

CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IMPACT REPORT 2020-2021



“Health equity is crucial because it’s fundamental to living a good life and building a vibrant society.”

— Victor Dzou

“Achieving health equity requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences.”

— Robert Wood

IN THIS DIGITAL COPY OF THE YEAR IN REVIEW, ALL LINKS TO OTHER PAGES AND TO WEBSITES ARE CLICKABLE FOR A MORE INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE.

MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Another year has passed, and we are still living in the era of COVID-19. We went from encouraging everyone to get tested, to pop-up vaccination sites everywhere, people trying to determine which vaccine is the right one for them: Pfizer, Moderna or Johnson and Johnson. To now the vaccine being available to children 12 and above, restrictions being lifted and return to work orders announced. While trying to comprehend the effects of the Delta Variant and get back to some sense of normalcy, but still safely engage in social activities with friends and family, navigate wearing our masks, maintain an appropriate social distance and keeping our trusty hand sanitizer close by.

CHC’s has been a trusted source, stood in the gap and used our social media platforms to communicate updated, easy to understand COVID-19 information and resources to the Southern Inland community at large.

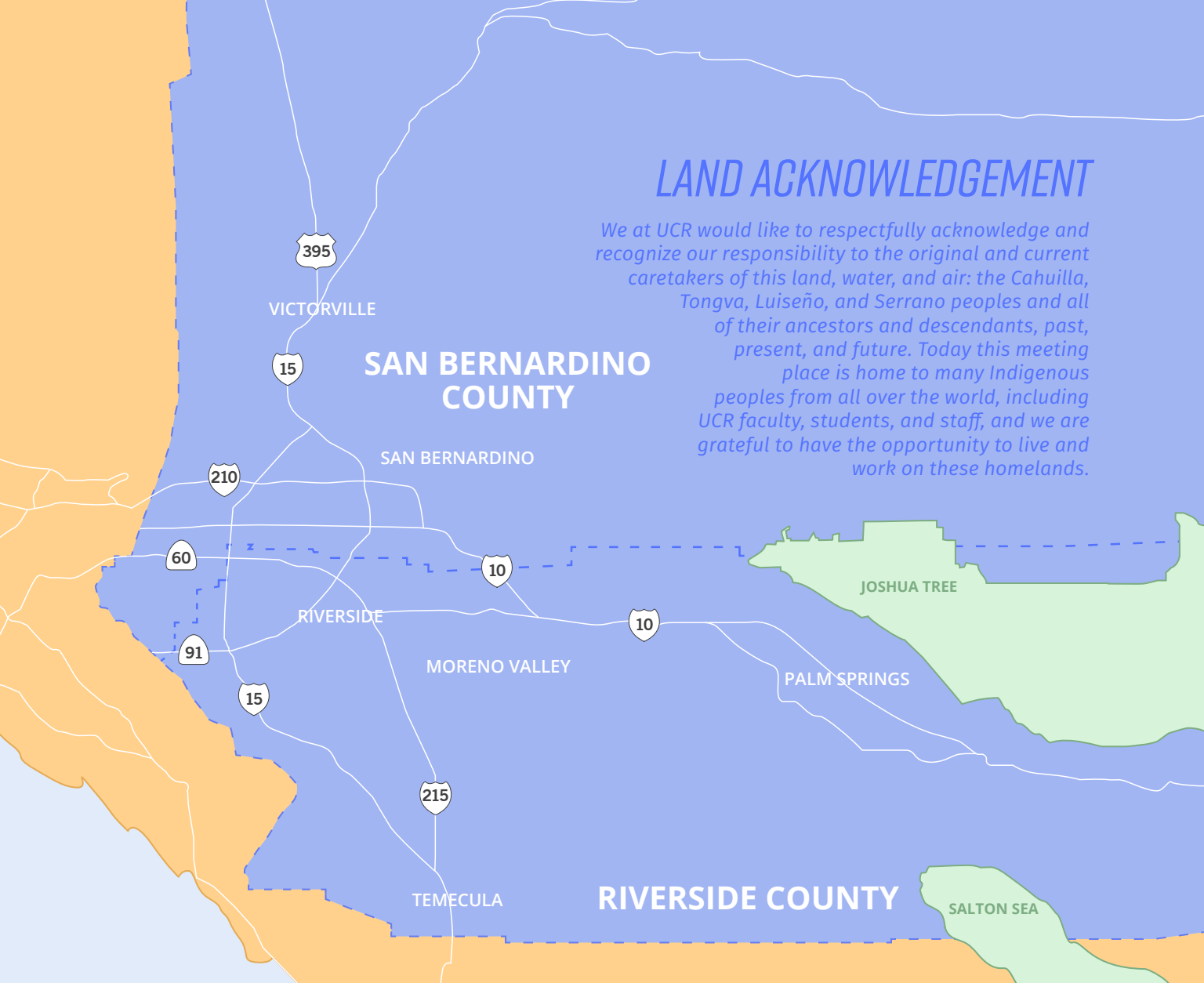
CHC partnered with our School of Medicine’s Drs. Adwoa Osei and Carlos Cortes and hosted a series of Community Conversations: Changing Systems, Challenging Attitudes. These conversations are a starting point to chisel away at systemic racism in the medical community. We initiated the conversation to learn how to understand, model empathy, and effectively communicate with people of different races, ethnicity, gender identity, faith, language, sexual orientation, and cultures.

This year has proven to be as emotional draining and filled with challenges as 2020. However, the difference is the southern inland community is coming together, appreciating our interconnectedness, and working to create incremental change in how we care for one another!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle S. Burroughs".

Michelle S. Burroughs, M.P.H.
Director of Community Engagement & Outreach (CHC)
UCR Center for Healthy Communities



THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

CHC was created to serve the Inland Southern California communities, which includes Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

There are four major health issues (cardiovascular, cancer, diabetes, and mental health) plaguing the Inland Empire. Traditionally CHC would have brought awareness and offered in-person educational opportunities to our community.

OUR VISION

The UCR School of Medicine’s research is aimed at improving the health of culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse communities in the region, especially the underresourced.

OUR MISSION

CHC aims to build connections between researchers and the Inland Empire communities through service, education, and research that addresses our communities’ needs and promotes health equity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SERVICE

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EDUCATION

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A MOMENT IN TIME IN THE COVID ERA

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PG. 15

GOALS ACHIEVED

PG. 18



Due to COVID restrictions we were unable to offer in-person health education services so we created a YouTube health series called, “It’s Lit.” (Learning, Informing, Teaching) explains health and social concepts in an easy format.

[▶ VISIT OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL TITLED “UCR CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES”](#)

SERVICE

The CHC is embedded in our diverse community. We are accessible and available to serve, to be a resource and to engage the residents of Inland Empire communities. Below are highlights of a few community engagement events that CHC was part of in 2020 & 2021.

MINI-GRANT

CHC created the Community Medicine and Population Health Mini-Grant Program which engages medical students, graduate students, residents, and fellows of UCR in service and advocacy projects within Southern California communities.

Inland Empire Immigrant Youth Collective (IEIYC) was awarded \$5,000 to support their UnDocuHealth Ambassadors Program.

ABOUT THE UNDOCUHEALTH AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

The UndocuHealth Ambassadors Program (UHA) supports the Health4All Campaign, which advocates for preventative healthcare that is accessible to all, especially the immigrant population residing in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. The program provides tools to build resilience within the immigrant community in the IE. By training 10 immigrant individuals how to advocate for preventative health care for all. The 10 ambassadors will serve and engage an additional 50 community member through a series of health-related workshops. The Ambassadors' program will capitalize on IEIYC's established partnerships with local organizations, raise awareness, and bring free or low-cost medical serves to their target population.



SUMMARY OF MINI-GRANT

UHA was able to train immigrant communities about digital organizing; state and county medical resources; developed new relationships, and advocate for health justice and utilize community members' stories to uplift the social movement. The ambassadors were also successful in enrolling themselves and an additional 33% into medical programs.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR MINI-GRANTS AT
healthycommunities.ucr.edu/mini-grants

COMMUNITY TOWNHALLS & CONVERSATIONS

Throughout late 2020 and early 2021, CHC was featured in and advertised several online webinars revolving around topics relevant to several groups within our community.



OCT 6
2020

ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL RACISM WITH
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Featuring Carla Davis, Ph.D. and Marla Hunter, MATL

Moderated by Michelle Burroughs, M.P.H.

OCT 7
2020

CLEAN AIR DAY WEBINAR

Hosted by the UCR Bourns College of Engineering
Center for Environmental Research & technology
and the UCR Office of Sustainability



OCT 8
2020

INFORMING THROUGH CRISIS:
COVID-19'S IMPACT ON BLACK COMMUNITIES IN CALIFORNIA

Hosted by the League of California Cities African-American Caucus

OCT 15
2020

I AM CHEO: VIRTUAL FILM SCREENING
& ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

A Hispanic Access Foundation short film about Latinos,
environmental justice, and wildfires



FEB 12
2021

STOP COVID-19
IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Hosted by the League of California Cities African-American Caucus
on Black Voice News

EDUCATION

CHC's faculty and staff offer trainings and educational opportunities to enhance the communities' knowledge of social determinants of health, public health and health equity. Using virtual education methods, CHC is able to equip community members with the skills necessary to effectively lead and facilitate real transformation. Also, our community continuously engages CHC in relevant co-educational discussions that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

DISCUSSIONS WITH CITY REPRESENTATIVES

At CHC, it is our mission to build connections with Inland Empire communities through service, education, and research that addresses our communities' needs and promotes health equity. CHC put this into action by meeting with City of Riverside council members: Mayor Lock Dawson and Councilwoman Gaby Plascencia to build connections and understand their vision of a healthier and more equitable Riverside.



