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Over 40 years SteppingStone has embraced growth to be able to care for more clients and meet the emerging needs of the people we serve. In the past this has been accomplished by opening additional adult day health care (ADHC) centers, adding care shifts, or creating specialized programs at the Centers. Now, for the first time, the agency will launch a different type of program: Enhanced Care Management (ECM), which is complimentary to ADHC, but provides services outside of a congregate setting.

SteppingStone believes that the need for the ECM Program is great, both among current clients and within the populations and communities we serve in San Francisco. To meet this mounting need, the ECM program anticipates having a staff of twelve operating from their own offices within a few months of beginning operations on July 1 of this year.



Why is SteppingStone undertaking this large new program? Executive Director, Daniel Gallagher explains:

"SteppingStone has always grasped the need to provide more care to the populations and people we serve and have responded within the structure of adult day health care. When California launched CalAIM, a Medi-Cal expansion to encourage the growth of enhanced care programs, we knew this could help us provide essential services other than through congregate care.

"After long consideration we concluded that launching an ECM program would be in the best interests of our clients and the communities we serve. It also allows SteppingStone to diversify the services it offers, strengthening the agency. Creating the new program is a substantial endeavor, but as a strong non-profit agency we bring multiple assets to the work, most importantly experienced staff members eager to be involved.

"The enhanced care management program will strengthen our existing adult day health care operations by delivering needed additional services to clients and new referrals to our Centers. This is a complimentary program that reinforces our existing operations." Daniel Gallagher, Executive Director.

One of the senior leaders involved in the creation of the ECM Program is Diana Almanza, the Director of Services and Outreach. Diana has great expertise and experience in serving marginalized populations and high-need clients, particularly unhoused and formerly

unhoused residents. For over a decade, Diana led one of SF's largest shelters and currently serves as Chair of the San Francisco Shelter Advisory Commission. Diana sees the need for the new program clearly.



"Large numbers of people simply cannot navigate the health care system to get the support they need. This is particularly difficult for people that speak a primary language other than English or are homeless or have significant health challenges, such as cognitive issues. I see the need for ECM among some of our current ADHC program participants as well.

Their needs are considerable and cannot be fully addressed by ADHC staff, particularly care coordination. They need the additional support ECM can provide.

"California's expansion of Medi-Cal to reach underserved populations and people disconnected from the healthcare system is a good thing and will profoundly help many San Franciscans. I am thrilled SteppingStone is joining this effort and proud to be involved in creating the agency's ECM program." Diana Almanza, Director of Services and Outreach.

What is ECM?

Enhanced Care Management (ECM) is designed to provide comprehensive, personalized care management to individuals with complex healthcare needs. Potential clients are referred to the program and, if found to be eligible under Medi-Cal regulations, they are offered ECM services. Once enrolled, participants receive a comprehensive assessment to identify healthcare priorities, care plans are developed, and service coordination begins.

All ECM program participants receive ongoing care coordination, health monitoring, and assistance with resource navigation as well as advocacy and education so they can make informed decisions about their care. These services are all part of a continuity of care designed to ensure provision of coordinated care and reduce gaps in services.

Unlike adult day health care, ECM is not a congregate care program, but services are delivered where the client can access them. This could be at their home, in the community, at the ECM program offices, or elsewhere that is convenient for the client. The goal is to meet people where they are and connect them to the services they need.

How will the new program work?

SteppingStone's Enhanced Care Program will be led by Jonathan Beavis, MPH, who has served as the agency's Outreach Coordinator for over a year. In that role, Jonathan led the agency's efforts to reach people with complex health needs, particularly formerly unhoused residents, and connect them to care. He worked closely with other institutions serving this population including the SF DPH PHACS Team and many single room occupancy residences (SROs) serving the formerly unhoused.

As the Program Director, Jonathan will lead an ECM specific staff. He sees multiple benefits of the program for SteppingStone clients and the broader community.



"The ECM Program will significantly enhance our ability to provide care to individuals with complex health needs not only at one of our four centers but to other people in the community as well. By implementing ECM, we can ensure that individuals with high medical acuity receive proactive monitoring, personalized care plans, and improved care coordination, leading to better health outcomes.

"I am eager to take on the role of ECM Program Director because I am passionate about healthcare improvement and innovation. Launching the new program will allow all of us involved the opportunity to develop and implement a model that incorporates best practices and evidence-based strategies, which have been shown to improve care for the people we will be serving." Jonathan Beavis, MPH, ECM Program Director.

Asked to consider the future of new ECM Program, Jonathan commented:

"An initial challenge is creating awareness about SteppingStone's new ECM program among healthcare providers, potential participants, and the community. In 6 months, we expect the ECM program will have made significant progress including hiring all staff and opening the program office. By then we anticipate having a well-established referral network and a steady enrollment of program participants. Within a year, we hope to see the ECM program further expanded and integrated into San Francisco's healthcare landscape." Jonathan Beavis, MPH, ECM Program Director.

Over the last four decades, SteppingStone has repeatedly expanded services and enhanced care to serve more people and meet the emerging needs of program participants. What was one ADHC Center in 1983 is now four; when specialized programs became necessary to serve people with Alzheimer's and members of the LGBTQ+ community, they were created.

On July 1, SteppingStone's newest program will begin operations offering Enhanced Care Management to both current clients and other San Franciscans eligible for this service. We will keep you informed as the program moves forward.

To learn more about SteppingStone's Enhanced Care Management program or make a referral, please contact Jonathan Beavis, ECM Program Director at 415 610 8663 or jonathanBeavis@steppingstonehealth.org.

SteppingStone operates four Adult Day Health Care Centers in San Francisco. Nearly all program participants have their care covered by managed care insurance (Medi-Cal, VA), so they have no out-of-pocket expenses. For more information, including reading past issues of this newsletter, visit our website: steppingstonehealth.org

Photos: (Top left) Daniel Gallagher, Executive Director
(Middle 1) Diana Almanza, Director of Services and Outreach
(Middle 2) Jonathan Beavis, Director, Enhanced Care Management Program

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