

# Designating sobering centers in the care of acute intoxication

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**Project Description:** How might we establish an acceptable and feasible way for counties in California to designate sobering centers as an alternate destination for EMS/paramedics in the care of acute intoxication?

**Outcome - Oriented Objective:** In response to current California legislation (*AB 1544 Community Paramedicine or Triage to Alternate Destination Act*) and the CalAIM Medi-Cal Reform (*proposing In Lieu of Services to establish sobering care*), create a national accreditation program through the National Sobering Collaborative to launch in mid-2021.

## **Solution:**

I initially proposed a national accreditation as my solution. Simultaneously, I worked to encourage lawmakers to place relevant language into AB1544 regarding permitting a National Sobering Collaborative accreditation program as a manner for CA counties in sobering designation.

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## Results

- I started this accreditation focus in early 2019
- Held Standards/ Accreditation session at 4<sup>th</sup> annual National Sobering Summit (Oct 2019)
- Established National Sobering Collaborative as federally tax exempt 501(c)3 not-for-profit (Jan 2020)
- Created Sobering Standards Task Force with sobering leadership nationally

## COVID-19 Challenges

- Study of sobering centers in California launched in March 2020, and was immediately delayed due to shelter-in-place
- Stakeholders had frequently changing priorities
- Many sobering centers required modification in care including: reduction in capacity, re-deployment of leadership and management to COVID-related response, full change in target population or services provided (aka, operating as Isolation & Quarantine)
- Standards Task Force delayed considerably

## Next Steps

- Intern started! Help to finalize draft of Standards, and create initial Tool Kit on establishing a sobering center
- Engage with attendees of monthly virtual forum for sobering centers
- Timing:
  - Draft to sobering leadership in California (Oct 2020)
  - Incorporate feedback from leaders (Dec 2020)
  - Present Standards to Accrediting Agency (Jan 2021)

## Lessons Learned

- I do not say No enough – take on far too many projects
- Learning how to distinguish other peoples' agendas from my own
- Strong internal resistance to reaching out to potential collaborators
- Need to improve my designation capabilities