From Recovery to Self-Sufficiency: Empowering Clients through Employment and Coverage Stability

Together for Hope Conference
April 29 – 30, 2026

Diliana De Jesús, MA

Chief Development Officer & Deputy Director
Casa Esperanza Inc.

Diliana De Jesús has more than 20 years of experience working with individuals and families living with co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders; at-risk youth and young adults; recent immigrants; returning citizens; survivors of domestic violence; people living with HIV; and homeless individuals.

Diliana is originally from Puerto Rico, fully bilingual, and has personal experience supporting family members in recovery.

Integrate Care. Empower Individuals. Strengthen Communities.
Casa Esperanza

Voices of “Mi Camino”

Juan Bernal-Vélez
Supported Employment Manager
Casa Esperanza, Inc.

Henry Rodriguez
Supported Employment Client
Whole Foods Inc.

Ron Marlow
Vice President Workforce Development & Alternative Education
Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.

Learning Objectives

- Understand why employment readiness is critical under new Medicaid work requirements
- Identify risks of “one-size-fits-all” employment approaches
- Learn what factors to consider in designing recovery-informed, employment-support strategies
- Leave with actionable steps to apply in your own organizations

Integrate Care. Empower Individuals. Strengthen Communities.
Casa Esperanza

The History of Hope:

Our Roots, Mission, and Vision...

Casa Esperanza, Inc., founded in 1984, began as a grassroots response to addiction in the Latino community. Over time, Casa established a nationally recognized, integrated care model to deliver evidence-based recovery treatment and mental health services to multiply-diagnosed Latine patients. Services prioritize cultural and linguistic access to serve the needs of institutionally underserved individuals and families. Casa offers comprehensive services to treat substance use and mental health disorders in Spanish and English.

Our mission is to empower individuals and families to recover from addiction, trauma, mental illness and other chronic medical conditions; to overcome homelessness; and to achieve health and wellness through comprehensive, integrated care.

Casa Programs
Levels of Care

Familias Unidas Outpatient & Telehealth Services

*Outpatient Psychotherapy
* Structured Outpatient Addiction Program (SOAP)
* Recovery Support Services
  - Intensive Case Management
  - Peer Support
  - Reentry Services
* Supported Education and Employment Services
* Supportive Housing Services
* Psychiatry & Medication-Assisted Treatment
* Behavioral Health Urgent Care
* Tu Bienestar HIV Services Abuse Prevention Services

Medication Reconciliation, Management, and Induction on Management Assisted Treatment (MAT)

* Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) services for persons with an opioid use disorder (OUD)
* Counseling, behavioral therapies

Conexiones ITS

* Comprehensive nursing Assessment
* On-site Nurse Practitioner
* Psycho-educational Groups
* Aftercare Planning

Residential Services

* Substance Use Disorder Treatment
* Integrated Services for Mental Health
* Aftercare Planning
* Referrals for resources

