



## **REMOVING BARRIERS TO CARE AND PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME**

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### **Description of Session:**

Without timely and effective treatment, approximately 50% of people who survive a violent crime will experience psychological or social difficulties.

Since the passage of the Federal Victims of Crime Act in 1984, the Federal Government has provided more than 5 billion dollars in restitution funds to state victim compensation programs. These funds help defray some of the costs that victims face after a violent crime. These benefits may include covering medical and mental health bills, lost wages, and funeral and burial expenses. Despite the availability of funds, there is considerable evidence that the vast majority of victims of violent crime do not access the victim compensation system. For example, a National Institute of Justice study found that only 20% of crime victims are aware of victim restitution funds and only 4% of victim's needs are addressed by the current victim service system.

In order to address these barrier issues, the State of California funded a demonstration project and the UCSF Trauma Recovery Center was created. This integrated trauma recovery model targets a wide range of victims of crime: including victims of sexual assaults, domestic violence, human trafficking, physical assaults, gun shot, stabbings, vehicular assault, gang violence, as well as family members of homicide victims. These victims are largely ethnic minorities, low income, homeless or marginally housed, and often have very few resources with which to cope with the physical and psychological consequences of violent victimization. The UCSF TRC model combines assertive outreach, case management, evidence-based trauma mental health services, substance abuse services, and assistance with law enforcement and other social services to help the victim deal with the devastating aftermath of violent crime. The results of this demonstration project have established that the UCSF TRC model is both clinically and cost effective when compared to customary fee for service care. Seventy-seven percent of victims receiving Trauma Recovery Center services engaged in mental health treatment, compared to 34% receiving customary care. The UCSF TRC model increased the rate by which sexual assault victims received services from 6% to 71%, successfully linked 53% to legal services, 40% to vocational services and 31% to safer and more permanent housing. Trauma Recovery Center services cost 34% less than customary care.

In creating and implementing clinical and cost effective victim services on a State level, attention must be given to the use of evidence-based practices and to creating an infrastructure to insure the model is successful across different communities and geographical regions.

This infrastructure should include training, technical assistance and support across sites, both initially and on an ongoing basis. It should also include standardized Program Evaluation and Performance Measures across sites. This will insure that programs are and will continue to be effective and accountable.