

The California Bridge Model

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THE PROBLEM

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

THE GOAL

Transform the way people who use drugs get help by ensuring that every hospital in California provides 24/7 access to evidence-based treatment.

THE SOLUTION

CA Bridge is changing 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, the program is currently working with 52 hospitals to make rapid response treatment widely available.

Three pillars comprise the core elements of the model:

- Rapid, Evidence-based Treatment
- Culture of Respect
- Linkage to Ongoing Care



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THE CALIFORNIA BRIDGE 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. California Bridge is instead 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. The program also promises more effective, just and humane responses to people addicted to any type of drugs. To date, 52 hospitals in California have joined the program and are working to make treatment available 24/7. It is time for health care to become an integral part of a new approach to addiction.



MEDICATION FOR ADDICTION TREATMENT

An essential part of evidence-based rapid response treatment and highly effective in acute care settings.



TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Supporting hospitals seeking information on rapid treatment for substance use disorders.

A UNIQUE APPROACH

The California 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. The process 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, the program emphasizes 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 working to ensure that people with substance use disorder receive 24/7 high-quality care in every California health system by 2025. We seek to fully integrate addiction treatment into standard medical practice — increasing access to treatment to save more lives.