

Grant Extends Telehealth Capabilities and Specialty Care Access to Help FQHCs Enhance Services for Central Valley Individuals and Families

Anthem Blue Cross, CalViva Health and HealthNet collectively commit \$150,000 to enable access to technology and services that address health needs in California's Central Valley.

FRESNO, Calif., Jan 12, 2021 The E-Consult Workgroup is pleased to announce that Anthem Blue Cross, CalViva Health and Health Net collectively have committed \$150K in grant funding to be distributed across Central Valley federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) to support e-consult adoption in their clinics. E-consult is asynchronous telehealth between primary care and specialty care providers that increases access to care and reduces patient travel to face-to-face visits for needs that could be addressed remotely.

In October 2020, Anthem Blue Cross spearheaded a program to engage regional health care leaders in support of e-consult expansion. This effort resulted in the formation of the Central Valley E-Consult Coalition, facilitated by BluePath Health and the E-Consult Workgroup, comprising provider, payer and policy organizations working to advance e-consult with support from the California Health Care Foundation. The Central Valley E-Consult Coalition consists of the aforementioned plans, several health delivery systems and provider associations, including FQHCs, Camarena Health Centers, Clinica Sierra Vista, Family HealthCare Network, Omni Family Health, United Health Centers, Valley Health Team, Central Valley Health Network, First Choice/Babylon, and La Salle and Sante. The Coalition is unique in that it:

- Covers clinic costs to make e-consult available to Central Valley patients.
- Engages stakeholders to resolve key issues and disseminate learnings.
- Shares e-consult progress and model outcomes to sustain provider adoption.

Central Valley providers have embraced e-consult and its potential to improve their patients' access to care. Joel Ramirez, MD, CMO, Camarena Health Centers, stated, "Over the last year, we have seen tremendous value in offering e-consult services to our patients in Madera County, making it easier for our providers to get specialist input in a timely manner, so we are pleased to now have the opportunity to offer e-consults in other Central Valley counties."

Clinica Sierra Vista representatives, Britto Saroja, Ester Marin-Guevara and Nancy Banuelos, RN, Deputy CEO, noted, "The use of this technology and approach reduces wait times, enhances health outcomes, strengthens the provider-patient relationship, increases provider confidence in delivering care and improves overall patient satisfaction."

"We are thankful for the Coalition's support and their recognition of FQHCs as part of the collective solution to improving the overall health of individuals and families across Central Valley counties," shared Kerry Hydash, President & CEO, Family HealthCare Network.

Joseph Hayes, DO, MMM, Chief Medical Officer, Omni Family Health states, "We expect to have increased, timely access to specialist recommendations that will improve our ability to get patients to the right specialist, with the right information."

Colleen Curtis, President & CEO, United Health Centers of the San Joaquin Valley stated, "The collaboration and support from the Coalition will be essential for our patients at risk who also require specialty services. We are grateful for the opportunity this affords our providers and underserved patients across the Central Valley.

Soyla A. Reyna-Griffin, CEO, Valley Health Team, stated, "reducing burdens and supporting primary care providers' ability to manage patients' problems through e-consult will improve patient health outcomes and provide timely access to specialty care, especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are truly appreciative of the Coalition for making this opportunity available.

To learn more about the Fresno E-Consult Coalition or get involved, visit econsultworkgroup.com/fresno or view the [program overview](#).

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