Supportive Housing Program

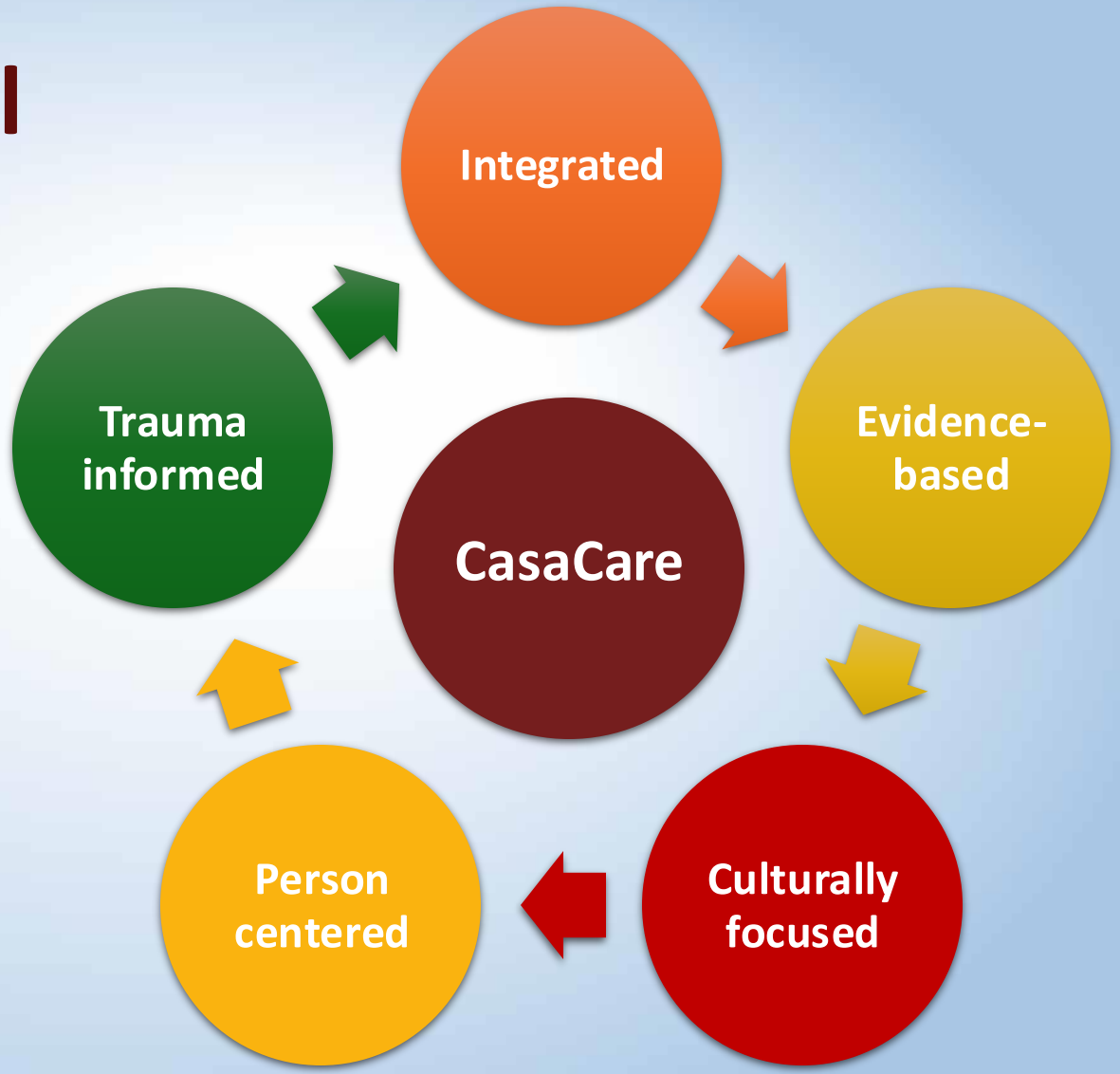
* Counseling Including Group, Family, and Individual
* Peer Recovery Coaching and Community Support
* Vocational Training, Job Counseling and Educational Opportunities

Our Integrated Care Model

Based on continuous data collection, we created the **CasaCare model**, a treatment approach that is based off of the Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT) model, to help meet the complex needs of our patients.

The CasaCare model incorporates components from three evidence-based models of care:

1. The Person-Centered Health Home
2. The Behavioral Health Model for Vulnerable Populations
3. Assertive Community Treatment



Individual Placement and Support Model

Studies have shown that integrating **SE** with IDDT, along with reasonable caseloads, increases the model's effectiveness and leads to better employment outcomes.

We also incorporated:

- Vocational ESL
- Benefits Programs Support
- Leadership Development Program
- Educational Partnerships
- Vocational Partnerships

Mi Camino: Supported Employment Program

The **Supported Employment Program** helps Latine adults with CODs find, apply for, and obtain suitable employment. The program empowers participants to assess their skills, interests, and needs. They then explore career opportunities aligned with their experience and goals.

Supported Employment helps participants build job skills through pre-employment services and support including:

- Interest inventories
- patient self-assessments
- Resume and cover letter writing skills
- Job search strategies
- Mock interviews
- And in ESOL for the workplace

New Nationwide Medicaid Work Requirements

Key Details on Implementation:

- **Effective Date:** January 1, 2027.
- **Target Group:** Adults ages 19 to 64 enrolled through Medicaid expansion.
- **Requirements:** 80 hours per month of work, job training, education, or community service.
- **Exemptions:** Exemptions are available for individuals over 65, those with disabilities, veterans with disabilities, certain caregivers, or those in regions with high unemployment.
- **Early Implementation:** States have the option to implement these requirements before 2027 through approved Section 1115 waivers.
- **Reporting:** Reporting of activities will be required at least every six months.

