



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

County of San Mateo

## Healthcare for the Homeless & Farmworker Health Program

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# LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

San Mateo County is at the forefront in providing assistance to vulnerable populations in need. **Currently the County is working to end homelessness in 2022.** It will take a community effort of individuals and organizations working together to reach this worthy and ambitious goal. The need for quality healthcare for all is an ongoing goal for our county government.

**The San Mateo County Healthcare for Homeless/Farmworker Health (HCH/FH) Program's mission is to serve people experiencing homelessness and farmworkers by providing access to comprehensive healthcare in a supportive, welcoming and accessible environment.** HCH/FH program is currently overseen by a Co-Applicant Board comprised of 11 board members and staffed by 3 administrative staff, a Program Director, and two part-time Medical Directors who work tirelessly to ensure that quality healthcare is available to our most vulnerable residents. The HCH/FH program contracts with San Mateo County Health divisions, including San Mateo Medical Center, Behavioral Health & Recovery Services and Public Health Policy & Planning, and community-based organizations to provide various health related services to our people experiencing homelessness and farmworkers and their families. The HCH/FH Board has set strategic priorities to further guide our program in the coming years.

In 2021, the HCH/FH program provided services to 4,660 individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the County and 1,162 farmworkers and family members residing in the coastal area of San Mateo County.

HCH/FH serves these populations with medical, dental and enabling services in accessible locations where people experiencing homelessness and farmworkers can receive timely care for physical and behavioral health needs. Individuals experiencing homelessness and farmworkers and their families are valued and considered a partner in making decisions regarding their health care.

**Providing quality and accessible health care is a team effort and just one component of what's necessary to support farmworkers and people experiencing homelessness in San Mateo County.** Working together with our community partners is the true definition of public service. I am pleased to share with you what HCH/FH has been working on in 2021 to meet that important challenge and what we're looking forward to in 2022.



**Robert Anderson**  
*Healthcare for the Homeless/Farmworker Health  
Board Chair*

# PROGRAM BACKGROUND

## OUR MISSION

*The mission of the San Mateo Health Care for the Homeless/ Farmworker Health (HCH/FH) Program is to serve homeless and farmworker individuals and families by ensuring they have access to comprehensive health care, in particular, primary health care, dental health care, and behavioral health services in a supportive, welcoming, and accessible environment.*

## OUR VALUES

### Access

*Homeless and farmworker individuals and their families have full access to the continuum of health care and social services.*

### Dignity

*Services provided are respectful, culturally competent, and treat the whole person's physical health and behavioral health.*

### Integrity

*Homeless and farmworker individuals and their families are valued and considered a partner in making decisions regarding their health care.*

### Innovation

*Services will continuously evolve to reflect current best practices and technological advances.*

San Mateo County's Health Care for the Homeless/ Farmworker Health Program (HCH/FH) is a federally funded program which has delivered and coordinated health care and support services for people experiencing homelessness since 1991. In July 2010, the program expanded its scope of services to include the farmworker population and their families/dependents.

HCH/FH is funded by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) pursuant to Sections 330(g) and 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act to support the planning for and delivery of services to medically underserved populations. It is jointly governed by an independent Co-Applicant Board and the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

People in San Mateo County experiencing homelessness or who work as farmworkers (and their families) can access any San Mateo County Health touch point – San Mateo Medical Center's (SMMC) hospital and clinics – and numerous other County and community-based organizations to receive outpatient health services regardless of insurance or documentation status.

The HCH/FH Program has agreements with county and nonprofit organizations to provide these services and compliance with HRSA regulations provides SMMC with Federally Qualified Health Center status.



**HRSA has a broad definition of homelessness which, in addition to people residing in shelters or on the street/in cars/RVs, includes doubling up (i.e. couch surfing) and those in transitional or permanent supportive housing (PSH).**

**For farmworkers, both seasonal and migrant workers are included in HRSA's definition, and importantly, so are family members.**

# HOMELESS PATIENT STORY

submitted by Fatima Olivares Cornejo



*I met EG at a homeless encampment clean up in Redwood City and, while offering him linkage to services, noticed he had his finger wrapped in a napkin and duct tape.*

He denied help when I asked if he needed help with his injury. His finger was still wrapped when I met him the following month, and although he was hesitant, he finally accepted assistance. Nurse Practitioner Laura Greicus from the Street Medicine team met with us at his encampment and examined his finger. NP Greicus explained the seriousness of his injury and that he needed to go to the ER right away. **EG was hesitant and explained that he was afraid of hospitals – he was concerned that his lack of insurance and immigration status would be an issue.** I empathized with EG and explained that he need not worry. I would take him to the ER and help him figure out coverage there. I also assured him that his immigration status would not prevent him from receiving care.

