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STATE OF CALIFORNIA AWARDS GRANTS TO HELP MEDI-CAL PROVIDERS LEARN ABOUT ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

CALIFORNIA – The Office of the California Surgeon General (CA-OSG) and the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) today announced the awarding of 150 grants to 100 organizations throughout the state to extend the reach and impact of the ACEs Aware initiative. ACEs Aware seeks to change and save lives by helping Medi-Cal providers understand the importance of screening for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and training them to respond with trauma-informed care.

The ACEs Aware grants will provide funding to organizations to design and implement training, provider engagement, and education activities for providers and organizations that serve Medi-Cal beneficiaries. For a list of grant awards, please visit the ACEs Aware [website](#).

“We are looking forward to working in partnership with this amazing group of community leaders to further our efforts to help health care providers become ACEs Aware,” said California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris. “This work is critical, now more than ever, given the stress so many Californians are experiencing as a result of COVID-19 and the role of racial injustice as a risk factor for toxic stress. A trauma-informed health care workforce is vital for helping our state heal.”

The grant funding will provide critical support to community organizations serving Medi-Cal providers and beneficiaries, which have been experiencing increased stress during the COVID-19 emergency. Grant activities will augment California’s efforts, underway since the summer of 2019, to develop provider training and engage providers, including the promotion of payments to Medi-Cal providers for screening their patients for ACEs.

“The state of California is facing an unprecedented budget shortfall as a result of the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 emergency, but the state is maintaining Medi-Cal program eligibility to help the state’s low-income residents respond to COVID-19,” said Jacey Cooper, State Medicaid Director. “Although budget reductions are proposed across the board, our community partners play an essential role in ensuring access to high quality, trauma-informed care for Medi-Cal beneficiaries.”



Added Dr. Karen Mark, DHCS Medical Director: “DHCS is committed to preserving and improving the overall health and well-being of all Californians. The ACEs Aware initiative is a vital part of the Medi-Cal program’s response to the COVID-19 emergency. These grants will help us reach Medi-Cal providers who serve diverse and often at-risk populations throughout the state, and will help to ensure that Medi-Cal members receive the high-quality, integrated care that every Californian deserves.”

ACEs Aware grants are being awarded in the following categories:

- **Provider Training:** 31 grants were awarded to help educate Medi-Cal providers about the importance of incorporating ACE screening into their clinical practice, as well as how to administer screenings, use clinical protocols to determine evidence-based treatment plans, and provide trauma-informed care. Some grants will support organizations in adapting existing or developing new trainings to meet DHCS/CA-OSG “core training” criteria to certify providers to receive Medi-Cal payment for ACE screening. Other provider training grants will support the development of “supplemental” trainings on key topics to support providers in this work.
- **Provider Engagement:** 83 grants will supplement ACEs Aware activities. These grants will help organizations to offer additional opportunities for providers and other stakeholders to share lessons learned and best practices that are tailored to specific geographic areas, patient populations, providers, and practice settings. Activities will include interactive sessions to share best practices among providers and across the entire medical and social network of care. Twenty-two of the 83 grantees are receiving funding to develop white papers highlighting best practices, lessons learned, and promising implementation strategies around ACEs screening and trauma-informed systems of care.
- **Communications:** 36 grants will supplement ACEs Aware activities by reaching organization members and other key audiences with information about provider training and engagement opportunities, and to increase awareness about the overall initiative. Organizations will use a wide range of communication approaches to share ACEs Aware information, as well as their own content tailored to their audiences.

The full list of ACEs Aware grantees, along with brief summaries of each awardee application, is available on the [ACEs Aware website](#).

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About ACEs Aware

Led by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, California Surgeon General, and Dr. Karen Mark, Medical Director for DHCS, the ACEs Aware initiative offers Medi-Cal providers core training, screening tools, clinical protocols, and payment for screening children and adults for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which are stressful or traumatic experiences people have by age 18 that were identified in the [landmark ACE Study](#). ACEs describe 10 categories of adversities in three domains – abuse, neglect, and/or household dysfunction. ACEs are strongly associated with at least nine out of 10 of the leading causes of death in the United States. Part of Governor Gavin Newsom’s *California for All* initiative, the goal of ACEs Aware is to reduce ACEs and toxic stress by half in one generation. Follow ACEs Aware on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

Office of the California Surgeon General

The role of California Surgeon General was created in 2019 by Governor Gavin Newsom to advise the Governor, serve as a leading spokesperson on public health matters, and drive solutions to the state’s most pressing public health challenges. As California’s first Surgeon General, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris has established early childhood, health equity, and ACEs and toxic stress as key priorities.

California Department of Health Care Services

DHCS is the backbone of California’s health care safety net, helping millions of low-income and disabled Californians each and every day. The mission of DHCS is to provide Californians with access to affordable, integrated, high-quality health care, including medical, dental, mental health, substance use treatment services, and long-term care. DHCS’ vision is to preserve and improve the overall health and well-being of all Californians. DHCS funds health care services for about 13 million Medi-Cal beneficiaries.