

Placer County Safety Net System Connectedness Survey Report & Next Steps



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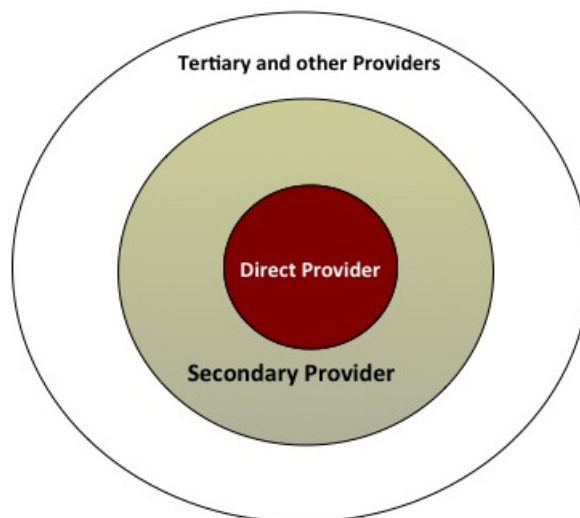


Introduction

Sponsored by Sutter Health and Kaiser Permanente, Valley Vision has partnered with the Placer Collaborative Network (PCN) to improve access to healthcare for some of south Placer County's more vulnerable residents. Based on input received at the PCN retreat in November 2010, a key step toward improving access to healthcare is strengthening the connections between the many organizations serving south Placer County's vulnerable populations – the *safety net system*.

The safety net system exists to ensure that the most vulnerable residents of Placer County have access to healthcare and related services when needed. The system includes those organizations that provide direct services to residents, as well as organizations that help residents find these services when needed. This system is represented in the figure below.

Figure One
Illustration of the Safety Net System



The following definitions help further identify members of the safety net system.

Direct Provider: Those individuals, organizations, institutions, or similar that provide direct health, mental, and related services to members of the community. Examples include: community clinics, private practice doctors, county health services, and hospitals. These providers can be thought of as "point of delivery" and "provide direct services to the patient" type organizations.

Secondary Provider: Those individuals, organizations, institutions, or similar that provide support to those seeking health, mental, and

related healthcare services from direct providers. Examples include: transportation companies, family resource centers, translation services, and community-based organizations. These providers can be thought of as intermediaries helping patients navigate to direct service providers.

While there are other members of the safety net system beyond these two levels, these were the focus of the survey.

All organizations that fit into these definitions were identified using “snowballing” techniques. This included using a number of sources to locate safety net member organizations including internet searches, printed directories, telephone and email inquiries to likely organizations, and inquires to members of the community familiar with the area. In the end, 77 identified organizations in south Placer County were put on a master list.

Survey

The depth and quality of connection between members of the safety net system is an important factor in how well the system functions. For that reason, Valley Vision created the survey for those organizations identified as being a part of the safety net system. The purpose of the survey was to measure system *connectedness* and *density*. Said another way, survey respondents were asked to identify among the list of 77 members how many members they knew of and felt connected to. This outward looking view is referred to as system “connectedness.” Additionally, the number of connections taken as a whole is designed to measure system “density.” This refers to the total number of connections among all 77 members of the safety net system.

The survey used a five-point scale, where the respondent ranked how connected they were with members of the system. The scale is illustrated below in table one.

Table One
Five Point Survey Scale

Value	Scale
1	Don't know at all/never heard of
2	Have heard of, but never worked with
3	Have heard of, worked with a time or two
4	Regularly work with
5	Know well, work with very often

The survey was sent via email to all 77 organizations on February 10, 2011, and recipients were given two weeks to complete it. Following the initial invitation, participants received two reminders to complete the survey. See Appendix A for a sample survey page.

Results

Survey data was downloaded for analysis on March 4, 2011. At this time a total of 38 responses had been received, representing a 49% response rate.

