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PRESS RELEASE

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LACDMH ENCOURAGES CARE FOR DEPRESSION IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

***Support groundbreaking research by voting online at
<http://www.changemakers.com/ucla>***

(LOS ANGELES; January 27, 2015) – Community Partners in Care (CPIC), a research team comprising members of the RAND Corporation, UCLA, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH), and Healthy African American Families II has been named a finalist in the UCLA Health / David Geffen School of Medicine and Ashoka Changemakers' Helping U Help Your Community Contest for groundbreaking research in the care of clinically depressed individuals in underserved communities. Each of five winners, chosen in an [online voting process](#) open to the public, will receive \$20,000 in funding.

All communities are negatively affected by clinical depression, the largest cause of disability among adults in the United States with links to unemployment and poverty. Research has shown that while high-quality depression care improves outcomes for all adults, it yields even greater improvements in economic outcomes like unemployment, net worth and decreased sick days among those who are employed. African American and Latino patients improve at five times the rates of whites who are offered equally high quality depression care. Unfortunately, a dearth of primary care clinics in the regions inhabited by such patients leaves them with few options for care.

“We are thrilled to be recognized by UCLA and Changemakers,” said Bowen Chung, M.D., assistant professor in-residence of psychiatry and biobehavioral sciences at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA, an adjunct scientist at RAND and a LACDMH psychiatrist. “While it’s an honor just to be nominated, winning this prize would help us ensure sustainability of the CPIC approach throughout LA County. So we’re urging all of our supporters to join us in beating depression and the stigma by casting a vote for us at [changemakers.com/ucla](http://www.changemakers.com/ucla) before Friday, January 30, 2015.”

CPIC has spent over 10 years working to find effective ways to treat depression in under-resourced communities. Research has shown that in areas facing obstacles such as poor primary care infrastructure, distrust of outside providers, language barriers and stigma or lack of awareness around mental health issues, clinical depression can be more successfully identified and managed through a collaborative effort that engages citizens, healthcare providers, faith-based agencies, community service providers and local business leaders.

A key differentiator of CPIC's collaborative approach is the shifting of tasks traditionally performed in healthcare settings to non-healthcare arenas. Examples of such an approach might include a minister providing depression detection, education, referral coordination, and symptom/treatment tracking for a member of his congregation; or a homeless agency adapting its services and facilities to accommodate depression care for its clients. CPIC works closely with any and all willing community members—including religious leadership, social services agencies, barber shops, beauty salons, and individuals—to co-develop approaches that are appropriate and sensitive to the needs that community.

Based on CPIC's 6-month client outcomes, L.A. County has adopted the Health Neighborhood Initiative, a plan to implement CPIC's approach throughout the county. If awarded to CPIC, funds from the Helping U Help Your Community contest would be applied toward the development of training methodologies and materials to support this implementation.

CPIC has found that by working in partnership between primary care and mental health providers of depression and working directly with the community to raise awareness, train leaders and other service providers, and track patients' symptoms and progress, they can deliver high-quality depression care in these areas more effectively and economically.

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