



Embedding Social Care in Community College Settings through a Mental Health Navigator Program

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SIREN 2025 National Research Meeting

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**This project is being funded by
Alameda County Behavioral
Health's Workforce
Development, Education and
Training division**



WHO

**The Alameda County
Mental Health Navigator
Program is an initiative
within the California
Community College
system since 2020
to address the limitations
of short-term campus-
based mental health
services.**

WHAT

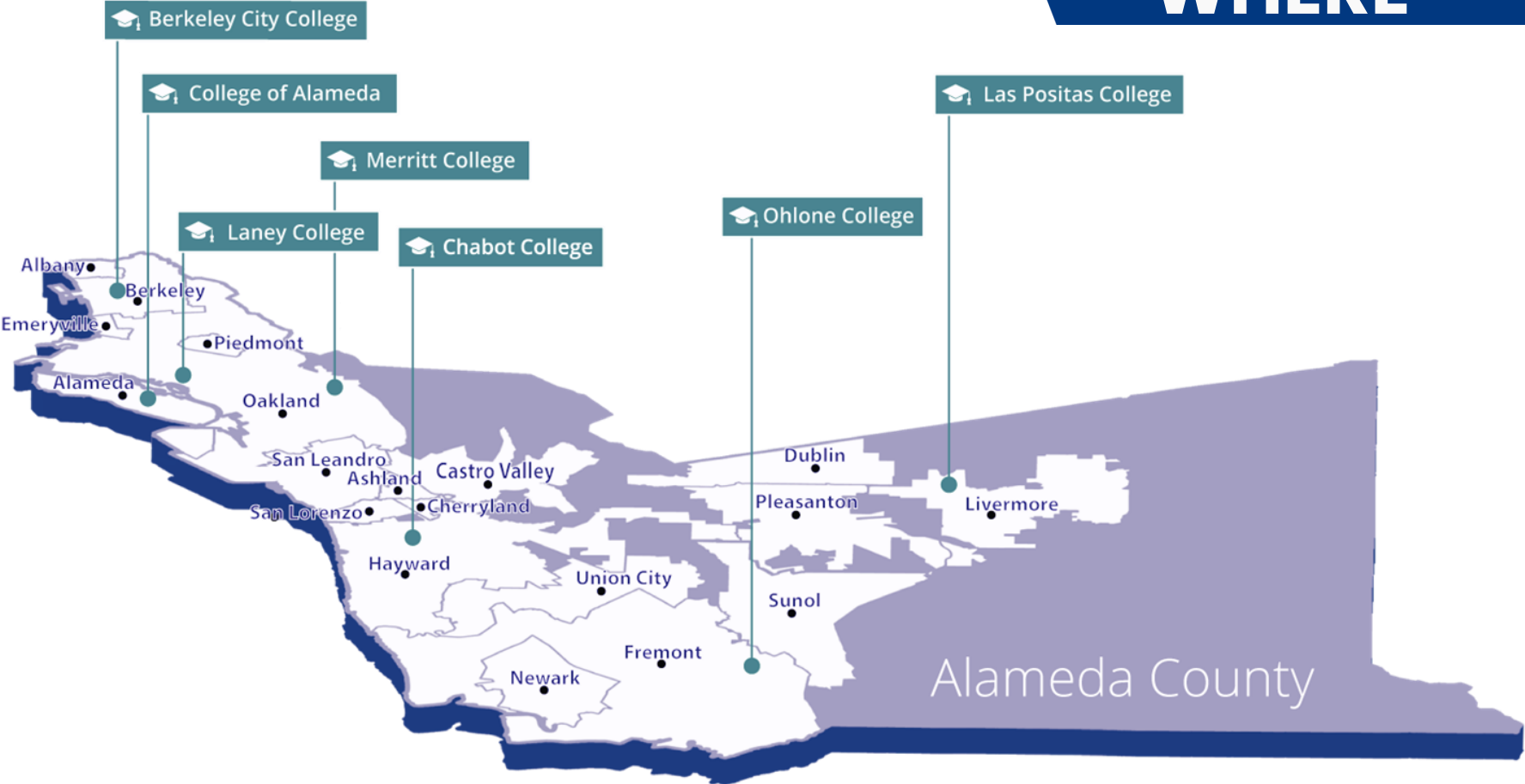
Year five of county-wide pilot project

Recruitment of students from each community college to serve as “mental health navigators”

