



# Alameda County **Health Care for the Homeless**

## StreetHealth Program (Oakland, CA): Bringing Mental Health Care to Those Who Need it Most



Aislinn Bird, MD, MPH, Psychiatrist  
Seth Gomez, PharmD, BCPP



# Objectives

- Discuss the importance of public psychiatry
- Discuss StreetHealth: Psychiatry Backpack Medicine Program
- Discuss future directions



# Public Psychiatry

- ❖ Uninsured or public insurance
- ❖ Care provided in federal, state, county or not-for-profit clinics, hospitals, and street medicine teams



## Behavioral Health Care is Needed:

- ❖ 1 in 5 US adults experience a behavioral health condition each year<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ 1 in 25 US adults experience a serious mental illness (SMI) each year<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for people ages 10-34<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ 43.3% of US adults with a mental illness received treatment in 2018<sup>1</sup>



## Lack of Psychiatry Providers:

- ❖ 40% of psychiatrist work in cash-only private practices<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ 10% decrease of psychiatrist working in the public and private health insurance sector from 2003-2013<sup>2</sup>



# Public Psychiatry Fellowships

## UCSF Public Psychiatry Fellowship

- Started in 2011 & Modeled after Columbia University's fellowship
- Director: Dr. Christina Mangurian, MD, MAS
- Residency Data:
  - Total number of graduates: 29
  - Current class size: 4
  - Percent retained in the public sector immediately after graduation: 90%
  - Percent of graduates currently retained in the public sector: 76%

## Stanford University

- Public Psychiatry Residency Track



# How This All Got Started

- Psychiatry Residency at Stanford University, Chief Resident (2012-2016)
- Attended UCSF Public Psychiatry Fellowship (2016-2017)
  - Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless/LifeLong Medical TRUST Clinic
    - Integrated care clinic for people who are houseless or housing insecure
- HRSA Access Increases for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (AIMS) Award
  - Started StreetHealth: Backpack street psychiatry program (2017)
- StreetHealth: Expanding to 14 teams to cover all of Alameda County
  - Multiple funding streams including HRSA and MHSA



# Houselessness in Alameda County

- Alameda County Point-In-Time Count (PITC). January 30, 2019.
  - 8,022 persons experiencing houselessness on this one night<sup>3</sup>
  - 6,312 persons unsheltered (literally homeless, HUD-defined homeless)<sup>3</sup>
  - Does not include people doubled up, incarcerated, hospitalized, trading sex for shelter
  
- Projected Yearly Count:
  - Urban Institute (2000): multiple the PITC single night count by 4.15-5.18 to give an estimated prevalence of yearly homelessness<sup>4</sup>
  - Estimate: 33,291 persons experiencing houselessness in Alameda County in 2019