During the car ride to the emergency room, EG shared that he became homeless in 2020 during the pandemic after losing his job in the restaurant industry. EG had never experienced homelessness prior to the pandemic. EG explained

he was robbed and assaulted in November 2021 and, when trying to block himself from being hit, his finger was struck between two metal pipes. EG noticed his finger was not hurting as much anymore and did not notice the discoloration but thought it was healing on its own. Once admitted to SMMC, it was found that the tip of his pinky was already necrotic, which is why he was no longer feeling pain. EG was admitted to SMMC for surgery and amputation of the top of his pinky. The doctors told EG that he would have lost his whole hand if he had waited longer to go to the ER. EG stayed at SMMC for two months, treating his finger and infection for which he needed IV antibiotics.

During his stay EG was able to rest, gained 20 lbs. because he was eating 3 meals a day and got in communication with his mother in El Salvador, with whom he had not spoken to since his phone was stolen during the assault. **EG is grateful to have accepted the help and is appreciative of the services that are offered to the homeless population in San Mateo County, of which he was not aware of prior to our first meeting.** His experience and hospitalization have motivated him to pursue getting a U-visa and employment so that he can have his own apartment again.

# 2021: YEAR IN REVIEW

## UTILIZATION OVERVIEW

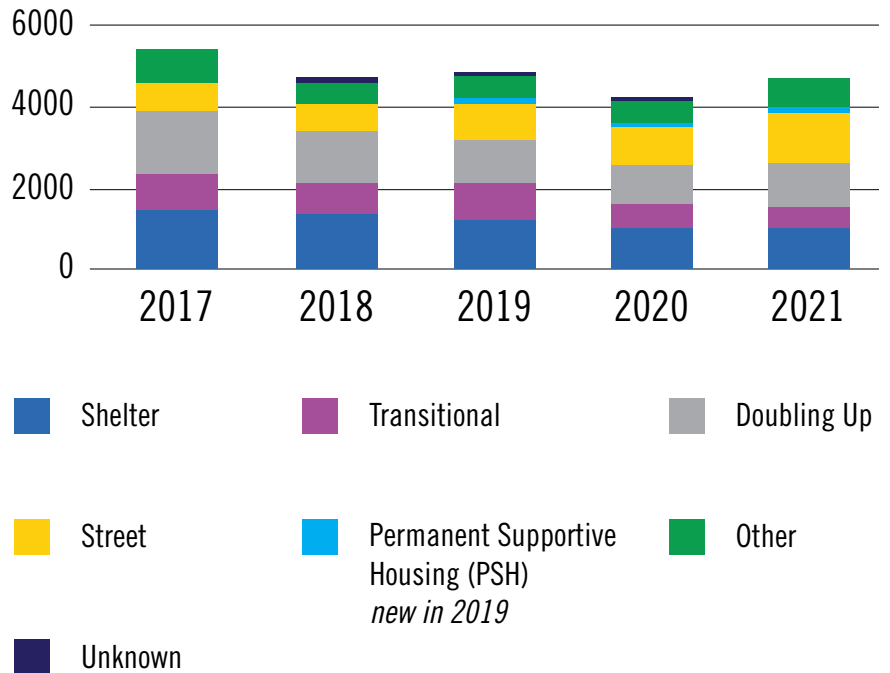
The number of homeless individuals accessing HCH/FH services increased 11.4% from 4,184 in 2020 to 4,660 in 2021.

However, 2020 was an atypical year due to the pandemic with fewer people throughout the country accessing healthcare services overall. The total number of people experiencing homelessness served in 2021 is comparable to 2018 and 2019 activity. **Of note, the number of patients experiencing homelessness (PEH) ages 0-19 increased 72% from 541 in 2020 to 928 clients in 2021 and represents the most homeless youth served by this program since 2016.**

