## Jackson Care Connect Report to Community 2020

# Strength in our community





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## Our Vision

Health, well-being and equity for all people of Jackson County



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## Dear friends and colleagues,

Welcome to our first Report to the Community. Whether you are new to Jackson Care Connect or deeply involved in our work, we're pleased to share these updates with you.

Since 2012, when coordinated care organizations (CCOs) were first formed, we have been dedicated to our mission of empowering people and systems to improve the health of our community. Over the years we have formed strong partnerships with providers and community partners to help us serve that mission.

While there is a mix of successes and trials in any year, 2020 brought an extraordinary combination of challenges. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and to the Almeda and Obenchain fires required quick-thinking, endurance, innovation and patience. As we worked with the network to serve our members throughout these difficulties, we found creative solutions that will benefit our community for years to come.

While serving our mission definitely calls us to respond to community health crises, it also involves the long-term work of continually building a strong network of support for our "Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and to the Almeda and Obenchain fires required quick-thinking, endurance, innovation and patience."

– Jennifer Lind, CEO, Jackson Care Connect

members. In 2020 we expanded our network, providing more options for members and new tools to providers. We also welcomed 21,000 new members, making Jackson Care Connect the provider for 80% of Oregon Health Plan members in Jackson County.

In this report, you'll learn more about all of this work. You'll also see how the strong network you are part of is helping our members every day. Thanks for all you do to make our community a healthier one.

Jennifer Lind CEO, Jackson Care Connect



# **Pivoting in a pandemic:** learning new ways of delivering health care

The COVID-19 pandemic brought incredible loss, grief and hardship to communities everywhere, and Jackson County was no exception. While we were tested every day, together we also created new ways to not only endure, but to rise to the challenge of serving our community's shifting needs.

The first cases of COVID-19 hit Oregon in March, and the emergency orders that quickly followed turned normal health care delivery systems upside down. Non-urgent procedures were postponed, in order to conserve personal protective equipment and hospital beds, and many providers stopped seeing patients in person, to help prevent the spread of this novel virus.

In the midst of all this change, keeping a stable, robust network in place to care for our members, both for COVID-19-related treatment and for routine care, was crucial. With that in mind, Jackson Care Connect reached out to partners to find out what support they needed. We quickly worked to provide \$2 million in stability payments, or advance payments for visits that would have normally occurred, to physical and behavioral health clinics throughout our network. We also released the majority of state incentive payments, funds that are normally tied to metrics performance, earlier than normal. This infusion of funds helped to both stabilize clinics against unplanned revenue losses and to provide funds for ramping up the technology needed to build a telehealth infrastructure.

It was also important that during this time, supplies didn't go to waste. Our Starting Strong store serves pregnant members and children up to

age 4 by giving members the opportunity to earn vouchers for healthy activities like prenatal visits. Those vouchers can then be redeemed for baby and childcare supplies like diapers, wipes and car seats. Due to pandemic safety precautions, however, the Starting Strong store was closed to in-person services, so we donated our inventory of supplies to the Family Nurturing Center so they could be used by the community. We also provided grant funding to clinics and community organizations serving these members, so they could provide basic supplies like diapers and formula.

As most patient visits to clinics converted to telehealth, crucial work was needed behind the scenes – and fast. Jackson Care Connect's billing system had to be adapted to accept new codes so providers could be paid without interruption. This involved about 300 hours of staff time over a short period of time, but it proved to be a worthy investment, as telehealth visits became and will remain a critical form of health care delivery.

# Supporting community partners

Responding to the pandemic demanded not only a strong clinical response, but comprehensive community support. Many organizations played a critical role in helping Jackson Care Connect members and the entire community navigate the fallout from the pandemic, providing support for housing, food, childcare, case management and more.

While many of these organizations have vast experience in serving our most vulnerable members, meeting the health and safety guidelines around COVID-19 added new expenses and protocols. Jackson Care Connect went to work, reaching out to organizations to see what the greatest needs were. We then supported organizations with more than \$378,000 in one-time grant funding, as they implemented new programs and found ways to safely serve our community in the midst of these enormous challenges. Grant requests were also reviewed by our Community Advisory Council, which includes Jackson Care Connect members and community representatives. This first-hand input from our members is key, as it helps ensure we are addressing their needs in meaningful ways, and that we are delivering critical services to our neighbors who need it most.

