

# Santa Cruz County Integrated Behavioral Health Hospital Transitions Pilot

## Who are we serving?

We serve adult Central Coast Alliance for Health (CCAH) beneficiaries who are hospitalized due to medical complications related to IV drug use and who have mild to moderate mental disorders. Grant funding from Dignity Health has enabled us to include non-CCAH patients.

## What agencies are involved?

The Behavioral Health Transitions pilot program is supported by various agencies throughout Santa Cruz County, including Central California Alliance for Health, Dignity Health (Dominican Hospital), Health Improvement Partnership, Janus of Santa Cruz, and Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency: Behavioral Health Division. The project has a steering committee comprised of representatives of these agencies and includes physicians, licensed clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists, care coordinators, and organizational leadership.

## What is the service?

Dominican Hospital social workers invite eligible patients to participate in the pilot services and obtain consent to invite a Janus Lighthouse Counseling therapist to visit the patient during their stay at the hospital or skilled nursing facility. Therapist visits focus on engagement, exploring patient interest in mental health and substance use treatment services, and providing linkage to these services upon discharge.

## Why is this service being provided?

We are interested in addressing the substance use and mental disorders that may be at the core of presenting illnesses that required hospitalization. The inpatient stay provides an opportunity to explore behavioral health treatment options. The goals of the program are to reduce use of emergency department and inpatient hospital services and improve quality of life.

## How does the service work?

The Janus Lighthouse Counseling therapist is in daily contact with Dominican Hospital social work M-F. Afternoon hours are reserved for visits to referred patients at the hospital and skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and coordination of treatment intake for mental health and substance use disorders. The Janus therapist and Dominican social work staff review shared cases regularly.

## What are our successes to date?

- Strengthened collaboration across network of providers as evidenced in an improved willingness to jointly identify issues, generate solutions, and modify practices. Essential elements of this strengthened collaboration included the development of a shared mission across partners, a deepened understanding of roles and perspectives, and improved trust and value among partners.
- Improved referral and follow-up workflows between hospital social work staff and Janus therapist
- Shortened time from referral to first patient visit from 3.2 days to <=24hr

- Met with 50 referred patients (usually 1-2 meetings) between September 2016 and July 2017
- Engaged 11 patients in new residential treatment episodes for substance use/co-occurring mental disorders (SUD/COD)
- Engaged 15 patients in new medication-assisted treatment (MAT) episodes
- Communicated a streamlined process for accessing rapid intake at MAT clinics
- Clarification and communication of eligibility criteria for patients entering residential SUD treatment directly from the hospital or SNF

## What have been our challenges?

- Rapid access to SUD treatment, particularly County-subsidized residential treatment
- Lack of affordable and available housing and shelter
- Medical & mental health complexity
- Coordination with existing & new initiatives
- Reluctance of hospitalists and ED physicians to start Suboxone treatment in hospital
- Stigma and lack of social support for patient population

## What are our next steps?

- Proposal submitted for Phase II funding for the Transitions program to (1) expand eligibility criteria to include all SUD and (2) support a care navigation team comprised of a Case Coordinator and Peer Support Specialist trained in WRAP. The care navigation team will support patients to develop and enact their individualized wellness plans from hospital inpatient stays to SUD/COD treatment and from SUD/COD treatment to community living.
- Increased Drug Medi-Cal coverage of residential SUD treatment with pending 1115 Medicaid demonstration waiver implementation in Santa Cruz County
- Training and implementation of VI-SPDAT pre-screening tool to quickly assess the vulnerability, health and social needs of persons experiencing homelessness and match them with community supports and housing options available through the Smart Path county-wide coordinated entry system
- Licensing to provide Incidental Medical Services in SUD treatment (pending)
- Implementation of the Central Coast Recovery Options MAT expansion projects to improve access to MAT in the hospital and office-based settings and reduce stigma (CA Hub & Spoke System grants). Activities include trainings and learning communities for hospital and office-based clinicians, expanded access to patient counseling services, development of a continuum of care based on clinical complexity, and community-wide education campaigns.

## For more information:

- Elisa Dakiwag, LMFT, Clinical Manager of Outpatient Services, Janus of Santa Cruz, [elisa\\_dakiwag@janussc.org](mailto:elisa_dakiwag@janussc.org)
- Sonya Drotter, LCSW, Manager of Care Coordination, Dignity Health-Dominican Hospital
- Jen Hastings, MD, Physician Consultant, Health Improvement Partnership: [jen@coho.org](mailto:jen@coho.org)
- Dona Putnam, RN, Director of Care Coordination, Dignity Health-Dominican Hospital
- Lisa Russell, Ph.D., Director of Research and Evaluation, Janus of Santa Cruz: [lisa\\_russell@janussc.org](mailto:lisa_russell@janussc.org)