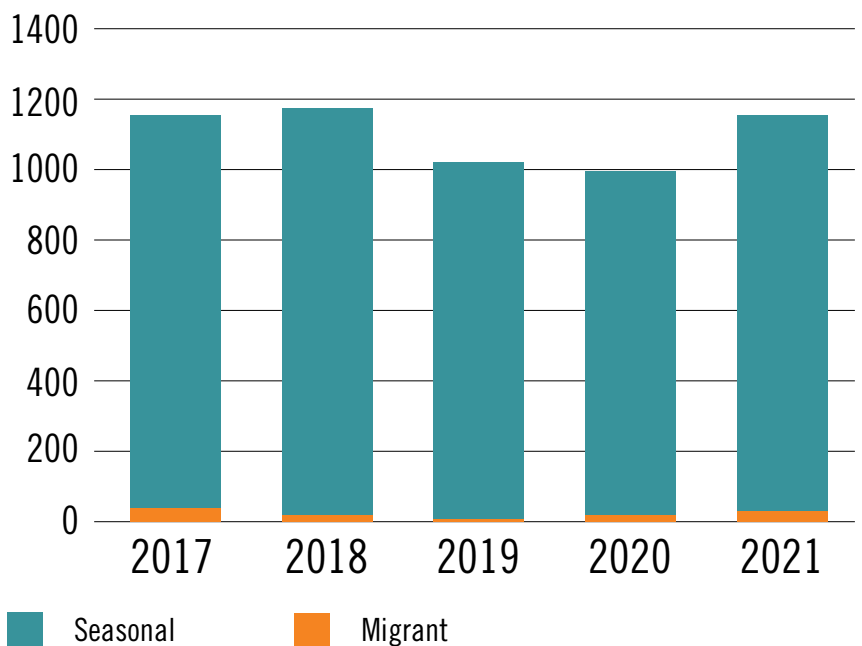
Farmworker utilization of services increased 16% from 2020 to 2021.

This increase can largely be attributed to the amplified outreach and care provided by community partners like Puente de la Costa Sur and Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS) to farmworkers and their families throughout the pandemic. Both organizations played key roles in getting hundreds of farmworkers vaccinated during the early stages of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out and were able to use these opportunities to engage farmworkers in their healthcare.

**Number of patients experiencing homelessness receiving services (by living situation type)**



**Number of farmworker patients receiving services**





## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In 2021, HCH/FH received \$2,910,173 from HRSA to support programmatic activities.

Over \$2M was allocated to contracts and MOUs to support healthcare and enabling services for people experiencing homelessness and farmworkers and their families in San Mateo County.

Mid-way through the year, all existing agreements expired, and new agreements were initiated after completion of the 2020/2021 Request for Proposal (RFP) cycle.

See which services are provided on page 7 (Contracts description). Since 2020, HCH/FH also received over \$2M in COVID-19 related funds (see page 10, COVID-19 Activities & Funding).

Revenue	Financial
HRSA Health Center Program Grant (HRSA 3330 Farmworker & Homeless)	\$2,910,173
Patient Revenue	\$4,957,896
COVID-19 Supplemental	\$632,864
Non-Federal/Local Support	\$9,791,314
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,292,247</b>

Cost	Financial
Clinical Visits	\$8,452,831
Care Coordination Visits	\$789,616
Facility & Non-Clinical Support	\$9,049,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$18,292,247</b>

# CONTRACTS DESCRIPTION

The Health Care for the Homeless/Farmworker Health Program works with the organizations listed below to ensure people experiencing homelessness, and farmworkers and their families in San Mateo County receive case management, primary care, dental care, as well as behavioral health services.

These organizations provide services beyond those described here, which focus on HCH/FH contracted services.



## **Abode Services**

Abode Services is one of the HCH/FH program's newest contracts. Abode is contracted to provide medical care coordination services to newly housed individuals to help them get connected or stay connected to primary care, behavioral health, and dental services. Abode began outreaching to shelter and homeless providers at the end of 2021 and will enroll its first client in 2022.



## **Ayudano Latinos a Soñar (ALAS):**

Another new contract for HCH/FH, ALAS is building a Promotoras (Community Health Worker) program for farmworkers in the Half Moon Bay region. The goal of the Promotoras program is to increase farmworker knowledge of health care topics and help connect them to health care, for example to SMMC's Coastside Clinic in Half Moon Bay.



## **LifeMoves:**

The LifeMoves HCH team provides care coordination to people experiencing homelessness throughout San Mateo County with the goal of helping them continue or establish primary care at an SMMC or BHRS clinic. They work closely with PHPP Street Medicine, the Health Coverage Unit and the New Patient Connection Center to achieve this.



## **Puente de la Costa Sur:**

The Puente Community Health team provides care coordination and health insurance eligibility/enrollment assistance to farmworkers in the Pescadero region. This includes outreach, education, transportation and translation services. Puente also collaborates with the PHPP Field Medicine Team to provide medical care to uninsured farmworkers.



