Highlights from the 4th Annual Behavioral Health Symposium

Thank you to all who joined us in May! Please enjoy the photos, presentations, and video from the 4th Annual Behavioral Health Symposium.

[Image]

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In addition to bringing together people with a shared commitment to behavioral health, the goals of the Behavioral Health Symposium are to recognize Mental Health Awareness Month and highlight a timely and important behavioral health topic. This year, we focused on Marijuana to Opioids: Understanding Substance Use and Mental Health.

Guests began the evening by enjoying the lovely Filoli Gardens and a reception complete with an amazing peacock display! Our program then began with remarks from our CEO Chip Huggins, who shared highlights from the work our donors and partners make possible and recent news, including the recent merger with Project Ninety.

Our San Mateo County Region Executive Director Tara Beckman, LCSW, and Solano County Region Executive Director Chris Kughn, MA, MFT, presented on “Treating Co-occurring Disorders at Caminar.” Our approach includes skill-building and support groups, trauma-informed care, harm reduction and motivational interviewing training for all employees, individualized treatment plans, and medication support. Tara and Chris also shared two client case studies to highlight our programs in action.

Next, Mark McGovern, PhD, spoke on “Integrated Treatments for Co-occurring Conditions.” Co-occurring disorders are common: two of three persons with substance use disorder have a psychiatric disorder, and one of three persons with a psychiatric disorder has a substance use disorder. Dr. McGovern explained that integrated treatments, rather than single, sequential, or parallel treatments, have been shown to yield the best results for clients. In fact, research finds that integrated treatment reduces harmful substance use, alleviates psychiatric symptoms, and reduces hospital and emergency room visits, while also
increasing work and school functioning and improving quality of life and recovery.

Douglas Noordsy, MD, and Adina Fischer, MD, PhD, then spoke on “Understanding the Effects of Marijuana in Schizophrenia.” With legalization of cannabis spreading across the country, the rates of cannabis use and cannabis use disorders are rising. In 2015, four million Americans met criteria for a Cannabis Use Disorder, and those with schizophrenia were found to be particularly vulnerable. In fact, their findings indicate that cannabis use is very common in lead-up to psychosis, especially for adolescents and young adults.

View and share the video of our Behavioral Health Symposium [here](#).

Our presenters also have generously shared their [presentation slides](#).

This educational convening would not have been possible without the generous partnership of the event sponsors. We thank our sponsors for their shared commitment to advancing the health and wellness of our communities.

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