Participants engage in robust training program and community agency showcases

Participants navigate health insurance coverage and linkage to off-campus services for their peers

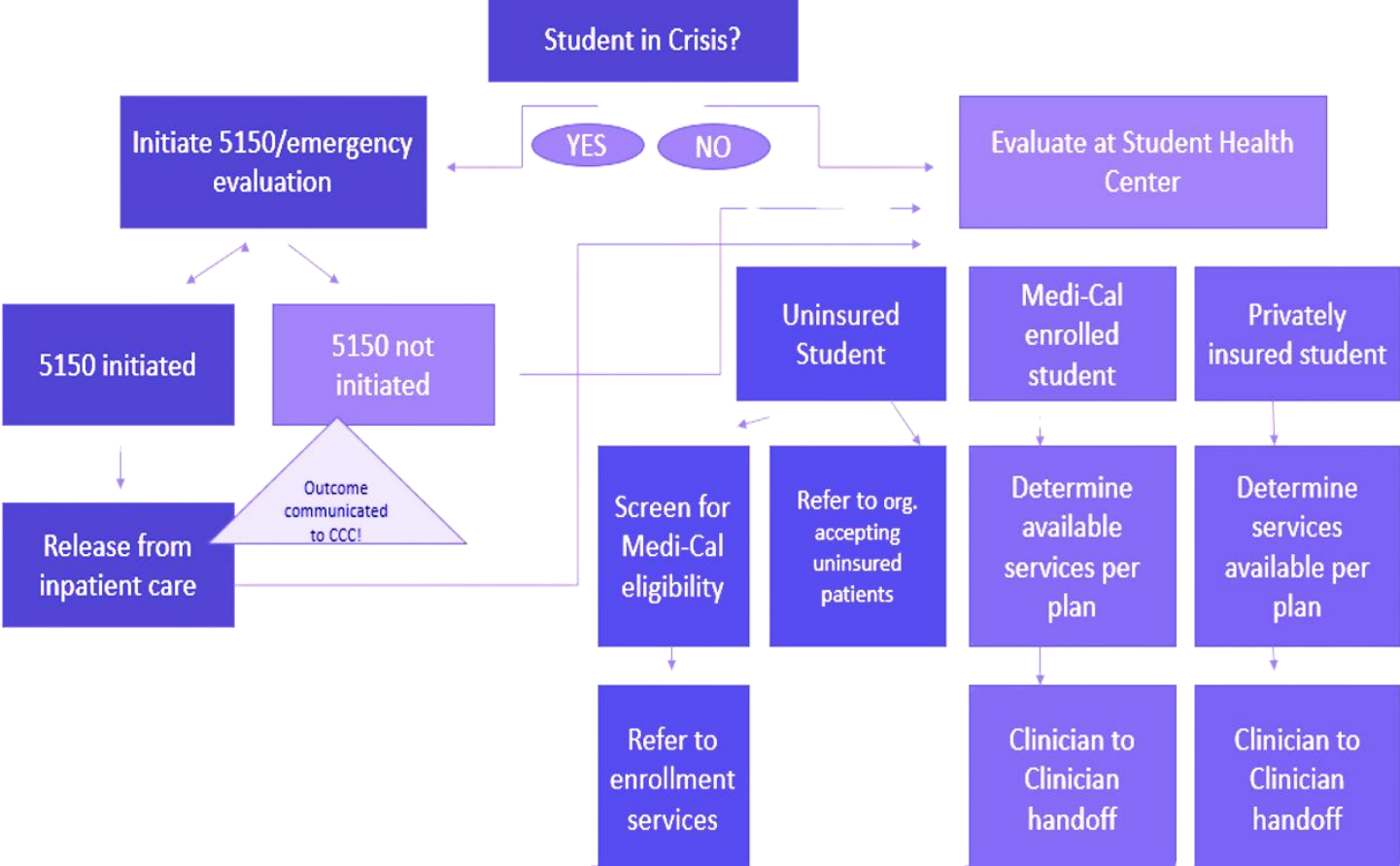
WHERE



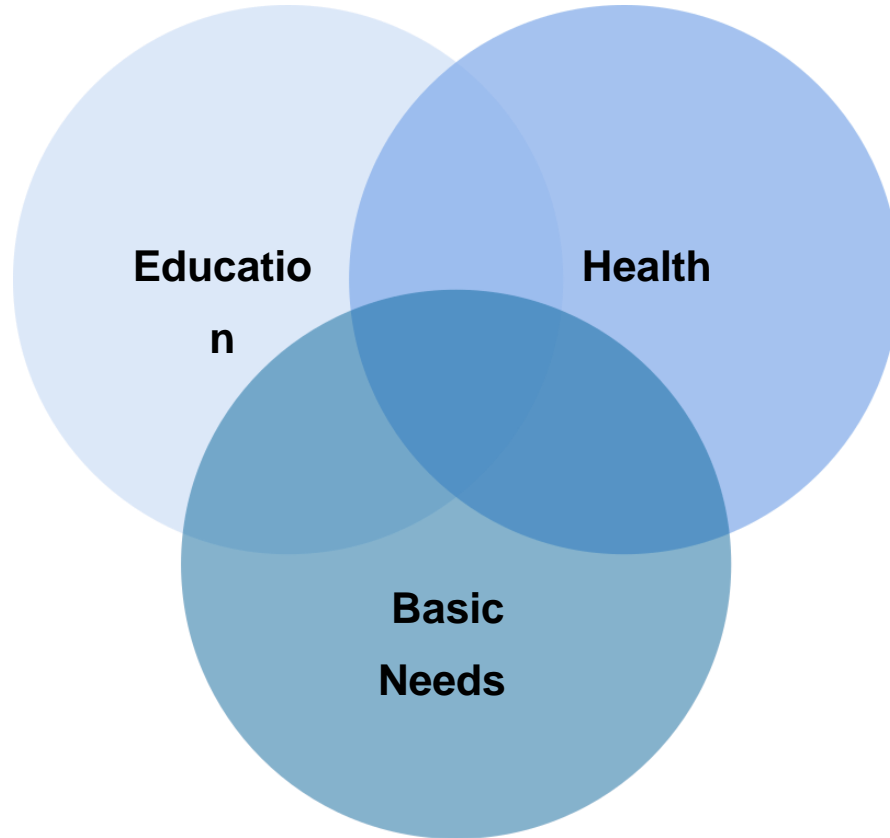
Participating Campuses

Campus	2020-21 AY	2021-22 AY	2022-23 AY	2023-24 AY	2024-25 AY
Berkeley City College	X	X		X	X
Chabot College	X	X	X	X	X
College of Alameda				X	X
Laney College	X		X	X	X
Las Positas College		X	X	X	X
Merritt College					X
Ohlone College	X	X	X	X	X

The Ideal Referral Process



Why We Are in the Social Care Space



2023-24 Impact

61	70%	59%	69%	20%	67%
Total number of cases assigned	proportion of female clients	Counseling services needed by % of clients	Insurance coverage support needed by % of clients	Housing resources needed by % of clients	Proportion of clients connected with resources provided

Methods

Training

and Winter Academy

- **Wellness, Recovery, Resiliency curriculum, and skill-building.**
- **Mental Health First Aid**
- **Suicide Prevention**
- **Community agency showcases.**
- **Community agency site visits.**

