



**STANISLAUS COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES**

# CULTURAL COMPETENCY UPDATE

*...a newsletter to address cultural issues that enable us to effectively work in cross cultural situations.*

## **Behavioral Health and Recovery Services**

*Substance Use Education & Prevention Services*

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I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the ongoing efforts Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) has been making to address the epidemic of opioid misuse and abuse in our community. The magnitude of this crisis can be summarized by an October 2017 report in the New York Times: “The current opioid epidemic is the deadliest crisis in American history. Overdoses, fueled by opioids, are the leading cause of death for Americans under 50 years old – killing roughly 64,000 people last year, more than guns or car accidents, and doing so at a pace faster than the HIV epidemic did at its peak.”

In 2017, Stanislaus County experienced 15 deaths due to opioid-related overdoses. A contributing factor is the number of opioid painkiller prescriptions. The average rate of opioid painkiller prescriptions in Stanislaus County is still one prescription for every man, woman and child (529,832 opioid prescriptions in 2017). People who abuse prescription painkillers get their drugs from a variety of sources. The clear majority obtain them for free from friends and family members. Proper disposal is key to reducing access.

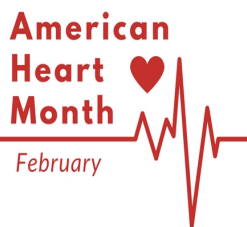
In 2009 BHRS initiated the Drop the Drugs program, an event that offers our community the opportunity to dispose of unused, unwanted, or expired prescription medications several times per year. As the demand for more disposal opportunities increased, BHRS partnered with our local law enforcement agencies beginning in 2014 on the Permanent Prescription Medication Drop Box Program. Permanent, secure disposal boxes are now located in all our county’s law enforcement lobbies.

A cross sector lens is needed to address this public health and safety challenge. In counties/regions across California, opioid safety coalitions have been formed to coordinate and support opioid epidemic-related initiatives. In July 2018 BHRS collaborated with Stanislaus County Public Health to create the Stanislaus County Opioid Safety Coalition, which has held five meetings to date. Under the guidance of Dr. Bernardo Mora, Interim Medical Director for BHRS and Dr. Julie Vaishampayan, Public Health Officer for Stanislaus County Health Services Agency, the Opioid Safety Coalition brings together a diverse group of community members, including treatment professionals, physicians, public health officials, law enforcement, pharmacists, school officials, community-based service organizations, consumers, and community members. Through the creation of three work groups, Community Education & Outreach, Opioid Use Disorder Treatment, and Provider Education and Safer Prescribing Practices, the Coalition addresses the challenges opioids present and develop strategies that will lead to solutions for a safer and healthier Stanislaus County.

The Mission Statement of the Opioid Safety Coalition reads, “To build a sustainable community of partnerships committed to preventing and reducing opioid misuse and abuse by promoting a culture of wellness through education, prevention, treatment and recovery support.” On January 24th, the Coalition takes its next steps toward achieving its mission through the launch of the website StanCountyRxSafety.org (available in both English and Spanish). The Coalition will also be hosting our county’s first Stanislaus County Opioid Safety Awareness Summit on Wednesday, March 27th, 2019. Please join us as we move towards a common vision and explore how to best address the needs of our community. Summit registration is now open.



**BHRS Cultural Competence, Equity and Social Justice Committee meets on the 2nd Monday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the Martin Conference Room, 830 Scenic Drive**



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## **Highlights of December CCESJC Meeting** **The National Alliance on Mental Health Illness**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization. NAMI provides education, advocacy, and support to individuals living with mental health conditions and to their loved ones. NAMI Stanislaus is a local affiliate of NAMI California. NAMI Stanislaus reaches community members from diverse backgrounds both because of the variety of programs we offer and because of the variety of venues at which we offer our programs. We have programs for both youth and adults. We also have programs for individuals living with mental health conditions and for the loved ones of those individuals. We offer our support groups and classes in both Modesto and Turlock. We offer our presentation programs at schools, colleges, shelters, and other community centers throughout the county.

Upon request, we also offer Provider Education training, a training designed specifically for mental health professionals. Except for the Provider Education training, all the programs mentioned in this article are available to the community free of charge. Currently, none of these programs or presentation are offered in other languages, but we are in the process of recruiting individuals to present in other languages, such as Spanish.

NAMI Stanislaus is located at 500 N. 9th Street, Modesto, CA 95350. Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 11:00 am. If you would like additional information, please call (209) 558-4555, or call Ms. Darlene Thomas, (209) 656-8855.

### **February is American Heart Month**

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Heart Disease is the leading cause of death for men and women. About 630,000 Americans die from heart disease each year. The good news? Heart Disease can often be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their conditions. Preventing Heart Disease You can make healthy changes to lower your risk of developing heart disease. Controlling and preventing risk factors is also important for people who already have heart disease. To lower your risk:

- Eat a healthy diet high in fresh fruits, vegetables and fiber and low in processed food, saturated fat, sodium and sugar
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Do physical activity of moderate intensity for 30 minutes, five days a week such as bicycling or brisk walking
- Don't smoke
- Limit alcohol intake
- If you are on blood pressure medicine, remember to take it!



**If you have questions or suggestions regarding Cultural Competency, please e-mail:  
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