

MENTAL HEALTH AT PLANNED PARENTHOOD

SPRING 2024 IMPACT REPORT



Years in the Making

Our Path to Mental Health



Our journey to launch mental health services began nearly a decade ago. We were guided by community need; our patients asked for mental health services and shared they wanted to come to PPPSGV. We hired our Director of Mental Health Services, and a program was built with our patients in mind and with a goal of treating the whole person. Our first mental health client was seen in January 2023. This journey would not have been possible without our community of supporters, who encouraged us along the way and echoed what we knew to be true: we cannot truly care for the whole person unless we also care for their mental and emotional wellbeing.

A special thank you to the Ann Peppers Foundation, the Callahan Family Foundation, Cedars-Sinai, Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park, and all our expansion campaign donors for believing in our mental health program.



PPPSGV's Mental Health Roadmap

- 2016** ○ We create a three-year strategic plan with a goal to launch mental health services by 2020.
- 2017** ○ We kick off an \$8 million fundraising campaign to open new health centers and expand services, including mental health and gender-affirming care.
- 2018** ○ We conduct focus groups with patients and local partners. Patients share that our health centers already feel like a "home base" where sensitive, intimate issues are addressed without judgement, shame, or stigma, and so "it makes sense to talk about mental health."
- 2019** ○ We begin piloting depression and anxiety screenings at our former Eagle Rock location and build up our referral network of therapists and other mental health providers.
- 2020** ○ We implement telehealth services with a plan to soon provide counseling sessions virtually.
- 2021** ○ The ongoing pandemic delays our mental health launch, despite growing demand for these services. We prioritize launching a far-reaching COVID vaccination program in the interim.
- 2022** ○ We expand mental health screenings and interview other Planned Parenthood affiliates already offering mental health services. Our PHQ-9 screenings reveal that about 36% of these patients had moderate to severe depression. We hire a Director of Mental Health Services.
- 2023** ○

After launching services in January, we complete over 500 mental health appointments in a year. To meet demand, we hire a second Mental Health Clinician and pilot our clinical internship initiative.



What inspired you to lead PPPSGV's Mental Health Program?

I began my work in social services at a small community clinic in Atlanta, which provided reproductive care, abortions, gender-affirming care, fertility services, and more. That job sparked my desire to pursue community-based work, and I always wanted to work with Planned Parenthood. Once I became a therapist and learned that many Planned Parenthood affiliates were expanding into mental health care, I knew I wanted to be a part of that.

How is the mental health program unique at Planned Parenthood?

Folks who come into our health centers often feel on the margins in various ways, yet they know we offer a safe and welcoming space committed to providing services that are inclusive and representative of the community.

Patients are currently seen only via telehealth. Will that change?

Most patients are fine with telehealth appointments, though some have requested in-person services. Right now, we're focused on growing our staff capacity, reflecting on our first year of learnings, and improving our quality of care. We're being thoughtful about what our next expansion looks like and whether that involves in-person services.

What trends are you seeing in patient need?

Even with a sliding scale, many patients still struggle with the cost of therapy. For those who don't qualify for Medi-Cal, it would be great to have a charitable care fund that would cover weekly therapy for free. There is also a lack of access to prompt medication evaluations and preventive care. Because every community program or mental health agency has a waitlist, by the time someone sees a therapist, their situation might have become urgent, rather than manageable. We hope to fill these needs within our community, and it is one of the many reasons that PPPSGV expanded into mental health services.

After a year of expansion and growth, what's next for the mental health program?

Hiring more staff so we can increase the number of patients we see. We also hope to increase our staff diversity, language offerings, and areas of specialty. No matter what, our expansion will be guided by meeting community need. It's important that patients know and trust us as a quality mental health care provider.



A conversation with Director of Mental Health Services

Jennifer (She/They)





The need for mental health care is clear.

79%

Adults indicated that psychological distress impaired their family life in Los Angeles County.

36%

Patients who have received PHQ-9 depression screenings at PPPSGV scored 10 or above, indicating moderate to severe depression.



A 2018 report from the University of California predicted that by 2028 demand for mental health professionals would be **40% more than supply**.



The number of 18-to-24-year-olds in California who reported having thought about committing suicide at some point in their lives **increased to 30.5%** in 2021 from 23.9% in 2020.



Our community can make an impact.

In our first year since launching services, PPPSGV conducted **over 500** therapy appointments.

We offer **sliding scale discounts** to our mental health clients to help alleviate financial burdens.

Our team of mental health providers has **grown by 5 people** in just one year, with 4 interns and one full-time Mental Health Clinician. This has increased our caseload capacity by about **400%**.

We currently offer counselling services in **multiple** languages.

Continued support and investment from our community and institutional partners will ensure we can do more. We hope to eventually market our services **to all PPPSGV patients**.

Stark health disparities exist.

In 2021, an estimated **27%** of California adults who were treated unfairly because of their race and/or ethnicity thought about committing suicide.



69% of LGBTQ youth in California reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety, including 75% of transgender and nonbinary youth.



58% reported experiencing symptoms of depression, including 65% of transgender and nonbinary youth.



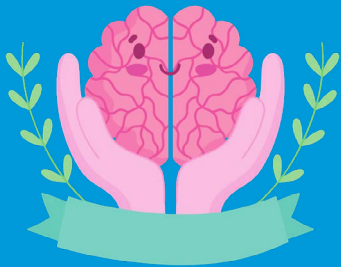
For non-English speakers, accessing affordable health care services can be especially difficult as Medi-Cal enrollees who prefer Spanish, Vietnamese, and Cantonese have access rates **less than half** that of enrollees whose preferred language is English.

[Click to visit PPPSGV's Mental Health Services webpage](#)

Data was sourced from the California Health Interview Survey, the California Health Care Foundation, the Trevor Project, and Kaiser Family Foundation, unless otherwise noted.

A Force for the Future

Launching Our Clinical Internship Initiative



Beyond providing essential health care to patients, our mental health program seeks to foster the next generation of compassionate mental health professionals. We are engaging in this important workforce development through our first-ever clinical internship program. In collaboration with California State Universities across Southern California, PPPSGV is working with Master of Social Work (MSW) students seeking hands-on experience in clinical settings as part of their degree completion and career preparation.

In 2023, we brought on four new clinical interns, who each have a caseload of about five patients. **The intern program has increased our capacity for care, supported service expansion to all health centers, and enabled sessions for Spanish-speaking patients.** PPPSGV continues to expand our reach in this sector, and this program gives us the opportunity to empower future mental health leaders, who can shape a brighter, more inclusive tomorrow.



After completing my MSW program, my goal is to work in a clinical setting with underserved populations.

My personal experiences and identity, as well as my time with Planned Parenthood have helped me find my clinical voice and solidified this goal. While pursuing my MSW and interning with Planned Parenthood I've learned that accessing mental health services should be a right. I hope to become a tool to aid the dismantling of barriers that keep individuals from accessing mental health services.

Gloria (They/Them)
MSW Intern



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