> "If this program was not available, I would not be able to go to work and be available for my caregivers or my clients. As a single mother and a health care worker this program is essential to me and my family. Thank you for all you do." – YMCA client

## **Creative solutions**

The governor's early emergency orders required people to shelter in place, which was a huge barrier for those in our community who are homeless. To help serve these individuals, Jackson County enlisted the support of several partners, including Jackson Care Connect, in the Greenway Project, named after the Bear Creek Greenway.

While camping or living on the Greenway is not legal, the County temporarily allowed people to shelter in place in their campsites

### JCC provided emergency COVID-19 relief funding to these organizations:

Ashland Family YMCA

Butte Falls Community Partnership

**College Dreams** 

**Greenway Project** 

Hearts with a Mission

Jackson County Mental Health

Listo

Options for Helping Residents of Ashland

Rebuilding Together Rogue Valley

Rogue Retreat

Rogue Valley Family YMCA

Rogue Valley Mentoring

Southern Oregon Consumer Credit Counseling

Southern Oregon Health Equity Coalition (SO Health-E)

St. Vincent de Paul

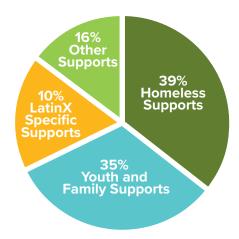
Unete: Center for Farm Worker Advocacy

United Way of Jackson County there. The Greenway Project brought food, medical support, sanitation stations and bathrooms to the people sheltering there. Mercy Flights community paramedics and service organizations had a regular presence as well, to help connect people to other resources including more permanent shelter and medical care. Jackson Care Connect was there to assist members in accessing health care and to provide phones and phone cards so members could access telehealth services.

The same creative spirit that spurred the Greenway Project led to discussions about longer-term solutions to serve those camping on the Greenway. Jackson Care Connect took part in those conversations, along with our partners in public health and law enforcement. A new, legal urban campground was established in Medford, and many who were camping on the Greenway were able to move there. At this new urban campground, community members can take advantage of safe shelter and access to community services, including alcohol and drug counseling, mental health services, housing services, legal aid

and more. Rogue Retreat is now leading this effort, and we are committed to ongoing support of their work.

#### \$378,000 in emergency COVID-relief funding



Many families with young children also encountered hardships during the pandemic. In-person school was closed, along with most childcare centers, which presented a huge challenge for many parents. The Roque Valley Family YMCA stepped in to help fill this need with an emergency childcare plan to support children of medical and health care workers, first responders, other essential workers and members of vulnerable populations.

While their exercise facilities were closed to the public, the YMCA used their expertise in providing children's programming to offer this service. Jackson Care Connect stepped in to provide financial support, helping ensure cost was not a barrier for families. The YMCA provided emergency childcare to 561 children in multiple locations, with an average of 174 children served per day. This program allowed essential workers to continue serving our community while their children were cared for in safe conditions tailored to avoid spreading COVID-19.



RIGHT: The Rogue Valley Family YMCA provided critical services for family during the COVID pandemic.



# After the fires: helping survivors recover and rebuild

The pandemic had already made for a very difficult year, but in early fall, we learned our community's toughest days were still ahead.

On September 8, unimaginable tragedy hit when the fast-moving Almeda fire, fueled by extreme winds and bone-dry conditions, rapidly moved through the valley. That fire destroyed more than 2300 homes in Talent and Phoenix, and the Obenchain fire destroyed another 33 in the Butte Falls area. Some people escaped with no more than their lives and the clothes on their back. About three-quarters of the homes lost were affordable housing units like mobile home parks, manufactured homes and apartment buildings. This meant the disaster hit three groups particularly hard. These were groups that had already been disproportionately affected by the pandemic: the Latinx community, senior citizens and low-income individuals and families.

Even before the flames died out, the strength of our community was on full display. Individuals and organizations leapt into action to help survivors meet their immediate needs of food, shelter, medicine and clothing. Jackson Care Connect helped staff The Connection Station at the Jackson County Expo Park, which was set up as a one-stop shop where people could get connected to relief and recovery services. Our team assisted in:

- Finding shelter for 116 JCC members who had lost homes and had nowhere to go. Including their family members, we housed about 300 people.
- Lifting limitations on the non-emergency medical transport benefit, helping members evacuate fire zones and connect to services.
- Helping survivors get replacements and refills on medications.

