



Our Year of

## WORKING TOGETHER TO END HOMELESSNESS



## Physical Health, Mental Health, and Addiction Challenges

### Factors Contributing to Physical Health, Mental Health and Addiction Challenges

- » Precedence for food, water, safety, and shelter over seeking health care leads to fragmented care, with high costs and poorer outcomes.
- » Chronic physical health issue(s) interfering with ability to work.
- » Lack of access to routine health care treatment.
- » Untreated mental illness, lower rate of diagnosed mental health disorders, and substance use disorders due to the stigma associated with it and insufficient mental health resources.
- » Lack of emotional and family support can cause sadness and behavioral health issues (addiction).
- » Co-occurring health issues.
- » Continue to experience trauma from being homeless.
- » Resistance to available care due to mistrust and perception of being judged.
- » Insufficient accessible mental health and substance abuse treatment services.
- » Difficulty in contacting services due to cognitive issues.
- » Lack of dependable transportation to attend medical and other appointments.

## Some Current Strategies to Address Health Needs

- » San Mateo County Medical Center and outpatient clinics
- » Primary and mental health care for clients experiencing street homelessness (Street Medicine and Mobile clinic)
- » Mobile Dental Clinic
- » County and CBO (Community Based Organization) outpatient clinics addressing behavioral health and recovery
- » Homeless Health Care Coordination (HCH) Team
- » Service Connect to support adults returning to the community following incarceration
- » Homeless Engagement, Assessment, & Linkage (HEAL) Team field-based outreach, engagement and intervention services
- » Community health and crisis response team (CCRT)
- » Supportive housing options (Mental Health, Veterans, addiction recovery)

## Some Identified Unmet Health Needs to Consider

- » Of the patients experiencing homelessness who received services through the Healthcare for Homeless (HCH) /Farmworker Health (FH) program in 2018, 25.9% (1,201) were diagnosed with mental health disorders and 17.1% (793) were diagnosed with substance use disorders.
- » Unsheltered individuals were more likely to identify incontinence, kidney issues/failure, and accidental falls causing injury as a problem they faced in the last year.
- » Unsheltered populations are at higher risk of cancer due to pollution and exposure to carcinogens.
- » Unsheltered populations are more likely to be diagnosed during the later stages of cancer, resulting in higher cancer mortality rates than sheltered individuals.
- » For both dental pain/problems and chronic pain, unsheltered individuals were slightly more likely to report them as a “major problem” than sheltered individuals.
- » 12% of all patients experiencing homelessness seen in 2021 had a diagnosis of diabetes and 30% were diagnosed with high blood pressure, but these rates are probably low because many homeless individuals living on the streets and in shelters maybe undiagnosed.



### 274 respondents identified these top six problems over the last 12 months in the 2019 HCH/FH survey:

- 1 Stress or anxiety
- 2 Dental pain and other problems
- 3 Feeling depressed
- 4 Feeling lonely, sad, or isolated
- 5 Chronic pain
- 6 Weight management/healthy eating