



Outreach and Engagement Best Practices: Leveraging Existing Behavioral Health Programs

AFBSS Webinar Series: June 16, 2026

The Assertive Field-Based Substance Use Disorder/Opioid Use Disorder Services Training and Technical Assistance is funded by California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). This session is presented by Health Management Associates. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, DHCS.



[Slide Image Description: This cover slide introduces the title of this webinar. It contains the logos for Health Management Associates.]

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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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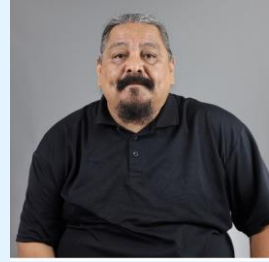
Presenters



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

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[Slide Image Description: This slide includes images of the presenters of this webinar on a light blue background.]

Charles Robbins has been transforming communities for the past three decades. His extensive community-based organization career spans healthcare, child welfare, housing and homelessness, mental health, suicide prevention, harm reduction, and substance use disorder, with a forte in advocacy, strategic planning, organizational development, leadership development, and capacity building.

Rachel Johnson-Yates, from Health Management Associates, is a licensed mental health and addiction counselor, public speaker, and educator with a demonstrated track record of developing innovative programs that focus on mental and behavioral health. She has dedicated her career to increasing access to care through approaching her work from an equity-focused and trauma-informed framework. Ms. Johnson-Yates has extensive experience designing, launching, and replicating complex programs to meet the disparate needs of the clients she serves, including low barrier and harm reduction shelter expansion for people with serious

mental illness/substance use disorder and experiencing homelessness. She also has led the design and development of a safe haven model for unhoused veterans, in which she facilitated stakeholder engagement, educated the community, developed strong connections between supporting agencies, and implemented wrap-around treatment and case management services for populations with complex needs, including those with serious mental illness. She held significant leadership roles in outpatient behavioral health, state government, criminal justice, inpatient psychiatric care, low barrier shelters for veterans, higher education, and residential substance use disorder treatment.

Joseph Becerra is the Supervising CHW for USC Street Medicine. Joseph supported the creation and development of the Community Health Worker (CHW) role at USC Street Medicine. He is also a Certified Addiction Treatment Counselor and Certified Clinical Supervisor who has worked with the underserved, incarcerated, at-risk youth and homeless for over fifteen years. He worked closely with the Department of Mental Health in the Juvenile Justice System and for a USC study focusing on intravenous drug users. Joseph has been involved with several nonprofit organizations and assisted with the development of two youth programs including a Boys & Girls home for children in need, Methadone clinics, Needle exchanges, and Human Trafficking Prevention Groups. In 2022, Joseph was named to the Clinician's Steering Committee for the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and travels around the country sharing his story and insight into promoting health care and support to the homeless/unsheltered population. He also continually serves as a representative for USC Street Medicine, including taking part in trainings/consulting for outside providers, harm reduction, and safety protocols for future Street Medicine Program development.

Agenda

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

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[Slide Image Description: This slide shows the major sections of this webinar on a light blue background.]

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.

[Slide Image Description: This slide shows the learning objectives for this webinar with a light blue background.]

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- 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.



[Slide Image Description: This is a section divider slide to indicate a major section of this webinar.]

This first section will provide an overview of outreach and engagement best practices in the field.

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.



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[Slide Image Description: This slide shows a description of USC Street Medicine, with a red textbox with a QR code.]

