

# Promoting Health Equity

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## Quote of the Month

*"One of the hallmarks of Building Healthy Communities is a focus on how community transformation is achieved – what we call Drivers of Change – rather than a focus on narrowly determined outcomes and a range of predetermined strategies for getting there. Underlying all Building Healthy Communities activities is a fundamental belief in the power of a functioning democracy in which all people are valued and included."*  
– The California Endowment

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## The Challenges We Face

It is hard to believe that it has been almost four months since our lives were taken over by the ever-evolving crisis that is COVID-19. Our new “normal” consists of sheltering in place, social distancing, and donning masks and gloves to accomplish our daily living and working routines.

And as we struggled to contain and prevent the spread of this potentially fatal infection we also witnessed how the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing inequities among communities of color. We, as a nation, gathered in unity to protest oppression and systemic racism; a direct result of centuries-long institutional and structural racism. Racism which was evidenced by the recent senseless killings which have shaken us to our core. We share in everyone’s feelings of sadness and outrage for the victims.

We are at a crossroads in our country, and we cannot stand by and say nothing. If one member of our community suffers, all the members of our community suffer with them. We must use our voice and actions to express that we’re against racism and injustice and we must do better as a community and country. We invite you to join us in calling out racism when you see and hear it and changing the language of divisiveness and exclusion to one of humanity and compassion.

*“We are all united in one human family – what hurts one hurts us all. Because either everybody’s life matters or nobody’s life*

Selfa Saucedo, Ventura County Public Health

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## Driver of Change: Housing Authority City of San Buenaventura

### Housing as More than Shelter

At HACSB we understand that health can be affected in many environments; we're conscious of it starting in the home. Our approach creates social and physical environments that promote healthy living for all age groups, from 0 to hero.



Team Community Services achieves this through outreach, social media, maintaining a presence in the community, being accessible to our residents, and working closely with over 40 partner agencies. We are working to close the digital divide, increase access to low cost internet, devices, and provide digital skill building workshops. To increase achievement of educational goals, career, and economic self-sufficiency, the agency runs an annual scholarship program. Our initiative to increase access to and consumption of fresh produce started with community gardens, weekly delivery of fresh produce to resident communities, and expanded to include delivery of prepared meals, nutrition education and physical well-being programs.

HACSB touches upon all five of the social determinants of health as they align with our agency mission. *The mission is to provide and develop quality affordable housing for eligible low-income residents of Ventura County and to establish strong partnerships necessary for HACSB customers to achieve personal goals related to: literacy and education; health and wellness; and job training and employment leading to personal growth and economic self-sufficiency.*

We are excited to continue to drive change through innovative ways of working with residents and partners in this virtual world while remaining impactful, meaningful, and influential.

Learn more:

*Team Community Services, pictured with 300 boxes of fresh produce ready for delivery.*



## Featured Resource: Each Mind Matters

Each Mind Matters, California's Mental Health Movement, highlights the collective efforts of all people and organizations that want to put an end to stigma related to mental illness, promote mental health, prevent suicide, and create communities across California where everyone feels comfortable reaching out for the help and support they deserve.



Racism, lack of economic opportunity, and oppression increase the chances of poor mental health in the African American community. The resources below can assist organizations serving African Americans as well as individuals interested in information for themselves or for a loved one.

### [Resources for Organizations Working with African American Communities](#)

Each Mind Matters

## Featured Resource: National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month in July



The Office of Minority Health (OMH) is dedicated to improving the health of racial and ethnic minority populations through the development of health policies and programs that will help eliminate health disparities. OMH encourages all our partners to join us in educating communities about the importance of mental healthcare and treatment and to help break down barriers, such as negative perceptions about mental illness.

Despite advances in health equity, disparities in mental health care persist. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) reports that racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S. are less likely to have access to mental health services, less likely to use community mental health services, more likely to use emergency departments, and more likely to receive lower quality care. Poor mental health care access and quality of care contribute to poor mental health outcomes, including suicide, among racial and ethnic minority populations.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- In 2017, 10.5% (3.5 million) of young adults age 18 to 25 had serious thoughts of suicide including 8.3% of non-Hispanic blacks and 9.2% of Hispanics.
- In 2017, 7.5% (2.5 million) of young adults age 18 to 25 had a serious mental illness including 7.6% of non-Hispanic Asians, 5.7% of Hispanics and 4.6% of non-Hispanic blacks.
- Feelings of anxiety and other signs of stress may become more pronounced during a global pandemic.
- People in some racial and ethnic minority groups may respond more strongly to the stress of a pandemic or crisis.

Learn more:

[Minority Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

## Keep in Touch

Keep in touch with us and let us know how you can be a Driver of Change. We post regular updates on our blog, where we feature news, resources and local stories of the great work everyone is doing in their communities. We hope to harness our local momentum and be inspired to create change in our communities. Stay in touch with us at [www.healthequityvc.org](http://www.healthequityvc.org).

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## Stay Connected

Ventura County Public Health  
[www.vchca.org/agency-divisions/public-health](http://www.vchca.org/agency-divisions/public-health)

Ventura County Behavioral Health  
[vcbh.org](http://vcbh.org)

Substance Use Services - Prevention Resources  
[vcbh.org/en/substance-use-resources](http://vcbh.org/en/substance-use-resources)

Ventura County Coronavirus Information  
[www.vcemergency.com](http://www.vcemergency.com)

Building Healthy Habits - How are we coping?  
[habits.vcbh.org](http://habits.vcbh.org)  
[habititos.vcbh.org](http://habititos.vcbh.org)

Ventura County Human Services Agency  
[www.ventura.org/human-services-agency](http://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency)

Social Determinants of Health  
[www.healthequityvc.org](http://www.healthequityvc.org)

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## Contact Us

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