



## Population Health Trust April Newsletter

### *Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health*

**April 2024**

It is hard to believe that tulip time has already come and gone! It is amazing how quickly time can pass. Often, we are so busy “doing” things that we forget to pause, reflect, and celebrate.

During a Trust meeting this spring, we took some time to pause and reflect on all the work happening to advance strategies in our [COVID Recovery Plan](#). Released two years ago, the plan includes strategies to address seven theme areas: equity, housing, access to care, behavioral health, child care, economic and fiscal security, and food security. A progress report is forthcoming; stay tuned for more details in a future newsletter.

Behavioral health encompasses both mental health and substance abuse. We know that when individuals have access to resources and support for managing their mental health and substance use, it creates a healthier community for everyone. Given the importance of behavioral health to individual and population health, it was a priority area in our plan. To advance the work, some American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funding was used to launch the Latinx Mental Health Matters program and for additional perinatal support through Perinatal Support WA (PS-WA). Below are highlights from both programs.



#### **Latinx Mental Health Matters (MHM):**

Latinx Mental Health Matters, of [Mental Health Matters of Washington](#), was developed to promote mental health and suicide prevention in Washington through a bilingual peer mental health navigator program. Their vision is a world where mental health is embraced and prioritized, where every individual can lead a life of emotional well-being and resilience.

To achieve their goals, the programs is built on four main strategies: providing mental health education and training, facilitating virtual round tables on mental health topics, hosting community events where the arts are used to engage the public, and through resource navigation

and social support. So far, the team has trained 87 new mental health navigators (32 are Spanish-speaking), hosted eight virtual round tables, and ten events. Learn more about the program, upcoming trainings and events, and find resources [here](#).



PERINATAL SUPPORT  
WASHINGTON

[Perinatal Support Washington \(PS-WA\):](#)

Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders are the number one complication of pregnancy and childbirth, impacting 20-25% of birthing people and 10% of their partners. Finding a therapist trained in perinatal mental health, especially one who is affordable, accessible, and available, is challenging. In support of this need, Skagit County utilized ARPA funding to expand PS-WA's peer support program into our area. The funding provided for two Parent Resilience Specialists that provide 1:1 peer support, in English and Spanish, through phone, text and in-person connections.

These specialists have lived experience, are trained extensively in perinatal wellness and mental health, and provide culturally matched supports and resources to help parents thrive. The group also educates and advocates for local providers at community events and recently began a collaboration with [Help Me Grow Skagit](#) to expand outreach.

These are just a couple of highlights of the tremendous work being done to improve access to behavioral health supports in Skagit County. While there is still much work to be done, by prioritizing behavioral health, we are creating a community where everyone feels supported, valued, and empowered to lead fulfilling lives.

Thank you for your partnership in keeping Skagit County healthy!



The Population Health Trust was founded in 2015 and is the Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health. For more information, check out our [website](#).

[Population Health Trust](#)

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