

For Immediate Publication

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Casa Esperanza, Inc. Receives Federal Grant to Establish Greater Boston's First Bilingual/Bicultural Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic serving Latinx Residents

Casa Esperanza, Inc. is one of four organizations in Massachusetts selected for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) planning, development, and implementation funding in 2022. Casa will receive up to \$4M from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to establish the first CCBHC in Eastern Massachusetts focused on serving the Latinx community.

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SAMHSA recently announced 2022 CCBHC Planning, Development, and Implementation (CCBHC-PDI) awards for Casa and three other MA providers. CCBHCs improve access to comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based, patient-centered behavioral health care in under-resourced communities. Casa will receive \$1M per year for up to four years to establish Greater Boston's first bilingual/bicultural CCBHC. This funding will improve access to and utilization of culturally-focused, integrated health services for upwards of a thousand Latinx patients with SUDs, SMI, or CODs, and their families.

"For nearly two decades, Casa Esperanza has built and delivered culturally-focused, evidence-based, integrated care to better meet the behavioral health needs of the Latinx community in Massachusetts. A community we know is highly vulnerable and drastically underserved," said Emily Stewart, Chief Executive Officer in response to the news. "We are honored to receive this award, which will ensure that Casa can sustain and expand our integrated CasaCare model. A model that draws on the strength and wisdom of the Latinx community to meet the needs of Latinx patients and their families and sets a high bar for equitable and accessible behavioral health care in the Commonwealth."

The need for accessible, effective behavioral health care focused on Latinx patients continues to climb at an alarming rate. Latinx households in MA face steep inequity across education, income, housing, and other social determinants of health. Economic segregation, driven by structural racial and ethnic bias, leads to high levels of poverty, violence, and instability in Latinx communities. As a result, long-term, stress-related health concerns can stay with Latinx families for generations. Research shows that Latinx patients are significantly more likely to benefit from care if it is attuned to their cultural needs. Casa's goal is to build a strong foundation for closing equity gaps in behavioral health access and outcomes.

Casa Esperanza, Inc. will use CCBHC-PDI funding to identify unmet needs in the Greater Boston Latinx community, address cultural and linguistic barriers to care, and strengthen strategic partnerships with

agencies offering complimentary services. The project seeks to develop a robust community health network, enhance behavioral health IT infrastructure, and expand capacity for critical services.

“Casa Esperanza has set the standard of what constitutes effective care. This grant recognizes the severity of the need for comprehensive behavioral health care and Casa’s demonstrated ability to meet the challenge, just as it has been doing for the past 35 years” said Pedro Garrido-Castillo, Board President.

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Casa Esperanza, Inc. is a CARF-certified, bilingual and bicultural behavioral health center that specializes in providing integrated, evidence-based, trauma-informed behavioral health, primary care, prevention, and urgent care services to the Latinx community in Massachusetts. Casa Esperanza, Inc. was founded in 1984 as a grassroots response to the cultural and linguistic barriers Latinx patients with Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) faced accessing treatment. Casa's mission is to empower individuals and families to recover from addiction, trauma, mental illness and other chronic medical conditions; overcome homelessness; and achieve health and wellness through comprehensive, integrated care. Casa's continuum of care includes Conexiones Clinical Stabilization Services (up to 32 adult patients); two residential addiction treatment programs, Latinas y Niños (20 adult recovery beds with 6 mothering suites serving up to 12 children under 10) and Casa’s Men’s Program (29 beds for adult men); 37 units of supportive housing; and Familias Unidas Outpatient Clinic which provides in-office and telehealth clinical treatment for SUDs, Serious Mental Illnesses (SMIs), and Co-occurring SUDs and SMIs (CODs), including targeted case management, peer support, reentry support, and other wrap-around services. Familias Unidas, is also home to Boston's only Spanish-language Structured Outpatient Addiction Program (SOAP) and offers HIV/AIDS screening, treatment, and prevention; and co-located primary care through a partnership with Boston Health Care for the Homeless.