“We lack a comprehensive exit strategy for those who are coming out of incarceration; those who are coming out of drug treatment programs and those who are coming out of mental health services. Those three populations, although some of them are related, all have different needs. They have different needs in which to thrive, and they need different services. Regardless, they all need intensive case management. That is something that I think we need to do. [...] There are so many things that are broken in this system that we are trying to fix right now.”

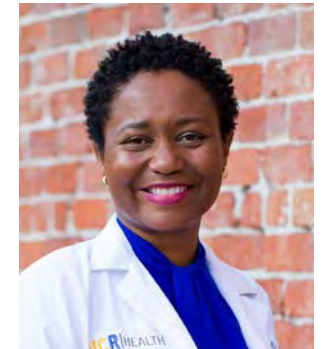
— Mayor Patricia Lock-Dawson
2mayor@riversideca.gov



“We still have some discriminatory policies. What I have done by declaring racism a public health crisis having the support of most of my colleagues and a group of residents from Riverside started this committee called “Anti-Racist Riverside”. What I love about them is that they really champion these kinds of issues. What they did was, they worked closely to start, within their group, a matrix has some tangible language that we could implement into our five-year strategic plan.”

— Councilwoman Gaby Plascencia
GPlascencia@riversideca.gov

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS AND CO-EDUCATION



In partnership with Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP), UCR presented empowering health equity, social justice, and anti-racism discussions with IEHP providers. Our very own Dr. Adwoa Osei moderated this series of conversations on how to understand, model empathy, and effectively communicate with people of different races, ethnicity, gender identity, faith, language, sexual orientation and cultures.

This conversation series was open to the community and hosted in Spanish, as well as with closed captioning.

TOPICS ADDRESSED IN THE SERIES:

- CHANGING SYSTEMS, CHALLENGING ATTITUDES
- LIVING WITH CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS
- DEALING WITH COVID-19; PERSONAL EXPERIENCES
- REBUILDING TRUST IN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN THE ERA OF COVID-19
- ASIAN-AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDERS PERSPECTIVE: HATE INCIDENTS & HEALTHCARE
- ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES IN MATERNAL HEALTH

STAY UPDATED ON UPCOMING EVENTS LIKE THESE AT
[instagram.com/ucr_chc](https://www.instagram.com/ucr_chc)

RESEARCH

Through partnerships, the CHC is able to design research for easy translation to real-world health settings and situations. As a result, the CHC is able to improve cultural and language-appropriate interventions that create better services for underrepresented and underserved populations.

AIR QUALITY RESEARCH PROJECTS

AIR QUALITY SHORT-FILM & ART EXPRESSION COMMUNITY CONTEST

Majority of residents experience health impacts either caused or exacerbated by poor air quality on a regular or semi-regular basis, including asthma, reduced heart function, and cancer. To gain a better understanding of how to address poor air quality in our community, we need people (i.e. key players, and influencers) that can lend their expertise on how we can effectively address the poor air quality issues that are plaguing our community. We will not achieve this goal without your input, and we need you to make a positive impact.

The Short Film and Clean Air Artistic Expression contests aim to engage the community in civic engagement through creative expression via the arts. Through this contest, our communities highlighted the effects of poor air quality and ways to reduce it within the Inland Empire.

AIR QUALITY SHORT-FILM WINNERS (FEBRUARY 2021)

Clear the Air

Directed, shot, and edited by Sean McDade
Featuring Nia Sharon Campbell, Renea Dorr

[WATCH "CLEAR THE AIR" AT
youtu.be/mPtUDNqvS1M](https://youtu.be/mPtUDNqvS1M)

Air Quality

Presented by NAACP Youth & College Division
Featuring Chloe Brantley, Jeremy Page Carney, Tiffany Lemieux, Salone Meadows

[WATCH "AIR QUALITY" AT
youtu.be/NlrFIWOLbRk](https://youtu.be/NlrFIWOLbRk)

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION WINNERS

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

- Jose Bonilla-Gurrola
- Diana Cuautle
- Alexandria Doubravsky
- Kamaria Kermah

WRITTEN EXPRESSION

- William Bowman

THE GEARS OF WASTE

by William Bowman

Many years ago, centuries if you feel so inclined,
There was an era where Mother Nature was running out of her time.
Watching as Humanity was experimenting with creation,
Mother Nature couldn't help but feel immense devastation.

Running the oil rigs, and mining for coal,
Everything for the environment was starting to sound droll.
Humanity's descent into the darkest of pits
Was beginning to settle into the creation they knit.

"The Industrial Revolution" is what they named their achievement.
Though for Mother Nature, it was deceptively inconvenient.
And over the years, as Humanity went further,
Everything about this was just screaming "Murder!"

Their finest creation, a noteworthy automaton,
Was a robot, simply designed to be more brains than brawn.
This clever thinker could be around for centuries,
But Humanity didn't stop to think if it wanted to be carried.

Equipped with flames, blades, and even a small furnace,
Its bright yellow eyes would glow, just to concern us.
Coming to a realization on Humanity's mistake,
They all knew what to do, only to be far too late.



Left to right: By Jose Bonilla-Gurrola, Diana Cuautle, Alexandria Doubravsky, Kamaria Kermah

A MOMENT IN TIME IN THE COVID ERA

Between 2020 and 2021, there was a rise and decrease of COVID-19 cases. In the end of 2020, vaccines such as Moderna and Pfizer were becoming released to the public and in early 2021, the single-dose Johnson and Johnson became available. CHC has played a role in bringing about awareness regarding COVID-19 testing and vaccine information, as well as ensuring that the community is always informed on where to get vaccinated.

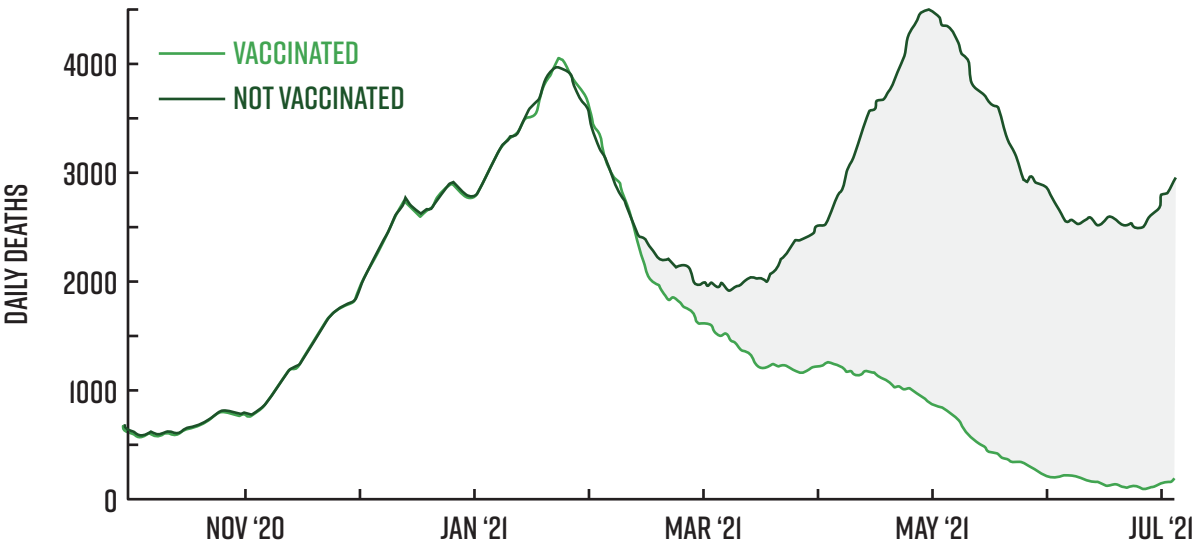
There are 3 vaccines that are authorized in the United States to prevent COVID-19:

