



2024 CSAC Challenge Awards – Executive Summary Fresno County – Rural Mobile Health Program

Overview: The Fresno County Rural Mobile Health Program provides no-cost medical services and care coordination to Fresno County's rural communities, improving health equity through key partnerships.

Challenge: Fresno County's rural communities often face significant barriers when accessing health care. Rural residents struggle to access medical services due to limited public transportation, language barriers, provider shortages, and financial burdens. These challenges result in delayed care, higher rates of chronic diseases, and significant health disparities. Additionally, lower health literacy levels and lack of awareness about preventive services compound these issues, leaving many residents without the necessary resources to optimize their health.

Solution: To address these challenges, the Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) established the Rural Mobile Health (RMH) program in early 2023, supported by \$6 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds allocated by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. As part of the program, FCDPH secured partnerships with the following local healthcare providers: UCSF-Fresno, Saint Agnes Medical Center (Saint Agnes), and Tzu Chi Medical Foundation (Tzu Chi) to utilize their mobile health units to deliver medical and vision services directly to rural communities. By reaching residents where they work and live, the RMH program is better able to meet the health care needs of Fresno County's rural areas. UCSF-Fresno and Saint Agnes's mobile clinics provide no-cost preventive care screenings, vaccinations, STD testing, contraceptive services, and more. Furthermore, Tzu Chi's mobile clinic offers no-cost vision services, including complete eye-exams, while providing single-vision glasses as needed. Simultaneously, FCDPH engages its Community Health Worker (CHW) Network to provide wraparound care coordination services. CHWs play a crucial role in delivering culturally and linguistically appropriate health education during the RMH program events. The CHWs also connect participants without a primary care provider to a nearby primary care home. In addition, CHWs receive on-going training on the services they provide, utilize a social determinants of health needs assessment, and a centralized data management system to track gaps and opportunities through person-level data that is specific to the needs expressed by clients. By partnering medical providers with CHWs, FCDPH's RMH program not only delivers medical and vision services to rural areas and agricultural workplaces, but also links residents to needed community resources.

Innovation: The RMH Program is a pioneering initiative due to its comprehensive, equity-focused approach to



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overcoming healthcare access barriers in rural communities. The program uniquely integrates mobile health units from UCSF-Fresno, Saint Agnes, and Tzu Chi with Fresno’s CHW Network. Innovative aspects of the program include its multi-sectoral partnerships, which combine resources from local medical providers and CHWs to create a holistic care model that helps reduce health disparities in the region. The RMH program’s focus on prevention of chronic diseases assists with improving the rural residents’ long-term health outcomes. Additionally, the CHW Network is moving towards sustainable efforts in which CHWs align with reimbursement opportunities outside of County contracts and FCDPH connects with other county departments to embed care coordination services into existing subcontractor agreements that enhance the county’s investment in the health of the community.

Results: Since the inception of the RMH program in 2023, 251 RMH program events have been held throughout Fresno County’s rural areas and agricultural workplaces. A total of 7,314 participants have received at least a general health screening. Tzu Chi hosted 15 of these RMH events, providing vision services to 263 participants and distributing 239 pairs of single-vision glasses. CHWs have enrolled 511 community members into the CHW Network to receive care coordination services, disseminated 10,978 health education materials to event attendees, and reached over 80,000 community members through event tabling.

Replicability: This program provides a scalable model that other California counties can replicate to address similar healthcare access challenges. A key factor in the program’s success is the partnership model, which involves collaboration between local healthcare providers and community-based organizations. The use of mobile health units to reach underserved areas is another replicable element, offering a flexible and effective solution for counties facing transportation and provider shortages. Additionally, the CHW Network is exploring regional expansion by engaging with surrounding counties to mirror components of the network and extend wraparound services to nearby areas.

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Additional Materials: [Fresno County Rural Mobile Health - County of Fresno \(fresnocountyca.gov\)](https://www.fresnocountyca.gov/rmh)