In analyzing the results, three key components were reviewed:

- Overall System Density – the mean or average score of all responses
- Individual Organization Connectedness – the mean or average score of an individual organization’s connections

During a convening held on March 7th, 2011, the survey results were shared with approximately 35 individuals that represented one or more of the 77 organizations invited to complete the survey. While each individual organization was given a unique score, this and other individual level information was not publicly displayed or distributed. A large-group discussion was facilitated by Valley Vision staff that allowed respondents to react to the results. A designated note-taker was present that captured the salient points and reactions made by the group. The results and comments are discussed below.

Overall System Density = 2.65 (on a 5-point scale)

There is little context that allows this density score to be evaluated. The score was intended to provide the group or system with a measure of its connectedness. While the survey scale allowed for up to a mean score of five, attaining this value would require that each of the 77 organizations surveyed to be in regular, ongoing contact with one another, and this seems unreasonable given the size of the group. On the other hand, a mean score of one would require that none of the 77 organizations knew of each other.

When discussing this score with those who attended the March 7th meeting, the following points were made by the group:

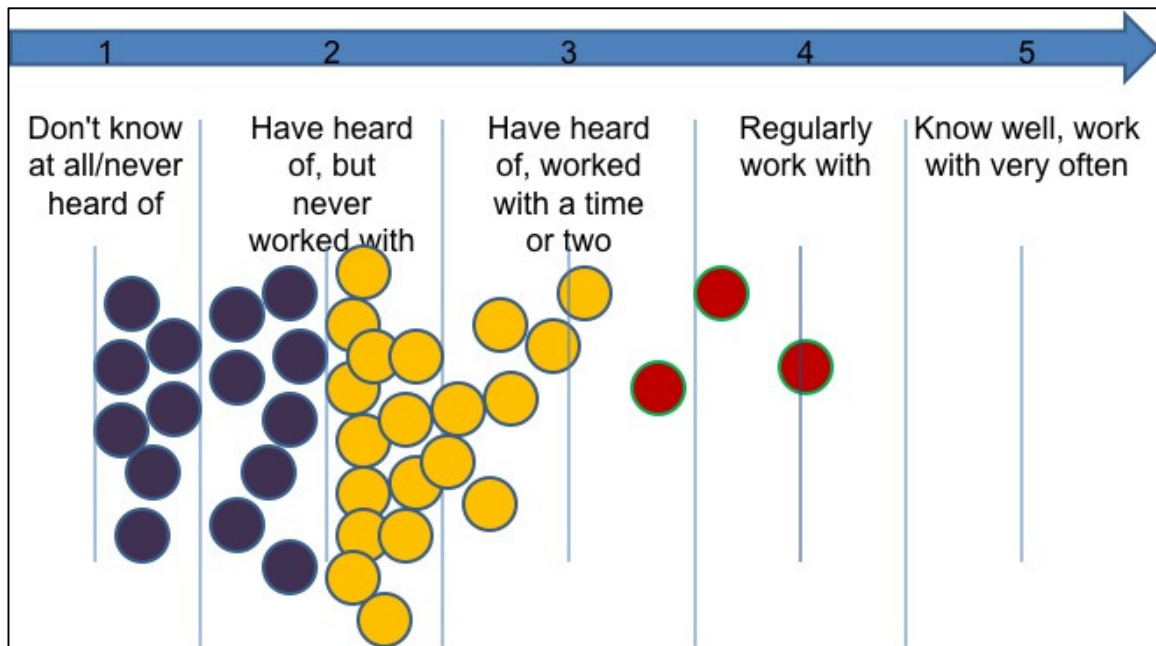
- Is it reasonable to expect that every organization regularly interface with others? The group argued that large-scale collaboration is not always the answer but having the capacity to act in this manner is important.
- The group argued that it needed to be intentional and build relationships with all potential partners so that the system was prepared for situations that require those relationships to be utilized.
- The group thought it important to consider how their clients would answer a similar survey, and how aware are they of the service organizations available to them?
- Many stated that they knew other organizations, but didn't know what projects they were working on or what services they currently provide. They asked the question: How can we set up a system that allows for regular collaboration to happen?

