

BHSA Prevention Definition

BHSA Prevention Forum

October 28, 2025



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH
hope. recovery. wellbeing



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

A minimum of 4 percent of the BHSA funding is allotted to CDPH for Population-Based Prevention and at least 51 percent of the funds must be used for populations who are 25 years old or younger.

Population-based prevention programs must incorporate evidence-based practices or promising community-defined evidence practices and meet one or more of the following:

- Benefit the entire population of the state, county, or particular community
- Serve identified populations at elevated risk for a mental health or substance use disorder
- Aim to reduce stigma associated with seeking help for mental health challenges and substance use disorders
- Serve populations disproportionately impacted by systemic racism and discrimination
- Prevent suicide, self-harm, or overdose

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CDPH-BHSA-Population-Based-Prevention-Phase-1-Guide.pdf>

As part of the BHSA, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has been allocated dedicated funding to address behavioral health prevention including, but not limited to:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CDPH-BHSA-Population-Based-Prevention-Phase-1-Guide.pdf>

- Implementing population-based mental health and substance use disorder prevention programs.
- Implementing population-based behavioral health prevention strategies under the BHSA, with the majority of funds directed at individuals who are 25 years of age or younger.
- Managing public awareness efforts to educate Californians about mental health illnesses and substance use disorders and opportunities for treatment.
- Working to enhance school-based/linked health services and supports for students and staff designed to identify and prevent suicide and substance misuse, and reduce stigma associated with seeking help for mental health challenges and substance use disorders.
- Coordinating and aligning statewide suicide prevention efforts and resources through programs like the Office of Suicide Prevention.