Case Management

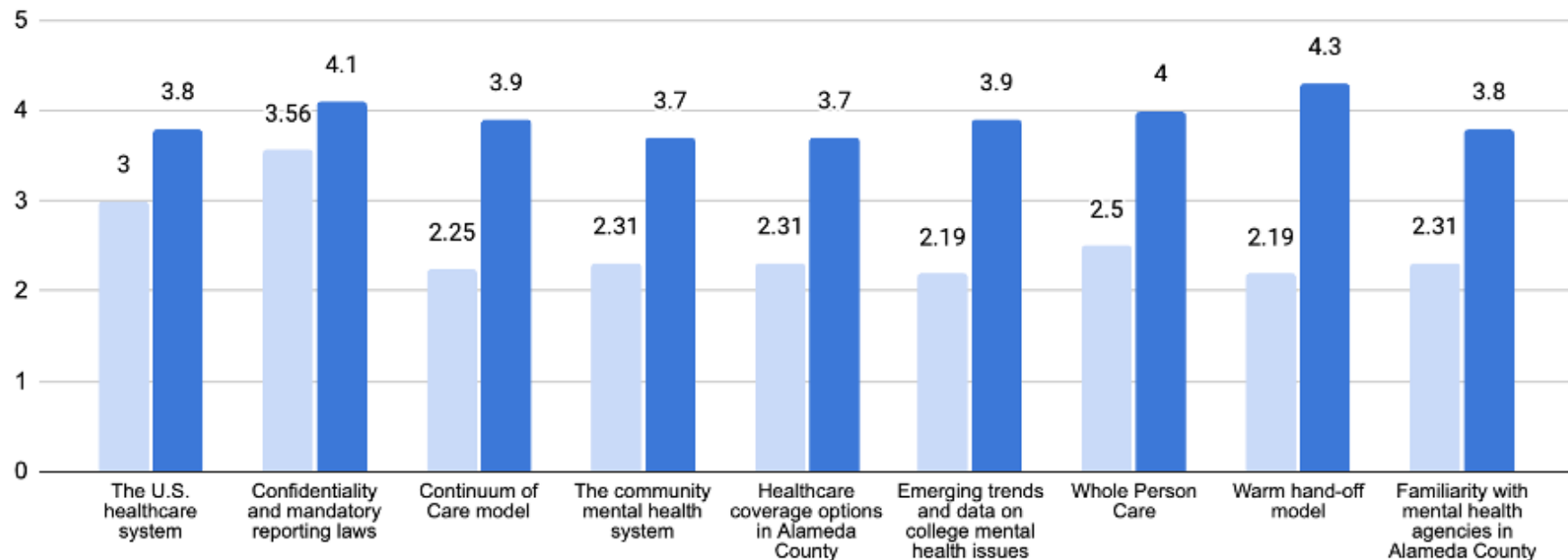
- **Navigator case management on mental health and basic needs services.**
- **Biweekly cohort meetings.**
- **Learning collaborative.**

Mentorship & Social Support

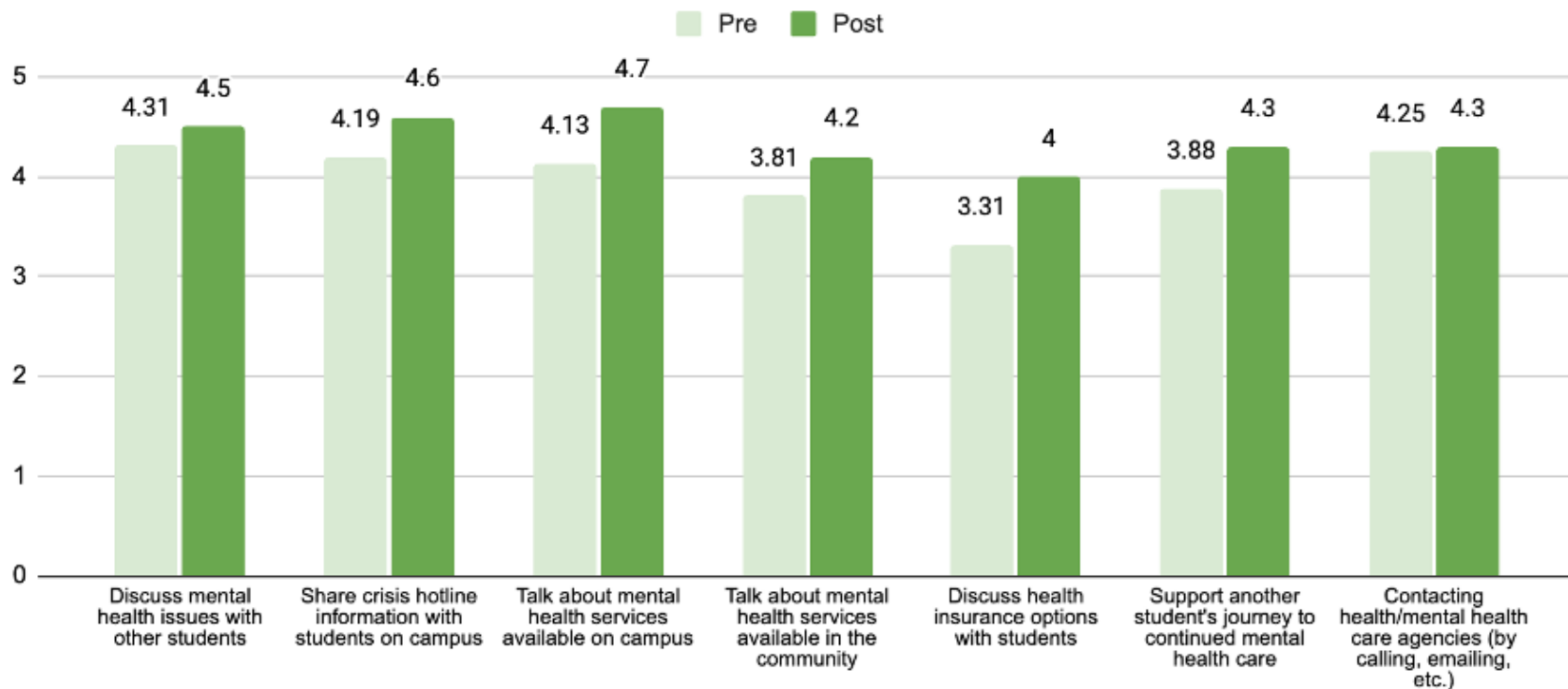
- **Social events to promote team building and connectedness.**
- **Teach-back sessions.**
- **One-on-one Navigator check-ins**

