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FROM COMMUNITY TO CLINIC: A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS FOR PEDIATRIC PATIENTS IN SAN MATEO & SANTA CLARA COUNTIES

Background: Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) serve as central hubs for the delivery of care & resources for our nation's most vulnerable children. Despite improvement efforts, coordination of mental healthcare for youth remains inefficient, resulting in many families never receiving treatment.

Community partner: This initiative was led by iPACT (Mid-Peninsula Pediatric Advocacy Coalition), a collective representing 4 FQHCs from San Mateo & Santa Clara Counties. The initiative was designed to strengthen partnerships between FQHCs, schools, and community organizations providing mental health support services to children and families in aims of enhancing children's access to mental healthcare.

Methods: General pediatric providers, school mental health staff, and county and non-profit pediatric mental health providers were interviewed to identify provider-facing and family-facing barriers and facilitators in accessing and establishing mental health care. Interviewees were asked to disclose what mental health resource gaps were most prevalent in their service population and which existing resources they most actively used.

Results: School-based providers (n=10) were more likely to perceive an overall lack of services, while community-based providers (n=22) were more likely to focus on a lack of trauma informed care. Overwhelmingly participants (n=32) identified the need for a centralized database of mental health providers that allows users to quickly identify care matching their unique insurance, language, and treatment needs.

Implications: Efforts to develop such a resource are underway and will be discussed. Similar efforts should be explored in other communities in aims of bridging the expansive gap between pediatric providers, schools, and mental health clinics.

COMMUNITY PARTNER

IMPACT (MID-PENINSULA PEDIATRIC ADVOCACY COALITION)