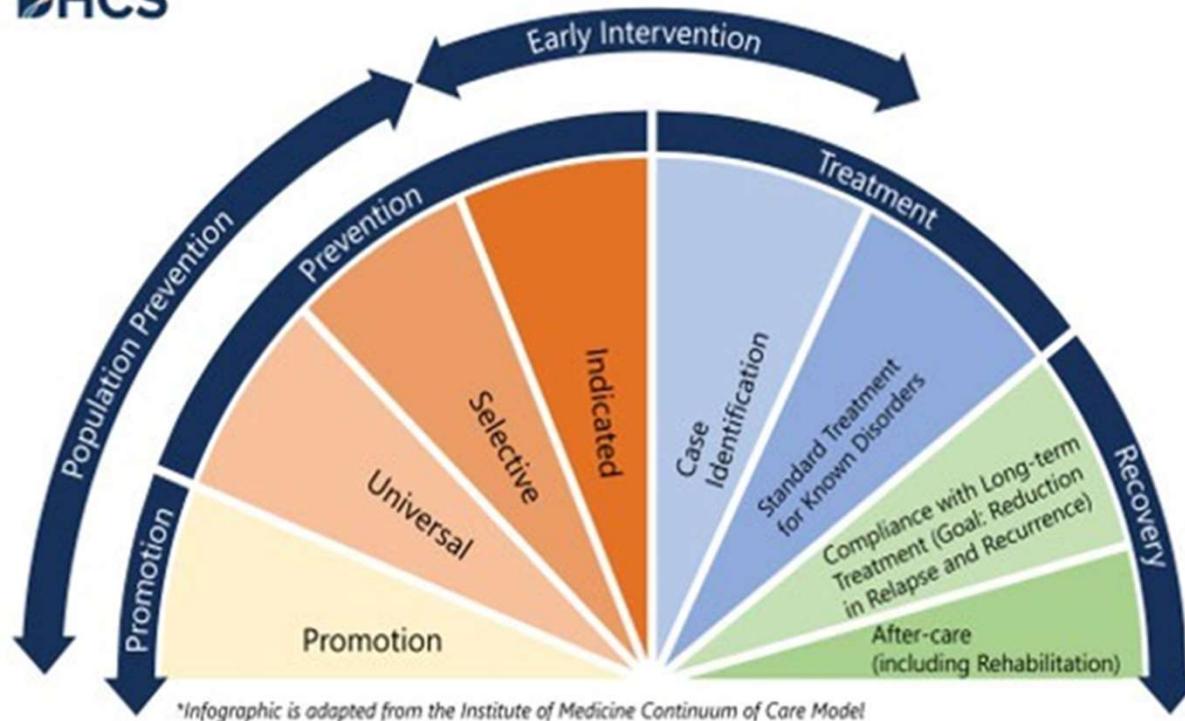


Statewide Behavioral Health Goals





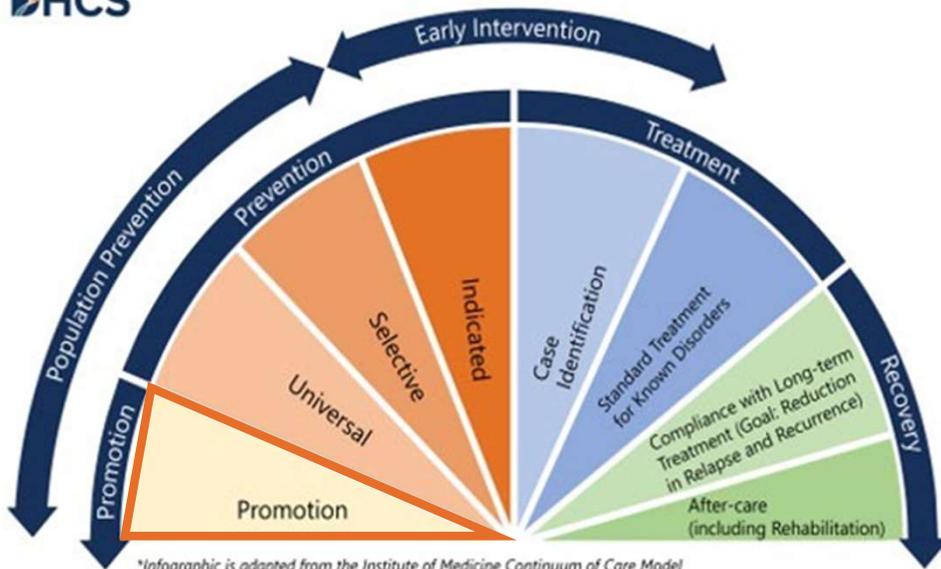
BHSA Prevention Definition, Led by CDPH



Institute of Medicine's Continuum of Care & Spectrum of Early Intervention Services



Promotion Definition



**Infographic is adapted from the Institute of Medicine Continuum of Care Model*

Promotion strives to improve the well-being of whole communities through such strategies as raising public awareness, reducing stigma, and ensuring access to activities and resources that support well-being (World Health Organization, 6 2005).

In behavioral health, promotion strategies are designed to create environments and conditions that support behavioral health and the ability of individuals and communities to withstand challenges. Promotion strategies focus on the general public and/or entire populations and aim to enhance individuals' ability to achieve developmentally appropriate competencies and a positive sense of self-esteem, mastery, and well-being.



