



# Roots-Stanford Partnership: Improving telehealth access and COVID-19 outreach for Spanish-speaking community members in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties



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## Background

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a tectonic shift in healthcare delivery to telehealth, which may worsen existing health disparities and exacerbate inequitable access to historically vulnerable populations. Roots Community Health Center in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties found that 70-80% of patients accessing Roots' COVID-19 testing are Spanish-speaking LatinX/Hispanic. To strengthen linkages with the community, Roots partnered with Stanford University to develop a volunteer student outreach program.

## Aims/Objectives

1

Increase outreach to Spanish-speaking patients who are COVID-19 positive and connect them with the health system for follow-up care and essential services.

2

Create a sustainable, community-responsive telehealth program, developed based on the needs and capabilities of this same patient population.

## Community Partner

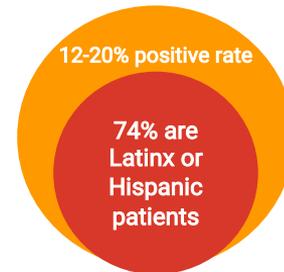
The mission of Roots Community Health Center is to uplift those impacted by systemic inequities and poverty. Roots accomplishes this through medical and behavioral health care, health navigation, workforce enterprises, housing, outreach, and advocacy. With a historic focus on people of African descent and a community-responsive model, Roots is actively working to provide much needed support for their growing Spanish-speaking population, especially as it relates to COVID-19 resources, linkage to care and follow-up. Furthermore, as Roots scales up telehealth practice, the need to create a program that is fully inclusive of the local community is critical.

## Methods



We engaged local students with Spanish-speaking proficiency to support outreach to COVID-19 patients to access video visits and community resources. Our Roots-based outreach coordinator launched the pilot and recruited Bay area student volunteers. We used this experience to develop a toolkit for other organizations to implement similar outreach projects.

## Preliminary Findings



### Roots' community-wide testing finds:

- 12-20% positivity rate (25,000+ tests to date) for COVID-19
- Approximately 74% are Latinx or Hispanic

### Clinic leadership has identified the need for:

- Language-concordant outreach to patients with COVID-19 to connect them with community resources

## Outcomes and Lessons Learned

83  
Outreach  
Phone Calls  
Conducted



35  
New  
Volunteers  
Onboarded



- Common community needs: food insecurity, unpaid leave for work and rent insecurity
- Common telehealth engagement barriers: lack of an email address and no personal cell phone
- Common barrier to volunteer onboarding: patient information-sharing without access to Roots electronic medical record

## Conclusion and Next Steps

We have been able to build, troubleshoot and document an outreach program leveraging local student volunteers to meet the needs of historically underserved communities with Roots Community Health Center to address disparities seen in COVID-19 and in telehealth. Next steps include dissemination and fine-tuning of the toolkit to other Stanford clinical community partners, and quality improvement of the Roots telehealth program informed by the community perspective.