I. Introduction and Overview

The County of Fresno, on behalf of the Department of Public Health’s Collaborating for Wellness program, is announcing a one-time Medication Therapy Management (MTM) Pilot Project for healthcare clinics and community pharmacies to jointly work together. This funding is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and will be made available until September 29, 2020.

Awards of $17,000 ($7,000 for each healthcare system and $10,000 for each pharmacy) are available through an application process to support work in medication adherence and hypertension and/or cholesterol management for their patients. A maximum of two awards in each category are available with a maximum compensation of $34,000. Project period is estimated to begin April 2020 and end September 29, 2020.

The goal of the MTM Pilot Project is to provide medication therapy management, an evidence-based service provided by community pharmacists, that is especially beneficial to patients aged between 18-85 who have high blood pressure and other chronic conditions (CDC, 2019). Pharmacies and primary care clinics that are interested in applying must submit a joint application (Attachment A) with the goal of providing medication therapy management to eligible project participants.

II. Pilot Project Eligibility and Application Requirements

A. Applicant Eligibility

Applications will be accepted from:

- Healthcare Clinics and Community/Independent Pharmacies

Clinic applicants must be able to determine which clinic patients with uncontrolled hypertension or uncontrolled cholesterol are also patients of the identified participating pharmacy. Pharmacies that apply must be able to calculate Proportion of Days Covered > 80% for medication adherence. Priority will be given to clinics and pharmacies with Collaborative Practice Agreements already in place, but those without will still be considered.

Clinic:

- # of adults 18 years to 85 (who were seen at the participating clinic in the past year) with BP≥140/90 mmHg (most recent measure) who use the pharmacy that is part of the project. The clinic would need to compare this list with the pharmacy list to enroll their participants.
- # of adults 18 years to 85 (who were seen at the participating clinic in the past year) with uncontrolled cholesterol (most recent measure) who use the pharmacy that is part of the project. The clinic would need to compare this list with the pharmacy list to enroll their participants.
Pharmacy:

- # of adults 18 years to 85 who have at least one blood pressure (BP)-lowering medication prescribed by providers at the participating clinic(s) who are not in adherence with their BP medication in the previous 6 months.
- # of adults 18 years to 85 who have at least one lipid-lowering medication prescribed by providers at the participating clinic(s) who are not in adherence with their lipid-lowering medication in the previous 6 months.
- For the medication adherence calculations, please use “Proportion of Days Covered ≥ 80%.” The PDC is the proportion of days in the eligibility period “covered” by prescription claims for the same medication or another in its therapeutic category.

B. Activities

**Project Objective:** Clinic staff and pharmacists must jointly work with selected patients to improve blood pressure control and/or cholesterol control by referring them to an MTM session. This may involve the use of Collaborative Practice Agreements.

**Medication Therapy Management:** MTM is used by pharmacists to ensure that patients are receiving optimal therapeutic outcomes for the prescription medications that they are taking. Below are components of a medication therapy management session (CDC, 2019):

- Performing patient assessments or a comprehensive review of prescriptions and their possible interactions or side effects.
- Formulating both short and long-term medication treatment plans.
- Monitoring the safety and efficacy of any and all prescription medication plans.
- Ensuring directional or instruction-based compliance through patient education.
- Better documentation and communication between health care providers in order to maintain a high standard of care across medical professionals.
- Encouraging to adopt lifestyle modifications: Evidence based practices shown to lower blood pressure, including but not limited to physical activity, stress reduction, healthy weight maintenance, healthy eating, and adherence to medications.

For the purposes of this project, MTM should include the three components below:

1. Medication List review
2. Medication Action Plan
3. Encouragement to adopt lifestyle modifications shown to lower blood pressure, including but not limited to physical activity, stress reduction, healthy weight maintenance, healthy eating, and adherence to medications.

**Referrals:**

Clinics are expected to refer patients who meet the criteria to the partnering community pharmacy to receive MTM. The Clinic needs to refer enough patients to meet the required minimum of 30 patients who receive two sessions of MTM. The clinics are expected to track patients who were referred to the pharmacy through their electronic health record (EHR).
The Pharmacist must provide a minimum of two sessions of MTM to each patient referred, both of which must be conducted in-person. Any follow-ups in between may be conducted over the phone. Pharmacists must also follow-up with the clinic to notify them of the patients that have received MTM and should track all session dates on a Tracking Tool.

C. Cost Proposal

Award Recipients:

- $7,000 for Healthcare Clinics
- $10,000 for Pharmacies

Although both entities must work diligently to achieve the project objective, the participating pharmacy will receive more funding because they must interact with each patient at least two times within the project period.

Use of Funds:

Funds may be used for staff time spent planning, implementing and evaluating the project, blood pressure and cholesterol educational materials, continuing education to train staff on blood pressure and cholesterol topics, or pill boxes.

