



Committed to a Healthy California

Homelessness and Health: Supporting Individuals Experiencing Housing Insecurity in San Diego

Despite wellness improvements and access to care in the last 10 years, housing insecurity and homelessness has become a growing core health issue in California. According to the 2019 America's Health Rankings, California faces one of the highest rates of homeless family households in America, averaging almost eight families sleeping outside, in an emergency shelter or in a transitional housing program per 10,000 households. Additionally, the state ranks 49th nationally for severe housing problems, identified as occupied housing units with major issues like no kitchen facilities, inadequate plumbing or severe overcrowding.

According to a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development report, approximately half of the nation's homeless population lives in California. Nationally, San Diego County ranks fourth with the largest homeless region at almost 10,000 inhabitants (behind Los Angeles County in California).



Addressing Wellness within Homelessness

Housing insecurity poses complex challenges to those impacted, and community resources can be crucial to meeting vital needs like hunger and providing stability. Housing and homelessness is a systemic challenge in San Diego, and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of California works proactively to address the several issues in partnership with community organizations and providers.

Compassion is one of five foundational UnitedHealthcare values, and its employees strive to "walk in the shoes of people we serve and those with whom we work." Last holiday season, for example, UnitedHealthcare volunteers in California distributed more than 200 holiday food baskets through Community Christian Services Agency. Two years ago, they participated in a coat drive and were able to donate 50 coats, jackets and sweaters to the homeless clients of East County Transitional Living Center.



200

HOLIDAY FOOD BASKETS

distributed by UnitedHealthcare volunteers.



DONATED

50

coats, jackets and sweaters to homeless clients of East County Transitional Living Center.

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Here are four more ways UnitedHealthcare is offering relief for issues complicated by housing insecurity and homelessness, including hunger and other challenges including hygiene and footwear:

1

San Diego Food Bank Grant

Along with supporting the delivery of 10 million pounds of food, a \$375,000 grant to the San Diego Food Bank in 2019 helped modernize the food bank's client registration process by reducing wait times at distribution sites. With upgrades to registration and the database, which contributes to the San Diego Community Information Exchange, the grant will help connect people countywide to wrap-around social services, including housing and employment services. In addition, food bank clients were also issued picture ID cards, providing acceptable identification for individuals that could not afford or prioritize it.

2

Hygiene Kit Donations

UnitedHealthcare has donated 350 hygiene kits to partners including La Maestra's Mobile Clinic, an important resource for San Diego's homeless population providing wellness exams, physicals, treatment for acute illness and chronic conditions. To "meet the need where it is needed," the organization's San Diego Homeless Outreach Team also provides weekly health care to those experiencing homelessness by going out in the community and providing resources, including hygiene kits, free health screenings and free dental screenings.

3

Health Home Program and Case Management

Transportation is more difficult to the homeless and housing insecure population, so UnitedHealthcare's United Clinical Services (UCS) meets Medi-Cal members where they are to provide specialized care they need. The UCS National Health Home Team provides oversight and collaborates with UnitedHealthcare's Medi-Cal team to provide integrated care coordination for high utilizing and vulnerable Medi-Cal Members. In addition, case management resources also connect the homeless population to clinical and behavioral resources, including housing programs and medically-assisted treatment programs for addiction.

4

San Diego Rescue Mission Footwear Donation

The San Diego Rescue Mission addresses the needs of men, women and children experiencing homelessness by providing a holistic approach to rehabilitation and recovery. As part of the UnitedHealthcare mission to help people live healthier lives, UnitedHealthcare recently donated 300 pairs of new Under Armour athletic shoes to clients of the San Diego Rescue Mission through a \$22,000 grant. The shoes arrived in an array of sizes and styles to help the men, women and children protect their feet, remain active and live a healthier lifestyle.



For more information on UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of California, please visit our regional newsroom or [UHCommunityandState.com](https://www.UHCommunityandState.com).



Working to build healthier communities.



Visit **[UHCommunityandState.com](https://www.UHCommunityandState.com)** to learn more about our local focus.



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