



PRESS RELEASE
February 2, 2015

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UCLA Partners with 211LA to Test a Novel Approach to Early Childhood Developmental Screening and Care Coordination for Vulnerable Families

The Children's Discovery and Innovation Institute at UCLA, along with the UCLA Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Equity, is pleased to announce a new grant awarded to Drs. Paul Chung and Bergen Nelson by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Drs. Chung and Nelson will partner with the Developmental Screening and Care Coordination program at 211LA, led by director Patricia Herrera, MS, as well Clínica Oscar A. Romero and its Medical Director, Dr. Geoffrey Booth, to test the effectiveness of an innovative, telephone-based approach to early childhood developmental screening and care coordination for patients seen for well-child care.

The grant is part of the RWJF Public Health Services and Systems Research (PHSSR) program, a multi-disciplinary effort to build the evidence base about how to organize, finance and deliver public health strategies to improve population health. One research priority for the program is to bridge public health and health care systems. This project, scheduled to begin in early 2015, will test an alternative delivery of an evidence-based practice—early childhood developmental screening—by randomizing patients that come in for routine well-child visits to Clínica Romero, to receive developmental screening and care coordination through 211LA or through the usual clinic processes.

Developmental screening is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics to identify developmental disabilities in the first 3 years of life, in order to make timely referrals for evaluations and to early intervention services. Despite these professional recommendations, studies have shown that many children are not screened by their primary healthcare providers, when they are screened they often face challenges following through with referrals, and many children with developmental disabilities are not identified until they enter kindergarten. This delay is even more pronounced for children from low-income and racial or ethnic minority families. 211LA serves a vital role in linking individuals and families with a wide range of needs to critical social services. Since 2009, 211LA has been offering developmental screening using structured, validated screening tools, to thousands of families with young children in LA. Beyond just screening, the 211LA program provides intensive care coordination for families needing a range of services, linking them to a rich network of community-based services. The program has nearly 50 memoranda of understanding with service providers and key partners, and has served over 9,000 families in the past 5 years.

"This research grant is critical for demonstrating the value of partnerships between 211 and health service providers to ensure that intervention services are received when they are most effective to a child's development. We are thrilled that RWJF, which initially helped to launch 211LA's innovative screening approach, is now helping to build the evidence for this highly replicable model." Maribel Marin, Executive Director of 211LA

The UCLA research team, 211LA, and the Clínica Oscar A. Romero, are all committed to improving care for vulnerable families with young children in LA, and are hopeful that this study will provide important evidence about a unique link between public health and clinical services.

“This partnership with 211LA is a perfect example of how the UCLA Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Equity collaborates with community organizations to jointly conduct programs to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities. Because 211LA is part of a national network of 211 call centers, effective programs have a very high potential to be adopted across the U.S., to benefit millions.” Alison Herrmann, Assistant Director, UCLA Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Equity.

About 211 LA County:

211 LA County, an independent nonprofit organization, is the free 24/7 resource line where Los Angeles County residents, including the most underserved and vulnerable populations, are directly screened and connected with the services they need for themselves or their children, including shelters, meals, autism diagnosis, veterans’ services, substance abuse programs, health care and mental health services and access to jobs. The organization currently assists more than 500,000 underserved individuals and families in Los Angeles County every year. For more information, visit www.211la.org.

About Clínica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero:

Clínica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero provides quality, affordable and culturally sensitive health care and other services to the uninsured, insured and underserved communities of greater Los Angeles regardless of their ability to pay by upholding the legacy and tradition of Monseñor Oscar Romero and educating and empowering Salvadoran and other community members through community organizing, health education and social justice and exchange programs in El Salvador. For more information, visit www.clinicaromero.com.

About UCLA Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Equity:

The UCLA Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Equity vision is to achieve health equity, as an essential characteristic of a society that values the health of all its members. The Center strives to achieve its vision of health equity by developing, implementing, evaluating and disseminating effective and efficient strategies to address inequities. The focus is on leveraging community assets to implement sustainable policy, systems and environmental change approaches executed in close collaboration with partners from a broad range of societal sectors including health care, education, government, business and civil society. For more information, visit www.healthequity.ucla.edu.

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