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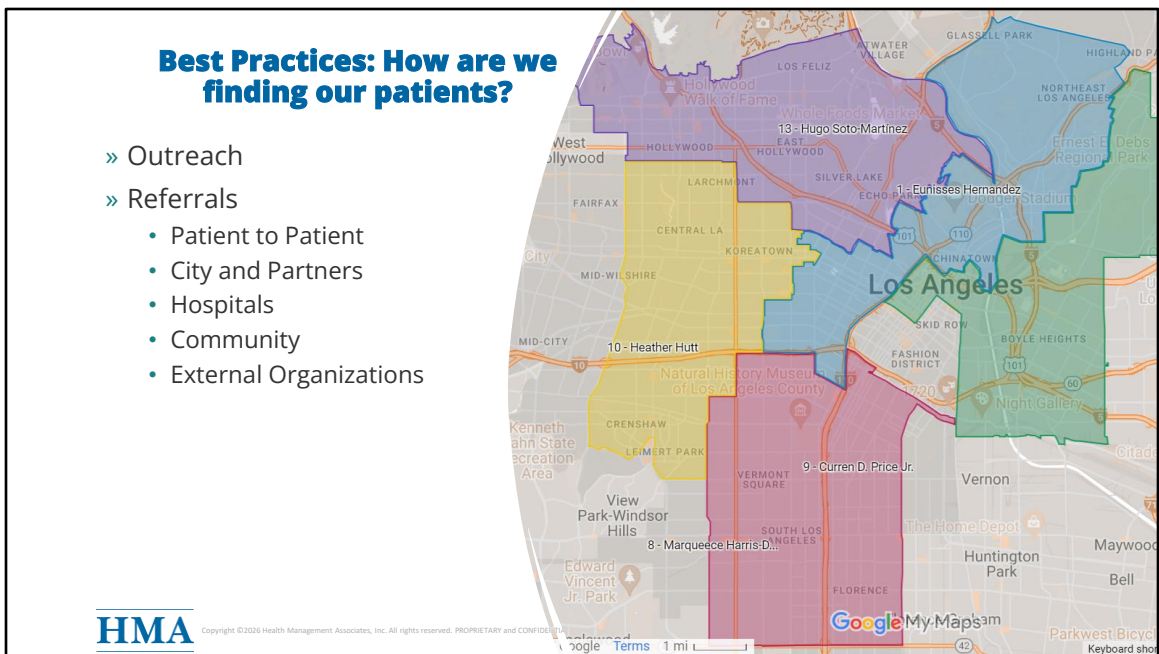
Street Medicine Primary Care:

- Health Screenings designed to meet the needs of the street.
- Diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic diseases, including:
 - Birth Control
 - STD screening and treatment
 - Hepatitis C screening and treatment
- Substance Use Disorder (SUD), including harm reduction and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).
- Mental health disorder, including the use of Long Acting Injectable Antipsychotics (LAIs) and other medications to help patients with bothersome symptoms like hallucinations.

- 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).



[Slide Image Description: This slide shows best practices on finding patients, with a map of Los Angeles and USC Street Medicine Service and Coverage Areas.]

Best practices for finding 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.

[Slide Image Description: This slide lists safe approaches and scene safety, with an image of a person standing on a sidewalk next to a road.]

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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.



[Slide Image Description: This slide shows the strategies for engagement, with an image of two people looking into a tent.]

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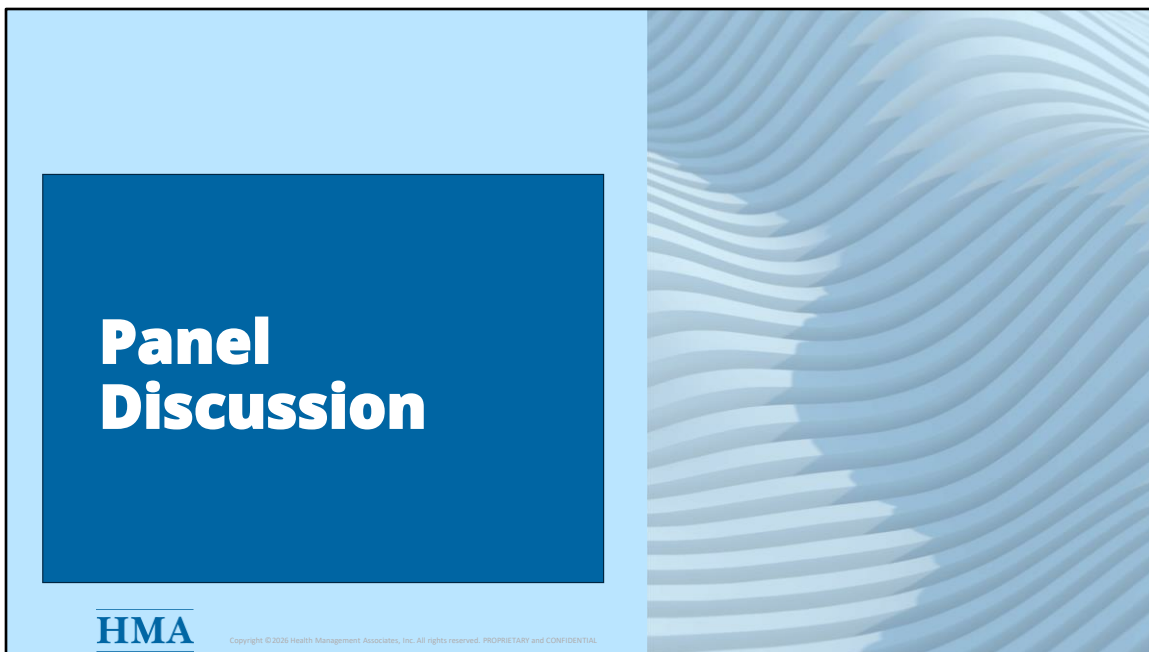
Building Rapport