Please indicate your level of familiarity on the following subject matters:

Pre Post



Students' level of confidence on mental health communication and support:



Challenges

What has the most challenging aspects of being a mental health navigator?

- “The most challenging aspect is navigating the different health insurances that clients have.”**
- “Wanting to know or get a confirmation if the resources I sent to my clients were utilized or helpful. Additionally, receiving feedback from clients and having a streamlined communication process.”**

Rewards

What has been the most rewarding aspects of being a mental health navigator?

•“The most rewarding aspect is hearing back from clients who tell me how grateful they are for me helping them find resources or navigating a confusing mental health system.”

•“This program allowed me to help students on campus in ways I did not expect I could.”

Benefits



Improved Access to Care:

- The program effectively connected students to critical mental health services, with up to 67% of clients successfully referred to resources in 2024.



Fostering Academic Success and Well-Being:

- Students reported feeling more connected to their colleges and experienced a heightened sense of belonging, which are predictors of academic retention



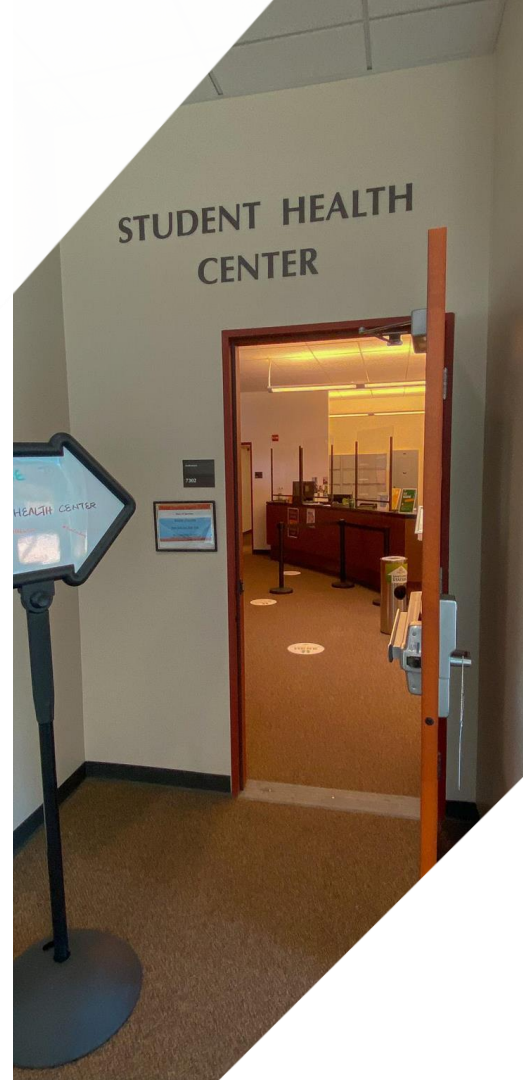
Workforce Development in Mental Health:

- Exposed students to real-world case management and community-based mental health systems, inspiring interest in behavioral health careers.

Dual Impact

The program supports students' academic achievement by addressing their well-being and cultivates the next generation of professionals in mental health and social care

"Navigators serve as the bridge between resources and students, creating pathways to both personal growth and academic achievement."



Thank You



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**Ohlone Student Health Center page:
<https://www.ohlone.edu/healthcenter>**

**Navigator Program page:
<https://www.ohlone.edu/stepup/MentalHealthNavigators>**



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