- PFIZER**

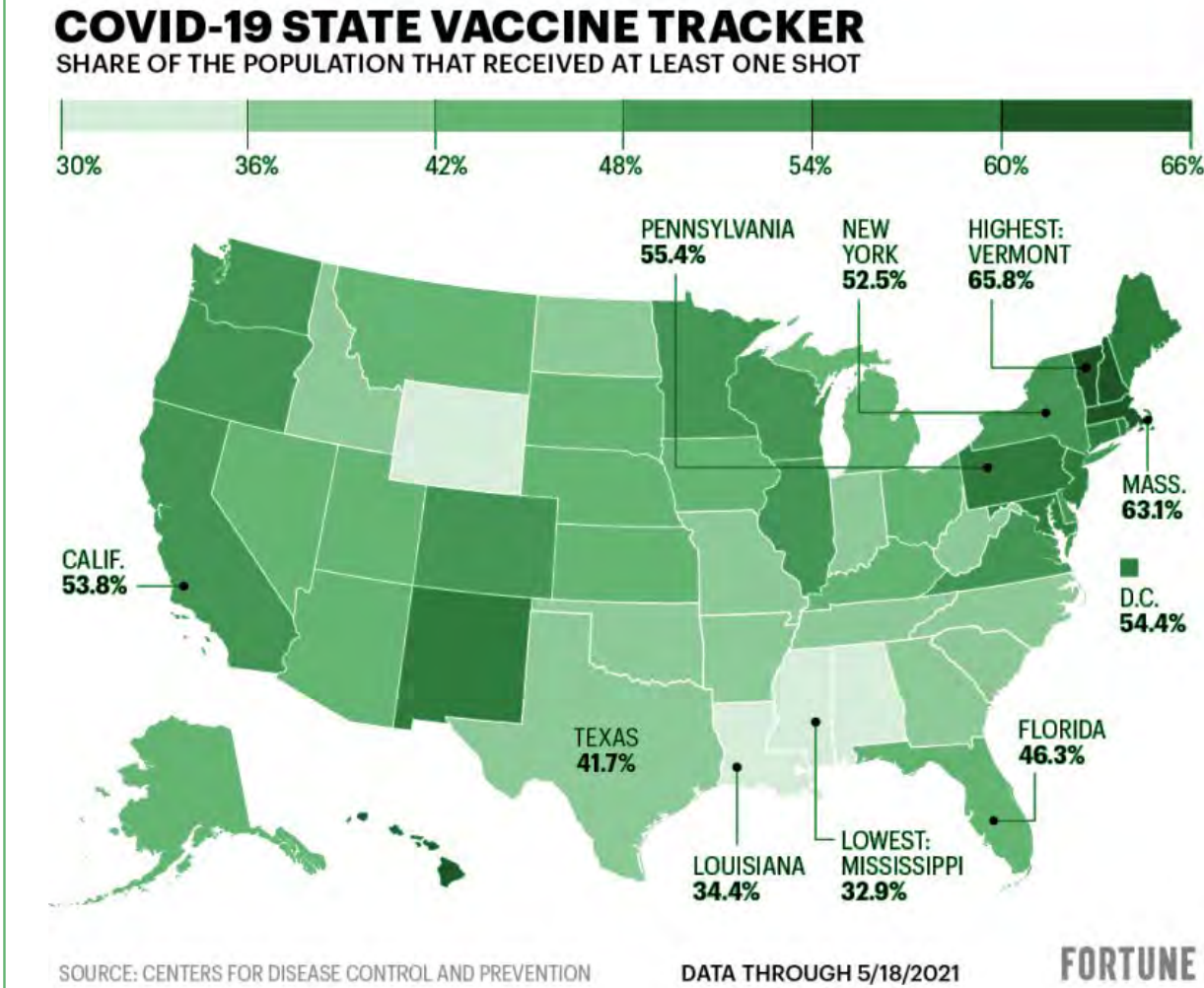
 - Manufacturer: BioNTech
 - Two shots, 21 days apart
 - The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is recommended for people aged 12 years and older
- MODERNA**

 - Manufacturer: ModernaTX inc.
 - Two shots a month (28 days apart)
 - The Moderna vaccine is recommended for people ages 18 years and older
- JOHNSON & JOHNSON**

 - Manufacturer: Janssen Pharmaceuticals Companies of Johnson & Johnson
 - One shot only
 - The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is recommended for people ages 18 years and older



Source: Alison Galvani, Seyed M. Moghadas, and Eric C. Schneider, Deaths and Hospitalizations Averted by Rapid U.S. Vaccination Rollout (Commonwealth Fund, July 2021)



- UPDATES AS OF EARLY 2021***
- If fully vaccinated, you can resume activities that you did prior to the pandemic (CDC, 2021).
 - Fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance (CDC, 2021).
 - You are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or you are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine

* INFORMATION PRESENTED ON PAGES 10 AND 11 ARE PRESENTED AS A SNAPSHOT OF THE COVID-19 CIRCUMSTANCES AS OF JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021. PLEASE REFER TO THE MOST RECENT CDC AND LOCAL GUIDANCE TO INFORM YOUR DECISIONS REGARDING PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS AND MYTHS ABOUT COVID-19

Throughout the pandemic, the CHC heard several myths about COVID-19 from our community members. We responded by communicating factual scientific evidence debunking the most commonly heard myths.

WILL A COVID-19 VACCINE ALTER MY DNA?

No. COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. The two types of COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized and recommended for use in the United States are: messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines and a viral vector vaccine. Both mRNA and viral vector COVID-19 vaccines deliver instructions (genetic material) to our cells to start building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19 (CDC, 2021). The material never enters the nucleus of the cell where our DNA is kept (CDC, 2021). This means the genetic material in the vaccines cannot affect or interact with our DNA in any way, and all COVID-19 vaccines work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease (CDC, 2021).

AFTER GETTING A COVID-19 VACCINE, WILL I TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 ON A VIRAL TEST?

No. None of the authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines cause you to test positive on viral tests (CDC, 2021). Neither can any of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States (CDC, 2021).

CAN A COVID-19 VACCINE MAKE ME SICK WITH COVID-19?

No. None of the authorized vaccines in the United States currently in development contain live virus that causes COVID-19 (CDC, 2021).

WILL A COVID-19 VACCINE MAKE ME INFERTILE?

No. The COVID-19 vaccine will not affect fertility. The truth is that the COVID-19 vaccine encourages the body to create copies of the spike protein found on the coronavirus's surface. This "teaches" the body's immune system to fight the virus that has that specific spike protein on it.



RACIAL JUSTICE

Although media attention may have gone away, organizers continue to work to increase Black-led projects, initiatives, and businesses. Our approach may be different due to COVID, however, we are all striving towards the small goal. In the words of civil rights activist and former American Congressman John Lewis, "we are fighting the good fight."

CONVERSATIONS ON RACIAL JUSTICE

In July 2020, CHC partnered with Riverside's NAACP to engage the community in two town halls on police reform to facilitate a dialogue with Riverside's Sheriff Department to start the conversation on what is happening in our community and address the racial issues that kill many innocent lives yearly.

Our team's efforts did not stop; after releasing our statement of solidarity with our community, we continue to spread positive messages through the use of our social media.

Keeping our community updated with local and state policies that affect us. In addition, we started sharing key terms to educate our audience of all ages. Through our Real Talk, which is our virtual bi-weekly open discussion, the community educated us on street terms.



In an effort to make the declaration practical, the mayor's multi-cultural forum in Riverside put together an anti-racism vision. CHC hosted a conversation series in July and September titled "Structural Barriers: Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis" to discuss with the community how can we start collectively working to eradicate racism in the Inland Empire.



JUNETEENTH

In 2020, we saw communities all throughout the country celebrating and bringing awareness of Juneteenth. A year later was that it became a Federal Holiday due to outpour work community activists and June 19 is now officially Juneteenth National Independence Day, a US federal holiday commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

FACTS ON JUNETEENTH

- It commemorates June 19, 1865, the day that Union Army Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas and told slaves of their emancipation. That day came more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. Even after Lincoln declared all enslaved people free on paper, that hadn't necessarily been the case in practice.
- Juneteenth is also known as Emancipation Day. People across the country celebrate with food and festivities, much like the Fourth of July.

LEARN MORE ABOUT JUNETEENTH BECOMING A FEDERAL HOLIDAY AT [CNN.COM](https://www.cnn.com)

STOP ASIAN HATE

Stop Asian Hate is the name of several rallies against Asian violence which have been held across the United States in 2021 in response to racism against Asian Americans related to the COVID-19 pandemic, or in short is a response to the hatred.

Our communities stand united against racism. As community member Nicole Dumaguindin says, “by lumping AAPI (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) together, a lot of people fall through cracks; it’s not one-size-fits-all in history, culture, immigrant experience in America.” Our role is to raise awareness on important issues that are happening in our community and provide resources.



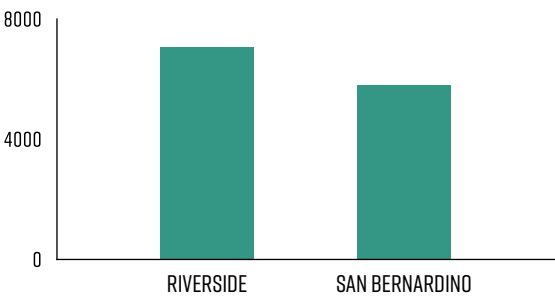
VOTING

2020 was a remarkable year that shaped all our lives’, in the political aspect, a record-breaking number of people voted in the 2020 election. Election day in 2020 was Tuesday, November 3rd. With the beginning of the second wave, many opted to mail-in their votes while others still decided to go to their local poll.

PREREGISTRATION NUMBERS

As of October 19, 2020

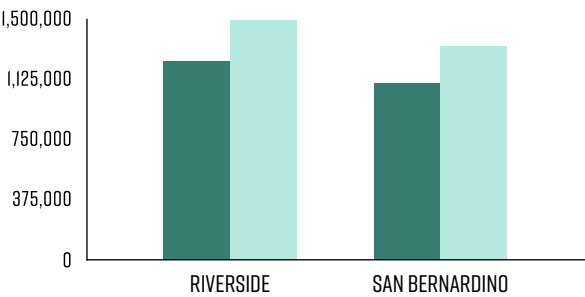
San Bernardino preregistration 6,527
Riverside preregistration 7,979



ELECTION REGISTRATION NUMBERS

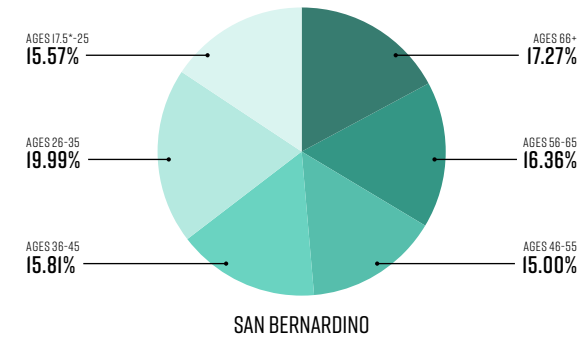
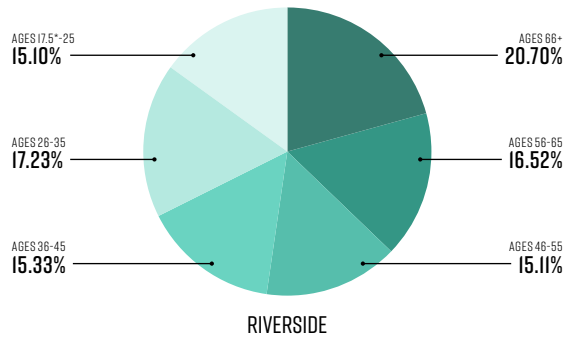
As of October 19, 2020

Riverside 1,241,552 (83.21% of total eligible)
San Bernardino 1,331,471 (82.82% of total eligible)



VOTING AGE

As of October 19, 2020



*You must be 18 years or older on Election Day to register.
If you pre-register to vote at 16 or 17, you will automatically be registered to vote on your 18th birthday.