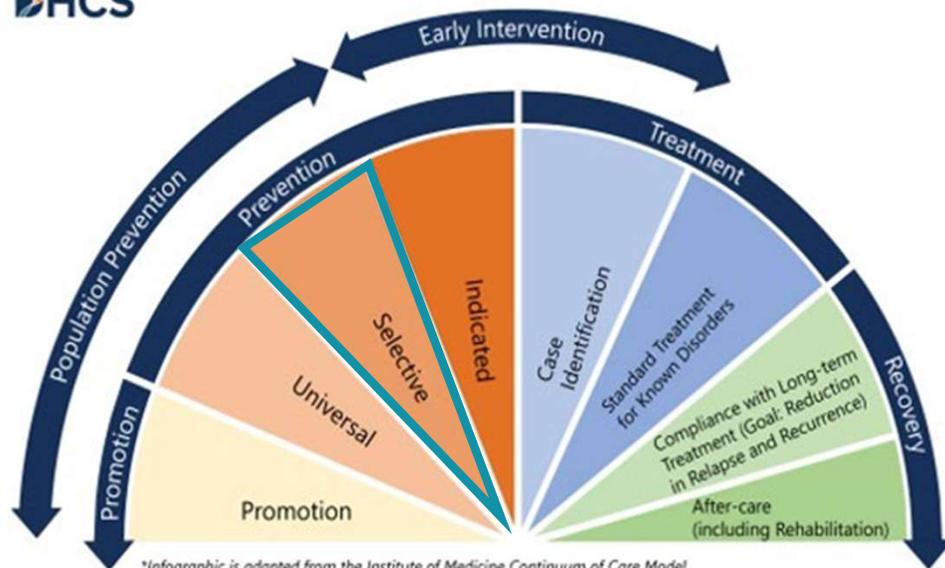
Universal Prevention



Universal prevention focuses on the general public or a whole population that has not been identified on the basis of increased risk (Kirkbride et al., 2024).



Selective Prevention



**Infographic is adapted from the Institute of Medicine Continuum of Care Model*

Selective prevention focuses on individuals or subgroups of the population whose risk of developing a mental health condition is significantly higher than average, as evidenced by biological, psychological or social risk factors (Kirkbride et al., 2024).

Prevention & Early Intervention Programs, Substance Use System of Care

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Prevention is the use of strategies or programs to change social norms, social conditions, and risky behaviors to minimize substance use initiation before it leads to substance use-associated disorders (addiction).

The Bureau of Substance Abuse Prevention and Control's (SAPC) Prevention Division oversees primary prevention services throughout Los Angeles County for youth, young adults, and adults. Programs are geared for individuals who have never used, may be at-risk for using, or do not have a current substance use disorder (also known as addiction) or need treatment. Primary prevention programs provide a comprehensive range of presentations, classes, youth activities, community events, and public health advocacy to prevent community substance use.

69,552 served across 29 provider agencies and 133 site locations

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/public/prevention/?tm>

Key Prevention Strategies



Strategy Description		Program Examples
1	Increase community education and awareness through Positive Youth Development programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/Guardian Presentations • Peer/Youth Leadership Program • After-School Programs
2	Mobilize community to develop strategies that address local concerns over substance misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Coalitions • Alcohol/Cannabis Retailer Education • Prescription Drug Take-Backs
3	Enhance data collection to assess the scope of use in Los Angeles County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol/Cannabis Density Reports • Community Needs Assessment • Scans at Alcohol/Cannabis Retailers
4	Launch countywide media campaign to promote education and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fentanyl Frontline • #Bigger Choices Than Weed • In Every Corner – Substance Use

For more information see [SAPC's Strategic Prevention Plan June 2020 – June 2025](#)

Directly DPH Operated

43 Student Wellbeing Centers

Safe, accessible environments on school campuses where students can receive guidance, resources, and education on substance use and other related health and social topics to support their physical, emotional, and social wellbeing and reduce substance use.

6 CORE Centers

Connecting to Opportunities for Recovery and Engagement (CORE) Centers at DPH Public Health Centers where anyone can come to get information and resources on how to prevent alcohol and substance use and know where to go for services.

Other County Departments

LA County Office of Education

Friday Night Live is a youth-adult partnership program focused on positive and healthy youth development and to create opportunities for engagement on substance use topics.

Parks & Recreation

Our SPOT is a teen after-school program to provide a fun, safe and supportive place to participate in alternatives to substance use and other risky behavior. (e.g., leadership, recreation, visual arts, field trips).

LA County Library

My Brother's Keeper is a peer-advocate program that uses outreach and education strategies to improve prevention outcomes for boys and young men of color.

Community-Based Organizations

35 Prevention Education Programs

CBOs that provide substance use health promotion and education services in community settings (e.g., schools, faith-based locations) and which reinforce positive support systems and community connections.

