THE PROBLEM

Substance use disorder is a high-risk chronic illness, but for too many patients treatment is unaffordable, unavailable, or ineffective.

TRANSFORMING ADDICTION TREATMENT STARTING IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM

THE SOLUTION

CA Bridge is disrupting addiction treatment by approaching substance use disorder as a condition that can, and should, be treated by medical professionals like any other life-threatening medical condition. As a grantee of California’s MAT Expansion Project, we are currently working with 52 hospitals to make rapid response treatment widely available. Three pillars comprise the core elements of our model:

- Rapid, Evidence-based Treatment
- Culture of Respect
- Connection to Ongoing Care and Community

OUR GOAL

is to transform the way people who use drugs get help by ensuring that every hospital in California provides 24/7 access to evidence-based treatment.
HELP SAVE LIVES!

OUR STORY

Currently most medical providers do not treat addiction. In fact, people who come to emergency rooms in withdrawal are often stigmatized, provided minimum symptom management (e.g., Tylenol, fluids), then sent away with a list of clinics likely inaccessible, with high costs and long waiting lists. CA Bridge is changing the conversation about addiction. We are engaging the health care community to deliver medication for addiction treatment (MAT), which is highly effective for opioid use and gives medical providers a concrete tool for saving lives. We are also promoting more effective, just and humane responses to people addicted to any type of drugs. Momentum is on our side, with increasing numbers of California hospitals joining our movement to make treatment available 24/7. It is time for health care to become an integral part of a new approach to addiction.

MORE ABOUT MAT

Medication for Addiction Treatment, or MAT, uses FDA-approved medications to treat substance use disorder. Common MAT include buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone. Research has shown that MAT is highly effective because it is associated with:

- Reduced or no withdrawal symptoms (the feeling of extreme sickness)
- Reduced or no cravings
- Preventing opioid-related overdoses
- Reduced likelihood of using again

OUR UNIQUE APPROACH

The CA Bridge model dramatically lowers barriers to treatment by eliminating medically unnecessary barriers and quickly providing patients with what they are seeking—immediate relief from withdrawal. We’ve designed a process that meets patients where they are and works in the real world of busy hospitals. Once patients are stabilized, they are better equipped to engage in conversation about long-term treatment, which they do with a Substance Use Navigator (SUN) – a peer from the community, often with lived experience. Based on a harm reduction perspective, we emphasize rapid, patient-centered care and human connections. More information can be found at BridgetoTreatment.org

California Bridge is a program of the Public Health Institute. Our goal is that people with substance use disorder receive 24/7 high-quality care in every California health system. Funding for CA Bridge is provided through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant to the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).