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Professional Title, Organization: Behavioral Health Medical Director, Santa Clara County Health System

CHIP Title: Vietnamese American Service Center

Project Description (include objectives, results, solutions):

Imagine an under-resourced place in East San Jose where Vietnamese immigrants live with significant health and social disparities. The community is painfully aware that due to legacy of war, political persecution, and mass displacement, they have been through significant multigenerational trauma. They prioritized and advocated for the building of a trusted place where they can receive mental health services in their own language or through an interpreter that they trust. They also participated in designing a “one stop shop” where they can receive holistic care with primary care, pharmacy, labs, health education and other support services.

The Vietnamese American Service Center (VASC) was built in the heart of San Jose’s to address critical mental health needs of this underserved community. Over a span of one year the VASC was able to provide mental health services to 240 patients. Culturally responsive services provided include individual and group counseling, psychiatric services, crisis intervention and peer support services. Other essential services were also made available to this underserved community.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned:

- The VASC, as a multiservice center, helps community members feel more comfortable coming in for services – overcoming significant barriers to overall care, not just mental health care.
- Culturally and linguistically responsive services in the heart of the community advances health equity. Within one year 240 patients have accessed mental health services at this clinic. There is potential for additional patients to do so.
- The VASC helps build trust where the community can access additional services including senior nutrition, health insurance, food and housing support, citizenship ESL classes, and other services.

Next Steps:

- Continue to partner with community stakeholders to increase awareness and acceptance of mental health issues.
- Continue to expand mental health services at VASC to serve a greater number of patients.
- Support dissemination of a best practice model – to provide culturally responsive, language accessible mental health care to a historically disenfranchised community.