Integrate Care. Empower Individuals. Strengthen Communities.
Casa Esperanza

141,000 Reasons Employment Support Matters

- Proposed Medicaid work requirements put coverage at risk for clients who can't document employment
- Most coverage losses (69%) are driven by documentation barriers, not eligibility
- Coverage loss disrupts treatment
- Employment isn’t a milestone; it’s part of how recovery happens
- Employment reduces anxiety, supports mental health, and lowers rates of use and rehospitalization
- Income builds independence and identity in ways that treatment alone cannot
- The right support makes the difference between a job that sustains recovery and one that derails it

141,000 – 203,000

MassHealth members at risk of losing coverage under proposed work requirements

BCBS MA Foundation, 2025

Integrate Care. Empower Individuals. Strengthen Communities.

Casa Esperanza

Activity: Once Size does NOT Fit All

- Form small groups about 10-12 people
- Assign a notetaker and a presenter
- Review Client Profile
- Discuss questions
- Report out

Client Profile

- **Age:** 32
- **Primary language:** Spanish (limited English proficiency)
- **Recovery stage:** Early recovery (3 months sober)
- **Treatment status:** Enrolled in outpatient substance use treatment (3x per week), individual therapy, and medication-assisted treatment
- **Housing:** Stable for now but dependent on maintaining income
- **Health coverage:** Medicaid
- **Employment history:** Unstable, short-term jobs (warehouse, restaurant kitchen, cleaning). Often leaves jobs within 2–3 months due to stress or missed shifts.

"Luis"

Integrate Care. Empower Individuals. Strengthen Communities.

Casa Esperanza

Client Profile

Current Situation

Luis recently started a new job through a traditional job placement program. The job coach focused on getting him a job based on what openings were available, rather than matching the job to his recovery needs.

The job requires:

- Early morning shifts starting at 6:00 a.m.
- Fast-paced work with high supervision
- English-only instructions from supervisors
- Limited flexibility in his schedule for medical or treatment appointments

Luis is already feeling overwhelmed. The fast-paced, high-pressure environment increased his anxiety. He has missed a couple of shifts because of treatment appointments and received a warning. He is worried about losing the job but is also afraid to stop attending treatment. He is afraid to ask for accommodations because of immigration-related fears and past experiences of discrimination.

Luis is now at risk of losing the job — and he believes that losing the job could also mean losing his healthcare.