D. Application Requirements and Submission

To apply for funding, review and complete the documents listed below (Attachments A-E, plus copy of CPA if applicable). Applications must be submitted by Thursday March 19, 2020 electronically to ancruz@fresnocountyca.gov or to Fresno County Department of Public Health, ATTN: Collaborating for Wellness Program, Room 360, 1221 Fulton Street, Fresno, CA 93721.

An electronic version of the application can be accessed on the Fresno County website Collaborating for Wellness program. The Clinic and Pharmacy must submit a joint application cover sheet, application and scope of work. The budget and insurance requirements must be completed individually by each organization.

- Attachment A: Application Cover Sheet-Joint
- Attachment B: Application and Narrative-Joint
- Attachment C: Scope of Work-Joint
- Attachment D: Budget-Individual
- Attachment E: Insurance Requirements-Individual
- Copy of CPA (if applicable)

All questions regarding the application must be submitted to ancruz@fresnocountyca.gov by Friday, March 13. Questions and answers will be posted on Collaborating for Wellness program page by Wednesday, March 11.

Key Dates:

RFA Issue Date: February 26, 2020
Written Questions for RFA Due: March 6, 2020
Applications Due: Thursday, March 19, 2020
E. Application Review and Selection

All application packets meeting the criteria will be evaluated and rated by Collaborating for Wellness staff. Applicants may be contacted to provide clarification about the proposed application if necessary.

F. Notification

Applicants will be notified of the decision to award funds (or not) for submitted applications within fourteen (14) days of the submission deadline date. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all applications and to waive informalities and irregularities.

G. Appeals Process

Applicants that are not accepted for funding may appeal the Collaborating for Wellness staff in writing. The Department of Public Health must receive written appeals within seven (7) days from notification of denial. Appeals will only be accepted based on a violation of law, rule, regulation, or terms of this document. Mere disagreement with the decision of the Collaborating for Wellness staff is not grounds for appeal. The Department Director is the sole and final authority regarding the approval or disapproval of applications and the conditions under which they are funded. The Department Director and the Purchasing Department will review accepted appeals within seven (7) days.

All appeals must be made in writing, dated, signed by the applicant or an individual authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the protesting Applicant, and contain a statement of the reason(s) for protest; citing the law(s), rule(s), and regulation(s) on which the protest is based. Such appeals may be sent either by U.S. mail, postage paid, or hand delivered to:

Fresno County Department of Public Health
ATTN: Collaborating for Wellness Program, Room 360
1221 Fulton Street
Fresno, CA 93721

III. Expectations for Successful Applicants

A. Award of Contract

Upon approval of funding by the Department, the successful applicant organization or entity will enter into a performance based contractual agreement with Fresno County Department of Public Health. Pilot project activities must occur in federal fiscal year October 2019-September 2020.

B. Reporting

- Monthly progress updates to FCDPH program staff via conference calls or e-mail updates.
  - Baseline and post-project blood pressure and cholesterol medication adherence for project participants. (Recorded on tracking tool)
  - Number of project participants receiving MTM sessions.
  - Key barriers and lessons learned during the project.
  - How the project will be sustained beyond the funding period.
IV. Questions or Technical Assistance

Collaborating for Wellness Program staff can provide clinics and pharmacies technical assistance in the following ways:

- Sharing best practices for drafting CPA’s.
- Updating EHR protocols to identify patients with hypertension.
- Providing resources for patients from local health plans.
- Providing Medication List review and Medication Action Plan templates.
- Provide Tracking Tools.
- Providing blood pressure tracking sheets.

Terms and Definitions for this Project

**Medication Therapy Management**: MTM is used by pharmacists to ensure that patients are achieving optimal therapeutic outcomes for the prescription medications that they are taking.

**Collaborative Proactive Agreement**: Agreements used to create formal relationships between pharmacists and physicians or other providers that allow for expanded services the pharmacist can provide to patients and the healthcare team.

**High Blood Pressure**: Systolic blood pressure (SBP) of 140 mm HG or higher or diastolic blood pressure (DBP) of 90 mm HG or higher with a diagnosis of essential hypertension (ICD-10-CM: 110) (CDC, 2013)

**Hypertension**: Repeated measurements of blood pressure where systolic blood pressure (SBP) was 140 mmHg or higher and diastolic blood pressure (DBP) was 90 mm Hg or higher. May include a clinical diagnosis (e.g ICD-10:10-15) and/or treatment with antihypertensive medication.

**Uncontrolled Hypertension**: At least two measurements of hypertension that have not yet been controlled.

**High Blood Cholesterol**: May include a diagnosis of dyslipidemia (e.g. ICD-10 codes E78.00, E78.1, E78.2, E&8.4, E78.5 or E78.6), high risk of cardiovascular events (based on criteria in CMS 347v2) or other diagnosis by a provider or clinician that indicates a need for cholesterol management.