

Project T.E.A.M. Building Healthy Communities through Technology and Education for Asthma Management



The Need

Nearly three million Californians struggle with asthma, a chronic lung disease with no cure. Daily prevention and control of symptoms is essential; if left unmanaged, serious asthma attacks require emergency care, and can even be fatal. Despite this risk, only 40% of adult asthma sufferers in California have received a management plan from their healthcare provider. As a result, more than 3 in 5 are considered to have poorly-controlled asthma. Those with lower incomes are much more likely to require repeated hospitalizations and have difficulty managing their disease.

In addition to being responsible for nearly 400 deaths in California every year, asthma places a financial burden upwards of \$1 billion on California's healthcare system. It doesn't have to be this way.

Mobile technology combined with community-based interventions can reduce costs and improve asthma management – particularly among low-income populations.

The Solution

In collaboration with Propeller Health, Dignity Health's Asthma Control Study at Woodland Clinic has already seen significant success. By combining clinical protocols with a mobile inhaler and online platform, **Project T.E.A.M. (Technology and Education for Asthma Management) expands on traditional asthma management strategies to reach patients where they are and with a tool they already use daily.** Using a basic cell-phone app and inhaler attachment, the program collects personal and locational data to help track asthma triggers and symptoms.

Project T.E.A.M. shares the data with patients and their care team through weekly reports, an online dashboard, and alerts via text message or email. Monitored by an asthma specialist, the project allows patients and providers to track triggers and symptoms in real-time and helps avoid costly health care utilization by enabling earlier interventions.

The pilot has resulted in improved asthma management among participants and dramatic cost savings per patient, per year. Preliminary data shows a 29% reduction in rescue inhaler use, 24% reduction in emergency room visits, 20% reduction in hospital admissions, and a 32% reduction in length of inpatient stay. Investment for every dollar spent on the program – in addition to achieving healthier and more empowered patients.

The Opportunity

Leveraging the success of our early pilots and programs, Dignity Health is launching Project T.E.A.M.

“The goal of Project T.E.A.M. is to change the way asthma is managed.”

The 12-month project combines locally-based interventions - including peer-led coaching, case management, and strong asthma education - with the innovative use of the Propeller sensor and mobile application system. The goal of Project T.E.A.M. is to **change the way asthma is managed in high-risk, low-income communities across the state.**

Targeting the most vulnerable populations, the project will be implemented in three sites where Dignity Health serves as a major safety-net provider, and where rates of asthma and underinsurance are among the highest in California. These locations include South Sacramento, Southwest Merced/East Merced, and South Kern County.

Project Elements

Dignity Health is investing and seeks matching investments for the \$3 million project. With these funds, Project T.E.A.M. will have the capacity to serve high-need individuals within identified target communities, where it is estimated that there are at least 30,000 adults and children living with moderate to severe asthma.

Funds will help to fulfill the following activities:

1. Individualized Clinical Care Plans

Following the Woodland Clinic model, all participants will obtain an individualized asthma action plan developed in collaboration with their doctor and care team.

2. Case Management and Education

Participants will have daily access to a team of clinical and non-clinical providers who work together to enhance learning for the patient and their family. Home visits will also be provided to address environmental concerns and ensure treatment plan adherence.

3. Peer-to-Peer Solutions

Trained “peer health coaches” will help monitor compliance with home-based asthma management plans by supporting medication compliance, coordinating with medical providers, and helping participants navigate their care.

In Conclusion

As the largest hospital system in California, Dignity Health is taking a leading role in testing innovative and impactful asthma-control programs in the communities we serve. By identifying the approaches and interventions with the greatest potential for replication and sustainability, Project T.E.A.M. aims to achieve long-term improvement in asthma control for those most in need, and ultimately reduce asthma-related mortality across California.

Join Dignity Health in this important effort by supporting Project T.E.A.M. – visit dignithealthfoundation.org to get involved and learn more.