

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Issue 16 • February 2021



Just because it makes us happy.

Snowy Owl Is Spotted in Central Park, for First Time in 130 Years
Jan. 28, 2021

[*A snowy owl in Central Park drew flocks of people \(and crows\), NY Times*](#)

February Celebrations: Black History Month

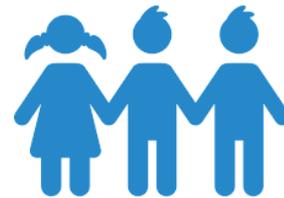
From the Office of Minority Health (OMH)

February is Black History Month. We take this time to celebrate the achievements of African Americans and honor the significant role and impact they have made on all facets of life and society throughout U.S. history. During the month of February, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) is celebrating the achievements of African Americans and honoring the significant role and impact they have made on all facets of life and society throughout U.S. history.

Learn more:

Message from Alma: Insights from our Children

As the year 2020 ended, I took the time to reflect with my grandkids. I wanted to hear their perspective on these times. Our conversation was about COVID-19 and distance learning. I asked them how they felt about coronavirus and how it affected them. They said "I hate that we can't go to the park anymore," "I don't like that we can't go to school," and "We have to stay home all the time."



As a grandma I wanted to help them process what they were feeling and help them to see positivity in what's happening around us. I shared with them that this time has brought us closer as a family. We are spending more time together and learning how to cope.

I asked how distance learning is going for them. My ten-year-old and 11-year-old grandsons said they miss their friends and not being able to play with them in school. The seven-year-old grandson said he really likes his new teacher and he enjoys his Zoom classes. This is my grandson that had the hardest time when we began staying at home and remote learning. He would tantrum like a two-year-old and refuse to get on Zoom so I was happy to see him feeling happy about his new teacher. My eight-year-old granddaughter shared that she likes seeing her teacher and classmates on Zoom.

It was great to hear them talk about their feelings. 2020 was a challenging year for everyone and it helps to get a child's perspective on what is happening in their lives. Having these conversations with our children is important, especially now. Their lens is sometimes a lot brighter than ours.

Learn more:
Coping with Coronavirus, Resources for Parents
www.wellnesseveryday.org/coping-during-coronavirus

– Alma Ixta, Community Services Coordinator

Featured Campaign: Vaping Historietas

Secondhand Vaping



See our latest campaign about the risks of secondhand vaping. We developed this campaign to address the health risks related to vaping and how it can affect others, which is especially timely due to COVID-19. 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.

The Secondhand Vaping historietas are available as videos, PDFs and printed booklets. To view and share, see:

English videos: www.vapingfactcheckvc.org

Spanish videos: www.vapeoverificado.org

PDFs:

[Historietas in English](#)

[Historietas in Spanish](#)

Printed booklets - contact Erika.Fernandez@ventura.org

Featured Video: Let's Talk About Opioids - The Conversation

Talking to your Doctor



Some people might think prescription opioids are safer than alcohol or illegal drugs, but they can carry risks and side effects. Talk with your doctor about your concerns and make informed decisions about pain management together. Prescription opioids are one of the many options for reducing severe pain. Ask your doctor these questions to fully understand both the benefits and risks of prescription opioids.

Learn more:

Talking to your Doctor

www.venturacountyresponds.org/preventing-overdose/talking-to-your-doctor

Featured Interview: Brad Friday, COAST Grant



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 are talking with Brad Friday, Implementation Coordinator for the County Opioid Abuse Suppression Taskforce (COAST) Grant, Ventura County Behavioral Health, Substance Use Services - Prevention.

Hi Brad. Please describe your work with the COAST grant.

Brad: My work with COAST includes collection, dissemination, and publishing of pertinent County Opioid-related data via Public and Internal Dashboards, as well liaising between the requirements of the grant and our key stakeholders/partners.

How did you get interested in the field of prevention?

Brad: While serving as an Active-Duty Hospital Corpsman in the Navy, I was assigned to Marine Corps ground forces as a Field Medic. The prevention bug first bit while preparing/educating Marines prior to operational deployments rather than being strictly reactionary. After that tour I became a “Preventive Medicine Technician” within Navy Medicine which specialized in overall safety, health, and wellness of deployable forces within the Navy and Marine Corps.

What is your passion for working in the community?

Brad: It’s validating to contribute toward providing our diverse population a safe place to live and grow despite the challenges we face. This only happens by being at the ground level and interacting with the community along with our multi-agency partners who are working hard to achieve this mutual goal. My passion is to keep these threads tied together, to enhance these relationships and to maintain a unified front in suppressing the opioid crisis.

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

Brad: My goal in working within the COAST Project is to act as a conduit toward reducing opiate abuse, overdoses and overdose deaths via immediate communication of real-time data. This communication will then guide prevention, health care, and community leaders who join us in tackling the opioid crisis toward making more informed decisions.

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

Brad: I am originally from the Midwest but felt deeply connected to Ventura County upon being stationed in Port Hueneme some 20 years ago. While my career took me out of the county for a while, the attachment to this area never left. I’m not only happy that I get to live in this amazing area with so much to offer; I’m also

increasingly proud I'm able to serve this community in this capacity.