- Replacing medical equipment members lost or had to leave behind, including oxygen tanks and diabetes meters.
- Allowing observation hospital stays for evacuees with fragile health.
- Replacing phones or providing phone cards for members.
- Connecting members to organizations with resources like computer access, help with insurance claims, emotional support and more.

Our clinical providers and pharmacy partners quickly worked through obstacles like power outages and downed phone lines, and in some cases, personal or professional losses from the fire, to ensure our members had ways to access essential care and medications.

Because the Latinx community was hit so hard, we also provided staff support to Jackson County Public Health to help community members navigate the fallout of the fire. Our Community Engagement team helped organize and staff a Latinx workgroup, ensuring services at The Connection Station were linguistically and culturally responsive. It was important



that anyone who arrived at the Expo Park could connect to the help they needed.

The Connection Station served the immediate relief needs in the aftermath of the fires, and soon the emphasis changed to longer-term recovery efforts. Jackson Care Connect continued to be involved in this wave of assistance at the Multi-Agency Resource Center in Medford, connecting people to the health care and services they needed to get back on their feet.

# Making affordable housing a priority

The longer road to fire recovery and home rebuilding will take years. Even before the fires hit, the housing market in Jackson County was tight, with a slim 1.5% vacancy rate. We have long been involved with many community organizations in efforts to address this need and look for creative housing solutions. The lack of affordable housing was also identified as one of three key priority areas in the 2019-2022 community health improvement plan All In For Health, which we have been actively involved in developing and implementing.

The destruction caused by the fires made housing an even more urgent need, when thousands of families were suddenly without homes. Knowing the important role stable housing has on a person's health, and the role affordable housing plays in helping our community recover, Jackson Care Connect committed \$500,000 in fire relief and affordable housing support. That support included a \$50,000 allocation to the Housing Authority of Jackson County, to help fund a new position dedicated to the development of mobile and manufactured homes.

In addition, the funding included:

- \$50,000 allocation from our Community Advisory Council to seed a new fund dedicated to community housing solutions.
- \$400,000 to support community organizations providing direct fire relief and recovery support, with \$200,000 is earmarked specifically for housing assistance.

As funding for community organizations is provided, we will prioritize funding to organizations that serve populations that were hit especially hard by the fires. Early allocations that support these populations include a grant to the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, who targeted outreach to local seniors who lost their homes, and funding to the Maslow Project to help hire a bilingual case manager, who will help Spanishspeaking families navigate resources and find stability.

Recovering from these devastating fires will take work and commitment from the whole community, and many organizations are finding creative ways to meet



the needs of fire survivors. We'll continue talking with our members and partners about what the biggest needs are, and actively reach out to communitybased organizations and projects to stay connected. We are also involved in community-wide conversations about long-term recovery and housing solutions.



LEFT: Rogue Retreat's new Urban Campground is a safe entry-level tent and pallet shelter. Clients receive meals and wrap-around services from community partners.



# Physical health: growing membership supported by a robust network

As we prepared for 2020, a big project was on the horizon. We were excited to welcome about 12,000 new members who were being transferred to JCC in January because of changes in PrimeCare's contracting.

As a network representing more than 500 doctors in the Medford area, PrimeCare's board decided it could best serve OHP patients if it worked primarily with one coordinated care organization (CCO). This resulting change represented about a 35% increase in our overall membership.

Our first priority was continuity of care for these members, so they could continue to see their providers with as little disruption as possible. The timeline around this transfer was swift, so we moved quickly and worked closely with our network partners. We also kept in close contact with the Oregon Health Authority to ensure providers were informed and supported through this change. Thanks to those careful preparations and the diligence of providers, the transfer went smoothly for members. Our quality assurance team tracked the number of complaints and grievances received by members, which actually decreased during this time period, which was a significant measure of success. We also surveyed our network, to see how the transfer went for providers. Responses showed the careful preparations paid off:

- 72% agreed patients were transitioned to JCC with minimal disruptions to care (another 20% were neutral)
- 70% agreed patients were able to access services they needed during the transition (another 20% were neutral)
- 87% agreed their patients get quality care through JCC (with another 13% were neutral)

## Additional growth in membership

Our numbers continued to grow steadily throughout 2020, as the pandemic took a severe economic toll.