Outward Looking (How Many Organizations You Know)

38 total organizations

A mean score was calculated for each individual respondent of the survey. This score represents the number of connections each individual respondent had with one or more of the 77 total organizations listed on the survey. Individual scores were not displayed; however, each organization's mean connectedness score was presented using the figure two below. Each organization was placed on the scale in a location that corresponded to its mean connectedness score. Colors are used to delineate organizations: red indicates a mean score of 3.5 or higher, yellow 2.5 to 3.49, and black 2.49 or lower.

Figure Two
Individual Respondent Mean Scores Displayed



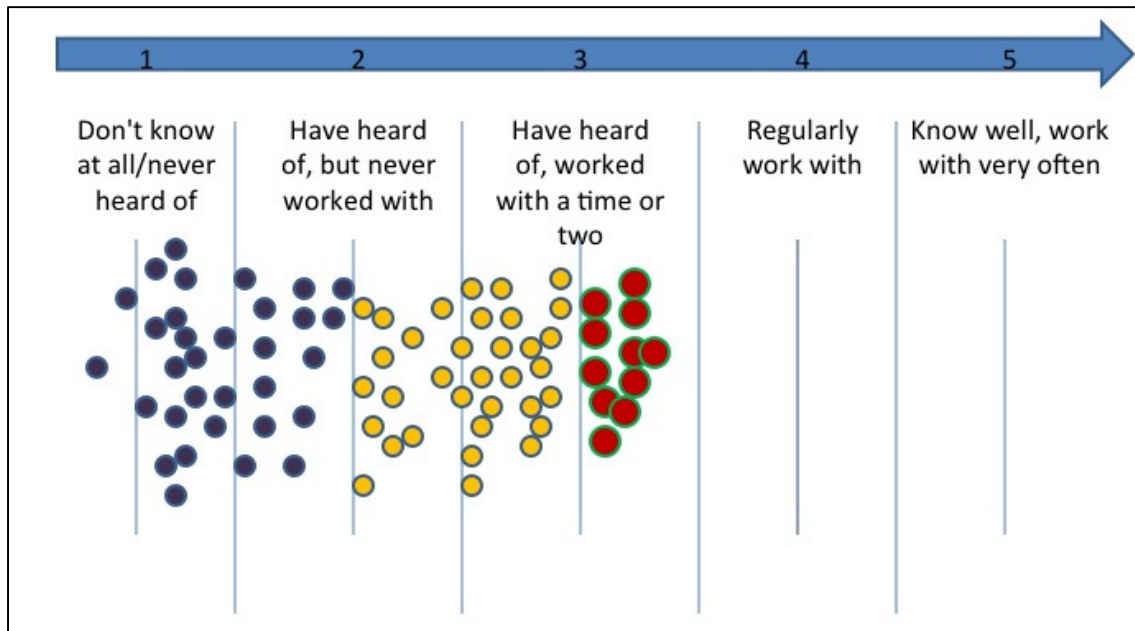
Only three of the 38 organizations attained a mean score of 3.5 or higher. 20 organizations had a mean score of 2.5 to 3.49, and 15 had a score of 2.49 or lower.

Inward Looking (How Many Organizations Know You)

77 total organizations

A mean score was also calculated for each of the 77 organizations identified in the survey. This score could be interpreted to indicate how well each of the listed organizations was known by and connected to all others in the survey. Each of the listed organizations was given a unique score, and these are displayed on the scale in figure three below. Individual identities are not displayed. Colors denote various ranges into which a single organization fit. Red dots represent organizations with a mean score of 3.5 or higher; yellow indicates a mean score of 2.5 to 3.49, and black a score of 2.49 or lower.

Figure Three
Mean Scores of all Organizations Displayed on Scale



In total, 11 of the 77 (14%) organizations attained a mean score of 3.5 or greater. These organizations could be interpreted to represent those within the system that are best known and well-connected. They could also be thought of as nodes in the system. 34 of the 77 (44%) attained a mean score between 2.5 and 3.49, and the remaining 32 (42%) attained a score of less than 2.5.

