

Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant

SUCCESS STORY 2019

California Wellness Program Implementation

Partners Row Upstream to Reduce Disparities

Public Health Issue: Health care providers are making strides to meet the non-medical needs of patients. There is a growing recognition that addressing individual social needs is not enough to improve health. In addition to individual interventions, policy and system changes are needed to address the fundamental social and economic conditions that influence community health¹. Strengthening public health and healthcare partnerships can illuminate those underlying conditions and identify upstream strategies to improve community health. Aligning community health assessments and priorities between healthcare systems and public health also advances public health accreditation goals and expands their collective impact.

Intervention: The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) California Wellness Plan Implementation (CWPI) Program supported the “Moving Upstream: Optimizing Public Health and Healthcare Partnerships to Prevent Chronic Disease” convening in the 11-county San Joaquin Valley region of California. The San Joaquin Valley Public Health Consortium (Consortium) co-sponsored the convening held on June 26, 2019 at the University of California Merced and it was attended by 83 healthcare delivery system and public health leaders. The event brought together teams of local health department and health system leaders (e.g., managed care/health plans, community clinics, and hospitals) interested in learning about promising practices and exploring how to partner on upstream prevention strategies to reduce health disparities. Convening themes included:

- How Public Health and Healthcare Can Target the Root Causes of Health Inequity
- Health Departments and Delivery Systems Partner on Upstream Prevention Approaches
- Delivery Systems Lead Innovations for Upstream Prevention Approaches
- Local Leadership Panel: Valley and Foothill Leaders Advance Public Health and Healthcare Partnerships
- Sharing and Using Data to Engage in Upstream Approaches Together

Tabletop discussions facilitated cross-sector and cross-county dialogue on opportunities to partner, and local public health and healthcare teams identified concrete actions to move the work forward.

Impact: Follow-up action steps identified at the meeting included: aligning community health assessments, utilizing the Healthy Places Index (HPI) to advance data collaboration, creating community information exchanges, and strengthening regional advocacy to improve the determinants of health. More than half of participants (43) responded to the evaluation survey and shared what was useful and what actions they will take to strengthen partnerships. The Consortium met in September 2019 to discuss strengthening its infrastructure to implement the regional strategies identified at the convening. A post-survey will be conducted in the coming months. A factsheet titled “Bridging the Gap Between Clinical and Community Prevention: How lifestyle change programs can be leveraged to engage communities and improve the social determinants of health” was prepared for the convening and highlights Merced County’s work. The fact sheet has been shared widely with public health leaders in California and is posted on the CDPH CWPI Resources Webpage.

Footnote:

1. Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short of Addressing Social Determinants of Health," Health Affairs Blog, January 16, 2019. DOI: [10.1377/hblog20190115.234942](https://doi.org/10.1377/hblog20190115.234942)