Membership growth

Many people faced a loss or reduction in income, meaning more people qualified for coverage through the Oregon Health Plan (OHP). We appreciated the extension of Medicaid coverage offered by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), which helped provide members with the care they needed. The extensions ensured our community would continue to have strong OHP coverage throughout the pandemic, without having to undergo typical annual redetermination efforts. As a result, we are seeing longer coverage times for many of our members.

All told, our membership increased 66% in 2020, and at the end of December, we were serving more than 55,000 members. That staggering jump means JCC now manages coverage for 80% of the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) membership in Jackson County, and provides health care coverage for about 25% of all Jackson County residents. As we have taken on this responsibility, we are honored and grateful to be able to count on a network of health care providers who prioritize member and community health.



## Strong provider network

To provide our members a wide range of options for high-quality physical, dental and mental health care and substance use treatment, we are proud of the solid network of providers we've built.

Our primary care network is robust. In 2020, 76% of JCC members were assigned to a primary care clinic that is recognized as a primary care patient-centered home (PCPCH). The PCPCH program is an Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Transformation Center program recognizing clinics that offer highquality, patient-centered care that helps break down patients' barriers to health.

"Partnerships like this one between Jackson Care Connect and the Housing Authority of Jackson County are going to be so important as we look at the long-term rebuilding of our community,"

 Jason Elzy,
Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Jackson County

In addition, we are focusing our growth in specialty networks in both physical and mental health, so members get the full range of care they need.

> RIGHT: Community paramedics from Mercy Flights help members navigate their care.

# Highlights in quality performance

Our network has continued to prove its commitment to quality and consistently performs well on OHA quality metrics, and this held true in 2020. Even throughout the challenges of the year, the network worked hard to get members timely care. Highlights included key successes in childhood immunizations and in engagement of SUD treatment:

- Adolescent immunization rates were higher in 2020 than in 2019.
- Childhood immunizations rates in 2020 were even with 2019.
- Among member with a diagnosis of alcohol or other drug use:

- The rate of initiation in treatment in 2020 was equal to 2019.
- The rate of engagement in treatment in 2020 was slightly above 2019.

### Mercy Flights program increases member engagement

Some members have complex health and social needs that require extra support. Our Transitions of Care partnership with Mercy Flights helps support members who are headed home after an unplanned hospital stay. Specially trained Mercy Flights community paramedics connect with members and schedule intake visits, where they learn what support the member needs. Members



choose whether to opt into the program. The support from Mercy Flights includes helping members connect to a primary care provider, conducting medication reconciliations, getting medical equipment, addressing transportation

## Engaged with a PCP by **30 days** after hospitalization

Engaged in Transitions of Care

**57%** 

**Declined engagement** 

## Engaged with a PCP by **90 days** after hospitalization

85%

68%

Engaged in Transitions of Care

74%

**Declined engagement** 

Engaged MAT before program

6.8%

Engaged in Transitions of Care

**6%** 

**Declined engagement** 

## Engaged in MAT **90 days** after starting program

14%

#### Engaged in Transitions of Care

9.3%

**Declined engagement** 

barriers and more. More than half of the members who have engaged in the Transitions of Care program with Mercy Flights have at least one chronic health condition.

This partnership is showing success in both increasing members' engagement in care and in lowering inpatient and outpatient costs. Compared to members who declined participation in the Transitions of Care program, members who engaged with Mercy Flights paramedics were more likely to have had follow-up visits with a primary care provider (PCP).

Also, the rate of engagement in medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for members who complete the Transitions program is more than double their pre-intervention MAT engagement, compared to a smaller increase for members who declined the program.

## Regional Care Team: high-risk member outreach

In 2020, we expanded our Regional Care Team (RCT), adding more care coordinators to better serve providers and members. This team is made up of staff with a variety of backgrounds and experience, including nursing, behavioral

## Members served by care coordination in 2020

## 8214:

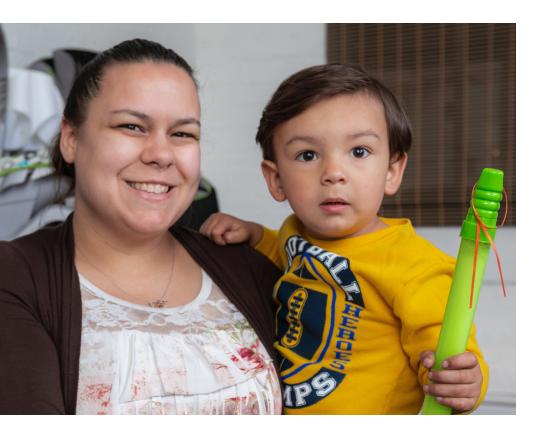
Members who had contact with care coordination in 2020

## 2684: Call volume to RCT in 2020

82: Average number of new care coordination referrals per month

health, pharmacy, health system navigation, local resources and more. The RCT model connects providers and community partners to a team of trained specialists who can help with a variety of services to improve member care, including working with multiple health care providers, locating appropriate facilities for specialty needs, arranging peer support and wraparound care for a member's family and even securing transportation.