Thank you Brad for sharing your experience with us. Your commitment and passion is inspiring.

Learn more:

Opioid Data Dashboard

www.coastventuracounty.org

Webinar Review: Treatment of Infants with Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome

Erika Fernandez, SUS Prevention Services

The *Updated Guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics on the Treatment of Infants with Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome* webinar was held on January 26. The webinar was hosted by the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW). The webinar provided an overview of American Academy of Pediatrics' revised guidance on Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome (NOWS) which provides recommendations for management of the infant with opioid exposure.

Dr. Stephen Patrick talked about improving systems that serve families affected by the opioid crisis. His research recommends that all pregnant women should have access to medications for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) because they have been shown to reduce risk of overdose death and improve pregnancy outcomes and pediatricians should advocate for funding to improve access to quality treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD).

He shared how communities play a huge role in opioid use. He stated that opioid-related complications have occurred disproportionately in impoverished and rural settings and that rural counties may be particularly at risk for opioid-related complications. He addressed the different factors that occur with maternal drug use: poor health, food insecurity, poor prenatal care, social stress, mental health needs, and violence.

Pregnant women and infants have been substantially affected by the opioid epidemic. While most opioid overdose prevention programs focus on education and outreach to specific at-risk populations, we rarely think of pregnant women being at a higher risk; however, there is a rising risk of opioid overdose across pregnancy and post-partum periods. Little is known about opioid overdose or naloxone access among pregnant women; even though, naloxone access is a key strategy in addressing rising opioid-related overdose deaths for all populations in the United States. This webinar provided insight on pregnancy and opioid use to assist us in expanding our overdose prevention outreach

strategies.

Learn more:

Supporting Families Affected by Opioids

ncsacw.samhsa.gov/topics/supporting-families-affected-opioids.aspx

Ventura County Responds

www.venturacountyresponds.org

Helpful Resources

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 Limits

www.venturacountylimits.org

Ventura County Responds

venturacountyresponds.org

Marijuana FactCheck

www.mjfactcheck.org

Vaping FactCheck

www.vapingfactcheckvc.org

Social Determinants of Health

www.healthequityvc.org

Ventura County Behavioral Health

vcbh.org

Wellness Every Day

www.wellnesseveryday.org/news

Follow us on Social Media

www.facebook.com/venturacountylimits

twitter.com/vclimits

Check out our Newsletters at

www.venturacountylimits.org/community-connections

www.healthequityvc.org/newsletters

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](#)

Calendar

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.

Substance Use and Risk of Suicide - Webinar

2/10/21, 10:00 am, Pacific Time

Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network

[Register](#)

Smoke Free Multi-Unit Housing Task Force Meeting

2/11/21, 11:00 am, Pacific Time

Contact: Shar.Busch@ventura.org

Working Toward Food Security Through Community Engagement - Webinar

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

2/16/21, 12:00 pm, Pacific Time

[Register](#)

Building the Latinx Prevention Workforce - Webinar

2/16/21, 8:00 am, Pacific Time

Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network

[Register](#)

Cannabis: People before Profits. The Evolution of Cannabis Policies and Where Prevention Fits In - Webinar

2/16/21, 3:00 pm, Pacific Time

Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network

[Register](#)

2021 Teens Kick Ash Virtual Conference, Manipulation 101, Taking off the Mask

Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE)

February 23 & 25, 2021

[See Flyer](#)

For information: www.vcoe.org/health/tka

2021 TEENS KICK ASH VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

MANIPULATION 101 Taking off the Mask



Register by
Feb 16!!

February 23
Middle School
Registration:

bit.ly/tkams21

February 25
High School
Registration:

bit.ly/tkajs21

Both days: 9:00am - 1:30pm

Keynote Presentation:



Bryan Coleman
Senior Manager,
Youth Leadership
Development

Diamond Miller, MPH
Specialist,
Youth Leadership
Development

truth initiative
INSPIRING LIVES FREE FROM
SMOKING, VAPING & NICOTINE

Truth Initiative® is America's largest nonprofit public health organization committed to making tobacco use and nicotine addiction a thing of the past.

Additional presentations by:



Find more info at:
vcoe.org/health/tka

About Truth:

Through innovative and interactive engagement, Truth Initiative's Community and Youth Engagement team works with today's youth to build a culture where young people reject smoking, vaping and nicotine. This dynamic team shares the facts and teaches youth how they can be advocates on these issues.

Got Photos?

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

About Us

Supporting Health – Preventing Harm

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.

Contact Us

Our newsletters are one way we stay connected to you. We have updated our websites and continue to add campaigns, publications, events and more, in hopes that you can bring back our Prevention messages to your agencies and communities.



Alma and Erika, our Community Outreach staff, continue to be in touch with you and we are working with our partners to share our work and efforts, despite the challenges we are all facing. Please continue to reach out to us, share your photos, Zoom meetings webinars and stories on how you are adapting and prospering in your communities.

Erika Fernandez, Erika.Fernandez@ventura.org

Alma Ixta, Alma.Ixta@ventura.org

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

Photo: Alma Ixta and Erika Fernandez, Community Services Coordinators, pre-COVID-19.

STAY CONNECTED

