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Telehealth startup for Spanish speakers raises \$4.9M to expand staff and product development

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San Francisco-based telehealth startup ConsejoSano, which targets Spanish speakers, has raised \$4.9 Million in a Series A round, [according to a company news release](#).

7wire Ventures led the Series A. Tufts Health Ventures, the investment and acquisition arm of Tufts Health Plan, TOTAL Impact Capital, Wanxiang Healthcare Investments,

Acumen, Oxeon Partners and Impact Engine also took part in the round, [the release said](#). The additional funding brings the total raised by the company to \$7.2 million.

[ConsejoSano](#) (which means healthy advice), will use the money to expand its workforce of 10 to 25 or 35 in the next 18 months, according to Abner Mason, the founder and CEO.

“A good number of them would be added to our tech team to build out our technical capabilities, particularly around integrating with clients,” he said. “Our early clients were corporate clients who were fantastic, but didn’t require nearly as much integration. Now that we’re starting to serve large provider groups and health plans, they require much more integration.”

The new funding will also help ConsejoSano develop its capability to collect data analytics to improve preventive care for Spanish speakers and expand its client base.

Most of ConsejoSano’s seven existing clients are health plans, employers and at-risk providers seeking to increase engagement with their Spanish-speaking customers, employees and patients. Mason hopes that by expanding that client base, the startup will reach more of the [56.6 million Hispanics who live in the United States](#).

Most of the U.S. Spanish-speaking population live in Southern California, where ConsejoSano is based, followed by Texas, Florida, New York and Illinois, [according to the Pew Research Center](#).

Whether they speak no English or speak it as a second language, Hispanics may need to talk to healthcare providers about medical conditions in Spanish, according to Mason.

“There’s this huge disconnect between supply and demand which results in poor outcomes for Spanish speakers and high costs for payers,” he said. “So people wait until

either they are very, very sick or they have no choice or they seek out alternatives where they can find a Spanish speaker, like for instance, the emergency room, but that's not a great way or a good way or an efficient way to provide healthcare.”

One of ConsejoSano's earliest clients is [LaSalle Medical Associates](#), a large Southern California independent physician association. Most of LaSalle's patients are Hispanics who receiving Medi-Cal (California's version of Medicaid), increasing the practice's need to improve its patient outcomes by value rather than volume or risk lower reimbursements.

ConsejoSano is working with LaSalle to increase preventive care among Spanish-speaking patients, particularly for young children. CMS requires children to receive 10 vaccines before they reach age 2, a mandate with which Hispanics have lower compliance rates than other patient populations. The startup is working to build trusted relationships with those children's parents, educating them about the vaccines in a linguistically and culturally appropriate way, according to Mason.

The company plans to open an office near Los Angeles and focus initially on reaching Californians, Mason said. Forty percent of the state's residents are Hispanic, but only 5 percent of its doctors speak Spanish, he noted.

“Some of our early customers are there and we think if we go deep there, we can have a meaningful impact and also build a compelling data case for our solution,” Mason added.

ConsejoSano is up against engagement giants like [Accolade](#) and [Quantum Health](#), and other telehealth companies seeking to improve communications among limited-English speakers and healthcare professionals. Mason believes his company has an edge.

“We are the only company that we know of that focuses on engagement for Spanish speakers,” he said.

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