8 Community Collaboration Programs

CBOs that address community factors that contribute to substance use through coalition and network development to address problematic availability, distribution, promotion, and sales via advocacy and policy action.

1 Media Campaign Vendor

Partner with DPH-SAPC in the development of social and mass media campaigns to educate community residents on priority substance related issues and to prompt defined action.

Conduct Needs Assessment to Identify Local Priorities and Design/Implement Targeted Interventions

Step 1: Gather and analyze publicly available data sources (e.g., surveys).

		LAC	SPA 1	SPA 2	SPA 3	SPA 4	SPA 5	SPA 6	SPA 7	SPA 8
Prevalence: Proportion of the population with a condition at a specific point or period of time.	Youth 12-17 used cannabis in past month	7.6%	8.8%	7.7%	6.0%	7.9%	8.8%	8.4%	7.3%	8.0%
	Young adults 18-25 used cannabis in past month.	21.3%	25.0%	21.1 %	17.2 %	22.4%	25.0%	22.8%	19.7%	23.4%
Contributing Factors: Amendable factors that contribute to use and serve as potential targets for interventions.	Perceived great risk of daily cannabis use, 18+	32.5%	23.8%	35.3 %	36.3%	27.0%	16.1%	42.6%	39.6%	25.1%
	Agree cannabis use harms youth brain development, ages 18+	79.5%	81.4%	82.1 %	76.0%	81.7%	69.9%	81.9%	83.5%	76.9%
Access and Availability: How easy is it to get a substance vs. how much is available to purchase within an area.	Perceived easy access to cannabis, ages 12+	81.2%	84.9%	81.1 %	82.9%	86.4%	79.5%	79.5%	78.1%	86.5%
	Cannabis dispensaries, rate per 100,000 people	11.1%	1.0%	14.4 %	3.4%	24.7 %	10.3%	11.9%	8.7%	8.3%
Social Norms: Family/peer practices, media, music, movies, and ads that influence beliefs, attitudes, actual use.	Close friends use cannabis, age 12+	43.1%	48.7%	37.8 %	46.5%	44.8%	58.0%	47.1%	34.0%	37.9%
	Family members use cannabis, age 12+	38.4%	45.6%	33.4 %	40.1%	37.4%	43.5%	47.5%	33.9%	34.4%

Step 2: Conduct individual and group interviews, environmental scans, surveys etc. for the local area

Determine a potential service area (e.g., several cities, Service Planning Area-SPA) and (1) conduct individual and group interviews, environmental scans (e.g., walk around area to physical factors such as number of liquor stores), and surveys; and (2) analyze data to identify priorities.

Step 3: Design and implement interventions specifically to address identified local needs

After analyzing prevalence, contributing factors, access and availability, and social norms data for all local substance use issues (e.g. alcohol, cannabis, methamphetamine, opioids), determine programs most important to address in order to reduce impact of substance on both individuals and communities.

For more information, and to see sample data/sources, see SAPC's [Strategic Prevention Plan July 2020 – June 2025](#)

