

HEALTH CARE TEAM

Team Leader/Issue Contact: Laura Niznik Williams, UC Davis Health System,
(916) 276-9078, lniznik@ucdavis.edu

SACRAMENTO'S HEALTH CARE LEADERS COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH

Requested Action:

- Use the successful models of care established by innovative programs working together throughout the Sacramento region to improve public health in other communities across the country.
- Where possible, improve funding and support for such programs to grow them to scale and to leverage existing funding and efforts to improve health and well-being in the Sacramento region.

Background:

The health care sector is a major employer and community partner in the Sacramento metropolitan region. With several not-for-profit health systems, 24 major and several smaller hospitals, affiliated health plans, other providers across the spectrum of care, a growing bio-science industry cluster, and local community-based organizations, the region's health care sector has played a significant role in improving the overall health of the community for decades.

The presence of multiple, well-established not-for-profit entities in the Sacramento region allows for unique collaborative partnerships and shared solutions to reducing community-wide health disparities, with multiple projects initiated, funded and sustained by Dignity Health, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health, Valley Area, and UC Davis Health System. These local health systems have a longstanding tradition of joining forces and pooling resources to address the medical, mental health and social service needs of special populations in the Greater Sacramento Region.

Economic Impact on the Region

Hospitals and other medical establishments in the greater Sacramento area provide a wide variety of employment opportunities. The wages and salaries for these health care professionals are 70 percent higher than the average for California. Hospital and health care spending also generates jobs for less skilled workers. In addition, hospitals generate close to \$12 billion in spending annually (Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, El Dorado, Yuba and Sutter Counties).

For additional information, please contact Chris Worden, Vice President of Public Policy

cworden@metrochamber.org | (916) 321-9115

www.metrochamber.org

Physicians are also vital to the health and economic wellbeing of the region and are substantial contributors to the state and federal tax base. According to a 2009 report, California office-based physicians created a total of \$137.5 billion in revenue, supported 458,397 jobs, and contributed \$106.3 billion in wages and benefits for employees.

Working Together to Improve Care Inside and Outside the Hospital Setting

Good health is not dependent on medical care in hospitals and clinics alone. That's why local health systems are joined by other prominent local health organizations in investing in community-based organizations throughout the region that provide direct services and social supports to people in need. From tackling human trafficking issues to addressing homelessness, from providing asthma education and outreach to ensuring access to healthy foods, together the health systems support more than 500 local organizations annually.

Combined, Dignity Health, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health, Valley Area, and UC Davis Health System reinvest close to \$1.5 billion of community benefit in services for the uninsured and underserved in the communities they serve, including charity care and unreimbursed medical costs from Medicare and Medicaid. California's Medicaid program, Medi-Cal, reimburses providers well below cost reimbursing hospitals - about \$.68 per \$1 of cost (not charges). Even with one in every three Californians and 50% of children on Medi-Cal, California's Medi-Cal reimbursement rates rank 49th in the nation. This continued underfunding impacts the overall health delivery system and creates cost shifts to businesses through higher commercial insurance rates. In addition to the unreimbursed costs for medical care, these four local health systems underwrite more than \$200 million in annual support for medical research, community education, and direct program services.

Among the many successful programs launched and sustained throughout the Sacramento region are:

Supporting Federally Qualified Health Centers and Community-Based Care

Through direct financial support, program support, shared staffing, loaned office space, equipment donations, and other joint ventures, the region's not-for-profit health systems support local community clinics, including the establishment and expansion of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) such as WellSpace Health, Elica Health, CARES Community Health, Sacramento Native American Health Center, and CommuniCare Health Centers. The FQHCs and community clinics provide integrated care for meeting physical and mental health needs, as well as addiction treatment and dental care. Combined, community clinics provide more than 120,000 patient care visits annually.

The health systems also partner with Sierra Health Foundation on the Safety Net Learning Institute, which is offered to all community health centers in the region. The Learning Institute convenings provide in-depth education on the important issues of today's health care environment, implementation of ACA, and the significant roles that community health centers will play in the future of the region's health care delivery system.

Connecting Families to Health Insurance Coverage

In 1998, the four health systems, government entities and community organizations joined together to launch a community wide "culture of coverage" for children in Sacramento. This steadfast support evolved into what is known today as Sacramento Covered, a public-private partnership responsible for helping to insure thousands of children and their families each year and directly benefiting more than 50,000 individuals over the life of the program. Sacramento Covered, now working in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter and Yuba counties, has expanded its core outreach and enrollment functions by helping local families navigate new health insurance coverage options and providing education. Patient Navigators, located in many local hospital Emergency Departments, provide onsite assistance to patients prior to discharge to connect/reconnect patients with their Primary Care Provider and other services. These Navigators also assist in determining eligibility for patients with no coverage, assist with retention of coverage, and provide assistance with other public benefits such as CalFresh.

Planning for the Region's Growth, Health and Vitality

Since 1996, local not-for-profit health systems have worked in partnership to conduct community health needs assessments (CHNA) with a shared vision toward increasing health equity. As the process has evolved, the health systems have adopted a data-driven, outcome-oriented, systematic approach toward assessing key determinants of health status in such areas as prevention, access, chronic disease, mental health and substance abuse, and the social determinants of health. The process exceeds the current requirements under the ACA and actively solicits input from health plans, community-based organizations, civic and business groups, government representatives, and educational institutions. Collaborating creates efficiencies and allows for more robust data gathering and analysis. The four health systems then work strategically to develop innovative solutions, build regional capacity, and improve individual health outcomes without duplicating efforts.

Helping Local Homeless Transition to Independence

Started in 2005, the Interim Care Program (ICP) was developed and funded by the four local health systems and the County of Sacramento as a response to the medical and shelter needs of homeless individuals upon discharge from the hospital. ICP offers food, shelter, health care coordination and

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case management services in a unique partnership between the health systems, WellSpace Health, Volunteers of America and Sacramento County. More than 76% of the participants leave ICP for transitional or permanent housing, and 97% have been enrolled in health insurance, helping to break a cycle of homelessness and improve the health outcomes for our most vulnerable residents. Sacramento Steps Forward, with significant support from the City of Sacramento and the health systems, among others, is building on this successful model as it looks to develop a comprehensive system of care in Sacramento.

Volunteering Medical Expertise for Patients in Need

One of the region's longest-running collaborative projects, Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society's Sacramento Physician's Initiative to Reach out, Innovate and Teach (SPIRIT), recruits volunteer physicians to provide free primary care and specialty medical services to the community's uninsured. With support from the health systems, the SPIRIT Project has helped more than 40,000 patients receive treatment (including over 750 surgeries) since its inception.

Addressing Health Care for the Undocumented

One of the most recent collaborations to address health needs is the development of the Healthy Partners Program, Sacramento County's health coverage program for undocumented residents. Created through the advocacy of a coalition of community organizations, Healthy Partners will provide 3,000 undocumented Sacramentans with a health home and access to specialty care, prescriptions, and other basic services.

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