- » 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.

[Slide Image Description: This slide shows the description of building rapport, with an image of two people cleaning a room.]

Building Rapport:

- Being respectful of “Not today.”
 - Asking for permission to come back.
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- Avoid making empty promises.
- Be genuine.
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This second section dives into a panel discussion.

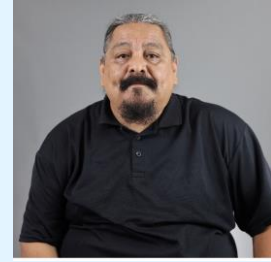
Panelists



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

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[Slide Image Description: This slide includes images of the panelists of this webinar on a light blue background.]

Maria Morgan is the Assistant Medical Services Administrator, Programs and Services, Behavioral Health Services for County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. Maria is a behavioral health professional with 20 years of extensive experience working within San Diego County's Behavioral Health systems, possessing an effective style of leadership and management. As the Assistant Medical Services Administrator, Maria supports the Deputy Director in overseeing the daily operations of the Adult and Older Adult System of Care, including County-operated and contracted behavioral health services, while providing informal supervision to six Behavioral Health Program Coordinators and their teams. She monitors program compliance and budgets, helps design and administer behavioral health services, resolves clinically and politically sensitive issues, and builds effective relationships with diverse stakeholders, staff, leadership, and the public.

Sandi Htut is a Senior Epidemiologist, Behavioral Health Services, Population Health, for County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. Sandi has extensive experience in creating and executing strategies for driving quality improvements in healthcare operations, as well as in aligning business objectives and staffing programs, events, and practices.

She plans, manages, and evaluates large public health programs focused on overdose and suicide prevention, including related projects and research activities. She uses predictive modeling and data analysis to turn complex information into actionable behavioral health insights, develops prevention recommendations, and collaborates with internal and external partners as a liaison on behavioral health initiatives.

Joseph Becerra is the Supervising CHW for USC Street Medicine. Joseph supported the creation and development of the Community Health Worker (CHW) role at USC Street Medicine. He is also a Certified Addiction Treatment Counselor and Certified Clinical Supervisor who has worked with the underserved, incarcerated, at-risk youth and homeless for over fifteen years. He worked closely with the Department of Mental Health in the Juvenile Justice System and for a USC study focusing on intravenous drug users. Joseph has been involved with several nonprofit organizations and assisted with the development of two youth programs including a Boys & Girls home for children in need, Methadone clinics, Needle exchanges, and Human Trafficking Prevention Groups. In 2022, Joseph was named to the Clinician's Steering Committee for the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and travels around the country sharing his story and insight into promoting health care and support to the homeless/unsheltered population. He also continually serves as a representative for USC Street Medicine, including taking part in trainings/consulting for outside providers, harm reduction, and safety protocols for future Street Medicine Program development.

Questions?

info@afbsstraining.org



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[Slide Image Description: This slide shows the AFBSS email address.]

We are here to support you and provide you with those opportunities to connect and hear about implementing AFBSS. Our email address is [**info@afbsstraining.org**](mailto:info@afbsstraining.org).

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