

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Recuperative Care Program Established on Central Coast  
to Help Plight of Local Homeless**

Successful Pilot Program Opens Door For \$1 Million  
in Recuperative Care Funding from CenCal Health

**Santa Barbara, CA** - February 5, 2019 - **CenCal Health** announces a collaborative new program that provides safe recuperative care to local homeless who are not sick enough to be hospitalized, but are too frail to recover from their illness or injury on the streets. The goals of the [Recuperative Care Program \(RCP\)](#) are (1) to address where and how the homeless recover after hospitalizations in order to improve health outcomes, (2) to break the costly cycle of emergency room as first-line medical care, and (3) to improve the lives of the most vulnerable in the health plan's service area of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. RCPs launched in other communities have shown that the program reduces Emergency Department utilization and hospital readmission rates of homeless residents.

“We became aware of this need in the community through on-going relationships with our medical partners and local social service agencies,” said **Bob Freeman**, CEO of CenCal Health. “We are proud to be able to provide payment for up to 90 days for those **Medi-Cal** members who need these comprehensive medical services. Together with our local partners, we plan to disrupt the cycle of preventable re-hospitalizations for our members experiencing homelessness.” CenCal Health will provide a funding plan for the Recuperative Care Program in both counties with up to a \$1 Million budget allocation, based on utilization.

For San Luis Obispo County and northern Santa Barbara County, CenCal Health is partnering with **Dignity Health, Tenet Healthcare, Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO)** and **Good Samaritan Shelter**. RCP partners in Santa Barbara include **Cottage Health** and **People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)**.

Hospitals and health plans nationwide have faced considerable challenges in identifying appropriate discharge options for patients who do not have safe, clean homes to go to.

This situation often results in unnecessary hospital stays, preventable readmissions, and increased costs for the health care system. To circumvent those negative outcomes, the Recuperative Care Program model provides:

- 24-hour bed with supervision of meals, showers, clothing, and basic Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
- Transportation to pharmacy and medical appointments
- Nursing education and support
- Medication reconciliation, dosing, and set up
- Review of compliance and patient education
- Communication with providers and coordination of care
- Case Management
- Discharge Planning
- Coordination with home health, mental health, drug/alcohol, and other supportive services
- Referrals and linkages to housing, self-sufficiency, social services, etc.

In 2017, CenCal Health, along with **Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO)**, successfully completed a RCP pilot in San Luis Obispo County, which included supervised shelter, meals, showers, patient education and transportation to medical appointments among other supportive services. The positive outcome of the year-long pilot resulted in the continuation and expansion of that program into northern Santa Barbara County, and helped inspire the recent launch of a similar program in southern Santa Barbara County.

The Recuperative Care Pilot Program was based on the **Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program** started in 1985. This program experienced 50% lower odds of early re-admission or death, 1 less inpatient day, and \$1,740 less inpatient charges at 90 days. A similar program in Orange County, CA experienced an annual cost savings of \$7 Million and an 84% reduction in Emergency Department visits.

Both Central Coast counties now have Recuperative Care Programs in place. In October of 2018, CAPSLO moved the RCP to its new *40 Prado Homeless Service Center* in San Luis Obispo, where the number of available RCP beds increased by 50%. Primary medical services and a pilot to provide behavioral health services are now available at 40 Prado. Integrated primary care and behavioral health services are also provided at Good Samaritan Shelter in Santa Maria.

### **About CenCal Health**

Serving the community since 1983, CenCal Health provides comprehensive health coverage to nearly 180,000 men, women and children enrolled in Medi-Cal. This regional health plan partners with over 1,500 local physicians and other providers to deliver quality patient care to approximately 1 in 4 residents of Santa Barbara County and 1 in 5 residents of San Luis Obispo County. CenCal Health also collaborates with community-based organizations to address social determinants of health while increasing members' access to medical care and reducing costs. The oldest Medicaid managed care plan of its kind, CenCal Health is a not-for-profit agency that employs close to 250 people at offices in both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo. For more information, visit [cencalhealth.org](http://cencalhealth.org).

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