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**Partnership HealthPlan of California Sponsors Fellows in UC Davis Program
to Help Primary Care Providers Offer Mental Health Support**

FAIRFIELD – Primary care providers – doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants – treat patients’ physical health issues every day, but they often are faced with concerns about patients’ mental health as well. A program offered by UC Davis and supported by Partnership HealthPlan of California (PHC) is in its second year of helping providers be better prepared to offer mental health support.

The UC Davis Train New Trainers Primary Care Psychiatry Fellowship is a yearlong education certificate program for providers who seek advanced training in primary care psychiatry. PHC offered financial support to six fellows in each of the program’s first two years. For 2017, six fellows each received \$12,000 from PHC toward the \$15,000 tuition, with the remaining \$3,000 being paid by the fellows’ health center or practice. The six PHC-sponsored fellows represent providers in five counties: Marin, Mendocino, Solano, Sonoma, and Shasta.

“The financial support from PHC has been invaluable in helping us train our inaugural class and continues to support our current cohort,” Kathie Howes, coordinator of the program, said.

“Partnership has supported our vision of training the primary care provider on commonly encountered mental health issues seen in the busy primary care setting. We hope to continue this collaboration in the future as the success of the fellowship grows.”

The fellowship curriculum includes more than 50 hours of training, including two weekend sessions, monthly mentoring, and twice-a-month, case-based discussions. The first weekend conference was held in January, and the second takes place in August.

Mike Huynh, a nurse practitioner with Solano County Family Health Services, is a fellow in this year’s program and one of the PHC awardees. “So far, I’ve become much more knowledgeable

(more)

and comfortable in managing depression and anxiety medications safely and effectively. Instead of referring patients to the licensed clinical social worker or to county mental health for treatment, I can start first-line treatment for many patients,” Huynh said in early March. “This is a benefit to many since the paucity of psychiatrist and mental health clinicians has caused many patients to wait several weeks or months before getting any kind of evaluation and treatment.”

As the yearlong fellowship continues Huynh said he hopes to learn “to be more comprehensive in evaluating and treating my patient’s anxiety and depression. I also hope to medically manage other mental health problems like psychosomatic/pain syndromes, addiction, borderline personalities, bipolar disorders, and schizophrenia.”

This year, there are a total of 49 participants in the UC Davis Train New Trainers Primary Care Psychiatry Fellowship; in 2016, the program had 35 fellows.

About Partnership HealthPlan of California (PHC)

PHC is a nonprofit community-based health care organization that contracts with the State to administer Medi-Cal benefits. PHC provides quality health care to over 560,000 Medi-Cal members. Beginning in Solano County in 1994 PHC now provides services to 14 Northern California counties – Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Shasta, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Trinity, and Yolo.