California, and nonprofit organizations that provide cancer resources including The American Cancer Society and Michelle's Place.

Epidemiologist Salomeh Wagaw, of Riverside University Health System–Public Health, presented various statistics to the group which indicated that southwest Riverside County has been driving the County's recent population growth, which is now over 2.3 million strong. Salomeh Wagaw also illustrated that cancer is the 2nd highest leading cause of death in the State and, more specifically, 18% of deaths in Temecula are cancer-related. Sentiment by the group unanimously confirmed that there is a severe deficiency in specialized cancer-related medical services including screening, treatment and resources for cancer patients in the region.

Mayor Mike Naggar stated, "Today's meeting opened the discussion with our medical community and experts, as well as the County of Riverside and neighboring Cities, to determine how we can bring more specialized cancer-related medical services to our region and, as a result of our discussions, we will be establishing a Regional Cancer Treatment Task Force to address this important topic."

Mayor Pro-Tem Maryann Edwards concurred, "Our Valley has grown tremendously, yet residents who are faced with such a challenging disease are often faced with driving several hours roundtrip to Orange County or San Diego to receive ongoing specialized cancer treatment." Mayor Pro-Tem Edwards added, "We need to ease the burden of those suffering from cancer and bring more cancer treatments and resource options closer to home."

The Regional Cancer Treatment Task Force will comprise of a core group of individuals and organizations including those present today, County and City elected officials, medical and health organizations, and related professionals with expertise on the topic of cancer screening, services and resources. The Task Force will carefully identify the various types of high-quality cancer services that are lacking in the area, and ultimately develop a plan to attract specialized oncologists, physicians and, ideally, a state-of-the-art cancer facility to the region. The group discussed a multi-faceted approach with that would address topics over the course of 7-10 meetings ranging from legislative and healthcare/insurance concerns, facilities/services and pharmaceutical needs, and economic incentives that may attract medical groups, cancer professionals, physicians and philanthropy to invest in the region.

Riverside County Supervisor Chuck Washington concluded, "I'm pleased with what we accomplished today and look forward to formalizing a Regional Cancer Treatment Task Force to address these concerns together with my colleagues at the County, City officials, regional partners, and medical experts."

If you are interested in learning more about this Regional Cancer Treatment Task Force, or attending future meetings, contact the Temecula City Manager's Office at 951-506-5100 or Council.Assistant@CityofTemecula.org.

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