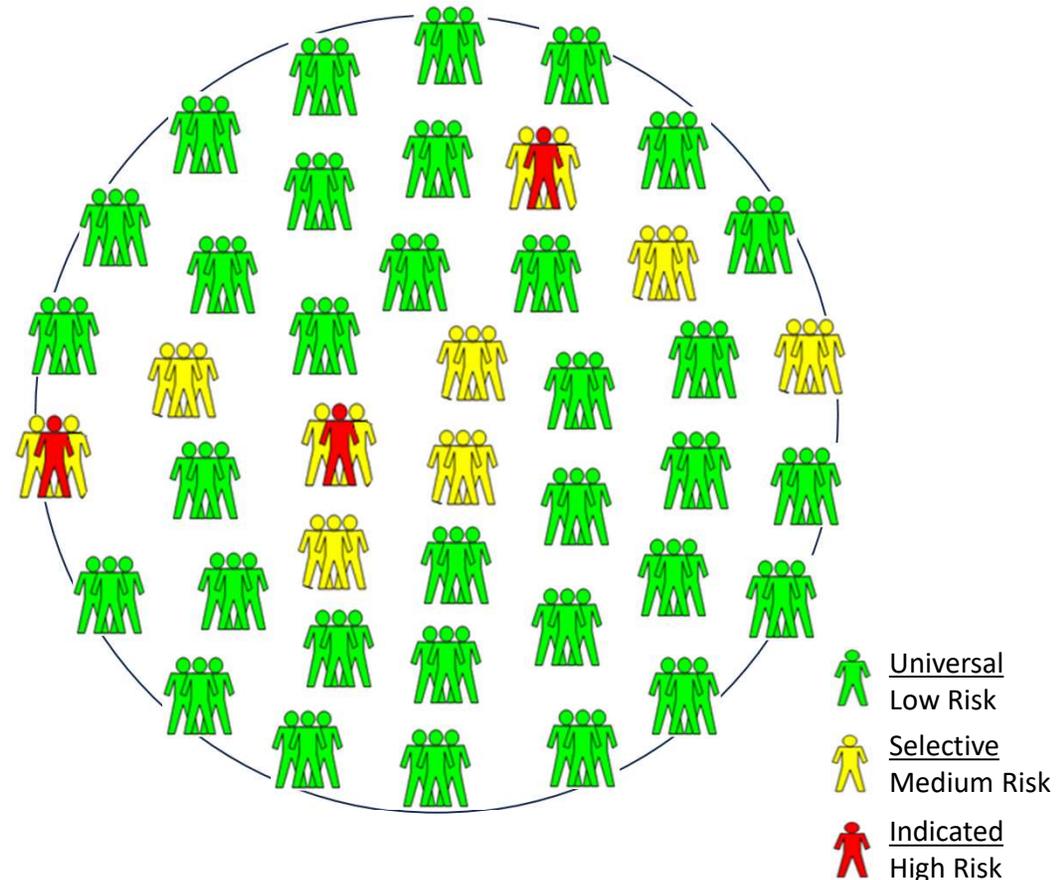
Promotion - Whole communities regardless of risk of substance use to support well-being

Universal - Entire population regardless of risk of substance use

Selective - Subset of population due to being at higher risk of substance use

Indicated - Individuals showing early signs of a substance use problem

Case Identification - Individuals showing early signs of a substance use problem



Promotion

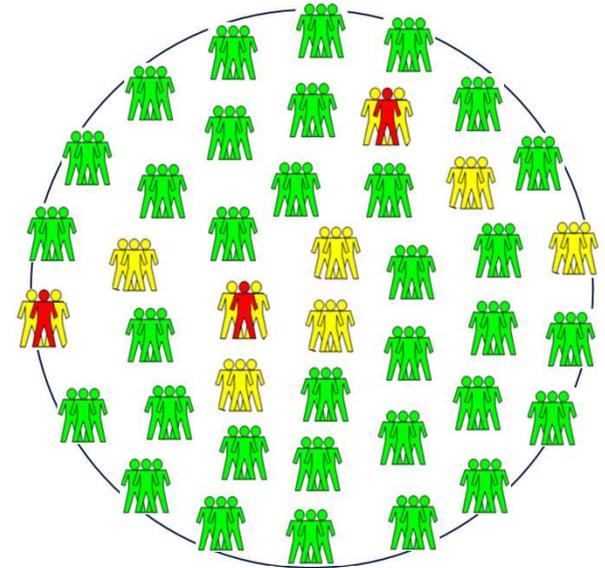
Universal

Selective

Indicated

Case Identification

- *Media Campaigns / Policy Change*
- *Community-Based Outreach*
- *Dept Parks & Recreation Our SPOT*
- *DPH Youth Advisory Group*
- *Let's Make a Difference*
- *DPH Student Wellbeing Centers*
- *LA Smoke Shop Project*
- *Educational Sessions with Probation Youth*
- *DPH CORE Centers*
- *Client Engagement and Navigation Services for Youth*
- *Early Intervention Services for Youth and Young Adults*



Stories From the Frontline: “Together We Defeat Overdose”

The Big Idea: The fentanyl frontline is everywhere in LA. No matter where you are, you’re affected. But there’s something everyone can do.