GENERATIONAL VIEWPOINTS ON VOTING

GEN-Z

“I felt that it was my duty to vote as a woman, a first generation American, and as a young first-time voter who wanted to see change in her country. Government officials make decisions that affect us all, which is why I performed my civic duty and voted for the candidate whose platform aligned most with what I felt society needed.”

— Priscilla Gonzalez

“There were too many things on the line such as reproductive, indigenous, LGBTIQ+, and POC rights. If Trump were re-elected, America would have continued to fail as a society without the protection of these rights.”

— Nolan Shimizu

MILLENNIALS

“Honestly, I am somewhat on the side that is jaded with voting because I think that the voting system is deeply flawed and gives us choices that are not meaningful alternatives at the level of systemic change. However, I believe voting is an act of harm mitigation because there are options on the ballot consistently that have strong likelihood of success that have drastic material consequences in the lives of marginalized folks across the country.”

— Dharshan Chandramohan

“As an immigrant who received her citizenship only recently, I was looking forward to having the right to vote ever since I learned about this civic duty in elementary school. Voting is far more than just casting our preference for presidency. Voting is about helping shape our local communities by making decisions about our local city councils, water districts, and school boards. As somebody who has helped run and win local campaigns, I have experienced firsthand how much votes matter: sometimes an election can be determined by just a few votes. The social determinants of health that influence us and our future patients heavily depend on the policies made by our local decision makers. To ensure improvements in health inequity (through environmental and social justice), we must vote.”

— Priya Vedula

BABY BOOMERS

“The 2020 election showed what we as a nation can do to pull together to save our democracy. But I would also add, not only do we have to save our democracy from white supremacy and its drift toward authoritarianism, but we have to push for the unfinished business of delivering democracy to all oppressed people in our society right now.”

— Dr. Yolanda Moses
Professor, UCR Department of Anthropology

“The 2020 election made me proud and empowered because I could go to the ballot box with both my daughter and mother. Since I was a child with my grandmother, voting has been something I have been doing; although she is no longer with us, her spirit is with us every time we vote.”

— Sharron Lewis

VOTING PROPOSITIONS

The community shared how difficult the many of the California propositions were to understand, so CHC responded by providing summaries to clarify the meanings of each proposition. These explanations were shared both in English and in Spanish.



PROP 14: STEM CELL RESEARCH

CA voters approved, which issues \$5.5 billion funds to stem and other medical research.

PROP 20: STRICTER PAROLE SENTENCING

CA voters denied, it would make changes and require people convicted of certain misdemeanors to submit DNA collection to a state database.

PROP 15: PROPERTY TAX

CA voters denied, the raise for schools and local governments by raising property taxes on commercial and industrial real estate.

PROP 21: LOCAL RENT CONTROL

CA voters denied, allowing cities and counties to implement rent control for residential properties over 15 years old.

PROP 16: END BAN ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

CA voters denied, keeping CA affirmative action in place.

PROP 22: RULES OF APP-BASED DRIVERS

CA voters approved, requires companies to label independent contractors as employees.

PROP 17: VOTING RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE ON PAROLE

CA voters approved, allows people on parole for felony convictions to vote after their prison term ends.

PROP 23: DIALYSIS CLINIC REQUIREMENTS

CA voters denied, requiring dialysis clinics to have a licensed physician, nurse or physician assistant on site during kidney dialysis treatment.

PROP 18: 17-YEAR OLDS VOTING

CA voters denied, allows expanding voting rights to a 17-year old in CA who's 18th birthday is the same year as the election.

PROP 24: EXPAND CONSUMER PRIVACY

CA voters approved, allowing Californians to block companies from sharing personal information and limit business' use of "sensitive personal information"

PROP 19: TRANSFER OF PROPERTY TAX BREAKS

CA voters approved, allowing homeowners over 55, disabled or victims of natural disasters to transfer part of their property tax with them when they sell their home and purchase a new one.

PROP 25: REPEAL OF CASH BAIL

CA voters denied, it would of replaced CA's cash bail system with a new pretrial release system based on public safety and flight risk.

GOALS ACHIEVED

At CHC, ur long-term goal is to create synergies with UCR’s campus community and community partners to improve the health outcomes of the Inland Southern California region and move the needle in advancing health equity for all.

CONTRIBUTE TO TRAINING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY.

CHC will provide opportunities for medical and graduate students engagement with the community on research, and health disparity issues that are relevant to the Inland Empire communities.

GOAL:
BY JUNE 30, 2021, CHC WILL CREATE FIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN MEDICAL/GRADUATE STUDENTS AND THE IE COMMUNITY.

OUTCOME:
CHC achieved 11 community engagement research opportunities in fiscal year 2021.

- UCR SOM Internships & Fellowships
- Community Medicine & Public Health Mini-Grants
- STOP COVID-19 in underserved and vulnerable communities
- Community Conversations: Changing Systems, Challenging Attitudes

CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY.

CHC will serve as a portal for engagement and be the bridge between UCR researchers and the IE community. Bringing new community partners in, to participate in research.

GOAL:
BY JUNE 30, 2021, CHC WILL CREATE TEN RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UCR RESEARCHERS AND IE COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

OUTCOME:
CHC was able to achieve 21 research partnerships in fiscal year 2021.

• Community Engagement and Dissemination Core (CEDC) • Structural racism conversations • COVID-19 CAB members • COVID-19 narratives • STOP COVID-19 in underserved and vulnerable communities (surveys and focus groups)	• Shared research results on social media • It’s L.I.T. (11 virtual events) • AQ Community Grant (art expression contest, short-film contest, and J.W North & Lincoln High School Summit) • Community Air Quality CAB members
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CONTRIBUTE TO IMPLEMENTING HEALTH PROMOTION EFFORTS TO ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY.

Engaging UCR campus community through the CHC, who can invest, learn from, and teach the community healthy behaviors and empower them to take control over their own health.

GOAL:
BY JUNE 30, 2021, CHC WILL HAVE OFFERED 16 HEALTH PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE INLAND EMPIRE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR (FOUR PER QUARTER).

OUTCOME:
CHC came close to this goal with virtual health promotion activities.

1. General Membership Meeting & Town Hall on Police Reform Part I 2. General Membership Meeting & Town Hall on Police Reform Part II 3. A Conversation Series: Structural Barriers: Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis 4. A Conversation Series: Structural Barriers: Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis Part II 5. Addressing Structural Racism with Community Engagement	6. Clean Air Day 7. Informing Through Crisis: COVID-19’s Impact on Black Communities in California Q&A 8. Chancellor’s UCR Campus Safety Task Force Meeting 9. I Am Cheo 10. Ladies First 11. HPV Vaccination Study 12. STOP COVID-19 in the Black Community PSA
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Working collaboratively with the community has given us the opportunity to train and retain a diverse workforce, build our research partnerships, and increase our health-promotion activities which has moved us closer to increasing health equity in the Inland Southern California communities.

Thank you

to our community, who has welcomed and partnered with CHC, and joined our calls to action for social transformation. Your support and dedication to improving the health outcomes of our communities, inspires hope and creates opportunities for a better tomorrow.

UC RIVERSIDE
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**CENTER FOR HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES**

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Center for Healthy Communities

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CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IMPACT REPORT 2021-2023



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS
School of Medicine

“Over the years, the meaning of health equity has changed for me. As a Black woman, health equity means addressing and correcting the structural barriers that have historically and continue to prevent Black community members from accessing quality health care. It also means recognizing the unique experiences and health care needs of minority groups and ensuring that they have agency over their health and wellbeing while making sure that they have equitable opportunities to live a healthy, fulfilling life without racial bias.”

— Hemen Mekonnen, CHC Intern

“When communities are able to achieve health equity, it ensures that all members of society have the chance to live a healthy life, regardless of their background or circumstances.”

— Sanaah Yousef, CHC Intern

“Health equity means fair opportunity for treatment and care in the healthcare world. We should do whatever we can as a society to provide opportunities for those who want help, whether that is hosting events to guide people through the healthcare system and how to take full advantage of what is offered or providing kits to the homeless and teaming up with other organizations to provide more and better help.”

— Tiffanie Hirst, CHC Intern

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MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Inland Empire Community,

As the Director of the Center for Healthy Communities (CHC), I would like to reflect on the health issues that impacted Southern California during the challenging period of 2021-2022. The past year has been marked by significant health challenges, foremost among them being the global COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside this, we also faced the emergence of Monkeypox, which further tested our resilience and commitment to public health.



