



Overview: Alameda County's Whole Person Care Pilot

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Summary

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency has been awarded \$140 million by the California Department of Health Care Services as part of the competitive Whole Person Care Pilot (WPCP) program of the Medi-Cal 1115 Waiver.

The Whole Person Care Pilot—The State's WPCP program is targeted to "high utilizers." It aims to reduce avoidable utilization of expensive health care services, such as emergency department visits and hospitalizations. Recognizing that people need basics such as housing and food, and often mental health and substance use treatment, to stay in good health, the new pilot program allows grantees to use Medi-Cal funding for services not usually thought of as healthcare, such as helping people find and stay in housing, and for infrastructure (e.g., information systems) that supports system integration and providers' ability to link patients with services.

Alameda County's successful WPCP application, called **Alameda County Care Connect**, proposed a bold vision of a system that will help patients move from conditions of crisis and acute care toward increased stability and wellness, and attain their highest possible level of independence and health, by better integrating services across multiple sectors. We will invest in supportive housing infrastructure, create a "community health record," and connect care teams to better link patients to the services they need, including physical and mental health, substance use treatment, housing and other social services, in as close to real time as possible.

Funding

Funding for WPCP is authorized by what is known as an 1115 waiver. Under waivers, states negotiate with the federal government for flexibility to spend Medicaid dollars on innovative programs. Under the current five year waiver, known as Medi-Cal 2020, the State of California is authorized to distribute up to \$300 million per year over five years for Whole Person Care Pilots. Alameda County has been awarded **\$28 million per year over five calendar years**, from 2016 through 2020. The grant terms require the County to put up 50% of the cost, hence the total cost of Alameda County's WPCP program, **Alameda County Care Connect (or AC Care Connect)**, over five years is \$280 million. Eighteen jurisdictions in California applied for WPCP funding.

Target Population

The target populations for AC Care Connect are:

- People experiencing homelessness
- People who are high utilizers of multiple systems, including emergency services, hospitalizations, and law enforcement; and
- People with complex conditions who need care coordination across multiple systems in order to obtain good treatment outcomes

It is estimated that at least 20,000 people will be touched by the grant.

Program Components

AC Care Connect contains the following key components:

- System of care coordination
 - Standardization and simplification of patient-facing processes in order to increase the efficiency and quality of service, including consent forms, client assessment and triage protocols, and eligibility determinations
 - Integration of efforts to secure safe housing for patients as part of the overall health care service
 - Improved processes for care teams
 - Incentives for participating entities who achieve desired outcomes, such as reducing emergency service utilization
- Housing for health
 - Services to help people transition into housing, including street outreach, step-downs from skilled nursing facilities when appropriate, and increased access to in-home supportive services for people with disabilities
 - Services to help people sustain their housing, including education and legal assistance
 - Increasing supportive housing options, through incentives for landlords and voluntary programs to improve community living facilities
 - Incentives for participating entities who achieve desired housing outcomes
- Data systems and analytics
 - Program is data-driven, with regular reporting of agreed-upon metrics and intensive data analysis to evaluate impact
 - New data solution to share essential information required for care coordination among entities whose data currently sit in silos
 - Training and support for participating entities
- Human infrastructure to sustain system transformation
 - A steering committee and work groups to support mutual accountability, collaboration and coordination
 - Promote skills development and quality improvement
 - Build communication and understanding across systems of care, such as housing, criminal justice, mental health, primary care, etc.
- Linkages to integrated health care, encompassing primary care, substance use treatment, and behavioral health care

For Further Information

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Links

[Alameda County Care Connect/Whole Person Care Pilot](#)
[State of California Whole Person Care Website](#)