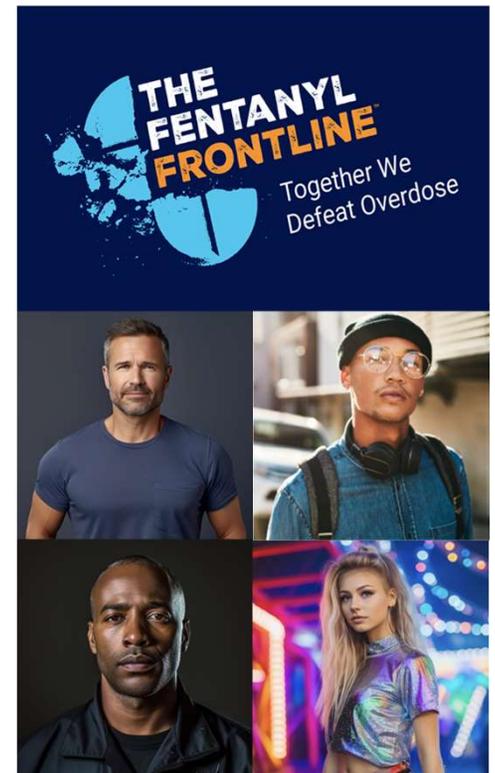
Execution: Tell stories based on the true accounts of people who are on the frontlines of fentanyl.

Target Populations:

- Community Non-Users, Adults 25–44
- Experimenters - White/AA Male Adults 18-39
- Susceptible Non-Triers (Teens), 13–17

Campaign Awareness:

- Knowledge of risks associated with illicit fentanyl and counterfeit pills
- Experimentation is risky
- Attitudes towards carrying naloxone
- Education about overdose prevention
- Increase in SASH calls/RecoverLA website (www.RecoverLA.org)
- Increase awareness of SUD treatment services



When it comes to preventing the potential harms associated with prescription drug misuse or abuse, we can all take:

3 STEPS

to keep our families and communities safe from the dangers of Rx medications.

- 1 SAFE STORAGE** KEEP RX MEDICATIONS SECURE AND OUT OF REACH.
NEVER LEAVE MEDICATIONS IN YOUR CAR OR IN THE BACKSEAT OF YOUR CAR.
- 2 NOT SHARING** NEVER SHARE RX MEDICATIONS!
SHARING RX MEDICATIONS CAN BE DANGEROUS AND ILLEGAL.
- 3 SAFE DISPOSAL** PROPERLY DISPOSE OF ALL RX MEDICATIONS.
LEAVE THEM OUT OF YOUR HOME AND OFFICE. USE A SAFE DISPOSAL SERVICE.



WARNING

Don't buy alcohol for anyone under 21

CALIFORNIA LAW
states that any person purchasing alcohol for a minor may be punished by:

- 6-12 months in Jail
- \$1000 FINE
- Or BOTH.

#RethinkAlcohol

rad-sgv.org



Los Angeles County OUR SPOT Program

- Our SPOT (Social Places & Opportunities for Teens) is a free, after school teen program offered at 16 LA County Parks. It provides youth ages 12 to 18 with a safe, structured space to build community, develop life skills, and explore leadership, wellness, and career pathways through daily programming, field trips, and special events.
- The program increases youth connection to a safe, supportive environment, where youth can build confidence, leadership, and social-emotional skills
- Participants are connected with career and college exploration opportunities as alternatives to substance use.
- The program reduces risk factors and strengthens protective factors for SUD through trauma-informed, culturally responsive programming.