The COVID-19 pandemic brought about unprecedented disruptions and hardships across the world, and Southern California was not exempt from its effects. Our communities endured waves of infections, the tragic loss of life, and far-reaching social and economic repercussions. The tireless efforts of our healthcare professionals, scientists, and community partners were vital in responding to the crisis. Together, we implemented preventive measures, established testing centers, and organized vaccination campaigns to mitigate the spread of the virus. Our collective dedication and resilience enabled us to navigate these uncertain times and provide support to those most in need.

Additionally, the emergence of monkeypox in Southern California posed an additional challenge to our public health efforts. Although not as widespread as COVID-19, this rare viral disease necessitated a swift and comprehensive response. Our teams worked closely with local health departments and healthcare providers to detect cases, conduct contact tracing, and educate the public on preventive measures. Through these collaborative efforts, we were able to limit the transmission and contain the outbreak effectively.

While we have made significant progress in addressing these health issues, we must acknowledge that our work is far from over. The impact of the pandemic and the emergence of Monkeypox have further highlighted the persistent health disparities and inequities that exist within our communities. Vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, and those with limited access to healthcare, have borne the brunt of these challenges. We must continue working diligently to address these disparities and ensure equitable access to healthcare resources and services.

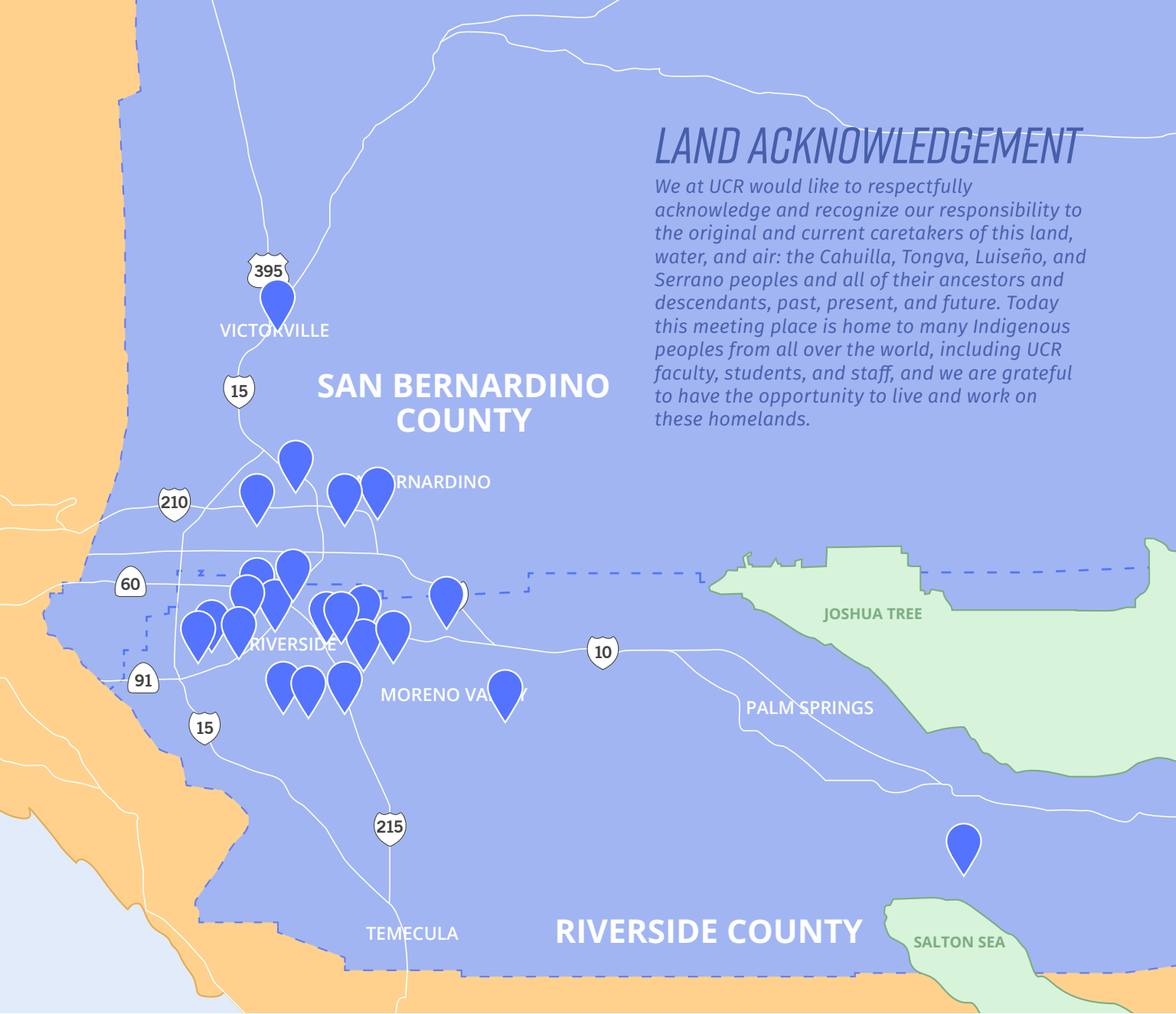
To tackle health disparities, we must adopt a multi-faceted approach. This includes improving access to quality healthcare for medically underserved communities, implementing culturally sensitive outreach and education initiatives, and advocating for policies addressing inequities' root causes. We must prioritize the needs of marginalized populations and work collaboratively with community-based organizations, healthcare providers, and policymakers to dismantle systemic barriers that perpetuate health disparities.

As we move forward into a new year, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to improving the health and well-being of all Southern Californians. Together, we can build a healthier, more resilient community. Let us continue to foster collaboration, innovate in our approaches, and advocate for change, guided by our shared vision of a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication and contributions to the Center for Healthy Communities. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Be Well,

Michelle C. Burroughs, M.P.H.
Director of Community Engagement & Outreach (CHC)
UCR Center for Healthy Communities



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at UCR would like to respectfully acknowledge and recognize our responsibility to the original and current caretakers of this land, water, and air: the Cahuilla, Tongva, Luiseño, and Serrano peoples and all of their ancestors and descendants, past, present, and future. Today this meeting place is home to many Indigenous peoples from all over the world, including UCR faculty, students, and staff, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these homelands.

THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

CHC was created to serve the Inland Southern California communities, which includes Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The place markers on the map indicate areas CHC carried out community engagement activities of service, education and research.

OUR VISION

The UCR School of Medicine’s research is aimed at improving the health of culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse communities in the region, especially the underresourced.

OUR MISSION

CHC aims to build connections between researchers and the Inland Empire communities through service, education, and research that addresses our communities’ needs and promotes health equity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SERVICE

PG. 4

EDUCATION

PG. 6

RESEARCH

PG. 10

INTERNSHIP/ VOLUNTEERISM

PG. 13

UNSHELTERED OUTREACH PROGRAM

PG. 13

BLACK HEALTH

PG. 15

GOALS ACHIEVED

PG. 18

SERVICE

To serve means to be accessible and available, to be a resource and to engage community. As such CHC is embedded in our diverse community and below are highlights of a few community engagement events that CHC was a part of throughout 2022 and 2023.



M A Y
2 0 2 2 | **AIR QUALITY**

In support of the Community Air Resources Board (CARB), the Clean-Air Artistic Expression contest was established to engage the Inland Empire community through creative expressions via the arts to drive change. This contest received over sixty-five submissions. The winners were revealed at the Riverside Community Air Quality Showcase & Award Ceremony.

The Riverside Community Air Quality Showcase & Award Ceremony was a celebration of the exceptional work of the community and J.W North & Lincoln high school students in spreading awareness about air pollution throughout the city of Riverside. The community was invited to learn about the activities going on to improve our communities' air quality.

2022 Clean-Air Expression contest winners:

Artistic Expression — Maya Gutierrez & Maithe Gonzalez, Sharon Ma
Journal/Magazine — Aracely Andres-Diege, Marisol Rodriguez, Danielle Godinez & Mary Ogbogu, Isaac Gomez
Research Project — Hannia Martinez, Meyleen Juarez & Makayla Noone
Oral Expression — Jaymee Valentine Lopez, Lylianah Garcia, Audrey Gutierrez & Kaleena Ortega
Written expression — Leticia Velasquez, Lilia Tomo



F E B
2 0 2 3 | **SOCAL YOUTH SUMMIT**

CHC attended the SoCal Youth Summit at UCR and engaged youth with public health trivia questions and showcased ways to get involved through internship & volunteer opportunities.



M A R
2 0 2 3 | **SPEAKERS BUREAU**

CHC went to Bonnie Oehl Elementary School and Colton Middle School to present knowledge on what it meant to work as a health educator. The ages ranged from second to eighth graders. Each child was allowed

to enjoy a hands-on experiment, see firsthand what a health educator was, how to become one and ask any questions they had.

"[I Learned] the impact a health educator can have on people and the community."

"I learned that [a health educators], job was helping people and helping community by teaching."

MINI-GRANT

CHC created the Community Medicine and Population Health Mini-Grant Program which engages medical students, graduate students, residents, and fellows of UCR in service and advocacy projects within Southern California communities.

The teams below were the mini-grant awardees for the past years.

2021 RECIPIENTS



THE MUTUAL AID AS A STRATEGY OF INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS OF OUTREACH-BASED STREET MEDICINE PROGRAMS

SBFC This project focused on improving healthcare access to community members by holding events which included resource distribution and medical care by the street medicine team.

