

Promoting Health Equity

Issue 14 • July 2021



Quote of the Month

"And that's why we must understand that Juneteenth represents not only the commemoration of the end of slavery in America more than 150 years ago, but the ongoing work to have to bring true equity and racial justice into American society, which we can do. In short, this day doesn't just celebrate the past; it calls for action today."

— Remarks by President Biden at Signing of the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, June 17, 2021

In the News: Senate Passes a Bill Making Juneteenth a Federal Holiday

The Senate unanimously passed a resolution establishing June 19 as Juneteenth National Independence Day, a U.S. holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger announced in Galveston,

Texas, the end of slavery in accordance with President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. In 1980, Juneteenth became a Texas state holiday. In the decades since, every state but South Dakota came to officially commemorate Juneteenth, but only a handful of states observe it as a paid holiday.

Read the article:

[Senate unanimously passes a bill making Juneteenth a federal holiday](#), CNN, June 16, 2021

[Remarks by President Biden at Signing of the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, June 17, 2021](#)

July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

Improving Access to Treatment



National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month is observed each July to bring awareness to the unique struggles that racial and ethnic minority communities face regarding mental illness in the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it harder for racial and ethnic minority groups to get access to mental health and substance-use treatment services.

Throughout the month, the HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH) will focus on promoting tools and resources addressing the stigma about mental health among racial and ethnic minority populations, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

OMH encourages state, tribal, and local leaders, community-based organizations, faith leaders, healthcare providers and individuals to educate your communities regarding mental health stigma.

Learn more:

[National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

Driver of Change: Interview with Norma Pérez-Sandford, Fillmore Unified School District

Helping My Community



Every issue we feature stories of individuals and agencies that are making a difference in their communities. Today we are talking with Norma Pérez-Sandford, District K-12 Counselor, Fillmore Unified School District.



How did you get interested in the field of education?

Norma: As a child, many professionals helped my family, including social workers, school staff, custodians, coaches and teachers. I was aware that we were recipients of their services, many outside of their work hours. As a child I told myself that when I was in a professional position, I would also help in my community of Fillmore.

What is your passion for working in the community?

Norma: In my parenting classes, I say, "children are the reflection of their parents." It is important to be aware that children are watching what is going on, even if adults do not think they are. Loving my children has always been the highest priority in my

life. Through my love of volunteer work and the blessings of caring mentors, I started to learn how to help others by offering my bilingual skills in the community. Volunteering in the community is a wonderful way to help others who may not have food, shoes, a warm coat, a bed or a couch. Volunteering is a way of life for me and I do not plan to stop. I know I am making a difference to one child or a family.

How are you addressing issues of Health Equity in your work and your community?

Norma: I have been called a “Walking Resource Directory.” Making any school, city or county information available to families has been the most important thing I have done to help people have access to services. I love it when families from 20 years back still call me with their questions. I will do whatever it takes to get answers and get them on their way to a better life. I have the advantage of being pro-active and not giving up on any challenge that comes my way and people know me for this strength.

What are the areas that you hope to make changes in?

Norma: We need to offer resources to individuals and families so they know what is available to them. During this past year many people have not continued their annual medical checkups/screenings, therefore health concerns have gotten worse due to in-person limitations and access to medical care. I am here to help those that seek guidance.

Tell us one thing about you that helps us get to know you better?

Norma: As a child, my school library card allowed me to go to different parts of the world, fantasy and real. I loved to read autobiographies of famous people who succeeded in life despite their circumstances. Throughout my school years, I loved to run and was very competitive in track. After high school I ran 5K's, 10K's, half-marathons, and completed ten marathons. I have a BA in Sociology at CSUN and a MA in Education from Azusa Pacific University with a Pupil Personnel Credential as a Counselor for grades K-12. I just got my AA and Certificate of Achievement from Oxnard College's Drug & Alcohol Studies program.

If you could give a closing remark for or words of inspiration for the community during this time, what would it be?

Norma: It doesn't matter what age you are, give back to your community by volunteering. The wonderful adult mentors I have had in my life showed me strong values, integrity, and genuine caring for my community of Fillmore and Ventura County. As we get older we serve as role models.

Thank you Norma for sharing your experience with us. You are an inspiring Driver of Change!

Learn the Risks of Vaping



Your vape contains a lot of unknown and potentially harmful substances. You might decide you want to vape anyway, but what about the people around you? What about the people you love? Some people are particularly sensitive to being harmed by the substances in secondhand vape - there are simple things you can do to protect them.

See our latest video about the risks of secondhand vaping. We developed this campaign to address the health risks related to vaping and how it can affect others. The *historieta* format shares the information through engaging short stories and highlights how vaping can affect children and other family members. The goal is to increase awareness that can lead to a safer home environment, especially for children who may be most vulnerable.

Learn more:

Secondhand Vaping Historietas

English videos: www.vapingfactcheckvc.org

Spanish videos: www.vapeoverificado.org

Out & About

Connecting with the Community



FILLMORE PRIDE RESOURCE FAIR

On June 29 we participated in the first Fillmore PRIDE event hosted by One Step a la Vez and several partner agencies. The city of Fillmore proclaimed June as PRIDE month.

