



Saint Agnes Medical Center

NEWS RELEASE

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For more information, contact:
Kelley Sanchez
(559) 450-2085 (office); (559) 696-8072 (cell)
Kelley.sanchez@samc.com

1303 East Herndon Avenue
Fresno, California 93720

www.samc.com

\$2.6 Million Grant Aims to Reduce Health Care Disparities and Inequities Among County's Most Vulnerable Populations

Fresno, CA, February 4, 2021 – The Fresno County Network of Care cohort, led by the Fresno Community Health Improvement Partnership (FCHIP) and Saint Agnes Medical Center, is one of seven counties in California to be awarded a \$2.6M grant from ACEs Aware Initiative, the Department of Health Care Services and the Office of the California Surgeon General.

The grant will be used to implement a seamless screening, referral and response process to support families who are at-risk of experiencing negative mental and physical health outcomes that stem from traumatic life events, also known as ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences).

The prevalence of ACEs and disparities are evident in our local community. As of 2017, 18 percent of all households in Fresno County have four or more ACEs and households with children are even higher at 21 percent¹ While these are haunting statistics, the science demonstrates that these factors are all symptoms of community trauma and health inequity that can be prevented and treated through ACEs screening and access to “buffering” resources, which is the focus of the grant.

This critical funding will be used to develop a strong network of care where patients are able to access services beyond the doctor’s office. The key component will be the implementation of community health workers who will serve as the interpersonal link for the patient between the doctor’s offices and community-based resources.

Locally, 20 community-based organizations will develop their capacity through training and coaching to support 60 Medi-Cal health care providers across 5 health systems who conduct ACEs screenings.

To learn more about ACEs and how this grant will benefit Fresno County families, contact Ivonne DerTorosian, Vice President, Community Health and Wellbeing, (559) 450-5222.

¹ Kids Data, [Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences, 2011-2017](#)

¹ [Adverse Childhood Experiences Data Report: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System \(BRFSS\), 2011-2017 An Overview of Adverse Childhood Experiences in California](#)

About ACEs Aware

ACEs Aware is an initiative led by the Office of the California Surgeon General and the Department of Health Care Services to give Medi-Cal providers training, clinical protocols, and payment for screening children and adults for ACEs. Detecting ACEs early and connecting patients to interventions, resources, and other support can improve the health and well-being of individuals and families.

Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, in partnership with Gov. Newsom, the state Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), and health and community leaders, is leading system reform that recognizes, and responds to, the effects that ACEs have on our biological systems and addresses the lifelong impacts of ACEs.

A key part of that work is the ACEs Aware initiative. Effective January 1, 2020, DHCS began paying Medi-Cal providers for conducting ACE screenings for children and adults up to age 65 with full-scope Medi-Cal. The Office of the California Surgeon General and DHCS are partnering with organizations across the health care system and California's communities to ensure that these providers have the training, tools, and resources they need to effectively incorporate ACE screening into patient care.

Network of Care planning implementation grants were awarded this year to support the providers by piloting the effectiveness of health care, social service providers, and community-based organizations working together to create a seamless screening, referral, and response process to support families in mitigating toxic stress and preventing further ACEs.

About FCHIP

FCHIP is an anchoring health focused initiative that works closely with the community, multi-sector partners, and local coalitions to collaborate, align, and leverage resources. FCHIP partners envision a culture of health in our community where every person has the opportunity and support they need to achieve a life of well-being. FCHIP's network of partners are active in FCHIP's four workgroups – the Trauma and Resilience Network, the Food Security Network, the Diabetes Collaborative, and the Land Use and Planning workgroup.

About Saint Agnes

Founded in 1929 by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Saint Agnes Medical Center has built its healing legacy on caring for Central Valley residents with the highest level of safety, quality and compassion. Committed to meeting its community's diverse and growing health care needs, the 436-bed acute care hospital also provides primary, specialty and urgent care through its growing network of more than 80 providers at 20 locations in Fresno and Clovis. Saint Agnes is a member of Trinity Health, one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic healthcare delivery systems in the United States. For more information, please visit www.samc.com.