California Statewide Survey on Homelessness
The Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative
UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative (BHHI)

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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
Welcome

California Health & Human Services Agency
Secretary Mark Ghaly
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

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
Study Aims

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?
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

3 Advisory Boards
- People with lived experience of homelessness
- Local, state, and national policy and practice experts
- Learning Community of participating counties

Advisory Boards provide input into data collection tools; sampling; data interpretation; dissemination

Hire and train community members (preferably with lived expertise) in each community to administer questionnaires
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!

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