# Barriers to Care

Stigma

Not feeling  
safe leaving  
belongings

Trauma

Limited clinical  
access

Not knowing  
community  
resources

Transportation

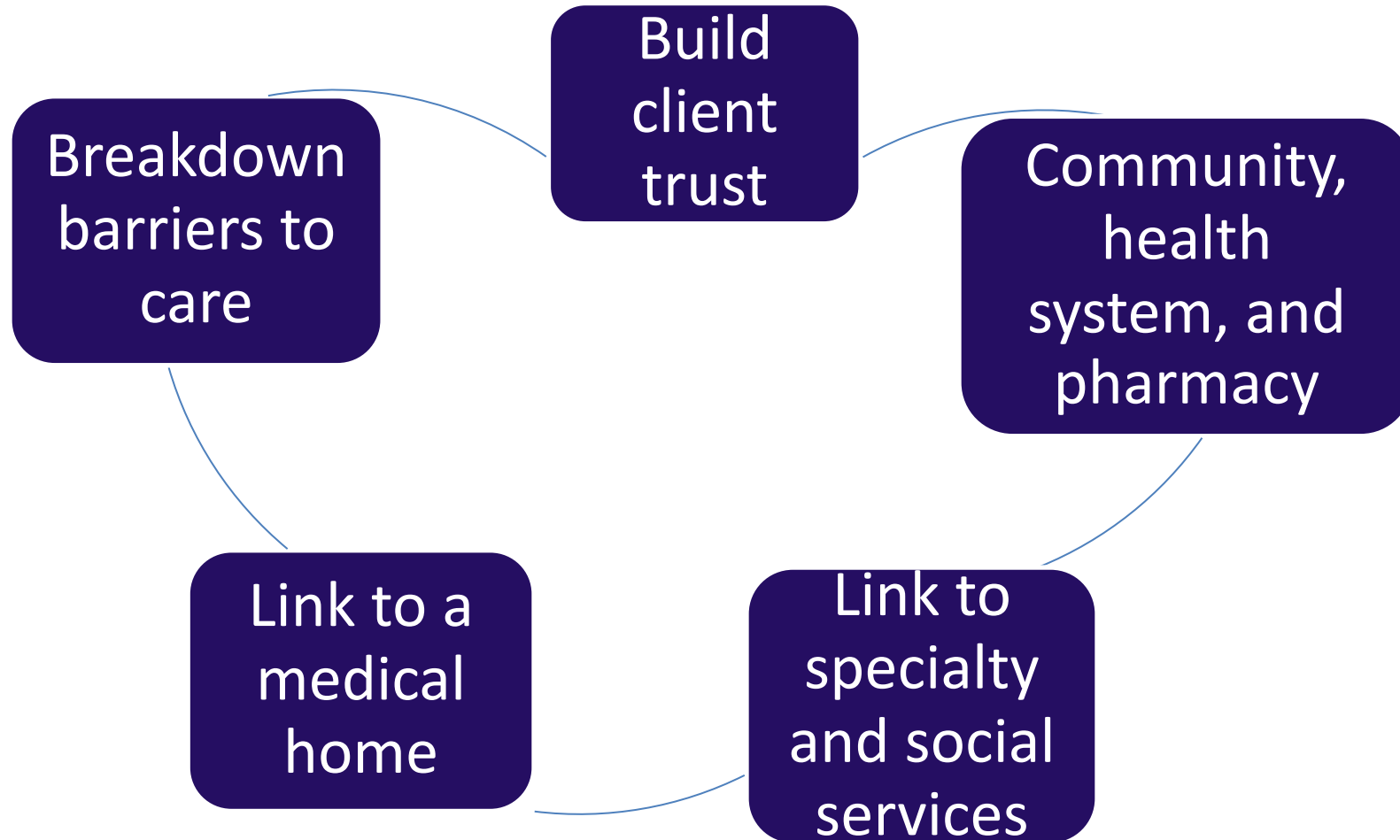
Lack of ID

Finances

Lack of  
coordination  
of care



# StreetHealth Goals





# StreetHealth Program Design: Go To People

- ❖ Backpack street medicine
- ❖ Registered Nurse-led multi-disciplinary teams
  - Scheduled encampment and street outreach
- ❖ Multi-jurisdictional coordination
- ❖ High level of community collaboration



# StreetHealth Services

- Behavioral Health Assessments and Treatment
- Substance Use Assessments and Treatment
- Risk assessments
- Intensive Case Management
- Social Services
- Basic First Aid
- Linkage to a medical home



Alameda County  
**Health Care for  
the Homeless**

# StreetHealth: Role of Team Members



# Nurse Care Manager (RN)

Mostly field based

Schedules field appointments with providers

Outreach and engagement

Provides health education and wound care

Health triage and basic first aid

Monitors inventory of 'backpack' medicine



# Community Health Outreach Worker

Mostly field based

Benefits enrollment

Outreach and engagement

Health related referrals (e.g. dental,  
optometry)

Coordinated Entry System (housing)  
applications

Connects client with community  
resources



# Intensive Case Manager

Mostly office based

Supports clients with achieving their goals

Assist with attending appointments

Benefits and legal advocacy

Employment assistance

Reconnecting with family





# Providers

## ❖ Psychiatric Provider (MD/NP/PharmD):

- Hybrid field/office based
- MD/NP- initial & follow up behavioral health assessments
- PharmD- follow up assessments
- Prescribe and dispense medicines in the field as needed

## ❖ Medical Provider (MD/NP):

- Hybrid field/office based
- Assessment, diagnosis, treatment of health conditions
- Consultation and telemedicine support for team

