



Connecting and empowering not-for-profit hospices throughout California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

California Hospice Network affiliate releases findings from three-year assessment

Nonprofit hospice conducts community needs assessment to improve access to end-of-life care services for rural and Native American communities in California

August 2, 2023 – A California Hospice Network (CHN) affiliate has published the findings of the Life Transitions Project, a three-year Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and quality improvement project that identified barriers to accessing end-of-life services for Native American and rural populations.

YoloCares, a nonprofit end-of-life care agency serving the Sacramento Valley that led the initiative, is now sharing assessment findings with the intention to aid other healthcare agencies in expanding access to care across the state of California.

The assessment was generously supported through a million-dollar grant from the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, a self-governed nation located in the Capay Valley of Yolo County as well as Sutter Health.

“At YoloCares, we believe that every person deserves dignity at the end of life. The Life Transitions Project represents our commitment as an agency to uphold this principle within our own community,” says Craig Dresang, CEO of YoloCares.

The Life Transitions Project was conducted using a Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach. Project leads gathered community input through a public survey, community workshops, focus group discussions, and one-to-one interviews. Discussions included community perceptions regarding advance care directives, grief practices, healthcare access barriers faced by both Native American and rural communities, and utilization of in-home care services.

Bolstered by a CBPR approach, foundational community relationships were built to seek ways to combat historic disparities. YoloCares worked to understand the needs of the community directly from rural and Native American community members and utilized the community’s feedback to develop solutions to address barriers to accessing end-of-life services. Solutions proposed in the final report indicate a need for greater cultural humility and increased healthcare provider knowledge of traditional beliefs and practices for Native American patients. For agencies who aim to serve rural communities, actions must be taken to address geographic barriers to access.

The report also found that a lack of community education opportunities and accessible, appropriate materials for those who do not subscribe to western cultural norms or Spanish-



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speaking communities on end-of-life care services contributes to lower utilization rates compared to white, English-speaking communities.

A general mistrust in medical systems also exists because of historic traumatic events caused by colonization, such as forced relocation, governmental suppression of resources, and many other forms of injustice. This is further compounded by a lack of diverse representation across clinicians and care providers in all healthcare systems.

YoloCares intends to utilize community feedback to develop a series of programs and reforms aimed at improving ease of access of services, including reworking informational materials to be more culturally appropriate and accessible for differing literacy levels.

The agency will continue to strengthen relationships through continued outreach and community education initiatives and will also create a community advisory board to help guide efforts, further amplifying the voices of the those represented in the Life Transitions Project. Additional initiatives include diversifying the offerings of YoloCares' Center for Loss & Hope and spiritual care programs.

While this report cannot offer a one-size-fits-all solution for clinical agencies, the Life Transitions Project intends to create avenues for agencies to review current community education and outreach, employee training and hiring, and communications practices to better serve Native American and rural communities.

To view the full report and accompanying magazine, visit yolocares.org/our-services/yolocares-life-transition-project/. A community-wide launch event will be held on Thursday, August 24, from 5-7pm at Galileo Place Adult Day Center, located at 1909 Galileo Court, Suite C in Davis, CA 95618. For more information, please call 530-758-5566.

About California Hospice Network

California Hospice Network is a strategic partnership committed to sustaining local nonprofit community-based hospice care in California. The Network's member organizations -- Hospice of Santa Cruz County, Mission Hospice & Home Care, and YoloCares -- are each recognized as trusted leaders in the communities they have served for 45 years. Aligned in their mission and values, Network members are working, sharing, and planning together to create stronger community-based hospices that deliver exceptional patient care and end-of-life services.

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