<https://parks.lacounty.gov/ourspot/>

DPH Youth Advisory Council

This program advances youth well-being and partners with Public Health to prevent initiation, progression, and harms associated with substance use among teens throughout LA County. A diverse cohort of 20 to 30 youth leaders annually (ages 16–21) from all 8 Service Planning Areas, united by a passion for equity and community change.

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/mch/CAH/PYD/Youth%20Advisory%20Council-About.htm>

- **Learning & Development:** Members gain hands-on experience including leadership development, mental health literacy, and substance use awareness and prevention strategies.
- **Strategic Collaboration:** Youth serve as advisors to DPH, co-designing prevention campaigns, toolkits, and shaping youth initiatives. These activities provide alternative options to substance use, while enhancing protective factors amongst LA County youth.
- **Community Impact:** YAC members lead youth-driven responses to urgent issues including substance use risk factors and expanding naloxone access in schools and communities as a vital risk reduction strategy.
- **Systems Engagement:** Through mentorship and public health systems learning, youth help enhance the reach and relevance of DPH initiatives targeting their peers.

Let's Make a Difference

Initiated in July 2022, Let's Make A Difference (LMD) is a community-level prevention initiative designed to raise awareness about the harms associated with opioids & prescription drug misuse/abuse.

LMD fully implements [SB212](#) which establishes a stewardship program to facilitate the disposal of unused and expired drugs.

<https://www.letsmakeadifferencerox.org/about>

- **Print/Multimedia:** Communicate the importance of safe medication practices as a means to ultimately reduce home and social access to opioids and other Rx Drugs
 - 19,978 materials distributed (rack cards, safe disposal magnets, key chains)*
- **Pharmacy Engagement:** Recruitment and engagement of a cadre of independent pharmacies to support the campaign
 - 37,519 pounds collected during DEA Drug Take Back Days
 - Estimated 196,313 pounds collected at Med Project USA drop off locations*
- **Community Partnerships:** Connect with school parent centers, community-based organizations, childcare centers, and other strategic partners to adopt the LMD campaign including the 'Safe Home Pledge Cards,' and promoting the campaign to their constituents, target community.
 - 4,318 Pledges Collected*

*Data collected through 2024

The Los Angeles Smoke Shop Project

The goal of the program is to decrease the sale of illicit hemp and cannabis in unlicensed cannabis dispensaries and traditional smoke shops. The project conducted Countywide environmental scans of traditional tobacco smoke shops that were located close to priority youth sensitive locations.

- 491 environmental scans conducted; 39 school-based surveys for school administrators
- 211 complaint submissions to regulatory authorities
- Retailer notification letters sent to 2,141 tobacco retail shops and food facilities, and 5,460 food facilities and tobacco retail shops
- Governor issued emergency ban on hemp products containing intoxicating cannabinoids; new temporary state regulations for products that are attractive to children

DPH Core Centers

The CORE Center is a community space where everyone can come to get information and resources about how to prevent alcohol and drug use, learn more about substance use disorders (also known as addiction) and find out where to go for free or low-cost treatment services.

Families and friends can build skills to talk about alcohol/drugs with loved ones and learn how to help someone experiencing a drug overdose. CORE Center staff are able to provide screening to identify alcohol/drug treatment needs and connect individuals to an appropriate local treatment center.

Services include:

- Information on alcohol and drug prevention, and community advocacy opportunities.
- Workshops such as preventing teen substance use and vaping, understanding health risks of different drugs, understanding substance use disorders and treatment services, and recognizing signs of relapse.
- Training on how to administer medication (naloxone) to reverse an opioid overdose.
- Screenings to identify treatment needs.
- Referrals to no-cost treatment services for Medi-Cal and My Health LA clients.

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/public/corecenter/?lang=en>

Screening and Assessment

Use of youth-specific ASAM criteria and standardized tools to identify SUD risks and treatment needs.

