Mental and Behavioral Health

Why This Matters

Mental and behavioral health is a pressing concern in all four counties. Key challenges include a shortage of mental health providers, especially in outlying areas like Gilroy and Brentwood, and rising rates of psychological distress, suicide, and suicidal ideation. These challenges were amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased economic stressors, isolation, and substance use.

Key Data Highlights

- Rise in fentanyl and opioid-related deaths in Bay Area despite lower overall mortality compared to California
- In all four counties, mental diseases and disorders accounted for the highest proportion of hospital discharges among youth, more than double the next-highest primary diagnosis
- Suicide and suicidal ideation rising in Alameda and San Mateo counties
- Low supply of qualified mental health providers, especially Contra Costa County
- Higher opioid hospitalization rate in Santa Clara County compared to state

At a Glance: What Else We Heard

Long wait times

Language barriers

Culture/service match lacking

Earlier prevention efforts needed

Community Voice

CHNA participants highlighted the following:

- Growing loneliness, stress, and isolation, exacerbated by economic insecurity and experiences of discrimination
- Concerns about lack of awareness and education of the harms of substance use, especially regarding potent substances like fentanyl
- The need for more integrated mental health and substance use services across systems
- Across all four counties, common populations of concern included LGBTQ, Black and Hispanic/Latino communities, youth, unhoused individuals, and justice-involved individuals

LONG-TERM GOAL

Improve access to affordable, high-quality mental/behavioral health care services.

Our Approach

A. Investments & Grants

- Support initiatives to increase the cultural competency of mental/behavioral health providers in community/safety net clinics
- Support community-based efforts aimed at expanding access to care for mental health and substance use issues
- Support programs that assist people recovering from addiction to transition back into the community

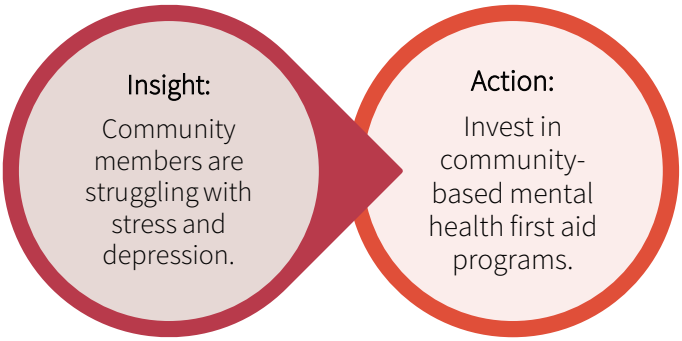
B. Institutional Systems & Practices

- Enhance screening and referral for mental/behavioral health issues in primary care and emergency care settings
- Support integrated mental health and substance use services/treatment for co-occurring mental illness and addiction
- Increase internal capacity through workforce development and partnerships

C. Advocacy & Community Engagement

- Advocate for mental health parity and policy solutions at the local and state levels

From Insight to Action



How Our Strategies Reflect an Anchor-Inspired Approach

- Recognize that many people face significant barriers to accessing mental/behavioral health care.
- Align institutional resources with community needs to remove barriers and promote equity in compliance with state and federal law.
- Help create environments where mental/behavioral health services are more accessible, culturally relevant, and integrated with other forms of support.

What We Aim to Achieve

- Improved access to culturally sensitive or responsive mental/behavioral health services, programs, and providers
- Greater emotional coping and resilience among people served
- Reduced housing instability among people with mental health/substance use issues
- Enhanced coordination across the continuum of care