



University of California  
San Francisco

**UCSF** Center for Vulnerable Populations  
Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital

**Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative**



# California Statewide Survey on Homelessness

# The Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative

# UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative (BHHI)

Cynthia Nagendra

Executive Director

Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative

# UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative (BHHI)

- A research and policy initiative focused on homelessness, housing, and health at UCSF
- Strives to prevent and end homelessness by identifying, evaluating, and communicating research-driven and equitable solutions
  - **responds** to the needs of stakeholders or “end users” by using strategic science
  - **conducts** rigorous and policy-oriented research
  - **translates** evidence into action and policy recommendations
  - **communicates** findings to broad range of stakeholders
  - **informs** homelessness and housing policies, innovative strategies, and equitable solutions

# Webinar Agenda

- I. Welcome by California Health and Human Services
- II. Study's Partners
- III. Study Aims
- IV. Methods
- V. How the CA Statewide Survey is Different
- VI. Timeline and Next Steps



# Partners



California Health Care Foundation



# Welcome

**California Health & Human Services Agency**  
**Secretary Mark Ghaly**





# California Health Care Foundation

**We are an independent, nonprofit philanthropy. We work to improve the health care system for Californians with low incomes and those not well-served by the status quo.**

## **Our big priorities:**

1. Get everyone covered
2. Deliver care better
3. Make care just





# Rachel Wick, Senior Program Officer



Blue Shield of California Foundation is an independent licensee of the Blue Shield Association

**Our mission: To build lasting and equitable solutions that make California the healthiest state and end domestic violence.**

# Margot Kushel MD



- **UCSF Professor of Medicine**
- **Division Chief and Director, Center for Vulnerable Populations**
- **Director, Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative**



**@mkushel**

# Study Aims

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We seek to inform:

- Policies
- Programs
- Perspectives

# Study Aims

- To understand characteristics of adults experiencing homelessness in California
- To characterize immediate precipitants of homelessness
- To understand impact of COVID-19 pandemic on homelessness
- To characterize experiences while homeless
- To understand barriers to housing exits

# Study Aims: Who is homeless?

To understand characteristics of adults experiencing homelessness in California

- Sociodemographic: explore racial/ethnic disparities
- Living Situation
- Education, employment
- Life experiences: trauma, victimization
- Health and Mental Health Status
- Health Related Behaviors

# Study Aims: Prevention Opportunities

To characterize immediate precipitants of homelessness

- What happened in the 6-12 months before this episode?
- What interactions with social service/health systems did people have?

# Study Aims: COVID-19 Pandemic

To understand impact of COVID-19 pandemic on homelessness

- Economic impacts on homelessness entrants
- Experiences during pandemic



# Study Aims

To characterize experiences while homeless

- Victimization
- Living, employment
- Access to food, basic needs
- Health, mental health, substance use
- Interactions with health (physical and mental) systems
- Interactions with homelessness system
- Interactions with social service systems

# Study Aims

To understand barriers to housing exits

- What are preferences?
- What resources do people have?
- What would it take to leave homelessness?
- What barriers are people encountering?

# What We Know & What We Hope to Learn

- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** is evidence-based intervention for people with homelessness & disabling behavioral conditions
  - What proportion of people experiencing homelessness (PEH) in California meet temporal criteria for chronic homelessness?
  - What proportion of PEH have severe behavioral health conditions?
    - differ by length of time homeless?
  - Could one-time or time-limited interventions have prevented:
    - progression to chronic homelessness?
    - worsening of behavioral health conditions?
  - What proportion of PEH may need higher intensity services?
    - functional & cognitive impairment?

# What We Know & What We Hope to Learn

- Behavioral health conditions and intimate partner violence (IPV) experiences increase risk of homelessness
  - What proportion of PEH experienced significant behavioral health disabilities prior to becoming homeless?
  - What effect does homelessness have on behavioral health conditions?
  - What are experiences of victimization while homeless?

# What We Know & What We Hope to Learn

- Two-thirds of people experiencing homelessness in California are unsheltered
  - What proportion are in vehicles? In organized encampments?
  - How does vehicular homelessness differ from unsheltered (without vehicles?)

...AND MORE!

