



Outreach and Engagement Best Practices: Leveraging Existing Behavioral Health Programs

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Disclosures

Faculty	Nature of Commercial Interest
Charles Robbins, MBA	Mr. Robbins discloses that he is an employee of Health Management Associates, a national research and consulting firm providing technical assistance to a diverse group of health care clients.
Rachel Johnson-Yates, MA, LMHC, LAC	Ms. Johnson-Yates discloses that he/she is an employee of Health Management Associates, a national research and consulting firm providing technical assistance to a diverse group of health care clients.
Joseph Becerra, CHW Panelist	Mr. Becerra discloses that he is an employee of USC Street Medicine and Keck School of Medicine of University of Southern California.
Jeanene Smith, MD, MPH, CME Reviewer	Dr. Smith discloses that she is an employee of Health Management Associates, a national research and consulting firm providing technical assistance to a diverse group of health care clients.

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Presenters



Charles Robbins, MBA
Principal
Health Management Associates
(HMA)



**Rachel Johnson-Yates, MA,
LMHC, LAC**
Associate Principal
Health Management Associates
(HMA)



Joseph Becerra, CHW
Supervising CHW
USC Street Medicine

Agenda

- » Overview of Best Practices in the Field
- » Panel Discussion
- » Question & Answer

Learning Objectives

At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- » Identify strategies to leverage existing behavioral health programs to design and implement assertive, field-based SUD services that expand reach without duplicating infrastructure.
- » Describe evidence-informed engagement techniques that effectively connect and retain individuals with complex, intersecting barriers to care, including homelessness, co-occurring conditions, and system involvement.
- » Apply practical, relationship-based outreach approaches including flexible service delivery and culturally responsive practices, to improve access, trust, and sustained participation among historically underserved populations.

Overview of Best Practices in the Field

Joseph Becerra, Supervising Community
Health Worker, USC Street Medicine

About USC Street Medicine

- » **USC Street Medicine** brings medical care designed to meet the needs of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to them in their environment—on the streets, in parks, and under bridges—wherever they are. This includes not just outreach to connect patients to a “brick and mortar” clinic, but real medicine right on the street.
- » **Street Medicine Primary Care:** Health Screenings, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic diseases (Birth Control, STD screening and treatment, Hepatitis C screening and treatment), Substance Use Disorder (harm reduction and Medication Assisted Treatment), Mental health disorder (Long Acting Injectable Antipsychotics (LAIs) and other medications), wound care, Point-of-Care Ultrasound.
- » **Specialty Services:** HIV Care, Behavioral Health (Street Psychiatry, Clinical Social Work), Gender Affirming Care, Social Work, Enhanced Care Management (ECM).

