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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 24, 2018****Community Bridges opposes public charge regulation**

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, Calif. — Following release of the draft public charge regulation on Saturday by the Department of Homeland Security, local nonprofit Community Bridges has issued a [statement](#) urging local community members to contact their congressional representatives to oppose the passage of the proposed regulations. As the leading human services nonprofit in Santa Cruz County, the agency has also reiterated its commitment to serve all Santa Cruz County residents regardless of immigration status.

The draft regulation broadens the parameters under which an individual can be defined as a “public charge,” giving US Citizenship and Immigration Services more power to deny those who seek to become a part of the nation based on how likely they are to use public benefits.

“We must not let policies that seek to limit access to food and medical care be used as weapons in a debate about immigration. The proposed regulation would only serve to punish tax paying, working parents who are doing what every American parent would do to ensure their children are healthy, fed and safe,” said Raymon Cancino, chief executive officer of Community Bridges. “No person should have to choose between food, shelter, or emergency healthcare or their path to citizenship.”

Community Bridges urges its partners and community to stand up to protect families and individuals impacted by the proposed policy change, and to advocate for all people who stand to be disenfranchised by the regulations.

Cancino’s full statement can be found on the Community Bridges website [here](#).

ABOUT COMMUNITY BRIDGES:

Community Bridges envisions a thriving community where every person has the opportunity to unleash their full potential. The Community Bridges family of ten programs delivers essential services, provides equitable access to resources, and advocates for health and dignity across every stage of life. These programs include Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County; Elderday Adult Day Health Care; Lift Line; Child Development Division; Child & Adult Care Food Program; Women, Infants and Children (WIC); La Manzana Community Resources; Live Oak Community Resources; Nueva Vista Community Resources; and Mountain Community Resources. To learn more, please visit communitybridges.org.