



Homeless Health Initiative

FY23 Year in Review



Mission to Serve

The Health Initiative (HHI) was launched in early 2019 by CommonSpirit Health leadership and our Dignity Health facilities across California. Over the past four years, we have experienced a devastating public health pandemic along with a major overhaul in our state Medicaid system, both of which have had significant impact on our unhoused communities. In response, HHI has served as a foundational effort that continues to evolve over time to address the changing needs and complex systems which impact our local communities.

As one of the largest nonprofit health systems in the U.S., with more than 2,200 care sites and 145 hospitals in 24 states, CommonSpirit serves a vital role in providing services, and coordinating the care needs of our patients and community members experiencing housing insecurities and homelessness. Our hospitals serve as anchor institutions and resource connectors in many of our communities for our unhoused neighbors. This work has always been a part of who we are as an organization and ingrained in our mission which states: “make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.”

The strategy of HHI continues to prioritize collaboration, co-location and integration of clinical services with housing and other social services to enhance the continuum of care. This strategy not only increases capacity of existing resources, but it focuses on strengthening the continuums of care by improving transitions through a coordinated approach. CommonSpirit has committed to invest a minimum of \$20 million across California through FY 2024 in programs that address two focus areas:

1. Housing insecurities and homeless prevention for individuals and families who are at-risk of experiencing homelessness.
2. Developing and strengthening collaborative efforts with community partners to improve coordination of care and access to resources for populations experiencing homelessness.



Guiding Principles

Recognize that housing is health care and the lack of stable and affordable housing negatively impacts an individual’s health.

Advance system transformation of the health care system and of communities.

Focus on upstream and prevention interventions including activities that address social determinants of health—food security, transportation, health coverage, childcare as well as housing.

Support community-driven initiatives that advance racial equity and promote equitable access to housing and health care.

Pursue a “Housing First” approach which prioritizes providing permanent housing to individuals experiencing homelessness, thus positioning them to pursue personal goals to improve their quality of life.

Provide innovative solutions including the use of new technologies and strategies.

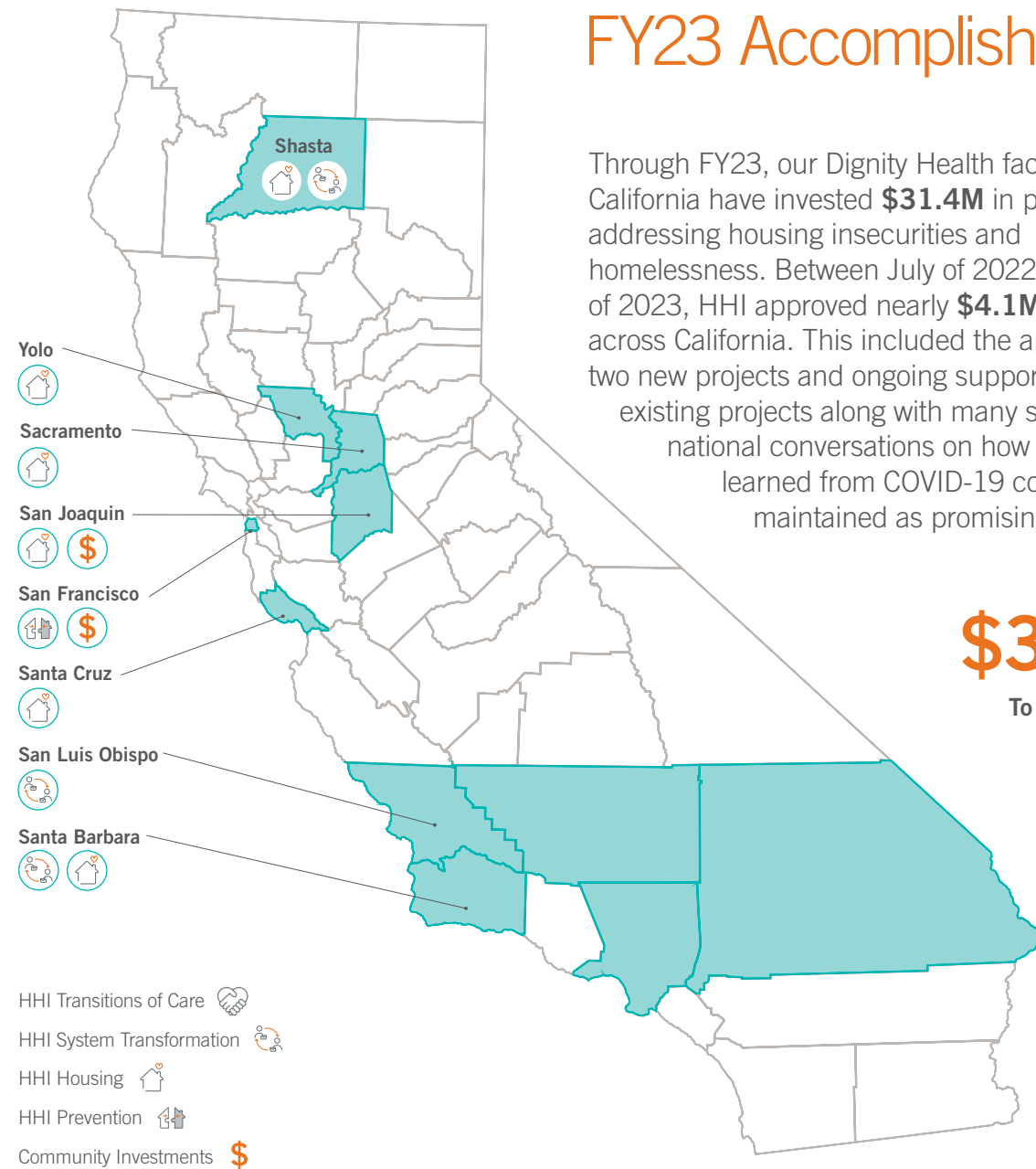
Serve as a catalyst for building capacity to address the need.