# Methods

# Methods

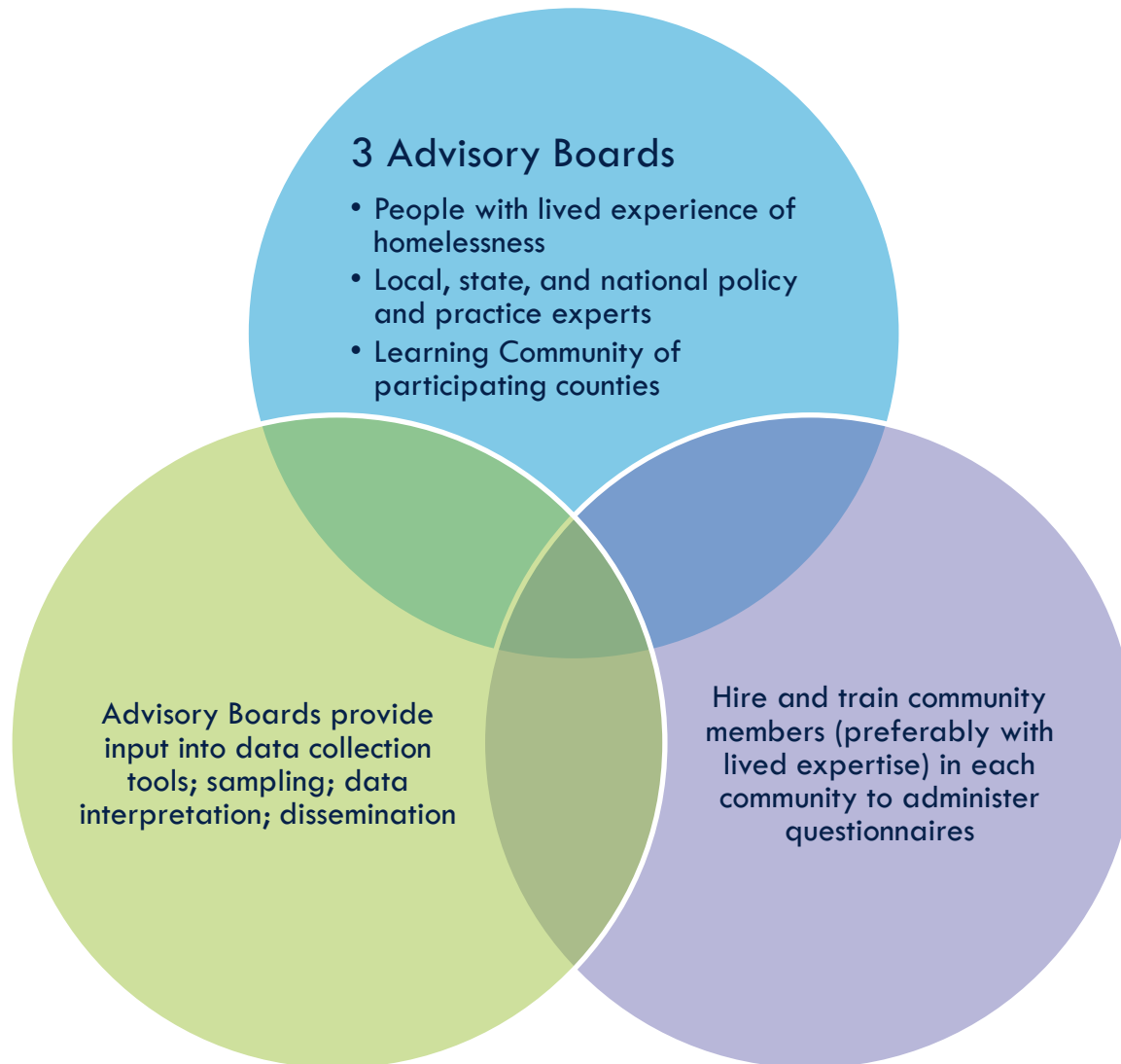
- Community Engaged
  - Three advisory boards
  - Work alongside community members
  
- Mixed Methods
  - Administered Questionnaires
  - In-depth Qualitative Interviews

# Methods: Community Engaged Practices

- Community Advisory Boards
  - Lived Expertise (Statewide)
  - Programmatic and Policy Advisors (State, National)
  - Learning Community (representatives from each County)
- Give input on sampling, data collection, interpretation, dissemination
- Community Partnered
  - Hire and train community members to conduct interviews



# Community Engagement and Participation



# Methods: Sample

- **8\* Counties**
  - Selected to be representative of California
  - Urban, Rural, Coastal, Inland, Northern, Southern
  - High and low rates of homelessness
- **350-500 participants per County**
  - Selected to be representative of population of adults experiencing homelessness
  - Adults (whether single or in families)
- **Sample**
  - “Venue” based (shelters, encampments, free and low-cost food lines, recycling centers)
  - Additional sampling techniques for hard-to-reach populations
- **Financial Incentive**

\* 9 Counties, because we will use one two-county cluster

# Methods: Administered Questionnaire

- **Domains**
  - Demographics, race/ethnicity; gender identity; age
  - Living Situation, Employment/Income
  - Precipitants/Precursors Homelessness
  - Mental and Physical Health
  - Victimization
  - Criminal Justice
  - Use of Services
  
- **Medical/Behavioral, Homeless Services/Social Services**
  - Barriers to Housing Exits
  
- **Descriptive Statistics and Associations**

# Methods: Qualitative Research

- Multiple embedded qualitative studies
  - In-Depth interviews
- Participants selected based on responsive to questionnaires
- Topics include:
  - Immediate precipitants of homelessness/missed opportunities
  - Interactions with health systems while homeless
  - Barriers to housing exits
  - Victimization
  - TBD
- Focus Groups with homeless system providers
- Qualitative Data provide rich, contextual information about experiences

# What is different about the CA State Survey?

# How is CA State Survey different from other sources of data?

- Not a substitute for Point In Time (PIT) Counts
  - The goal of survey is **not** enumeration
  - The survey is **not** CoC specific
    - Meant to generate state-wide relative estimates of subpopulations with descriptions of those, but not enumeration
- Different than administrative data (HMIS, HDIS)
  - Primary data collection
  - Not reliant on use of services
  - More contextual information about individual experiences

# What the CA State Survey will NOT Do

- Will **not** impact county funding, allocations, or abilities to apply for state funding
- Will **not** evaluate program or system performance
- Will **not** lead to preferential treatment for funding awards for participating Counties

# How the CA State Survey will be used

- Give a State-wide picture of homelessness
  - Increase knowledge about unsheltered populations
  - Fill existing gaps in knowledge about homelessness
  - Examine effects of COVID-19 on homelessness
  - Inform local and State policy decisions
- 
- For participating Counties: We will share data for internal use



# Timeline and Next Steps

# Timeline and Next Steps

- Developing draft questionnaire
- Will convene Advisory Boards shortly
- Have notified two early counties for preliminary planning
- Will bring selected counties on board (2-3 at a time)
- Plan to start surveys this summer
  - 2-3 weeks per County
  - 12-15 months data collection
- Interval results

# Questions

# Contact and Follow Us!

Website: <https://homelessness.ucsf.edu>

Email: [BHHIStateSurvey@ucsf.edu](mailto:BHHIStateSurvey@ucsf.edu)



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