## Sonrisas

Sonrisas provides comprehensive dental services to farmworkers and their families at Puente's Pescadero location once a week. Sonrisas and Puente work closely to coordinate dental care for patients.



## Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS)

**Healthcare for the Homeless:** One of the HCH/FH program's longest standing agreements is with BHRS to provide care coordination to people experiencing homelessness with mental illness to get connected to SMMC or BHRS clinics. The team works with both sheltered and unsheltered clients via referrals.

**Field-based mental health services (formerly HEAL):** Although this program hasn't yet begun, BHRS will hire psychiatric social workers to provide mental health services to people experiencing street homelessness by partnering with the LifeMoves Homeless Outreach and PHPP Street Medicine Teams.

**El Centro de Libertad:** The HCH/FH program is partnering with BHRS to support a contract with El Centro to outreach to and provide substance use disorder case management and education for farmworkers and their families.



## Public Health Policy & Planning (PHPP)

**San Mateo County Mobile Health Clinic:** A state-of-the-art van provides drop-in primary care services to people experiencing homelessness throughout San Mateo County at regularly scheduled sites.

**San Mateo County Street/Field Medicine Team:** To meet people where they are, this backpack medicine program provides primary care, mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) case management to people experiencing homelessness living on the street or in tent encampments and to farmworkers in the field.



## San Mateo Medical Center (SMMC)

SMMC is a safety net hospital for all county residents with Medi-Cal, Medicare or San Mateo County Access and Care for Everyone (ACE) coverage. Outpatient clinics are located across the entire county. Anyone experiencing homelessness and/or is a farmworker or family member of a farmworker can receive health care services at any of these clinics.

**Saturday Dental Clinic for Farmworkers:** In June 2021, SMMC launched the Saturday Dental Clinic, a free dental service dedicated to farmworkers who are not easily able to take time off work to access dental services during the week. The Saturday Dental Clinic is currently occurring monthly with the goal of being able to hold weekly dental clinics.



# FARMWORKER PATIENT STORY

submitted by Alexandra Gutierrez



*In March 2022, I was assigned to BV, a 51-year-old farmworker who lives and works in Loma Mar.*

My first task was to pick up BV's prescription from Anchor Pharmacy in South San Francisco because **she was not able to take time off work to go to the pharmacy during business hours.** When I dropped off BV's prescription at her home, I completed an intake and learned that BV had been referred to the Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Clinic in San Mateo but was having significant challenges in making an appointment.

BV had been referred to ENT in September 2020, but the referral was closed because she did not return the call. A new referral was opened in March 2022 and closed again for the same reason. **Due to limited cell service in Loma Linda, BV kept missing phone calls from the ENT clinic to schedule an appointment.** Additionally, B.V. was only able to return missed calls when she got off work at 6pm and was unable to connect with the ENT clinic.

I was able to help BV set up the appointment and obtain transportation with help from Puente de la Costa Sur. After nearly two years, BV will finally attend an ENT appointment.

# COVID-19 OVERVIEW



## 2021 COVID-19 ACTIVITIES

It is hard to imagine now that vaccines are ubiquitous, what a challenging time early 2021 was – when supply was low and there was a lot of uncertainty about who would become eligible and when. However, the County prioritized its most vulnerable population and committed resources to ensuring farmworkers and people experiencing homelessness could get vaccinated as soon as the state made them eligible.

HCH/FH worked with the County, Department of Agriculture, Center on Homelessness, and numerous community-based organizations and farm owners to get vaccines out to the community.



**Starting in February, HCH/FH helped coordinated vaccine clinics on-farms in Half Moon Bay – Puente did similar coordination in the Pescadero region. And in April, HCH/FH helped coordinate vaccine clinics at congregate and non-congregate shelters, and Street Medicine coordinated vaccine clinics for people experiencing street homelessness.**

All in all, about 800 farmworkers were fully vaccinated by May from 35 farms and about 600 people experiencing homelessness were vaccinated by June.

When boosters became available at the end of 2021, HCH/FH helped coordinate booster clinics and through HRSA's COVID-19 program was able to place orders for rapid antigen tests, which were then distributed to homeless shelters and community-based organizations in early 2022.



## COVID-19 FUNDING

Over the past two years, the HCH/FH program has received multiple supplemental funding opportunities to mitigate, respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including \$1.6M from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act in April 2021 and an additional \$500K in ARP funding dedicated to capital improvement projects.