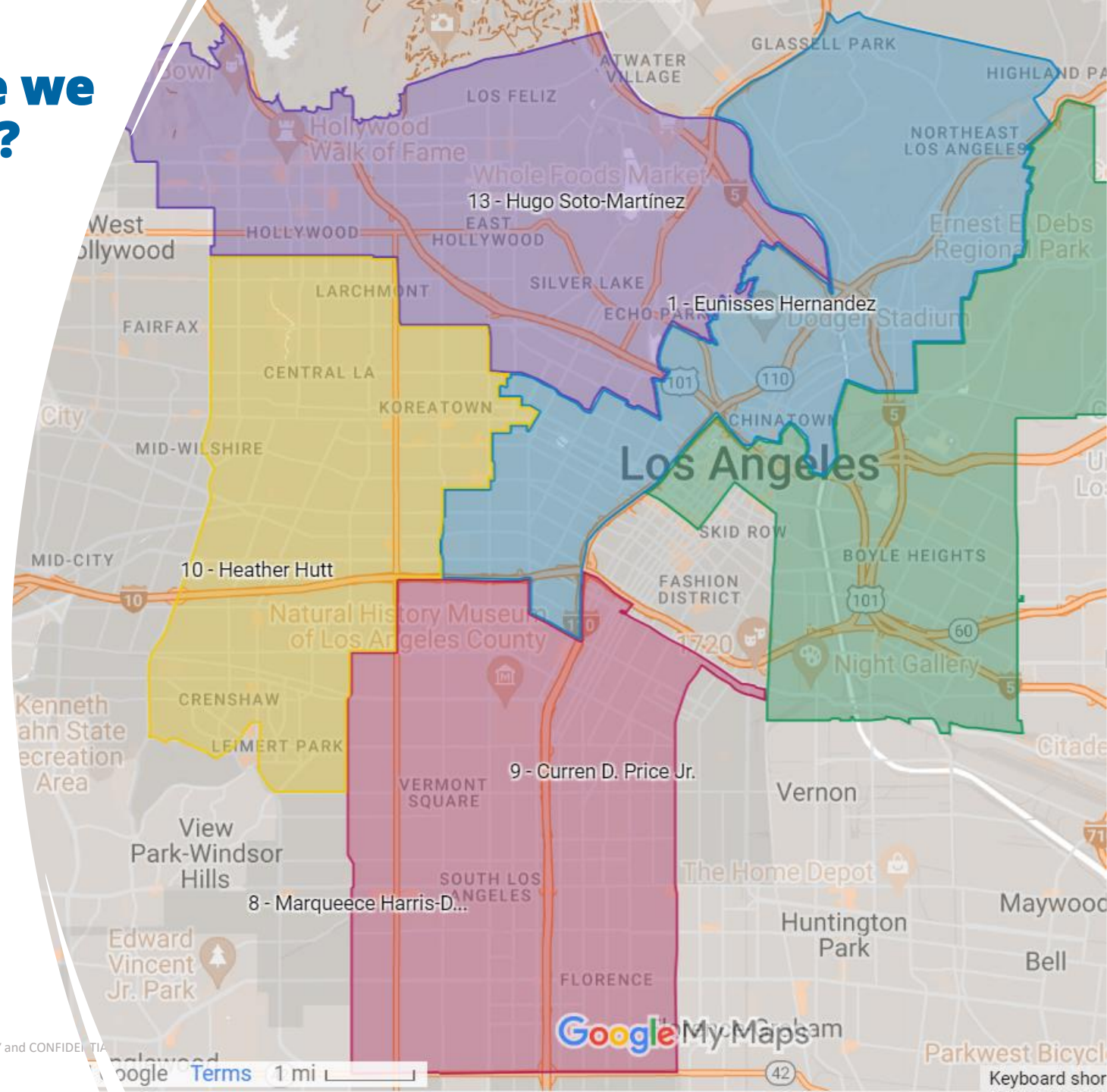
Interested in services for your client? Scan the QR code to see services and coverage areas.



SOURCE(S): USC Street Medicine, 2026.

Best Practices: How are we finding our patients?

- » Outreach
- » Referrals
 - Patient to Patient
 - City and Partners
 - Hospitals
 - Community
 - External Organizations





Safe Approaches and Scene Safety

- » ALWAYS maintain Situational Awareness.
- » Every day is a new day in an encampment.
- » Never go alone.
- » Always have identification visible.
- » Have safety measures in place for unforeseen events.
 - E.g., Yellow highlighter, Red Pen.

Strategies for Engagement

- » Introductions to services and supports.
- » Offering the following:
 - Water
 - Hygiene Kits
 - Harm Reduction
 - Tents, Sleeping bags, Blankets
 - Snacks
- » Be genuine.
- » Remember: “You are a guest” in their home.





Building Rapport

- » Being respectful of “Not today.”
 - Asking for permission to come back.
- » Showing up when you say you will.
- » Avoid making empty promises.
- » Be genuine.
- » Offer items even if they say no to engagement on that day.

Panel Discussion

Panelists



Maria Morgan, MFT

Assistant Medical Services
Administrator, Programs and
Services, Behavioral Health Services,
County of San Diego Health and
Human Services Agency



Sandi Htut

Senior Epidemiologist, Behavioral
Health Services, Population Health,
County of San Diego Health and
Human Services Agency



Joseph Becerra, CHW
Supervising CHW
USC Street Medicine

Questions?

info@afbsstraining.org

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