This team was a crucial part of care during the pandemic and following the fires, as members faced complex challenges and as the need for social services was greater than ever. RCT staff reached out to members to make sure they had the care they needed to be safe and healthy.



## Looking ahead

There are both continued challenges and exciting opportunities ahead. As we navigate the ongoing challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, we will work with providers and community partners to help promote equitable vaccination distribution. In 2021, we are also focused on getting members reconnected to the health care and community services they need. We're engaging with providers to ensure members are accessing preventive services and screenings, after the decrease in members accessing those services in 2020.

We are also focused on increasing health equity and improving access to care, so all members can get the quality health services they need, in the way that works for them.

Because we know language access leads to better health outcomes, we are also focused on strategies to improve members' access to interpretation services. We are piloting a program with one clinic system to train and support certified and qualified interpreters, which will better support our members' language needs.

LEFT: Reconnecting families to preventive care is a priority.

New connections are also on the way. In 2021, we are building an infrastructure to support members' access to five categories of licensed traditional health workers (THWs). These public health professionals will provide critical personal, nonmedical support and guidance to help members navigate their health care.

We're also partnering with clinical and community partners alike to launch Unite Us, a new community information exchange. This is an extension of a statewide coalition called Connect Oregon, which is a coordinated care network of health and social care providers serving Oregon. Partners in this network are connected through a shared technology platform, which enables us to send and receive electronic referrals, address people's social needs and improve health across communities. We look forward to realizing the potential of this exciting new tool, as together we work to improve the health of our community.

# Behavioral health: supporting member health with a full spectrum of care

Since Jackson Care Connect started managing the behavioral health care benefit for our members in 2017, we have built a strong network of mental health care and substance use treatment providers.

Over the past year, we continued to broaden and strengthen those relationships, in our continued commitment to provide our members with a full spectrum of high-quality behavioral health care. As our members endured the challenges of 2020, it was clear that having access to mental health and substance use care was more important than ever.

One of these key areas of growth was in our expanded contract with Options for Southern Oregon. In addition to increasing the number of providers our members could choose from, this move ensured members who were transferred to JCC at the beginning of the year could maintain their continuity of care. Options is a Certified Community Benefit Health Clinic, a federal designation for providers that offer a comprehensive range of mental health and substance use disorder services, including crisis care, care coordination and integration with physical care.

We're also committed to ensuring members can easily access behavioral health care through their primary care provider, and we have focused on expanding our integrated network. Currently 28 primary care clinics in our network are offering integrated behavioral health. In addition, many more members can access those integrated behavioral health clinicians through network referrals. This includes members who see a primary care provider at La Clinica, Roque Community Health, Providence Medical Group, Asante Physician Partners, Southern Oregon Pediatrics and Roque Valley Physicians.

Jackson Care Connect is also piloting an expansion of integrated behavioral health offerings, broadening the services that can be reimbursed in primary care. The goal is to expand this to additional clinics in the future. We are also expanding the specialty behavioral health network, as we explore contracting with additional providers for psychological testing and psychiatric prescribing.

Our strong partnerships and collaboration have paid off, as utilization has steadily increased, with a 25% increase in members accessing services from 2017 to 2020.



ABOVE: Physical health providers can refer their patients to integrated behavioral health clinicians through a warm handoff.

## Making MAT more accessible

Providing a broad spectrum of substance use treatment is also key to the strength of our network and the stability of our community. As we have expanded that network, a crucial element has been the increased access in medication-assisted treatment (MAT).

Comprehensive MAT programs have been shown to greatly reduce relapse rates, compared to programs that do not offer medication. Because we know how important

BELOW: MAT providers discuss best practices at a Learning Collaborative. quality MAT services are to our community, we wanted to help ensure our providers have the tools they need to successfully implement them. In 2019, we started a MAT Learning Collaborative, which brings together providers from hospitals, clinics, Jackson County Public Health and other entities. In 2020, we moved the collaborative online and joined forces with our colleagues at Columbia Pacific CCO to host an online, cross-regional learning system. The sessions tap into expertise from both CCOs' service regions to support providers in understanding and implementing MAT for those with opioid and other substance use disorders.

