Access to Care

Why This Matters

Access to health care remains uneven across communities. Health care workforce shortages, high costs, and linguistic and cultural barriers limit care for vulnerable community members. Access to primary and specialty care is particularly strained in underserved regions.

Key Data Highlights

- Shortages of non-physician providers (e.g., NPs, PAs) in three of the four counties vs. the state
- Limited cultural and language concordance
- Chronic and infectious disease rates in all four counties suggest poor access to care
- Dental Health Professional Shortage Area in Ashland/Castro Valley
- In all four counties, rates of preventable hospitalizations for older adults are highest for the Black population, followed by the Hispanic/Latino population
- Premature death (years of potential life lost) higher in three of the four counties vs. CA

At a Glance: Barriers to Care

Long wait times

Language & literacy challenges

High cost even with insurance

Transportation gaps

Community Voice

Community members and stakeholders shared:

- Concerns about affordability and long wait times
- Rural and less-populated areas may lack nearby hospitals, clinics, and specialty services
- The potential of the closure of essential health care facilities in coastal San Mateo County and East San José
- People expressed a desire for providers who are respectful, inclusive, and speak their language

LONG-TERM GOAL

Improve access to affordable, high-quality health care services for at-risk community members.

Our Approach

A. Investments & Grants

- Support capacity-building opportunities, such as health clinics near vulnerable neighborhoods

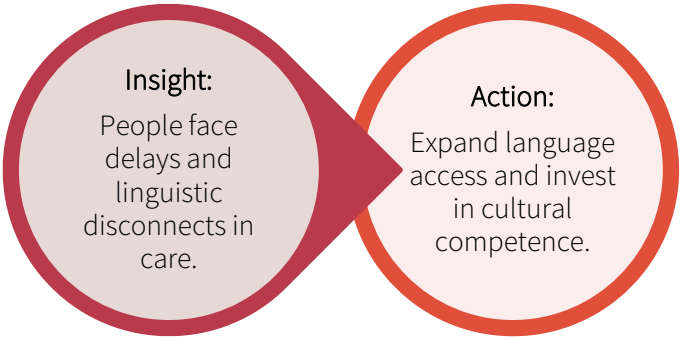
B. Institutional Systems & Practices

- Expand access via digital health initiatives
- Continue to offer financial assistance, including charity care and uncompensated care
- Support enrollment in health insurance
- Encourage care coordination interventions
- Support initiatives that address culturally responsive and compassionate/respectful care, including enhanced language access
- Advance health-related social needs screening and linkage to resources

C. Advocacy & Community Engagement

- Advocate for access-focused policies at all government levels

From Insight to Action



How Our Strategies Reflect an Anchor-Inspired Approach

- Recognize that access to care is inseparable from the social and economic determinants of health that shape community well-being.
- Acknowledge that many people experience major barriers in accessing quality care.
- Align institutional resources with community needs to remove barriers and promote equity in compliance with state and federal law.
- Help create environments where health services are more accessible, culturally responsive, and better integrated with other forms of support.

What We Aim to Achieve

- Greater access to culturally sensitive care
- Higher preventive care and vaccination rates
- Reduced avoidable ED use and preventable hospitalizations
- Improved outcomes and reduced disparities for community members