

# Essential Hospitals Collaborate to Reduce Social Barriers to Opioid Use Disorder Treatment

*The project, supported by CVS Health Foundation, fits within a framework of association initiatives to combat structural racism and promote equity.*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 25, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Learning how social drivers of health, such as homelessness and food insecurity, can limit access to opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment among marginalized people and overcoming these barriers to care is the focus of a significant new research collaborative of 10 essential hospitals.

Essential Hospitals Institute, the research and education arm of America's Essential Hospitals, has launched the project with the support of a grant from CVS Health Foundation.

The project, "Social Medicine in Opioid Use Disorder Treatment at Essential Hospitals," will continue through March 2024. It fits within a framework of association initiatives to combat structural racism and promote equity.

"We know a multitude of social factors influence the ability of low-income and underrepresented populations not only to access vital health care services, such as OUD treatment, but also to achieve successful outcomes," said Kalpana Ramiah, DrPH, MSc, Institute director and association vice president of innovation. "What we learn from this project will help essential hospitals reduce health disparities and lead the way to more equitable care."

OUD claims more than [130 lives every day nationwide](#) and [disproportionately affects people of color](#) and other historically marginalized populations essential hospitals serve. Between 2019 and 2020, [overdose death rates have increased by 44 percent for Black people](#) and 39 percent for American Indian and Alaskan Native people compared with a still substantial increase of 22





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*Kalpana Ramiah, DrPH, MSc*

percent for white people. Consistent with their safety net mission, more than half of essential hospitals provide addiction and psychiatric care compared with less than a quarter of other hospitals nationwide.

Under the project, the Institute will make peer collaboration, expert training, and other learning opportunities available to the participating hospitals to help them develop community-focused, data-driven,

service delivery models focused on ODU treatment and social drivers of health. Each hospital will receive grant funding of up to \$50,000 to support this work. Participating hospitals include:

- Alameda Health System, Oakland, Calif.
- Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, Paramus, N.J.
- Chesapeake Regional Healthcare, Chesapeake, Va.
- Parkland Health, Dallas.
- Tampa General Hospital, Tampa, Fla.
- Temple University Hospital, Philadelphia.
- The MetroHealth System, Cleveland.
- UMass Memorial Health, Worcester, Mass.
- UVA Health, Charlottesville, Va.
- Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center, San Francisco.

The project builds on ongoing and related work, also supported by CVS Health Foundation, to improve access to OUD treatment in primary care settings. Six essential hospitals are participating in that 12-month project, which the Institute announced in November 2022.

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#### About America's Essential Hospitals

America's Essential Hospitals is the leading association and champion for hospitals dedicated to equitable, high-quality care for all, including those who face social and financial barriers to care. Since 1981, America's Essential Hospitals has advanced policies and programs that promote health, health care access, and equity. We support our more than 300 members with advocacy, policy development, research, education, and leadership development. Communities depend on essential hospitals for care across the continuum, health care workforce training, research, public health and health equity, and other services. Essential hospitals innovate and adapt to lead all of health care toward better outcomes and value. Learn more at [essentialhospitals.org](https://essentialhospitals.org).

#### About Essential Hospitals Institute

Essential Hospitals Institute leads research, education, dissemination, and leadership development for America's Essential Hospitals. To advance the quality, equity, safety, and

affordability of care at essential hospitals, the Institute identifies promising practices in the field, provides professional development training, promotes practice improvements, and disseminates innovative approaches to care. It does this with an eye toward improving individual and population health, especially for underrepresented and marginalized people and communities.

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