

#### Overview

St. Jude Medical Center, part of Providence St. Joseph Health, is a faith-based, not-for-profit hospital with 320 beds and more than 650 physicians, located in Fullerton, Calif. As part of an effort to prioritize mental health services, the organization has established a number of behavioral health programs over the last five years, including school-based mental health services and the *Each Mind Matters/Promise to Talk campaign*.

“About five or six years ago, we began working with the County Department of Education on the PBIS model – Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports,” says Barry Ross, R.N, regional director of community health investment, Southern California Region, Orange County/High Desert, Providence St. Joseph Health.

This program helps schools create a positive school climate and identify students who were at risk for social-emotional issues.

“School districts in our area were implementing this program inconsistently, so we worked with the county to ensure that it was implemented more faithfully and see that all of our Title I schools were implementing it at the highest level,” says Ross.

As a result of this effort, the Fullerton School District determined that there was a need for more direct service for students who were identified as at-risk. The hospital agreed to support the effort with a multi-component program. The program includes universal behavior/social-emotional screening for all students in the district to identify those in need of behavioral health services; a partnership with California State University Fullerton’s social work program to provide counseling and support services (preventive, individual or group services) at targeted schools; and a part-time

liaison to connect families to children’s mental health Medi-Cal benefit providers.

To reduce the stigma surrounding behavioral health, St. Jude implemented the Each Mind Matters/Promise to Talk campaign in North Orange County in 2018. The program was launched three years ago at Mission Hospital, another Providence St. Joseph Health

organization, and its success there led to other facilities adopting the initiative.

The Each Mind Matters campaign targets people in low-income neighborhoods with discussions about mental health and a call to action called Promise to Talk.

“We hold outreach at community events, parks and schools,” Ross explains. “We also do pop-ups, where we go into a neighborhood, set up a table, and just



talk to people. We talk about how they perceive our hospital as a place of support, whether anyone has talked to them about mental health issues, and whether they have been able to get help if they've needed mental health services. We can also use these opportunities to direct them to services if they or a family member needs them."

During these conversations, St. Jude-contracted staff encourage community members to sign a "Promise to Talk." This symbolizes a commitment to reducing stigma by talking openly to friends and family about mental health, listening to friends or family members expressing their state of mental health, and sharing one's story with others to encourage open dialogue about mental health.

## Impact

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Both of these initiatives are still relatively new to St. Jude, so hard data is not yet available. However, Ross and St. Jude staff are optimistic about their effect.

As part of the school-based mental health services, they are tracking discipline referrals.

"The goal is to decrease suspensions and increase the number of students at risk who have behavior support plans," he says. "Baseline data was taken last school year, so we'll be able to start getting some comparison data at the end of this school year. Then we can start looking at what works and what doesn't."

Sixty-two families were referred to local agencies for services, and social workers are now going back to talk to families who did not connect with those services to find out why and provide support.

"We do know that in some cases, the parents did not

feel that the child needed services, which goes back to the issue of stigma," Ross says.

As part of Each Mind Matters, St. Jude has made more than 2,400 contacts with individuals and families in the community. In addition, they set a goal of getting 600 people to sign the Promise to Talk, and as of early 2019, 743 people have signed.

## Lessons Learned

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For the school initiative, Ross says it would be useful to look at ways to better integrate the program into the classroom.

"Classroom teachers are already overwhelmed," he says. "We need to look into what systems the schools already have in place and see if they're being followed consistently and what we can do to make that simpler for the teachers. We also need to do more to show how these behavior supports positively affect academics."

With the stigma-reduction efforts, it was valuable for multiple organizations to come together and gain some economies of scale, particularly with regard to social media.

"We linked our campaign to state and county campaigns, so we're able to leverage their resources and print materials," Ross says. "When you're able to connect to something already going on but make it deeper in the community, that's a better use of resources than doing something separate."

## Future Goals

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The school-based project is a pilot, so St. Jude is



planning a related, different program for another school district.

“They asked for a social-emotional health curriculum, so we’re learning more about what they want and what outcomes they hope to achieve and finding best practices to address those,” Ross says. “PBIS is a common, foundational approach that all the districts had agreed to use. This new district is talking about specific interventions, and each school district has a different philosophy on that.”

To continue reducing mental health stigma, the organization is looking at other successful campaigns to grow their social medial presence. In addition, they’re looking at common county-wide metrics that

all stigma-reduction campaigns in Orange County can agree to so that they can leverage the investment of other organizations to have a collective impact on this important issue.

## Contact

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