"The MAT Learning Collaborative is a great program and community resource to bring people together."

Kerri Hecox, MD, Oasis
Center of the Rogue Valley

We also provided \$100,000 in capacity grant funding in 2020 to La Clinica, Addictions **Recovery Center and** Providence Medical Group. This funding supported infrastructure and the creation of processes necessary to deliver MAT. The goals of these grants were to increase members' health, lower barriers to care, increase the likelihood of better health outcomes through evidencebased services, reduce costs and use trauma-informed methods in early intervention or prevention encounters.

## **Supportive housing**

Helping a person address their complex mental health needs is difficult if they don't first have safe and stable housing. Adopting the model of "housing first," we have worked closely with community partners to increase members' access to supportive housing and quality care.



Through our longstanding partnership with ColumbiaCare Services, we have supported a continuum of supportive housing services, ranging from crisis residential care to supportive housing and rental assistance. By the end of 2020, there were more places for our members to be safe and secure as they received appropriate treatment:

- 6 subacute spaces
- ▶ 8 transitional spaces
- 4 supportive housing space
- 7 board and care spaces

In 2020, those residential facilities served 297 JCC members.

Helping a person address their complex mental health needs is difficult if they don't first have safe and stable housing.

### Looking ahead

As the behavioral health landscape continues to change, we will keep finding creative ways to serve our members' needs, improve care and support our provider network. We're partnering with Jackson County and



ABOVE: ColumbiaCare's continuum of services includes the Beckett Center, a crisis respite center JCC helped support.

community leaders on the strategic planning for a cross-sector crisis response system. We are also actively involved in building the Jackson Youth System of Care, a spectrum of effective services and support for youth and their families that is organized into a coordinated network.

In 2021, we are rolling out the Intensive In Home Behavioral Health Treatment (IIBHT) benefit, OHA's newest level of care for youth and their families. IIBHT provides increased in-home services, additional child psychiatry consultation, peer/coaching support for families, and 24/7 crisis response as a diversion from higher levels of care out of the home.

We have also formed a steering committee on Outcomes-Based Care (OBC). An example of OBC is the Feedback-Informed Treatment (FIT) model, which drives strong therapeutic alliance and ensures person-centered, client-driven care. In addition to funding the FIT trainings, we provide technical assistance and organizational support for providers interested in adopting FIT within their practice.

## Report to the Community 2020

## **Board of Directors**

Laura Bridges Chief of Social Work Services, La Clinica

John Curtis JCC Community Advisory Council

**Jason Elzy** Executive Directory, Housing Authority of Jackson County

Erin Fair Taylor Chief Legal Officer, CareOregon

**Eric C. Hunter** *President and Chief Executive Officer, CareOregon* 

**Brenda Johnson** Chief Executive Officer, La Clinica Health

**Scott Kelly** Chief Executive Officer, Asante Health System

Paul Matz, MD Family Practice Physician, Rogue Community Health

**Cindy Mayo** Chief Executive Officer, Providence Medford Medical Center (Retired)

Craig Newton JCC Community Advisory Council

William North Chief Executive Officer, Rogue Community Health

Mark Orndoff Director, Jackson County Health & Human Services

Lori Paris President & Chief Executive Officer, Addictions Recovery Center

Matt Sinnott Director of Government Affairs and Contract Management, Willamette Dental

#### Community Advisory Council

George Adams Diana Alfaro Soto-Cordoba Jackson Baures Jennifer Bethany Don Bruland Lisa Collins Edith Cortez John Curtis Jacquie Jaquette Craig Newton Chelsea Reinhart Rich Rohde

### Clinical Advisory Panel

Justin Adams, MD Laura Bridges, LCSW, QMHP Amy Fine, DMD Matt Hough, MD Jason Kuhl, MD Eric Jensen, MD Alan Ledford, PhD BJ Lynch, MD John Mahan, MD Paul Matz, MD Gary McConahay, PhD Kim Oveson, MS CADC II Dan Weiner, MD



ABOVE: JCC's Community Engagement Team helped fire survivors at the Jackson County Expo Connection Station.



#### jacksoncareconnect.org