UCSF and UnitedHealth Group announce new partnership to grow and diversify California's mental health workforce

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Video of UHG-UCSF Partnership

A four-year, $4 million grant partnership between UC San Francisco and UnitedHealth Group will expand the mental health workforce in California. Co-led by UCSF?s School of Medicine and School of Nursing, the partnership will grow the pipeline of diverse child and adolescent psychiatry clinicians by creating new clinical learning opportunities and mentoring supports for child and adolescent psychiatry fellows and psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioners, as well as providing scholarships and financial supports to underrepresented medical and nursing students pursuing child and adolescent mental health careers.

?We have a serious shortage in our state?s mental health workforce,? said California Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis. ?This grant will be a critical step in helping to develop and grow a diverse health care workforce that is well-prepared to address the distinct mental health needs of children and youth in California. As a UC regent, I am proud that this effort will leverage the incredible expertise of the University of California to better serve our communities.?

Partnership to address a projected critical shortage of mental health providers in California

California has a mental health worker shortage that is projected to grow worse unless meaningful action is taken to address it, according to the California Future Health Workforce Commission. There are only 13 child and adolescent psychiatrists per 100,000 children in California, compared to 75 pediatricians per 100,000 children. By 2028, California will have only about half of the psychiatrists it will need to serve residents in need of treatment, and 28% fewer psychologists, social workers and counselors than necessary to meet the projected demand, according to the UCSF Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies. In some communities and regions, the shortages will be even worse.

?One of our nation?s most pressing health care needs is the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents,? said Steve Cain, CEO of UnitedHealthcare of California, part of UnitedHealth Group. ?Together with the University of California, San Francisco, UnitedHealth Group is honored to help expand and diversify the health care workforce.?

It is estimated that up to 1 in 5 children living in the United States experiences a mental disorder in a given year, according to a National Research Council and Institute of Medicine report [1]. The teen suicide rate has increased 34% in California in the past four years for adolescents ages 15-19, according to America?s Health Rankings 2020 Health of Women and Children Data Update [2].

Four-year, $4 million UnitedHealth Group grant will help UCSF grow and

diversify the pipeline of child and adolescent psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse practitioners

The new programs enabled by the grant partnership with the UCSF School of Nursing and School of Medicine are already up and running. Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners have been selected as scholarship recipients and are receiving training as they work with youth; medical students specializing in psychiatry who have been recruited for fellowships are completing rotations; and UCSF faculty members have been hired and recruited to mentor residents and fellows.

?As part of UCSF?s commitment to serving the public, we are grateful for UnitedHealth Group?s support in preparing our medical and nursing students to deliver world-class mental health care to communities across California, the country and around the world,? said UCSF Executive Vice Chancellor and provost Dan Lowenstein, MD [3].

In addition to the partnership with UCSF, UnitedHealth Group and UC San Diego are also launching a new four-year, $4 million initiative to diversify the pipeline of child and adolescent psychiatrists and encourage medical students to pursue careers in this field through the creation of new psychiatry curricula and clinical learning opportunities, expanded student mentoring, and new financial support for diverse students and residents.

About UnitedHealth Group

UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH) is a diversified health care company dedicated to helping people live healthier lives and helping make the health system work better for everyone. UnitedHealth Group offers a broad spectrum of products and services through two distinct platforms: UnitedHealthcare, which provides health care coverage and benefits services; and Optum, which provides information and technology-enabled health services. For more information, visit UnitedHealth Group at www.unitedhealthgroup.com [4] or follow @UnitedHealthGrp [5] on Twitter.

About UCSF Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

The UCSF Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences [6] and the Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute are among the nation's foremost resources in the fields of child, adolescent, adult, and geriatric mental health. Together they constitute one of the largest departments in the UCSF School of Medicine and the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences, with a mission focused on research (basic, translational, clinical), teaching, patient care, and public service.

UCSF Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences conducts its clinical, educational, and research efforts at a variety of locations in Northern California, including Langley Porter Psychiatric Hospital and Clinics [7]; UCSF Medical Centers at Parnassus Heights, Mission Bay, and Mount Zion; UCSF Benioff Children?s Hospitals in San Francisco [8] and Oakland [9]; Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center; the San Francisco VA Health Care System; UCSF Fresno; and numerous community-based sites around the San Francisco Bay Area.

About the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences

The UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences [10], established by the extraordinary generosity of Joan and Sanford I. "Sandy" Weill, brings together world-class researchers with top-ranked physicians to solve some of the most complex challenges in the human brain.

The UCSF Weill Institute leverages UCSF?s unrivaled bench-to-bedside excellence in the neurosciences. It unites three UCSF departments?Neurology, Psychiatry, and Neurological Surgery?that are highly esteemed for both patient care and research, as well as the Neuroscience Graduate Program, a cross-disciplinary alliance of nearly 100 UCSF faculty members from 15 basic-science departments, as well as the UCSF Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases, a multidisciplinary research center focused on finding effective treatments for Alzheimer?s disease, frontotemporal dementia, Parkinson?s disease, and other neurodegenerative disorders.

About UCSF

The University of California, San Francisco [11] (UCSF) is exclusively focused on the health sciences and is dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care. UCSF Health [12], which serves as UCSF?s primary academic medical center, includes top-ranked specialty hospitals [13] and other clinical programs, and has affiliations throughout the Bay Area.

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[1] http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK32776/
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