Create collaborative, scalable and sustainable impact.

FY23 Accomplishments

Through FY23, our Dignity Health facilities in California have invested **\$31.4M** in programs addressing housing insecurities and homelessness. Between July of 2022 and June of 2023, HHI approved nearly **\$4.1M** in funding across California. This included the approval of two new projects and ongoing support for 13 existing projects along with many state and national conversations on how the lessons learned from COVID-19 could be maintained as promising practices.

\$31.4M
To address housing insecurities and homelessness



FY23 has also created opportunities to support our local community-based organizations who are stepping into the Medicaid space for the first time and learning how to work directly with managed care plans, as many services become reimbursable as “Community Supports” through CalAIM.



Emergency Housing

- 232 unique persons accessed overnight shelter services.



Transitions of Care

- Provided medical respite care to 105 unique persons.
- Screened 950 persons to determine eligibility for a multi-disciplinary care coordination program.



Prevention

- A Medical Legal Partnership program supported 54 individuals with addressing health-harming legal needs.
- 504 households exited and/or were diverted from homelessness.
- Mental health services provided to 50 unique young persons.
- 30 households who were housing insecure received group case management and financial coaching over 18 months.



Permanent/Interim Housing

- Construction of a 61-unit permanent supportive housing campus was completed and began housing 32 residents.
- 15 persons were permanently housed through the FUSE Program.
- Initial planning began for a 94-unit Interim Housing Project in Santa Maria.
- 120 units of permanent supportive housing in Santa Cruz County are scheduled to break ground this year.
- A total of 18 individuals have been permanently housed across three rehabbed homes in the past three years. Additionally, permits were approved, and construction has begun for two more housing units, adding another 12 rooms to the scattered-site housing stock.



“ Staying healthy isn’t easy while living on the streets. Figuring out how to get insurance was a top priority of mine. Keeping my feet dry and sleeping as much as I could were also priorities of mine to stay healthy. I used my food stamps to access healthier food, but not having kitchen facilities limits what you can do with food and having fresh options is hard. ”

—Housing Matters Participant



Program Highlights

National Institute for Medical Respite Care (NIMRC)

NIMRC provided technical assistance (TA) across multiple communities to strengthen the ecosystem of medical respite/recuperative care providers and advance best practices, expert services and state-of-the-field knowledge in services. All participating communities received individual TA support and participated in a learning cohort on a bi-monthly basis where teams were able to engage to share best practices, challenges and innovation on topics such as program development, service delivery, staffing and capacity building.

Shasta Community Health Center

The HOPE Medical Respite Program began in November 2020 as a partnership between Shasta Community Health Center and Pathways to Housing. The HOPE Program is a 15-bed medical respite facility where individuals who are unhoused can recover from medical conditions in either a congregate or non-congregate setting. Over the last year, more than 100 unduplicated persons were served through the program and received access to care and services such as wound care and prenatal care, chronic disease treatment and management and medical and specialty appointment coordination. Patients who access the program have shared that they feel “seen and heard,” and many participants are motivated to engage in their health care as a result of this person-centered care model.

CommonSpirit's Research and Equity Advisory Council for Housing Insecurities (REACHI)

REACHI was created to build partnerships between people with lived expertise, the health care system, and providers and advocates of homeless services in California.

The council has provided formal recommendations for the HHI grant proposal process and created a sub-committee focused on elevating lived experience voices in the process. Further, members have hosted and participated in local site visits in the communities of Santa Barbara, Bakersfield and Stockton, furthering local community partnership and collaboration.

Community Investments and Community Health Improvement Grants

In FY 2023, hospitals across California awarded \$674,772 in community health improvement grants to 14 projects that focused on housing/homelessness. The Community Investment program extended \$1.4 million in funding and approved \$3 million, totaling \$4.4 million across two projects. The programs include:

Larkin Street Youth Services

Larkin St. was approved for a loan renewal in February 2023 for \$1.4 million to continue to support the six-bedroom facility to shelter homeless HIV-positive youth.

Stocktonians Taking Action to Neutralize Drugs (STAND)

STAND was approved for a \$3 million line of credit to be used for multiple affordable housing projects. One of the projects will be to fund the development of five lots into permanent supportive housing for up to a combination of 30 individuals and/or 11 families experiencing homelessness.



Client Stories

The **HOPE Medical Respite Program** encountered an unhoused veteran who had a large invasive tumor which completely obstructed their vision in one eye. Unfortunately, persistent delusions were negatively impacting their ability to engage in their healthcare. After multiple engagements with HOPE's Medical Director, the patient agreed to engage in psychiatric care.

Since starting treatment, the patient's delusions and fear of medical providers have reduced. The patient entered the HOPE program and with the support of a case manager, was able to transition to temporary housing and begin radiation treatment. The cancer is responding to treatment and the client once again has the use of both his eyes.

“

FUSE navigators onsite are very well versed with practically all of the available housing linkages, resources, and guidelines and are diligent, insightful and both are able to navigate the challenging patient population with compassion and dignity.”

—CHMC Social Worker

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Want to learn more?

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