Intervention Services

Brief Interventions using Motivational Interviewing and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to address early substance use risks among youth

Care Coordination & Navigation

Client Engagement and Navigation Services (CENS) screen and connect system-impacted and youth with complex care needs to appropriate care

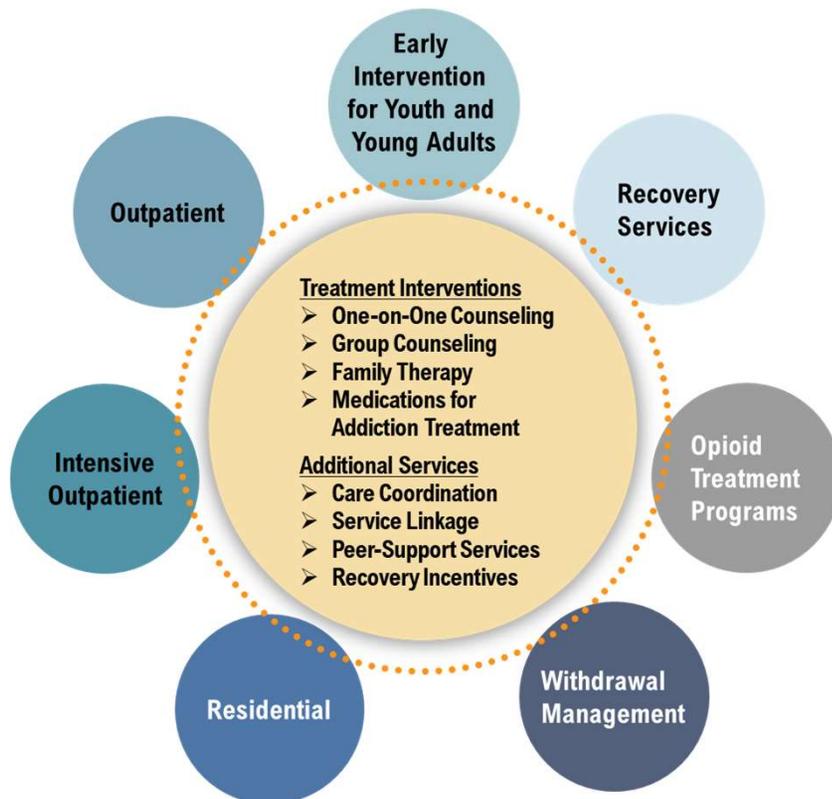
Early Family Supportive Services

The BRIDGE Program (Building Relationships, Inspiring Development, Growing Engagement) enhances caregiver participation through Early Family Engagement, Family Education & Support Groups, Community Outreach, and Positive Family Development Activities.

Inter-Departmental Collaboration

SAPC partners with DCFS, DMH, DYD, OCP, Probation, LAUSD, LACOE and others to coordinate and strengthen referral pathways for SUD services.

Case Identification: Youth SUD Network (Medi-Cal Services for 17 and Under)



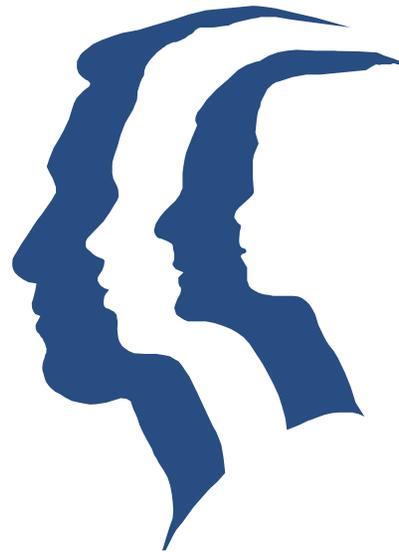
DMC-Certified Youth SUD Network

Provider	30
Agencies	
Number of Sites*	50
Field-Based Sites	105

Field-Based Service Sites

Schools	30
STRTPs	17
Other	9
In-Home	8

*Includes Outpatient, Intensive Outpatient, Residential, and Field-Based Services (FBS)



Questions?