

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Issue 6 • July 2020



## Summer is Here

Making life enjoyable this summer is a challenge for everyone, especially parents. Summer camps, beach days and vacations are postponed and canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions. We keep our distance, wear masks in stores, and plan our outings. Planning special time for baking, games and movie times may be more the norm. And yet despite it all, we find time for connection, with family and friends and our communities.

Our Community Services Coordinators are well connected in the community, so take advantage of their expertise and willingness to help. They can help to access substance use treatment services or provide you with prevention tips on how to talk to your child about drugs and alcohol.

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**Featured Agency: Gold Coast Health Plan**

Every month we feature an agency that is helping the community. We are featuring agencies that are adapting and continuing to reach out during this time of COVID-19.



**Gold Coast  
Health Plan**<sup>SM</sup>  
A Public Entity

Gold Coast Health Plan (GCHP), Ventura County's Medi-Cal plan, oversees medical, pharmacy, and mental health services for its members. GCHP has a Care Management team that is available to help members understand and manage their benefits and guide them as they learn about a new diagnosis.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, GCHP launched a 24-hour advice nurse line to help members and their families decide if they can wait to see the doctor or if they should seek urgent care. GCHP has continued to serve its members while working remotely. While community outreach events have been cancelled, GCHP has found other ways to support its members and the community during the pandemic.

Since April GCHP has awarded more than \$20,000 in sponsorships to organizations that are addressing food insecurity and providing much-needed supplies:

- American Heart Association: Blood pressure monitors to support the telemedicine efforts of local clinics.
- CAREGIVERS: Volunteers Assisting the Elderly: Grocery shopping and pharmacy pick-ups for elderly county residents.
- Feeding the Frontline: Food for essential workers in the agricultural industry.
- Food Share: Pop-up food pantries.
- LUCHA, in conjunction with Poder Popular de Santa Paula: Food distribution to Santa Paula's agricultural workers.
- Secure Beginnings Free Diaper Bank: Diapers for families.
- Students for Eco-Education and Agriculture (SEEAG): Educational materials and fresh produce for the children of farmworkers.

Learn more:  
Gold Coast Health Plan  
[www.goldcoasthealthplan.org](http://www.goldcoasthealthplan.org)

COVID-19 FAQs for GCHP Members  
[www.goldcoasthealthplan.org/for-members/covid-19-information](http://www.goldcoasthealthplan.org/for-members/covid-19-information)

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**Message from Alma:  
COVID-19 and Spirituality**

It is already July and once again we are shutting down many services in the county. It saddens me because instead of moving forward, I feel that we are going backwards. I want to write today about the impact of COVID-19 and county closures on places of worship, and how this has impacted me.

Many in the community have been affected by the restrictions on the ways in which we worship. There were several months that we were not able to attend our places of worship. Religion and spirituality plays an important role in many of our lives. Many of us are active members of our parish, it's our support system. It's where we go for guidance and to connect with our church community.



COVID-19 has impacted many aspects of our lives, not just physical, emotional and mental but our spiritual and religious needs as well. Gatherings and celebrations like baptisms, weddings and funerals have been affected. It has been sad to see friends and family die and not have the support of loved ones during these times. How does one choose which ten family members or friends attend a funeral? How does one decide who will be present at a wedding on such an important day?

A few weeks ago, we could resume our spiritual lives and attend church with restrictions. We got temperature checks, wore masks, and used hand sanitizer as we walked in. We called ahead of time to register, as the number of people that can attend is limited. And now suddenly churches are to be closed again and services must be held outdoors. As difficult as these changes seem, precautions are for our well-being and I encourage everyone to have faith that everything will get better. Adapting is challenging, but our spiritual communities will continue to offer the support that many seek during these uncertain times.

Everything is changing and this is our new normal. Change can cause anxiety, stress or depression in some of us. If we don't have a good support system or know how to deal with changing conditions, it can lead to other serious problems, including substance use. We have seen a rise in drug overdoses during the past four months. Please be vigilant with your loved ones, especially if they suffer from mental health and substance use issues. Help is available but many are not willing to ask. This is where a caring family member or friend can be the hero and help save a life. See below for information on our Overdose Prevention

Program and how to find substance use treatment services.

Learn more:

Wellness Every Day, Spirituality

[www.wellnesseveryday.org/wellness-toolbox/spirituality](http://www.wellnesseveryday.org/wellness-toolbox/spirituality)