In discussing these results with the group, it became apparent that some organizations within the safety net system and in the tertiary provider category rarely work with external organizations on the service delivery level. This lack of interaction with external organizations would reduce the possibility that other organizations would be aware of them and their work. However, the data confirms that most organizations are at least aware of other organizations that could help them. These results also show that there are some organizations in the safety net system that are relatively “unconnected” to others. For example, the lowest mean score attained by any organization was 1.21 (Don’t know of/never worked with).

Frequency of Referrals

To get a sense of the degree that various organizations referred clients to one another, participants were asked how frequently they referred clients to other organizations within the safety net system. The responses were (out of 38 respondents):

- Frequently: 60%
- Occasionally: 24%
- Seldom: 8%
- Rarely: 8%

These numbers again show that organizations within the safety net system are interacting with each other. While it may only be with the same small set of organizations, they are still working together on some level.

Self Classification

One additional analysis was conducted. Here the goal was to see how many respondents classified their organization as a member of the south Placer County safety net system. Out of 38 respondents, 93% believed they were a part of the system, with only 7% considering themselves not a part of this system. When discussing this finding with the group, those that did not see themselves as a part of the system, argued that: (a) other organizations in the system did not know of their work, or (b) they were not a direct service provider, hence not a member of the safety net system. While both of these are reasonable arguments, it is argued in the Introduction to this report (page 2) that the safety net system is comprised of more than just the direct providers; hence an important step in enhancing system functionality is for each member to recognize their role in the overall system.

Next Steps

Findings from this survey were presented at an interactive meeting on March 7, 2011, held at the Kaiser Permanente facility in Roseville, CA. The images and discussion points from this summary are taken from the presentation and meeting notes, respectively.

The next step will be administering another survey to this same population, with the purpose of measuring the *collaborative capacity* (the degree of efficiency with which the system accomplishes its stated goals and objectives) of the south Placer safety net system. Findings from this survey will be presented at a meeting on April 29, 2011, at the Sutter Auburn Faith Hospital facility.

Limitations

As with any study of this type, there are several limitations that need to be identified and discussed. First, private practice physicians that serve south Placer County's more vulnerable populations were not included in this survey. Some physicians offer their services for free, while others work on sliding scales, reduced fees, and take Medi-Cal insurance. These physicians play an important part in the safety net system. These physicians were not included in the survey due to the difficulty in identifying them given the limited resources of this research team.

Further, the survey constructed and used in this study was derived from prior research that examined the degree of integration among mental health care providers working in various cities within the United States (see: Provan, K. G., & Milward, H. B. (1995). A preliminary theory of interorganizational network effectiveness: A comparative study of four community mental health systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40:1, 1-33). These studies used qualitative measures to identify the degree of connectedness within these systems. The approach used in this study was built on prior research; however, the survey instrument used was not normed or validated through statistical means.

APPENDIX A

Placer County Safety Net System Connectedness Survey

Please indicate how well you know and are connected to the following list of organizations: *

Note: The "Save & Continue" option will not save your answers on this page if you have not answered all of the questions; it will only save your answers from previous pages.

	Don't know at all/never heard of	Have heard of, but never worked with	Have heard of, worked with once or twice	Regularly work with	Know well, work with very often
Abundant Life Church, Roseville *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acres of Hope, Applegate *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adventure Christian Church, Rocklin *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Auburn Family Co-op Project *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Auburn Food Closet *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bayside Church, Roseville *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boys and Girls Club, Auburn *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
California Children Services, Auburn *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
California Children Services, Newcastle *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Camellia Women's Health, Roseville *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chapa De Indian Health Clinic, Auburn *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dial-A-Ride *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elijah's Jar, Foresthill *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
First Church of Nazarene, Roseville *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gathering Inn, Roseville *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>