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Household Assessments in South LA Reveal Strong Demand for Mental Health Resources

By Lauren Walters

On July 13, 2024, South Central Heals held a community convening at the Florence Library. The convening's purpose was to introduce South Central Heals Community Public Health Team (CPHT) to the community, share results from household assessments completed, gather input from community members about how South Central Heals can best address their concerns, and to provide a variety of resources on mental health, substance use, education and employment, and medical and dental services.

Demand for mental health resources

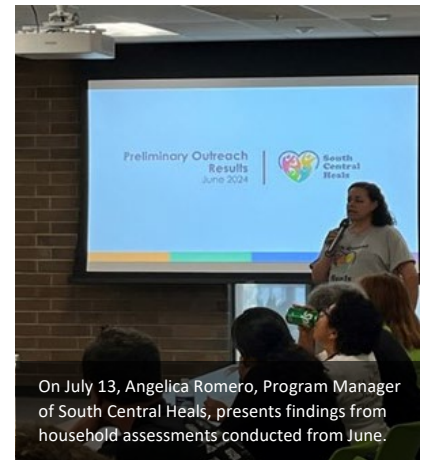
South Central Heals conducts household assessments to gather health needs and connect people to care in Florence-Firestone, South Los Angeles, West Vernon, and South Park. In June, these household assessments revealed a strong demand for mental health resources. At the community convening, Angelica Romero, Program Manager of South Central Heals shared these findings with community members. Attendees also identified challenges related to mental health including lack of care, substance abuse, and stress in their daily lives.

At the community convening, community workers from Department of Mental Health (DMH) presented on wellbeing and peer mental health counseling sessions available to the community. A Resource Navigator from Public Health provided information about substance abuse support groups at the Healing and Trauma Prevention Center in the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Public Health. A representative from Aaron Community Cultural Center distributed literature on life skills development and family support courses. Lastly, St. John's Community Health facilitated small group activities and shared informational brochures for their low-cost and no cost medical and dental services. Staff from Lead Free Homes LA were also present and provided informative flyers about free and reduced cost home lead remediation.

South Central Heals is addressing these issues by connecting community members to Public Health and DMH services while expanding its mental health network through new partnerships. This includes initiatives that involve local influential groups—such as barbers and religious leaders—with the goal of reducing stigma and promoting mental health education to community members. Through its Community Action Plan, South Central Heals works to provide resources while acknowledging the cultural and socioeconomic factors contributing to mental health challenges.

A commitment to combat stigma and meet needs

South Central Heals is dedicated to reducing the stigma of mental health in South Los Angeles. Henry Saray, a Community Health Worker from South Central Heals with a background in mental health care, had a major role in planning the community convening. He believes breaking the silence around mental health is key to combatting cultural stigma, "We've been social victims of mental health deficiencies. The only way to combat this is by making visible what we've been told not to talk about." South Central Heals looks forward to continuing its work to reduce stigma and improve mental health access in the community.



On July 13, Angelica Romero, Program Manager of South Central Heals, presents findings from household assessments conducted from June.

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Henry Saray