

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Issue 8 • August 2020



What is Prevention Services & why are we important?

Supporting Health - Preventing Harm

Prevention Services is a part of the Substance Use Services Division within the Ventura County Behavioral Health Department.

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.

We hope you will check out our websites and follow us on social media.

Interview with Ignacio Ixta, Community Services Coordinator

Making a Difference



Every issue we feature stories of individuals and agencies that are making a difference in their communities during this time of COVID-19.

Today we talk with Ignacio Ixta, Community Services Coordinator with Ventura County Behavioral Health, Substance Use Services - Prevention. Ignacio was recently reassigned to help with our county's COVID-19 testing in the community.

What is your current reassignment?

Ignacio: I was asked to join a team that helps expand our county's COVID-19 testing sites. I am helping with the coordination of new pop-up sites for COVID-19 testing and with registration of Spanish speaking participants. So far, I've reached out to Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church close to Port Hueneme and Oxnard Housing in La Colonia where we have had testing for the community, and we have been successful.

What do you enjoy about your job?

Ignacio: I enjoy the face to face interaction with the Spanish speaking community. I like the opportunity to educate people so they are not fearful of being tested or getting positive results.

What is the response from the community that you engage with?

Ignacio: People in the community are grateful we are there, close to their homes and a having a more personalized way to get tested. Community partners are grateful that we can provide a free service to their community. Some Latino participants have concerns about getting a positive result. They are fearful that their employers will find out and they'll be out of a job and won't be able to provide for their families.

What is your new position with Prevention Services?

Ignacio: I'm excited about doing substance use prevention outreach in the community. I'm looking forward to helping educate families about overdose prevention.

It seems like you have a strong personal commitment to your work, is that right?

Ignacio: My role in my church is to provide spiritual guidance to the community and be a resource to parishioners. It was rewarding to help provide COVID-19 testing for my community, as I am part of the clergy at Mary Star of the Sea Church.

On a personal note, when parishioners saw me at registration, they were grateful that I was there helping to bring these services to our church community. Along with the HCA precautions and PPE provided to me, their gratefulness helped me overcome my personal fear of being exposed or acquiring the virus. I love helping my community!

Photos by Alma Ixta: Ignacio Ixta, Johnny Gomez, HCA, at the COVID-19 testing site, Mary Star of the Sea Church, Oxnard.



Message from Alma: Staying Healthy through Zumba

Fun & Fitness During COVID

Many things have changed in our community and in our personal lives. For me personally, I used to love taking Zumba classes. That was my way of dealing with my everyday stress and trying to stay healthy in a

fun way for me. I didn't see Zumba as doing exercise. Zumba for me was more like a way to socialize and make friends with the people in class.

Since the initial closure of the gyms, I stopped exercising and even when they re-opened the gyms, I didn't feel safe going back. Taking Zumba classes online just doesn't feel fun as there is no interaction

with other people. I've always been a people person so not having face to face interaction with others has been very challenging for me. I am sure that many others are struggling with how to stay active without going to classes and gyms and finding daily ways to stay healthy and fit.



Exercising alone isn't easy for some people, and it is a challenge for me too. Being in the field that I am in I know how important it is to deal with our daily stressors for prevention of bigger issues down the road. Exercise is one of the best stress-relievers, so I know it is important to incorporate some type of activity to our daily lives. I also know it's not easy that's why we must get creative. I now put my Zumba music on when I am cleaning house and believe it or not, it gets me dancing while I sweep, mop, dust, and care for my grandson. I pick him up and dance with him. So now I'm not just exercising but I am helping develop his brain, speech and language and gross motor skills as we bond.

There are many ways to be active, find what's fun for you and your family. Maybe a walk after dinner as a family or practicing meditation, or maybe making it a challenge with family and friends to see who loses COVID-19 weight faster. I know I have gained a lot of it and really want to get rid of it. For now, I will keep doing my Zumba moves at home to music! What are ways that you can stay physically active?

Learn more:

[Tips for Self-Care During Covid-19](#)

Building Healthy Habits - How are we coping?

habits.vcbh.org

habititos.vcbh.org

Photos: Alma Ixta and Erika Fernandez, Community Services Coordinators, pre-COVID-19; LA Fitness, Ventura; Esporta Fitness, Oxnard.

**This location is temporarily
closed to the public.**

Governor Newsom ordered today, July 13, 2020,
that all fitness centers close immediately until
further notice.

Please download our free LA Fitness mobile app so
we can let you know when we reopen.

You will not be billed during this time. Your
membership was returned to the complimentary
Freeze status.

We deeply appreciate your patience and
understanding.



Featured Campaign: Get a Ride. Not a DUI.



Did You Know...?

You can be arrested for driving
under the influence of anything
that impairs your ability to
drive.

The use of any drug can make it
unsafe to drive a car. Drugs can
impair motor skills, perception,
judgment and memory. Even
small amounts of some drugs
may have an impact on the
ability to drive.

Impaired driving involves all substances, not just alcohol.

Learn more:
www.notadui.org



DUI ?
DID YOU KNOW...

YOU CAN BE ARRESTED FOR DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF...

- Alcohol
- Marijuana
- Prescription medication
- Other drugs

OR ANYTHING THAT IMPAIRS YOUR ABILITY TO DRIVE.

Why do Teens Vape?

Watch the Video
National Institute on Drug Abuse



2019 Monitoring the Future
National Institute on Drug Abuse

VAPING:
Why do Teens Vape and What are the Health Concerns?
NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow

Recorded December 2019

Stay Connected - It's Easy

If you are looking for resources in the community, check out our

websites. We continually add news, tips, latest research, blogs, publications and more.

- **Ventura County Responds**
venturacountyresponds.org
- **Marijuana FactCheck**
www.mjfactcheck.org
- **Vaping FactCheck**
www.vapingfactcheckvc.org
- **Ventura County Limits**
www.venturacountylimits.org
- **Social Determinants of Health**
www.healthequityvc.org
- **Follow us on Social Media**
www.facebook.com/venturacountylimits
twitter.com/vclimits
- **Coping During Coronavirus, Wellness Every Day**
www.wellnesseveryday.org/coping-during-coronavirus

Need Help?

If you or a family member are struggling with addiction, talk to your healthcare provider or call the confidential 24/7 Access Line: 1-844-385-9200.

> [Learn about Substance Use Treatment Services.](#)

Upcoming Events - Join Us

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 Meeting
Zoom, September 2, 2020
Contact: Teresa Tellez, teresa.telles@oxnardpd.org

Circle of Care Meeting
Zoom, September 2, 2020
Contact: Kate English, kate@myonestep.org

Share your Photos

Send us photos of Ventura County scenes and we'll share in future newsletters. As the county continues to open, we want to capture the changing landscape of our communities. We will give you

credit too!

Contact Us

Alma Ixta Alma.Ixta@ventura.org

Erika Fernandez Erika.Fernandez@ventura.org

Erika is on leave through October.

Share your stories with us. Want us to feature you and your work in the community? Send an email to Alma!

STAY CONNECTED

