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FIRST 5 CONTRA COSTA AWARDED NEARLY \$2.4 MILLION IN ACES AWARE IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

First 5 Contra Costa, in partnership Contra Costa Crisis Center and La Clínica Pittsburg Medical, has been selected to receive an ACES Aware implementation grant totaling \$2,355,708 from the Office of the California Surgeon General (CA-OSG) and the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to participate in the state's [ACES Aware initiative](#).

"Our first round of ACES Aware grants brought medical, behavioral health, and community organizations together to imagine a system that prevents, screens for, treats and heals from ACEs," said Dr. Ruth Fernández, Executive Director, First 5 Contra Costa. "This latest funding will take this dreaming and put it into practice. When medical providers like La Clínica and community resources like the Crisis Center can integrate their work, our county is all the readier to interrupt and heal cycles of toxic stress."

First 5 Contra Costa and their partners will seek to mitigate the toxic stress response, build resilience, and limit the intergenerational transmission of ACEs by screening children age 0 to 5 years and their primary caregivers and connecting them with buffering resources and support structures in their communities. Recognizing the impact of maternal toxic stress on a child's development, the work will have a strong focus on screening prenatal and postpartum mothers and creating supports and community referral systems that connect them with the resources they most need.

"Our program encourages caregivers to focus on their own wellbeing as a way to create a stable home and to build resiliency in their children. This is important for all mothers, but especially so for those with toxic stress related to their own ACEs," said Dr. Barbara Botelho of La Clínica Pittsburg Medical. "At La Clínica, many of our patients have traumas stemming from both poverty and discrimination. By partnering with the Crisis Center and First 5, we hope to provide the material support and the tools to help them heal."



In addition to screening caregivers and children ages 0-5, the project will build resilience in children and mothers by referring them to community supports, including:

- Mental health services for the mother to address positive ACES screening or other mental health issues including postnatal depression
- Breastfeeding support
- Support for basic needs, with a particular focus on addressing food insecurity and homelessness
- Community-building opportunities
- Parenting classes and education on normal infant development
- Resources for cultivating parental wellbeing

“In our work building a Network of Care, we’ve learned that our medical community is well aware of ACEs and the effects of toxic stress. Where they’ve struggled is answering the question, ‘what’s next?’ after they screen for ACEs,” said Wanda Davis, Early Intervention Program Officer, First 5 Contra Costa. *“This latest round of ACEs Aware grant funding will answer that question by connecting providers and systems of care to one another. When it comes to screening, treating, and healing ACEs, we don’t have to go it alone.”*

The second round of ACEs Aware grants focuses on planning and implementing networks of care across the state, including developing information technology platforms that provide the connectivity and integration necessary to move from screening, to treatment, to healing.

“The science is clear: Without intervention, Adverse Childhood Experiences and the resulting toxic stress response can lead to lasting negative mental and physical health outcomes,” said California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris. *“These grants will strengthen the capacity of our networks of care to support health care providers to effectively screen, treat, and heal patients with ACEs.”*

A total of \$30.8 million in second round ACEs Aware grant funding was awarded to 35 organizations across California to build and strengthen robust “networks of care” to effectively respond to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress with community-based health and social supports that meet the needs of children, adults, and families.

The full list of ACEs Aware grantees is available on the [ACES Aware Website](#).



About First 5 Contra Costa

[First 5 Contra Costa](#) helps young children start school healthy, nurtured and ready to learn by investing in programs and activities focused on child development.

About La Clínica Medical

The mission at [La Clínica Medical](#) is to improve the quality of life of diverse communities by providing culturally appropriate, high quality, and accessible health care for all.

About Contra Costa Crisis Center

The mission of the [Contra Costa Crisis Center](#) is to keep people alive and safe, help them through crises, and provide or connect them with culturally relevant services in the community.

About ACEs Aware

Led by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, California Surgeon General, and Dr. Karen Mark, Medical Director for DHCS, the ACEs Aware initiative offers Medi-Cal providers core training, screening tools, clinical protocols, and payment for screening children and adults for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which are stressful or traumatic experiences people have by age 18 that were identified in the [landmark ACE Study](#). ACEs describe 10 categories of adversities in three domains – abuse, neglect, and/or household dysfunction. ACEs are strongly associated with at least nine out of 10 of the leading causes of death in the United States. Part of Governor Gavin Newsom's *California for All* initiative, the goal of ACEs Aware is to reduce ACEs and toxic stress by half in one generation. Follow ACEs Aware on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

Office of the California Surgeon General

The role of California Surgeon General was created in 2019 by Governor Gavin Newsom to advise the Governor, serve as a leading spokesperson on public health matters, and drive solutions to the state's most pressing public health challenges. As California's first Surgeon General, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris has established early childhood, health equity, and ACEs and toxic stress as key priorities.

California Department of Health Care Services



DHCS is the backbone of California's health care safety net, helping millions of low-income and disabled Californians each and every day. The mission of DHCS is to provide Californians with access to affordable, integrated, high-quality health care, including medical, dental, mental health, substance use treatment services, and long-term care. DHCS' vision is to preserve and improve the overall health and well-being of all Californians. DHCS funds health care services for about 13 million Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

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