2022 RECIPIENTS



THE BAYANIHAN PROJECT

Filipinx Americans in Medicine (FAM) at California University of Science and Medicine (CUSM) working to provide health screenings for the Filipino population in the Inland Empire. Through the Mini-Grant, the group was able to raise awareness on health adversities specific to the Filipino culture by providing health screenings and education on prevalent diseases.

SAN BERNARDINO FREE CLINIC (SBFC) - HEALING HEARTS INITIATIVE

SBFC is a full-service primary care clinic providing resources to underserved patients with continuity-of-care and educational information specifically the Healing Hearts Initiative focuses on providing resources targeted to heart health. The Mini-Grant awarded SBFC allowed the team to purchase much-needed items necessary for clinical operations for better patient care and privacy.



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR MINI-GRANTS AT
healthycommunities.ucr.edu/mini-grants

EDUCATION

CHC offers trainings and educational opportunities to enhance the communities' knowledge of social determinants of health, public health, and health equity. Our objective is to equip community members with the skills to effectively lead and facilitate real transformation.

STEM LEARNING

Air Quality Community Advisory Board members from CHC and J.W. North high school educators developed a STEM learning lab, an activity that exposed high school students to air quality awareness. Students were asked to participate in research, identify solutions, and report out.



“Small changes such as planting more trees/plants in the area can help contrast emission, electric vehicles can also be used for transportation, multi-level warehouses will help greatly reduce area being taken up for the warehouses, and air purifiers help prevent indoor pollution, ventilation is essential.”

— Environmental Stewardship

“Warehouses provide jobs, funds, education, and health benefits for the people working in the warehouses. Create a curfew truck can travel within the community. It will allow for better sleep, and nighttime air quality.”

— Social Responsibility

“Locals may not have proper qualifications for particular jobs. Most of the time a proposition voted it down typically because the citizens are not fully educated on the jobs it can provide or that without these vital buildings nothing would be delivered on time.”

— Economic Prosperity

Warehouse Project City Hall Meeting

Instructions: Each group will be called on at random and begin their turn by saying (an example is given below.) Notes should be taken on each group's viewpoint, if they oppose or support warehouse building in their community and why.

*Each group will have 2 minutes to speak.

An example to use as a guide, you are welcome to use your own words:

My name is _____ and I represent _____ (group viewpoint).
I acknowledge (group who went before you) and what they said about _____.
I (agree/disagree) with it because _____. I also (agree/disagree) with
(another group) because _____. I want to add (read prepared statement).

Background Information: There is a city council meeting to determine if a warehouse/distribution center should be built in the area. You will be assigned one of the following viewpoints and prepare a speech to support your assigned viewpoint.

The following article ([scan QR code to read](#)) is a good read for understanding all sides of the issue before researching your viewpoint:



You should answer the following question:
How does building a new warehouse impact _____?

An example for each **viewpoint** is given below, can you think of others?

Economic Prosperity - The warehouse owners could hire from within the community which would grow the community's economic status.

Environmental Stewardship - The warehouse developers could plant trees within the community which would contribute to cleaning the air.

Social Responsibility - The warehouse developers could fix the roads in the community or create a curfew for when the trucks can travel within the community, which would make the community a more desirable place to reside.

CARB GRAND OPENING

CHC engaged community members through co-creating interactive educational lung models at The California Air Resources Board (CARB) grand opening. The lung models were made of sustainable products and provided a lasting impression on families.



PRIME STUDENTS

CHC introduced UCR School of Medicine's Program in Medical Education (PRIME) students to the community through a three-day summer immersion series with African, Black, and Caribbean (ABC) community leaders. The immersion series included a visit to the City of Banning to meet Mayor Pro Term Colleen Wallace, a visit with Dr. Barry Settle of Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal, a visit with Dr. Columbus Batiste with Healthy Heart Nation's Pressure Project, and lastly a UCR campus visit to hear narratives from The Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFASA). The students shared the following based on their experience:



“The connections we were able to make with our communities and actually going out to visit really reinforced the mission of the program.”

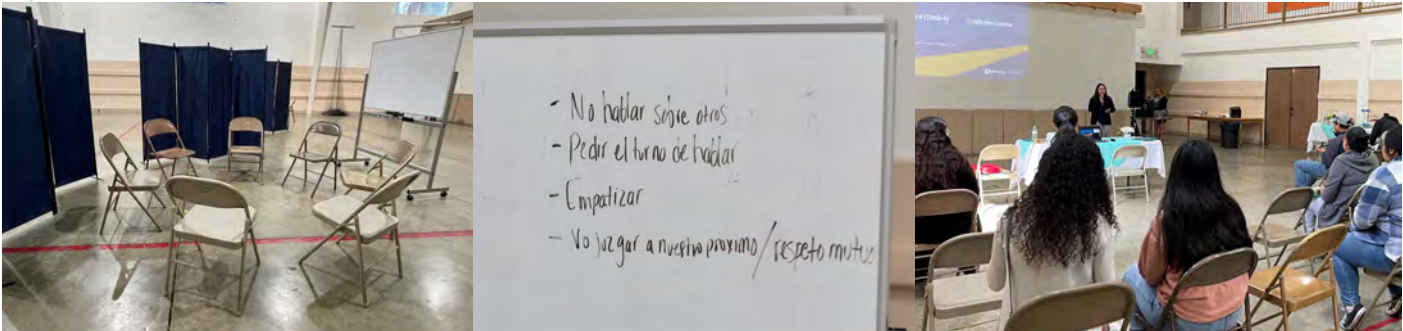
“The contacts that have been initiated with the community are exceptional. This not only introduced us to a spectrum of community leaders and listened to their concerns and areas of focus but is also allowed us to be stakeholders in their action plans and inform our practice.”



LEARN MORE ABOUT PRIME PROGRAM AT
ume.ucr.edu/prime

LISTENING SESSIONS AND HEALING CIRCLES

The Listening Sessions and Healing Circles was done as a collaborative effort with Fatima Baldelomar of SBX Youth & Family Services which provided community members with a safe and supportive atmosphere that enabled them to cope with the traumas, grief, and losses caused by COVID-19. Individuals were able to share their own experiences, gained encouragement and comfort from those who understood their hardships and developed healthy coping skills. The healing circles were held in both Spanish and English, allowing a diverse group of individuals from different backgrounds to express themselves. At the end of each listening session and healing circle, CHC educated on Long Haul COVID signs, symptoms and resources.



COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS/ PROMOTORES

Community Health Workers (CHW's)/Promotores are trusted community members that share lived experiences with the communities they serve. Partnering with The Center for Health Disparities Research (HDR@UCR), a rapport was developed with CHW's to assist in dissemination efforts.



The CHW's completed field hours with CHC/HDR@UCR which included exploring the Salton Sea region and learning about its health impacts due to the air quality. The CHW's then co-created a plan to effectively disseminate educational information to Salton Sea communities.

CHW's are valuable in creating co-learning opportunities that engage and educate community members and academics which is crucial to improving the quality and infrastructure of health disparities research while promoting health equity.



SHARED HARVEST FIRESIDE CHAT



In the Fireside Chat hosted Shared Harvest Fund featuring, CHC's Director Michelle Burroughs, she highlighted the importance of getting vaccinated against COVID-19. Emphasis on vaccination was made in combating the spread of the virus and protecting individuals and their loved ones.

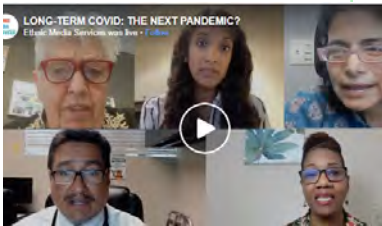
“To work towards achieving health equity for all we must acknowledge that communities of color have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.”

— Michelle Burroughs

As such, this chat addressed these disparities by educating on the need for targeted efforts ensure equitable access to vaccines and sharing healthcare resources.

ETHNIC MEDIA SERVICES - LIVE WEBINAR

The Ethnic Media Services live webinar entitled “Long-term COVID: The Next Pandemic”. CHC director provided a overview of the symptoms, treatments, and disparities associated with long-haul COVID to ensure an environment that is inclusive to all patients. Throughout the webinar Burroughs emphasized the importance of educating the Black community on making informed healthcare choices.



IT'S L.I.T.



Throughout the year, CHC's team members consisting of interns and staff, offer health education services that explains health and social concepts through its YouTube channel series called, “It's L.I.T.” (Learning, Informing, Teaching).



VISIT OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL TITLED “UCR CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES”
youtube.com/@ucr_chc

RESEARCH

Through partnerships, CHC can collaboratively-design research for easy translation to real-world health settings and situations. As a result, CHC is able to improve cultural and language-appropriate interventions that create better services for underrepresented and underserved populations.

RIVCO. PROMISE HEMET PROJECT

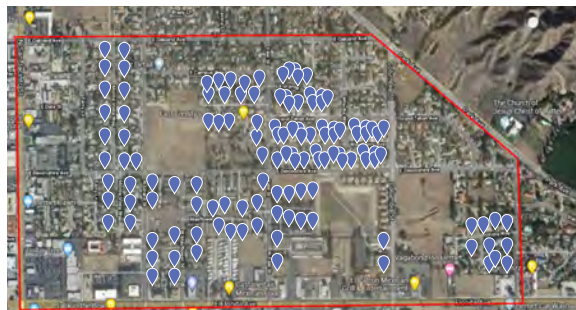
The RivCo. Promise Hemet Project was proposed under the Anthem Foundation grant and targeted community members of Hemet, California in which has the lowest Healthy Places Index (HPI) score within the county of Riverside. The HPI score provides an overview of health needs by neighborhood .