Integrate Care. Empower Individuals. Strengthen Communities.
Casa Esperanza

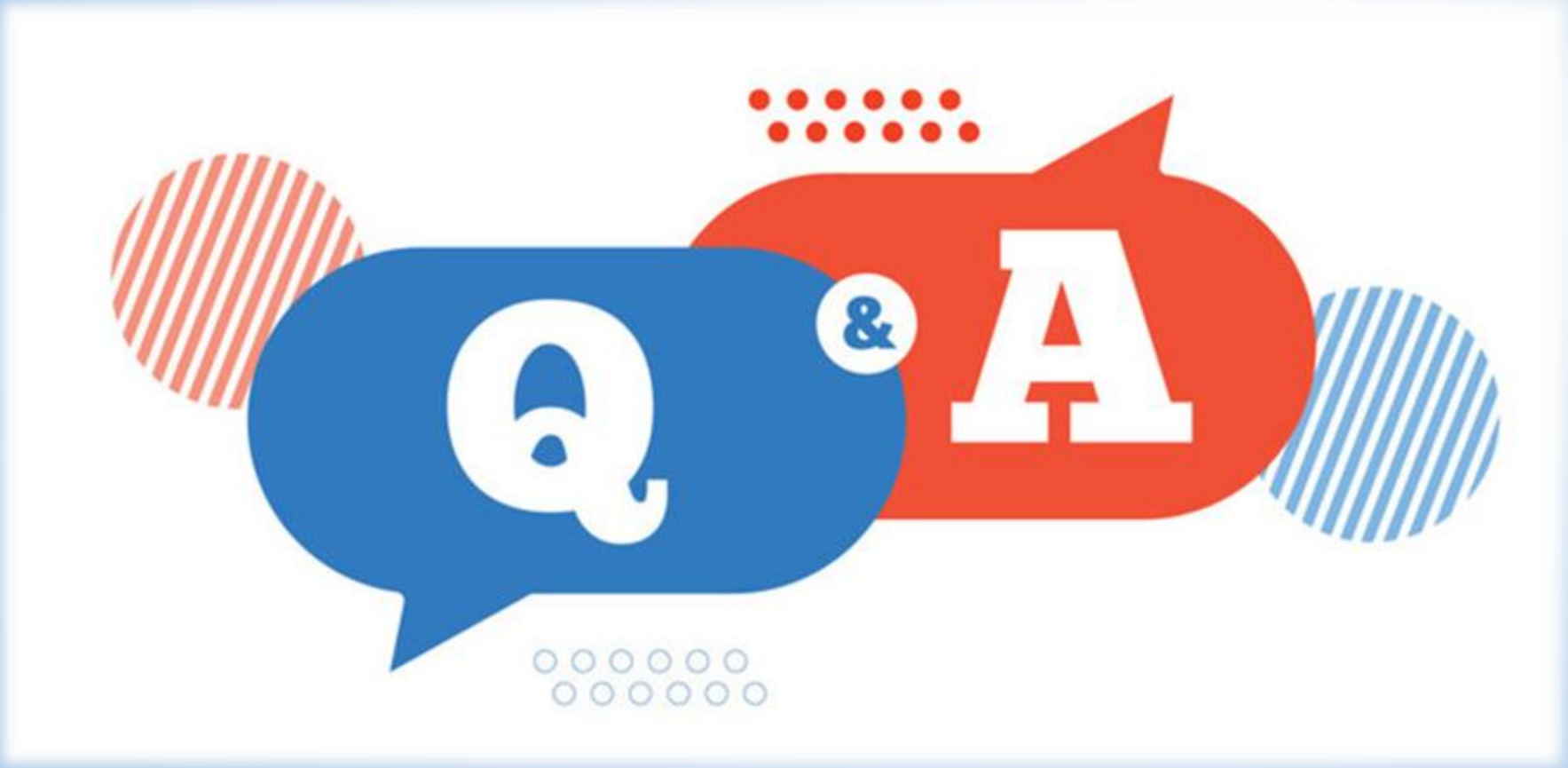
Discussion Questions

- Why might a standard job placement fail?
- What recovery risks are present?
- What supports would be necessary?

- ¿Por qué podría fracasar una colocación laboral estándar?
- ¿Qué riesgos existen para la recuperación?
- ¿Qué tipo de apoyo sería necesario?

Scan here for Client Profile

Panelist Questions / Q&A



Integrate Care. Empower Individuals. Strengthen Communities.
Casa Esperanza

References

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. (2025). Six-month redetermination and work requirements: Impacts on health coverage in Massachusetts. https://www.bluecrossmafoundation.org/publication/six-month-redetermination-and-work-requirements-impacts-health-coverage-massachusetts

Kaiser Family Foundation. (2024). Medicaid enrollment and unwinding tracker. https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-enrollment-and-unwinding-tracker/

Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission. (2023). Report to Congress on Medicaid and CHIP. https://www.macpac.gov/publication/report-to-congress-on-medicaid-and-chip/

Saloner, B., Bandara, S. N., McGinty, E. E., Barry, C. L., & Pollack, H. A. (2018). Justice-involved adults with substance use disorders: Coverage increased after 2014 Medicaid expansion. Health Affairs, 37(8), 1268–1276. https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2018.0124

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2009). Supported employment: The evidence. https://store.samhsa.gov/product/supported-employment-evidence-based-practices-ebp-kit/sma08-4365

IPS Employment Center. (n.d.). Evidence for IPS. https://ipsworks.org/index.php/evidence-for-ips/

One Big Beautiful Bill Act, H.R. 1, § 71119, 119th Cong. (2025). https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1

Integrate Care. Empower Individuals. Strengthen Communities.

Casa Esperanza

Scan here for Casa's IPS Partnership Gap Assessment

Thank you!

For General Information

info@casaesperanza.org

(617) 445-1123

casa-esperanza-ma

@casa.esperanza.ma

@CasaEsperanzaMA

www.casaesperanza.org

Sign up for our newsletters:

For Supported Employment Information:

Juan Bernal-Velez

jbernal@casaesperanza.org

(617) 445-1123 x15080

Integrate Care. Empower Individuals. Strengthen Communities.

Casa Esperanza