



Public Health

# City of Pasadena Public Health Department

Operation Link  
Pasadena, California





# Operation Link Program

Public Health

## Program Description:

Operation Link provides peer case management to homeless individuals living with HIV and newly diagnosed with a history of mental health illness and/or substance abuse. The program provides comprehensive supportive services ranging from housing, mental health and substance abuse through our collaborative partnerships throughout Los Angeles County.



# Issues

## Public Health

- High no-show rates (45-47%)
- Impact on program sustainability
- Impact on HIV care and treatment
- Spread of HIV virus
- Decline in health status, impact on other co-morbidities
- Client resistance in becoming active participates into care (engagement)
- Lost to care and out-of-care (<6-months)



# Programs

## Public Health

- Programs that presented with more issues:
  - Medical Outpatient
  - Medical Care Coordination
  - Mental Health Psychiatric Services
  - Mental Health Counseling Services



# Assessment

## Public Health

Through Operation Link, clients provided feedback on the reasons for not making their medical appointments and other services.

Program Manager conducted observation surveys to gather more understanding of the issues from a programmatic perspective including client feedback, and through case conferences with Peer Navigators.



# Findings

## Public Health

- Provider(s) awareness and practices as it related to the homeless population, lack of understanding of the population and the factors that impacted their engagement into treatment.
- Providers were focused on contractual obligations, felt sense of pressure and driven by contract objectives.
- Programs and services availability and access.
- Provider(s) didn't perceive lack of cultural awareness (self-perception).
- Lack of understanding of chronic mental health issues.



# Interventions

## Public Health

- Provide access to trainings for program staff.
- Staff meetings to discuss constructive feedback about the issues, and presented to provider(s) and staff in a non-judgmental manner to address it from a programmatic quality perspective.
- Presented best-practices regarding flexibility around serving homeless clients, such as changes in scheduling, allowed walk-ins and used crisis intervention (trauma-informed approach).
- Encouraged provider(s) and staff to include an active role of the Peer Navigators, especially when dealing with difficult cases.



# Cont. Interventions

## Public Health

- Provided other supportive services, such as transportation, food and case management.
- Provided a cultural competency training (refresher course).
- Monthly participation in the Client Advisory Board (CAB) to report and get feedback to changes in the programs and services. Encouraged previously homeless clients to provide feedback as to interventions that worked for them.





# Case Presentation

## Public Health

- HIV+ 40 year old Caucasian male has a history of substance abuse, mental illness and chronic homelessness. The client started off well getting linked into various services to help him become stable. The client received a HOPWA Section 8 housing voucher through Pomona Housing Authority. Due to the client's relapse into substance abuse the client lost his voucher. Since then the client dropped out of medical care. The client linked back into medical care as of May 9<sup>th</sup>. And is sleeping on the streets of Pasadena due to



- Enough space in the homeless shelter. The client's PCN linked him to Impact Drug Abuse Program for their outpatient services. The client followed up but due to his perception of being judged because of being homeless the client declined services.



# Contact Information

Public Health

- Angelica Palmeros, MSW

Phone: 626-744-6158

E-mail: [apalmeros@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:apalmeros@cityofpasadena.net)