*Photo: Alma Ixta and Erika Fernandez, Community Services Coordinators at work.*

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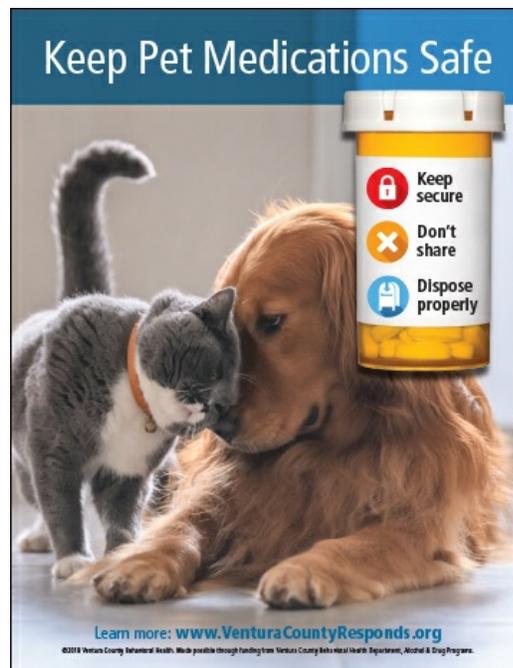


**Featured Campaign:  
Keep Pet Medications Safe**

We launched the Rx Safety Campaign related to pet medications to raise awareness about keeping your pet medications securely locked up as you would any medications.

### What You Can Do

- Keep pet medications in a secure location.
- Monitor and secure all medications.
- Keep pet medications in their original containers with intact labels.
- Keep pet medications away from children.
- Store pet medications away from people medications to prevent a mix-up.
- Commit to safely disposing of your prescription drugs.



Learn more:

Ventura County Responds, Medication Disposal  
[venturacountyresponds.org/en/medication-disposal](http://venturacountyresponds.org/en/medication-disposal)

U.S. Food & Drug Administration  
[Properly Store Medications to Keep Your Pet Safe](https://www.fda.gov/medwatch/medwatch-articles-and-news/2018/08/2018-08-20-keep-your-pet-safe)

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## Featured Website: 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.



This website features news updates, resources, events and local stories of the great work everyone is doing in their communities. Being part of the solution means we are Drivers of Change. Read about the Drivers of Change in our community.

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!

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

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## Overdose Prevention

If a loved one or someone you know may be at risk of an overdose, call about getting an Overdose Rescue Kit. If you are eligible for a kit, you can be trained online on how to use naloxone. You will then be instructed on how to pick up a kit by appointment at one of the VCBH locations. Call about a Rescue Kit at (805) 667-6663.

Naloxone is administered when someone is showing signs of opioid overdose. Naloxone can very quickly restore normal respiration to a person whose breathing has slowed or stopped due to abusing heroin or prescription opioids, or accidentally ingesting too much pain medication. If we can act early when a person shows signs of an overdose, we can work quickly to help save a life.

Learn more:  
[venturacountyresponds.org/how-to-get-naloxone](http://venturacountyresponds.org/how-to-get-naloxone)

To download the NoOD High Risk Card:  
[venturacountyresponds.org/en/naloxone-faq](http://venturacountyresponds.org/en/naloxone-faq)

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## Stay Connected

If you are looking for resources in the community, please check out these websites. There are more resources available in Ventura County than most people realize. Check back regularly for news and information updates, and new materials for educational outreach.

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

Building Healthy Habits - How are we coping?

A graphic with a blue background. At the top, there is a white square with an orange border containing the letters 'NO' in orange and 'OD' in blue. Below this, the text 'Could someone you care about overdose?' is written in white. At the bottom, there is an orange square containing the text 'Call about a Rescue Kit: 1-805-667-6663 Confidential • Free' in white.

**NO  
OD**

**Could someone  
you care about  
overdose?**

**Call about a  
Rescue Kit:  
1-805-667-6663  
Confidential • Free**

[habits.vcbh.org](https://habits.vcbh.org)  
[habitovcbh.org](https://habitovcbh.org)

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

Substance Use Resources  
[vcbh.org/en/information-resources/substance-use-resources](https://vcbh.org/en/information-resources/substance-use-resources)

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

Ventura County Responds  
[venturacountyresponds.org](https://venturacountyresponds.org)

Vaping FactCheck  
[www.vapingfactcheckvc.org](https://www.vapingfactcheckvc.org)

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

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## Upcoming Events

We will keep you posted on upcoming events, trainings and meetings in each newsletter. If your agency is planning any type of online meetings, please send to us so we can post this.

**Oxnard Police Department, Community Outreach Planning Meeting, Zoom, August 5, 2020**  
Contact Teresa Tellez [teresa.telles@oxnardpd.org](mailto:teresa.telles@oxnardpd.org)

**Circle of Care Meeting, Zoom, August 5, 2020**  
Contact Kate English [kate@myonestep.org](mailto:kate@myonestep.org)

**Multi-Unit Housing Taskforce Meeting, Zoom, August 6, 2020**  
Contact Shar Busch [Shar.Busch@ventura.org](mailto:Shar.Busch@ventura.org)

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## Share your Photos

Send us photos of Ventura County scenes and we'll share in future newsletters. As the county opens up more businesses, we want to capture the changing landscape of our communities.

*Photos by Alma Ixta: Streets of Santa Paula, Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Oxnard*



[Contact Us](#)

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Erika Fernandez [Erika.Fernandez@ventura.org](mailto:Erika.Fernandez@ventura.org)

**It's a boy!!** Erika is on maternity leave and will be back in October.

STAY CONNECTED

