

Connecting Emergency Patients with Mental Health Care

KP South Bay Emergency Department pilots a behavioral health navigation program.

Behavioral health diseases impact a patient's ability to live a healthy life on their own. Receiving the right resources for follow-up care and treatment can make all the difference for patients with substance use disorder (SUD). To kick off National Mental Health Awareness Month, we're highlighting a pilot program launching in Kaiser Permanente South Bay's Emergency Department to provide those resources.



The program is made possible by a \$1.5 million grant to Kaiser Permanente Southern California from the California Department of Health Care Services. All 15 Kaiser Permanente Southern California medical centers were given \$100,000 to improve the treatment of SUD and mental health disorders by helping navigate patients in the emergency department into ongoing substance use treatment and social services.

Kaiser Permanente South Bay Medical Center has partnered with Behavioral Health Services, Inc. (BHS), a nonprofit that will deploy two Behavioral Health Navigators to serve as case managers in our emergency department. Navigators will work with hospital staff and community agencies to help direct identified patients to behavioral health resources, housing referrals, and other social health services, such as food and transportation.

“Our BHS partners will coordinate follow-up, medication-assisted treatment for patients with substance use disorder,” says Barry Brewer, emergency department administrator. “Not only will this improve the care experience for our patients, but it also will help lower unnecessary utilization of hospital resources by connecting patients to the right care, at the right time, at the right place.”

[BHS](#) is a non-profit, community-based healthcare organization that provides substance abuse, mental health, and older adult services; drug-free transitional living; HIV/AIDS education and prevention; and other related health services via 25 sites throughout Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

Kaiser Permanente is proud to offer this service through our facilities and encourages everyone to make their mental well-being a priority. For tools, tips, and resources, visit kp.org/chlscal/mentalhealth.