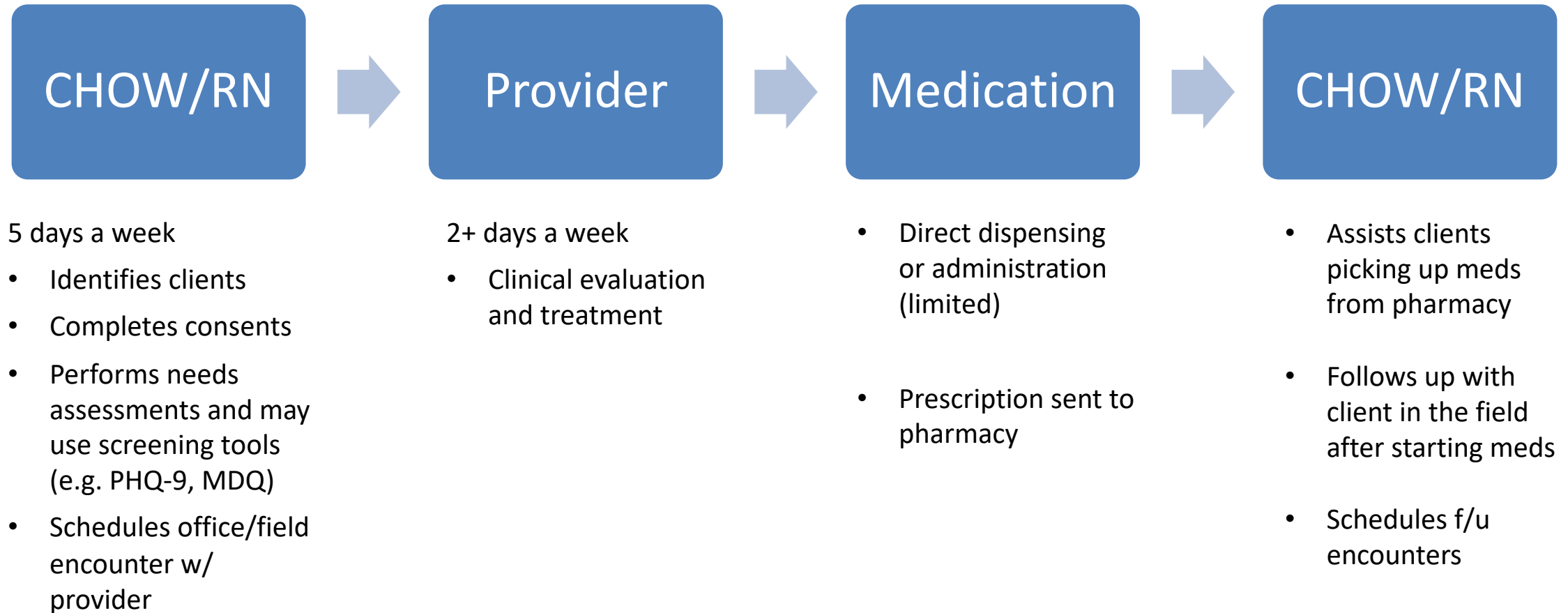


Alameda County  
**Health Care for  
the Homeless**

# **StreetHealth: Service Delivery Framework**



# Street Health Psychiatry





# Medication Related Services

Wound management supplies

Harm Reduction – naloxone  
distribution

Psychotropic medications

Medication Assisted Treatment



# Psychotropic Medications

May take multiple encounters  
before medications introduced

Anti-depressants

Anti-psychotics

Anti-anxiety medicine

Long acting injectable  
anti-psychotics

No controlled substances



# Medication Assisted Treatment

May take multiple encounters  
before medications introduced

Buprenorphine

Naltrexone

Nicotine Replacement Therapy



## Medication Related Services

Decisions to medicate are made collaboratively between providers and clients

Prescribe (+/- dispense) 1-2 weeks medication supply

Clear follow-up plan

Support client to pick up medications as needed



Patients prescribed buprenorphine (Bupe) to date: 36

November 2018- April 2019

Patients who were prescribed bupe: 19

Never filled bupe prescription: 5

Patients who filled prescription provided in the field: 9

Patient who filled prescription provided in the clinic: 5

Average weeks of prescription filled in the field: 2.6 weeks

Average weeks of prescription filled in the clinic: 9.4 weeks





## Data: July 1, 2018- June 20, 2019

- Individuals with trackable outreach encounters: 369
- Individuals with 1+ Enabling Service (HRSA UDS criteria): 254 (69%)
- Individuals with an enabling service linked to clinic: 54 (21%)
- People linked to clinic with 3+ visits: 25 (74%)
- Number of psychiatry evaluations: 50
- Number of individuals prescribed a medication: 35 (70%)
- Number of individuals prescribed buprenorphine: 22 (63% of all prescriptions)



# Case Examples

- DP: 64-year-old AA man, chronically homeless, h/o Schizophrenia and Opioid Use Disorder, mistrust for psychiatry.
- Eventually agreed to start a LAI, provided in the field by our RN.
- Improved engagement in care. Slow warm hand-off to a Full Service Partnership case management team which did not go well.
- Patient has declined the LAI since December 19, 2019.



## Case Examples

- DE: 40-year-old Latino man, homeless for less than a month, recently unemployed, h/o Opioid Use Disorder.
- Prescribed buprenorphine in the field on August 2018.
- Linked to Trust Health Center in August 2018.
- Established care with PCP who continued buprenorphine, last prescribed October 2019, when client moved out of county.

