



County Name

Merced County

Work Plan Title

Integrated Primary Care and Mental Health

Population to Be Served

Work Plan #4: Integrated Primary Care and Mental Health

Individuals to be served:

1. Culturally and linguistically isolated
2. Older adults with mild depression
3. Awareness of suicide prevention for adults

Work Plan Description

The **Integrated Primary Care and Mental Health Project** includes four programs designed to integrate primary and mental health care for adults and older adults and intended to act in partnership with each other. This Project revolves around primary care centers as the nexus of care. The Project seeks to augment the services available at existing primary care centers to help ensure that they are equipped to provide early intervention for mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and (for older adults) suicide ideation. The Project will fund the establishment of care managers within clinics to provide short term problem solving therapies to teach coping skills along with linking participants to existing services. The Project will include a special focus on older adults to include suicide prevention training for care managers in addition to the establishment of specially trained home visiting care managers to work with older adults. The Project incorporates a strong emphasis on cultural competency in providing funding to work with existing mental health cultural brokers (established by the Public Awareness Project) to enable Merced County residents to have access to these services. **The Integrated Primary Care and Mental Health Project** will expand the capacity of community health care clinics in providing mental health screenings (PHQ-9 and long form, as indicated), care coordination, and early interventions. Clinic providers will receive training on depression, and clinic administrators will work to implement policies that support best practices for mental health integration. Care coordinators will work with patients to help identify resources and supports to eliminate or reduce stressors in their lives. Care managers, working in tandem with mental health specialists and cultural brokers, will help individuals identify the services and supports necessary to stabilize their mental well-being. As appropriate, care managers will help transition patients to more intensive mental health services both within clinic practices and resources funded through community services and supports. In addition, funds are designated to help each participating clinic implement best practices for integrated primary care and mental health through clinician training and other reorganization supports necessary to encourage a new way of doing business.

Prevention of Suicide in Primary Care Elderly Collaborative Trial (PROSPECT) Clinics currently receiving funding will also be eligible for further funding for PROSPECT suicide prevention training. With PROSPECT, specially trained, clinic-based care managers provide up to 12 weeks of intervention for suicide ideation. Preliminary findings suggest that this level of intervention can be effective in reducing suicide ideation, particularly in those with no prior history of suicide attempt. The PROSPECT program will be offered jointly with the clinic-based care managers because studies demonstrate that effective clinical care is one of the associated protective factors for older adults.

Cultural Brokers for Mental Health Services: This Project will fund Cultural Brokers (known elsewhere as *promotores* or lay mental health workers) who are typically affiliated with local community based organizations and serve as consumer advocates. Cultural Brokers conduct community outreach along with peer support groups, and provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information about wellness, mental health and mental health services. Cultural Brokers work independently and in partnership with the funded clinics to ensure mental health services are more meaningful and appropriate for the culturally and linguistically isolated, including the Latino, Hmong, and even the smaller Punjabi and Mixteca communities. A program that utilizes Cultural Brokers is the **Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives for Seniors (PEARLS)**. PEARLS is an intervention based program for people 60 years and older who have minor depression as a result of loneliness, isolation, or recent loss and are receiving home-based social services from community services agencies. The program is designed to reduce symptoms of depression and improve health related quality of life. PEARLS provides eight 50-minute sessions with a trained social service worker in the client's home over 19 weeks. Counselors use three depression management techniques: (1) problem-solving treatment, in which clients are taught to recognize depressive symptoms, define problems that may contribute to depression, and devise steps to solve these problems; (2) social and physical activity planning; and (3) planning to participate in pleasant events. Counselors encourage participants to use existing community services and attend local events. Planning participants were attracted to the PEARLS program due to the home-based nature of the program and its emphasis on mild, non-acute depression. The use of social workers versus trained mental health clinicians makes this program easier to expand to local community based agencies and using more culturally competent staff.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Annual Number of Clients to Be Served

_____ Total

Number of Clients By Funding Category

_____ Full Service Partnerships

_____ System Development

_____ Outreach & Engagement

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Annual Number to Be Served

Prevention: 10,120 Individuals

Prevention: 400 Families

Early Intervention: 2,200 Individuals