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DHS NEWS

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Health Department Awarded \$162M for Innovation in Treating Uninsured

10 California Counties to Share \$540M for Programs Addressing Healthcare Crisis

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS) is one of 10 counties in the state that will receive a portion of a \$540 million pot of federal funds to develop an innovative healthcare program for low income, uninsured adult patients, the Governor’s office announced today.

Los Angeles County was awarded the largest and maximum allocation of \$54 million annually for three years in the competitive bid, referred to as the Coverage Initiative, for a total funding allocation of \$162 million for its “Healthy Way L.A.” program, which will start September 1.

The local initiative will enroll 94,000 uninsured county patients, many with chronic illnesses, in a program that establishes a community based medical home for the patient in the county’s health centers and public/private partner (PPP) clinics. The program will provide access to primary care services and regular treatment for chronic diseases.

Federal funding restrictions in the coverage initiative limit enrollees to adult citizens or documented residents living at the federal poverty level.

“We’re thrilled with the news and pleased that the state recognized the innovation of the DHS team in addressing ways to improve care to the uninsured, the single biggest threat to healthcare in the state and the country,” said DHS director and chief medical officer Bruce Chernof, M.D.

The department spent four months planning and writing its proposal, with extensive input from community stakeholders on ways to reform the current health system within a defined patient segment. A cornerstone of “Healthy Way L.A.” effort is to provide coordinated care by establishing a medical home for the patient in his or her community for preventive services and chronic disease management for conditions like diabetes, asthma, and congestive heart failure.

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The “Healthy Way” program has an evaluation process built in that officials believe will illustrate better health outcomes for patients and greater efficiencies in services after two years.

“The real savings will be shorter lines in our emergency rooms and better care for some of our most seriously ill patients,” added Chernof. “This effort is all about improving quality of life.”