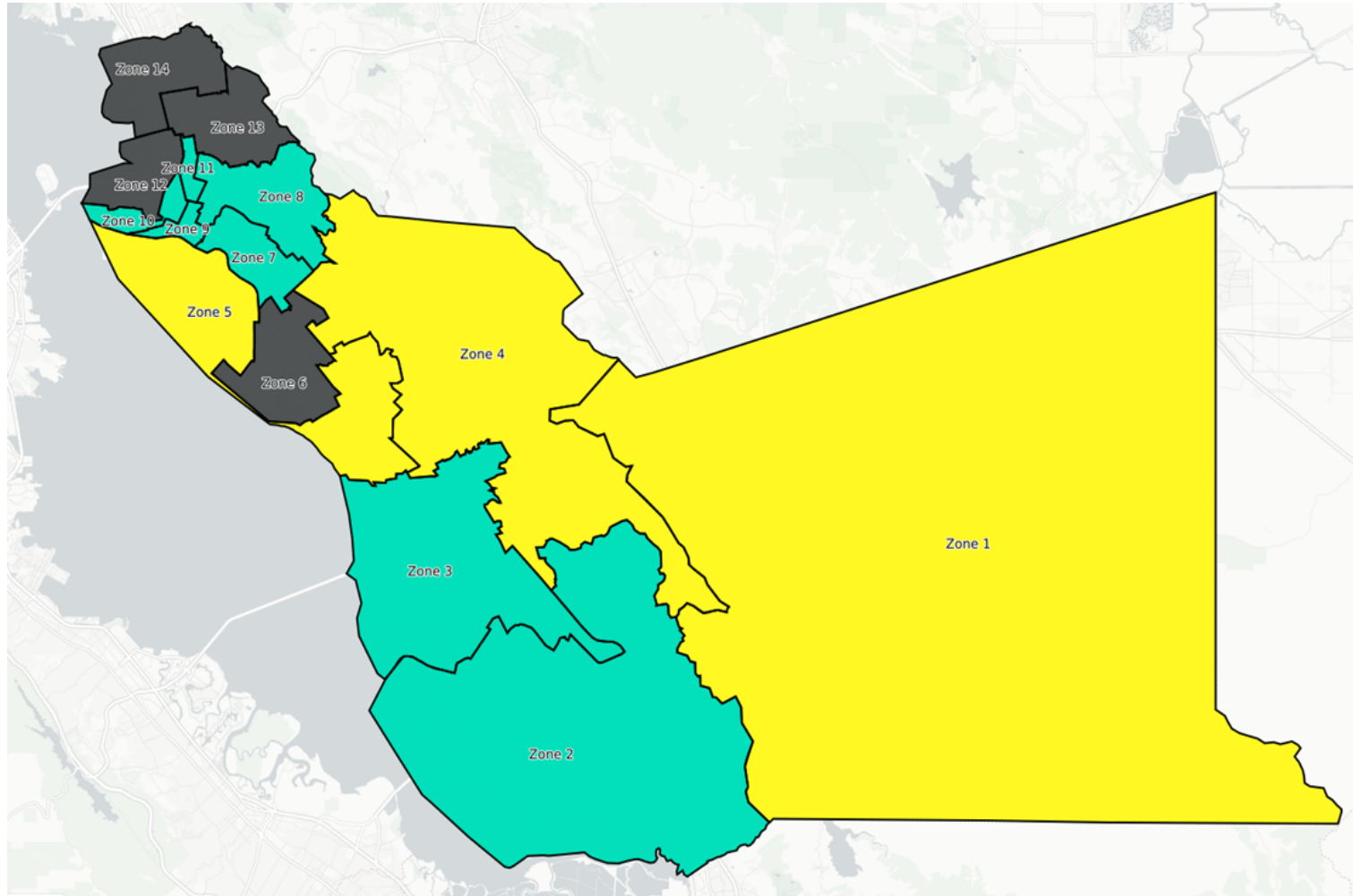


# Case Examples

- JB: 23-year-old Caucasian woman, homeless on and off since age of 14, recently unemployed, h/o Opioid Use Disorder, referred by Punks with Lunch.
- Started on buprenorphine in December 2019.
- Never established care at Trust Health Center.
- Last prescription on January 2020
- Lost to follow-up



# Future Directions





Alameda County  
**Health Care for  
the Homeless**

Street outreach teams provide direct services and linkage to care to our most valuable neighbors



# Alameda County **Health Care for the Homeless**

## QUESTIONS



Aislinn Bird, MD, MPH, Psychiatrist  
Seth Gomez, PharmD, BCPP



1. NAMI, Mental Health by the Numbers. (Sept 2017) <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>
2. National Council Medical Director Institute. (March 2017) [https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Psychiatric-Shortage\\_National-Council-.pdf](https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Psychiatric-Shortage_National-Council-.pdf)
3. EveryOneHome, Point-In-Time-County. (2019) <http://everyonehome.org/home/continuum-of-care/everyone-counts/>
4. A New Look at Homelessness in America, Martha Burt, Urban Institute, 2000 <http://www.urban.org/publications/900302.html#burt>
5. National Coalition for the Homeless, [http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/How\\_Many.html](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/How_Many.html)