**HCH/FH staff worked with County Health and external providers to fund a range of projects and activities to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and expand health center capacity, including:**

- **SMMC's Call Center expansion** to improve workflows and reduce average wait times and percentage of dropped calls.
- **Counseling for and increased outreach to farmworkers** and their families in Half Moon Bay via a contract with Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS).
- Purchased and distributed **COVID-19 rapid antigen tests** to shelter and farmworker providers.
- Overhaul of **interpreter services and replacing end of life equipment** at SMMC outpatient and specialty clinics.
- **COVID-19 vaccine and booster outreach** and registration via a contract with the County and El Centro de Libertad.



In 2022, with guidance from the HCH/FH Board, staff will continue to partner with SMMC, County Health and community partners to plan and implement projects that improve access to and delivery of healthcare services in San Mateo County.

# STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The Board's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan can be found here: <https://www.smchealth.org/smmc-hchfh-board>



It focuses on five main priorities:

1. Increase homeless & farmworker patient utilization of SMMC & BHRS Services.
2. Decrease barriers for homeless and farmworker patients to access health care.
3. Support health care providers serving homeless and farmworker patients.
4. Decrease health disparities among people experiencing homelessness & farmworker patients and SMMC general population.
5. Meet and exceed all HRSA Compliance Requirements.

While there are many activities and outputs HFH/FH uses to evaluate performance, (outlined in the plan), there are 6 main targets that have been set by the Board to achieve by the end of 2023:

1. 50% of clients receiving care coordination will have at least one brick and mortar health care visit (primary care, behavioral health, or dental care) within a 12-month period at SMMC or BHRS.
2. Increase the percent of people experiencing homelessness receiving mental health & AOD services by 40% from 2019 baseline.
3. Increase the percent of farmworkers receiving mental health & AOD services by 20% from 2019 baseline.
4. Decrease the number of uninsured homeless and farmworker patients seen by HCH/FH to 5% and 10% respectively.
5. Following a site visit, have no more than 5 immediate enforcement actions, fewer than 2 conditions enter the 90-day phase of Progressive Action and 0 conditions enter the 30-day phase of Progressive Action.
6. Program will have no more than 5% of funds remaining at the end of the current grant cycle (December 2023).

At the end of 2021, the program is on track to meet all its goals aside from the health insurance goal, which was an aggressive goal and may need to be re-evaluated for feasibility at the end of 2022.

# MEET OUR BOARD

The Co-Applicant Board is responsible for the overall direction of the HCH/FH program, including selection of services and evaluation of progress.

Board Members must be San Mateo County residents and cannot be employed by San Mateo County Health. The HCH/FH Program is always seeking passionate San Mateo County residents to join. People with lived experience are particularly encouraged to apply, however homeless or farmworker status is not required.

More information can be found online at: <https://www.smchealth.org/smmc-hchfh-board>



**Robert Anderson**  
*Chair*



**Victoria Sanchez  
De Alba**  
*Vice Chair*



**Steve Carey**



**Eric DeBode**



**Tayischa Deldridge**



**Gabe Garcia**



**Brian Greenberg**



**Steve Kraft**



**Suzanne Moore**



**Janet Schmidt**



**Tony Serrano**

# LOOKING AHEAD

Although this report is looking back on 2021, activities in 2022 are already in full swing.

From a staffing perspective, the program is looking forward to **onboarding a new Program Coordinator**, Meron Asfaw, after the position was vacant for almost 2 years. We will also be **continuing to expand the role of a part-time Behavioral Health Medical Director**, currently filled by Dr. Kapil Chopra, which is also a new position for the program.

HCH/FH is also looking forward to providing input for health services at the **new Homeless Navigation Center** and what role the program can play in the implementation of CalAIM.



Additionally, HCH/FH is excited to **partner with University of California's CITRIS Health and Mitre ACTIVATE program** to expand tele-health opportunities on the Coast for farmworkers via the Coastside Clinic in Half Moon Bay.

Finally, the HCH/FH program is in full swing of developing patient and provider surveys for the **Needs Assessment**, which is seeking to understand the care experience/journey of SMMC homeless/farmworker patients and healthcare teams and to make system recommendations based on the findings.



# HCH/FH STAFF



**Jim Beaumont**, Director

**Danielle Hull**, Clinical Coordinator

**Amanda Hing-Hernandez**, Interim Medical Director

**Irene Pasma**, Implementation Coordinator

**Kapil Chopra**, Behavioral Health Medical Director

**Sofia Recalde**, Management Analyst

## WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

### ATTEND A BOARD MEETING

Meetings are open to the public

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### BECOME A BOARD MEMBER

<https://www.smchealth.org/smmc-hchfh-board>