The RivCo. Promise project sought to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the community's unemployment rates and lack of access to healthcare resources. Thus, CHC composed a survey in English and Spanish to be canvassed door-to-door to highlighted community voices on specific economic and healthcare needs.

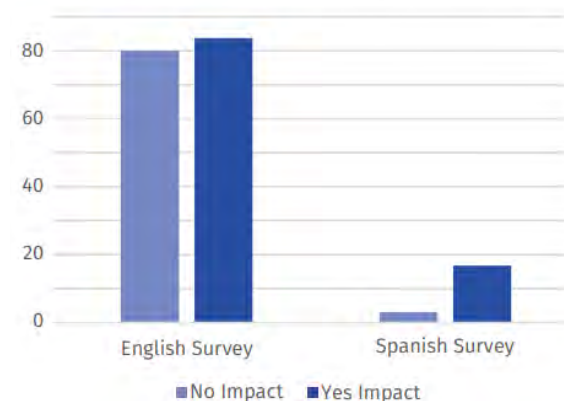
CHC and community partners from from Conduit Community Development went out to Hemet and were able to reach over 100 residents.

RESULTS INDICATED THE FOLLOWING:

- Nearly half of the participants reported being unemployed.
- Over half of the participants indicated that COVID-19 had impacted their employment status and/or health. Spanish survey participants were significantly more likely to report that COVID-19 had impacted their employment status/health compared to English survey participants.
- The most commonly cited reason for lack of childcare as a barrier to employment was that it was too expensive, followed by lack of availability.



HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED YOUR EMPLOYMENT STATUS, HEALTH, ETC.?



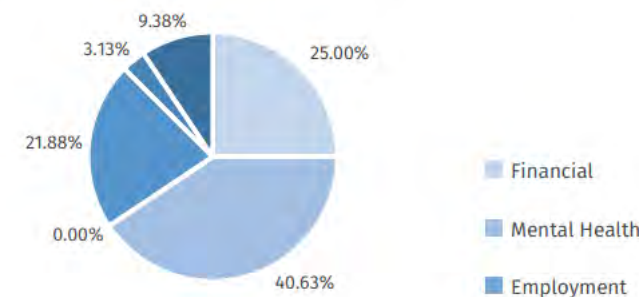
STOP COVID-19 IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

The Stop COVID-19 in the Black Community was a community project to help empower the Black community of the Inland Empire against COVID-19.

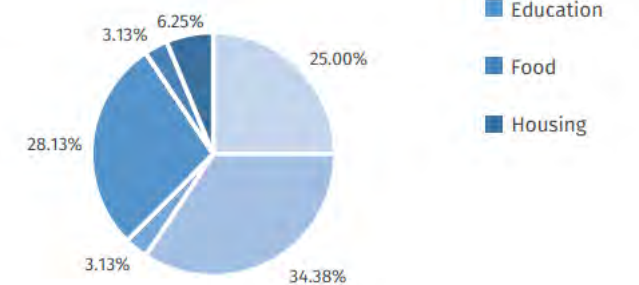
Conversations with the Congregation, was a intervention that encourages faith leaders to discuss COVID-19 in their place of worship. CHC was able to assess attitudes and knowledge regarding COVID-19 by administering pre and post surveys to the participants. Community resource toolkits were receive by participants which consisted of items useful to protect against COVID and a resource pamphlet.

RESULTS INDICATED THE FOLLOWING OF TOP PRIORITIES RELATED TO COVID-19:

PRETEST



POSTTEST



STOP COVID-19:
BLACK
COMMUNITY
RESOURCE
TOOLKIT



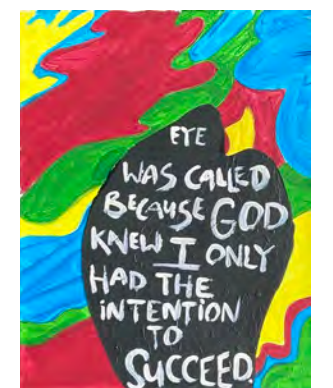
Additionally, CHC had a Black Community Artistic Expression contest to showcase the adverse impacts of COVID-19 as well as demonstrate how we can overcome and move towards addressing health concerns. Winners submission can be viewed below.



CHANELLE JONES, SECOND PLACE



VALENCIA PINES, FIRST PLACE



AUJANE BROWN, THIRD PLACE

COVID-19 & WELLNESS

In partnership with Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP), CHC’s Michelle Burroughs was the “Woman on the Streets” asking community members questions on COVID-19 vaccinations, beliefs and attitudes. Woman on the Streets was filmed at two locations within the Inland Empire community at The UC Riverside Campus and at IEHP’s Community Resource Center in Victorville.



 WATCH "ARE YOU VACCINATED? UCR AND IEHP" AT youtu.be/iSxaUmNTm9E

 WATCH "ARE YOU VACCINATED? COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTERS" AT youtu.be/nCex35Gnwgk

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

At CHC, our strength is our diversity. Our growing community is made up various ethnicities and backgrounds which allows us to have various perspectives. CHC promotes Diversity, Equity and Inclusion awareness through social media honoring Black History Month, Asian American and Pacific Islanders Month, Hispanic Heritage Month and Pride month.



STAY UPDATED ON SIMILAR POSTS LIKE THESE ON INSTAGRAM AT [instagram.com/ucr_chc](https://www.instagram.com/ucr_chc)

TO APPLY FOR INTERNSHIP/VOLUNTEERISM CONTACT CHC AT chc@medsch.ucr.edu

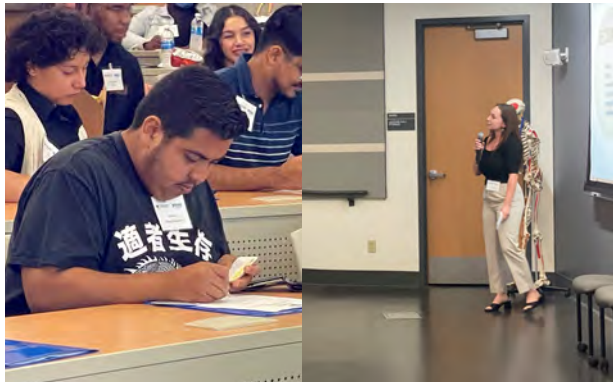
INTERNSHIPS & VOLUNTEERISMS

CHC is committed to serving the Inland Empire’s diverse and underserved communities. As such, interns and volunteers at CHC have the opportunity to contribute to meaningful projects that make a positive impact on our community. The supportive and collaborative environment at CHC fosters professional growth and encourages a comprehensive approach to promoting health equity in the community, making the opportunity unique to develop skills and drive change.

CHC also hosts UC Riverside’s Medical students during their community-based experience (CBE) rotations in gaining hands-on experience on understanding community health needs.



Additionally, CHC collaborated with UCR School of Medicine’s Pathway Program in providing California Medicine Scholars Program (CMSP) students an internship at CHC. The students from CMSP are from community colleges that are part of the REgional Hubs of Healthcare Opportunity (RHHOs) and benefit from a support system that provide a comprehensive strategy to build a robust and diverse physician workforce. This year CHC provided field experience to six CMSP interns.



UNSHELTERED OUTREACH PROJECT (UOP)

In 2022, CHC lauched the Unsheltered Outreach Project. What started out as a small outreach project has slowly grown over time and continues to expand.

UNSHELTERED OUTREACH PROJECT?

The UCR School of Medicine’s Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) Unsheltered Outreach Project (UOP) is a field-based engagement project that provides direct outreach services to the unsheltered within the Inland Empire community. The UOP aims to gain insight into the unsheltered’s socioemotional and medical needs. This information is crucial in understanding how to address the immediate health need of the unsheltered and the barriers that exist with accessing care. Each outreach provides unsheltered individuals with essential hygiene items and a direct pathway to healthcare services offered by UCR Health Community Clinic - Hulen Place. The UOP collaborates with local organizations with aligned missions to improve the health outcomes of the Inland Empire community. The UOP is committed to creating a more equitable healthcare experience that supports the health and well-being of the unsheltered community.



BLACK HEALTH

The prominence of the Black Lives Matters (BLM) movement and the declaration of racism as a public health crisis are steps to advancing racial equity and justice. To drive towards meaningful change, we engaged community, The African American Equity Collaborative Group and asked them to vote on the establishment of “The Black Health Equity Initiative”.

CHC launched the Black Health Equity Initiative (BHEI), a community-based advocacy program to promote health equity and address health disparities in Black communities. The BHEI aims to create safe, welcoming spaces for dialogue, education, and engagement and acknowledges the barriers to accessing quality healthcare, including systemic racism, discrimination, and a lack of resources. By fostering a culture of trust and cooperation between Black communities and healthcare providers, the BHEI works to improve health outcomes and promote health equity in Black communities. To achieve this goal, the BHEI engages in community-based advocacy to increase awareness of health disparities and encourage community members to take an active role in their health. By partnering with community-based organizations and Black healthcare providers, the initiative develops and implements strategies that support Black health equity. Through community conversations, town halls, and workshops, the BHEI educates and empowers the Black community create healthy habits, learn self-efficacy skills, and prioritize their health. The BHEI is committed to creating a more equitable and just healthcare system that supports the health and well-being of the Black Community.