MEXICAN CONSULATE OUTREACH: VENTANILLA DE SALUD

On June 22 we participated in the first in-person Mexican Consulate, Ventanilla de Salud in Oxnard, and offered resources and information to the Spanish speaking community.

**Recap: Listening, Learning, and Leading:
Anti-Racism in the Crisis Continuum of**

Care Conference

By Erika Fernandez, Community Services Coordinator

I attended the Listening, Learning, and Leading: Anti-Racism in the Crisis Continuum of Care Conference last month. This was a two-day conference hosted by the CARE TA Center. It addressed the crisis continuum of care and justice diversion from the perspectives of communities who experience racial trauma, disproportionate health disparities, and for whom, connection to cultural practices can be distinctly healing. The conference offered presentations related to the crisis continuum of care, justice diversion, recovery supports, and anti-racist clinical and hiring practices that strive for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the behavioral health workforce.

Speakers shared how organizations can begin at the ground level to build an organizational culture where diversity, equity and inclusion is exhibited in their service offerings to help minimize disparities. They talked about trainings that help staff identify unconscious biases and how to address these biases at work as part of a commitment to anti-racist behavioral healthcare and workplaces. They discussed anti-racism and justice diversion and the importance of acknowledging trauma. They explained how many programs address the surface issues such as substance use and behavioral problems but fail to address the root of the problem, such as racism and poverty.

I attended sessions about systemic racism, the overdose crisis, incarceration trauma, adverse childhood experiences, implicit bias, and workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion. Listening to these discussions and learning about best practices has inspired me to work towards anti-racism change in my workplace and community.

Visit the [Crisis and Recovery Enhancement \(CARE\) Technical Assistance \(TA\) Center](#) to access the [Resource Library](#) and recordings of [archived webinars](#).

The Crisis and Recovery Enhancement (CARE) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is a cross-agency team from the fields of mental health; training and technical assistance; crisis response and recovery; criminal justice diversion; and wraparound supports for youth and adults at greater risk of mental health crisis, including people experiencing homelessness.

Upcoming Events

We will keep you posted on upcoming events in each newsletter. If your agency is planning any online meetings, please send us the information so we can post it.

Environmental Strategies to Prevent and Reduce Substance Use

July 21, 10:00am, CT

Central East PTTC

[Register](#)

Providing Inclusive & Integrated Services to LGBTQ+ Individuals

July 27, 10:00am, ET

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

[Register](#)

Founded in 1969, the National Council for Mental Wellbeing is a membership organization that drives policy and social change on behalf of nearly 3,500 mental health and substance use treatment organizations and the more than 10 million children, adults and families they serve.

NWATTC Webinar: Harm Reduction Service Use and Delivery: Lessons Learned from Vancouver, Canada

July 28, 12:00pm, PT

Northwest ATTC

[Register](#)

Treating the Heart of Addiction

August 11, 3:00pm, ET

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals

[Register](#)

Nominate a Driver of Change

Share your Stories

You may nominate a community member or colleague for recognition for exemplary work in the community to help build healthier communities and address health equity. Go to the website and nominate someone or yourself!



We would love to hear your stories of community change, what inspired you, and how you are making a difference.

Learn more:

Social Determinants of Health, Drivers of Change

www.healthequityvc.org/drivers-of-change

Stay Connected

If you are looking for resources in the community, check out our websites. We continually add news, tips, latest research, blogs, publications and more.

Social Determinants of Health

The Social Determinants of Health website provides resources, news, and features community agencies or “Drivers of Change” who are working to building healthier communities through individual, organizational and community wide effort and engagement.

www.healthequityvc.org

Ventura County Limits

This website is a portal to help learn about our efforts to address substance use challenges in our communities.

www.venturacountylimits.org

Ventura County Behavioral Health

The Ventura County Behavioral Health Department (VCBH) provides mental health and substance use treatment services. Learn about our services and how to access help.

vcbh.org

Follow us on Social Media

www.facebook.com/VCBehavioralHealth

www.facebook.com/venturacountylimits

twitter.com/vclimits

Check out our Newsletters

www.venturacountylimits.org/community-connections

www.healthequityvc.org/newsletters

About Us

Supporting Health - Preventing Harm

Substance Use Prevention Services works upstream to reduce alcohol and drug-related problems in our community. Initiatives are aimed at limiting harms related to impaired driving; underage and binge drinking; marijuana and vaping, especially as it relates to harms to youth; prescription drug abuse; and addressing health disparities among vulnerable populations.

A primary goal is to delay the onset of first use of alcohol and or other drugs by youth. We collaborate with schools, parent groups, government agencies, medical partners, law enforcement, community-based organizations and more.

Social Determinants of Health

Health equity is achieved when everyone has the opportunity to live a healthier life, no matter who we are, where we live, or how much money we make. And while we can't currently ensure that everyone will be healthy, we can change the physical conditions in which people live, learn, work and play, one community at a time.

These conditions are called the Social Determinants of Health and by improving these conditions we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and improve their quality of life.

The Social Determinants of Health website provides resources, news, and features community agencies or “Drivers of Change” who are working to building healthier communities through individual, organizational and community wide effort and engagement. Ventura County Behavioral Health and Public Health sponsored three Social Determinants of Health events in 2018-2020, and wanted to continue the dialogue in the community about the issue of Health Equity.

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STAY CONNECTED

