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Contact: Cate Powers  
(916) 531-2293  
media@osg.ca.gov

## **CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR TACKLES ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES WITH \$10M PROPOSAL FOR CROSS-SECTOR TRAINING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS**

SACRAMENTO (Jan. 10, 2020) – Governor Gavin Newsom today unveiled his Administration’s 2020-21 State Budget proposal, which includes a \$10 million one-time General Fund expenditure for the development of an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) public awareness campaign and cross-sector training. The California Surgeon General has set a bold goal of cutting ACEs and toxic stress in half in a generation through raising awareness and strengthening response networks.

The California Surgeon General will engage leading experts and consultants to develop a series of trauma-informed trainings specific to key sectors, including early childhood, education, government, and law enforcement. These trainings will incorporate the latest evidence on trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive responses and will be made available statewide.

This investment is a continuation of work already being done by the State of California to enable early detection and mitigate against the health and societal impacts of ACEs and toxic stress. The Office of the California Surgeon General and the state Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), recently announced phase one of the [ACEs Aware](#) initiative, a first-of-its-kind statewide effort for California health care providers to screen patients for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that increase the likelihood of ACE-Associated Health Conditions due to toxic stress.

“Governor Newsom’s continued support for addressing ACEs and toxic stress is fundamental as a primary prevention mechanism to head off the major public health threats for the future generations in our state,” said California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris. “The Office of the California Surgeon General is bringing together the latest science and leading experts to develop the tools to support educators, law enforcement, early childhood and government workers for a true cross-sector response to address ACEs as a root cause of health and societal challenges – from heart disease to homelessness.”

ACEs are stressful or traumatic events experienced by age 18. A consensus of scientific research demonstrates that cumulative adversity, especially when experienced during critical periods of early development, is a root cause to some of the most harmful, persistent, and expensive health challenges facing our state and nation.



The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently issued a special report on ACEs and suggested that the prevention of ACEs may lead to a reduction in a large number of health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes, as well as depression, unemployment, and substance dependence.

According to the most recent California Department of Public Health data reporting from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS, 2017), 63.5 percent of Californians have experienced at least one of the ACEs, and 17.6 percent of Californians have experienced four or more. Nationally, the prevalence rate is similar.

Additionally, research shows that individuals who experienced ACEs are at greater risk of numerous ACE-Associated Health Conditions, including nine of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States, and that early detection, evidence-based intervention, and trauma-informed care can improve outcomes.

As of January 1, 2020, Medi-Cal providers can now be paid for ACEs screenings for Medi-Cal patients. California is offering a free provider training on and payment for screening pediatric and adult patients for ten categories of ACEs, which include abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. The [two-hour online curriculum](#) is easy to access for a wide range of health care professionals and provides continuing medical education (CME) and maintenance of certification (MOC) credits.

Through the ACEs Aware initiative, Medi-Cal providers can receive training, clinical protocols, additional resources, and payment for screening children and adults for ACEs. Detecting ACEs early and connecting patients to interventions, resources, and other support can significantly improve the health and well-being of individuals and families.

All providers are encouraged to receive training on how to screen patients for ACEs and respond with trauma-informed care. By screening for ACEs, providers can better determine the likelihood a patient is at increased health risk due to a toxic stress response, which can inform patient treatment. Trauma-informed care recognizes and responds to the signs, symptoms, and risks of trauma to better support the health needs of patients who have experienced ACEs and toxic stress. Additional details about the healthcare provider training and ACEs Aware initiative are available at [www.ACEsAware.org](http://www.ACEsAware.org).

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#### **ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE CALIFORNIA SURGEON GENERAL**

The role of California Surgeon General was created in 2019 by Governor Gavin Newsom to advise the Governor, serve as a leading spokesperson on matters of public health, and drive solutions to



our most pressing public health challenges. As California’s first Surgeon General, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris has established early childhood, health equity, and ACEs and toxic stress as key priorities. Dr. Burke Harris has set a bold goal to reduce ACEs and toxic stress by half in one generation.