BLACK HEALTH EQUITY INITIATIVE PROJECTS

PERSPECTIVES IN BLACK HEALTH SCREENING	PG. 16
LONG HAUL COVID-19 TOWNHALLS	PG. 16
COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS - HOW DO I...? SERIES	PG. 17

PERSPECTIVES IN BLACK HEALTH



CHC’s short film Perspectives in Black Health was debuted by Ezra Productions. The video gave rise to the Black Health Equity Initiative, as community members expressed the impact of the key message, “Your health matters”.



STOP COVID-19 IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY: LONG HAUL COVID-19 TOWN HALLS

In these town halls, Black healthcare professionals discussed all things COVID including information on long haul COVID-19. The presenters interacted with community allowing them to voice their concerns, comments and needs.

“Lots of information on long COVID, people don’t realize how related they are to other things. And some things are confused with other conditions. So, you have to really advocate for yourself, tell your doctors while this may be normal for other conditions, but this is not normal for me. And 200 different symptoms (of long haul COVID-19), I had no idea.”
— Community Member



“I know that it is fairly new and that it can affect anybody. That is kind of the scary part, is you don’t know how COVID is going to affect you, it’s kind of like an individual case basis”
— Community Member

“There’s no test [for Long Haul COVID-19], but from your history there is a diagnosis to exclude everything else out. Memory loss is real, people have had to change occupations”
— Black Physician

HOW DO I...? SERIES

The “How do I...” series is a workshop supported by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF), a non profit organization that seeks to enhance the health of Californians. The Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) was dedicated to organize these workshops for the community of the Inland Empire as a way of providing an outlet for the Black Community to gain access to important health resources, with the intention for them to reach optimal health. CHC has organized and carried out the following workshops:

“How do I... Advocate for Myself and Others”: Guest speaker Dr. Newell-Harris addressed clinical health disparities and advocated for equal access to treatment and quality care for children and their families.

“How do I... Navigate the Healthcare System”: Guest speaker Leticia Vaca-Williams, MSW spoke on the importance of understanding how to access healthcare services and connect to the proper level of care. Williams states that “the barriers to care are predominantly financial and logistical.”

“How Do I...Take Action”: Guest speaker Dr. Simmons and Director Michelle Burroughs provided tips on how to improve overall health. Together they provided a step-by-step workshop that encouraged participants to prioritize their health.



“ I felt like I was kind of on top of it myself. I felt pain and I asked to go to the gastroenterologist, and I didn’t go. Then later on, I was having back pain and different things. So, I felt like I was being ignored a whole bunch of times.”
— Lisa Diggs

“ I also want to be an advocate and a face for Black people or others with traumatic brain injuries or disabilities, who are afraid to stand up and say, ‘I’m not okay.’ What I find is a lot of people with brain injuries, especially because it’s invisible, they’re kind of embarrassed to share it.”
— Brianna Rice



“ What do we do when physicians don’t listen to us? How do we get them to listen? ”
—Grace Nyanzwii

GOALS ACHIEVED

At CHC, our long-term goal is to create synergies with UCR’s campus community and community partners to improve the health outcomes of the Inland Southern California region and move the needle in advancing health equity for all.

CONTRIBUTE TO TRAINING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY.

CHC will provide opportunities for medical and graduate students engagement with the community on research, and health disparity issues that are relevant to the Inland Empire communities.

GOAL:
BY JUNE 30, 2023, CHC WILL CREATE FIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN MEDICAL/GRADUATE STUDENTS AND THE IE COMMUNITY.

OUTCOME:
CHC achieved 29 community engagement research opportunities in fiscal year 2023.

- 12 UCR SOM internships
- 4 Fellowships
- 3 Mini-Grants
- 5 Unsheltered Outreach
- 5 CBE Medical Student rotations & 6 PRIME medical students

CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY.

CHC will serve as a portal for engagement and be the bridge between UCR researchers and the IE community. Bringing new community partners in, to participate in research.

GOAL:
BY JUNE 30, 2023, CHC WILL CREATE TEN RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UCR RESEARCHERS AND IE COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

OUTCOME:
CHC was able to achieve 11 research partnerships in fiscal year 2023.

• Community Engagement and Dissemination Core (CEDC) • Listening Circles and Healing Sessions • Air Quality - community grant art contest & symposium • California Air Resources Board (CARB) • Sierra Health Foundation	• Stop COVID-19 in the Black Community • Air Quality CAB members • California Healthcare Foundation (CHCF) • Riv.Co Workforce Development • Conduit Company Develop Corporation (CCDC)
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CONTRIBUTE TO IMPLEMENTING HEALTH PROMOTION EFFORTS TO ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY.

Engaging UCR campus community through the CHC, who can invest, learn from, and teach the community healthy behaviors and empower them to take control over their own health.

GOAL:
BY JUNE 30, 2023, CHC WILL HAVE OFFERED 16 HEALTH PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE INLAND EMPIRE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR (FOUR PER QUARTER).

OUTCOME:
CHC achieved goal of health promotion activities.

1. IEHP “Are you vaccinated?” (2 virtual events) 2. It’s L.I.T. (7 virtual events) 3. Screening of <i>Perspectives in Black Health</i> 4. The Y.A.C.K. (Young Americans Creating Kultur) 5. Ethnic Media Services (EMS) Live Webinar 6. Shared Harvest Foundation Fireside chat 7. Youth Summit 8. Speakers Bureau (2 in-person events) 9. STEM Learning Lab	10. UCR Health Staff event 11. Long Haul COVID-19 townhalls (4 in-person events) 12. Community Workshops - How Do I...? series (3 in-person events) 13. Stop COVID-19 in the Black Community PSA 14. Stop COVID-19 in the Black Community conversations with the congregation (3 virtual events)
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Working collaboratively with the community has given us the opportunity to train and retain a diverse workforce, build our research partnerships, and increase our health-promotion activities which has moved us closer to increasing health equity in the Inland Southern California communities.



Thank you

to our community, who has welcomed and partnered with CHC, and joined our calls to action for social transformation. Your support and dedication to improving the health outcomes of our communities, inspires hope and creates opportunities for a better tomorrow.

healthycommunities.ucr.edu

UC RIVERSIDE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

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CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITITES **IMPACT REPORT** 2023-2024

“Health equity means everyone has a fair and just opportunity to achieve their best health. It involves recognizing and addressing the social determinants of health—such as income, education, and environment—that create disparities and inequality in health outcomes. As a Latina woman, I understand how systemic barriers are preventing individuals, families, and communities from accessing quality health care, leading to significant health disparities. For Love and Nurture, health equity is a guiding principle. We advocate and work to ensure that our programs and services are accessible to all, emphasizing mental health, regardless of their socio-economic status, ethnicity, or background. This means providing bilingual health education materials and cultural competence, including advocating for policies that expand access to health care and creating initiatives that specifically address the needs of underserved populations such as the Latino communities. Our agency believes working together on community engagement activities and projects is essential because it fosters community collaboration, inclusivity, and empowerment. When we join forces, we combine our strengths, resources, and perspectives, creating a more comprehensive approach to addressing health and social issues.”

— *Fatima Baldelomar, Founder*
Love & Nurture Initiative

“Health equity to us means everyone from all walks of life should have access to basic healthcare needs. It’s essential for things like healthy foods, routine check ups, community sports/exercise programs are made available to all people regardless of their social or economic backgrounds. We apply the message of health equity in our work by mentoring youth in video/media production. Collaborating on community projects allows all parties involved to be introduced to new ways of thinking, or processes that we may have not known about before. Working together on projects/activities will make our community stronger.”

— *Jaden Powell, President*
Young Americans Creating Kultur (The Y.A.C.K. Org)

“Ensuring that all individuals, irrespective of their origin or circumstances, have access to the resources necessary to attain optimal health is the essence of health equality. It entails being aware of the causes of these inequalities and making an effort to eradicate them. The goal of health equality is to ensure that all people may live healthy, productive lives by establishing universal access to quality medical treatment, effective disease preventive programs, and other wellness opportunities.”

— *Arsema Araya, CHC Intern*
UCR Biology Undergraduate Student

IN THIS DIGITAL COPY OF THE YEAR IN REVIEW, ALL LINKS
TO OTHER PAGES AND TO WEBSITES ARE CLICKABLE FOR A
MORE INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE.

MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Dear Inland Empire Community,

The Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) at the UCR School of Medicine is committed to working in partnership with communities throughout Southern California to advance health equity. Our approach centers on collaboration, innovation, and community engagement to address the rising prevalence of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease has disproportionately affected various ethnic communities that call the Inland Empire home, thus amplifying existing health inequities.

CHC recognizes that achieving health equity requires a multifaceted approach. So, we seek to build authentic partnerships with community members, organizations, and stakeholders to co-create solutions that address the root causes of health disparities.

Through our collaborative efforts, CHC aims to foster trust and respect within the communities it serves, recognizing these as fundamental to effective collaboration. CHC endeavors to establish and maintain trusting relationships by actively listening to community needs, respecting their expertise, and valuing their perspectives.

Moreover, CHC engages community members as equal partners in the research process, from identifying research priorities

to designing interventions and evaluating outcomes. By co-designing research initiatives, CHC ensures that its efforts are culturally responsive, relevant, and sustainable.

Additionally, CHC is committed to promoting health literacy and empowerment within communities, aiming to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to make informed decisions about their health. Recognizing the influence of social, economic, and environmental factors on health, CHC works in cooperation with community partners to address the social determinants of health, including access to healthy food, safe housing, quality education, and economic opportunity.

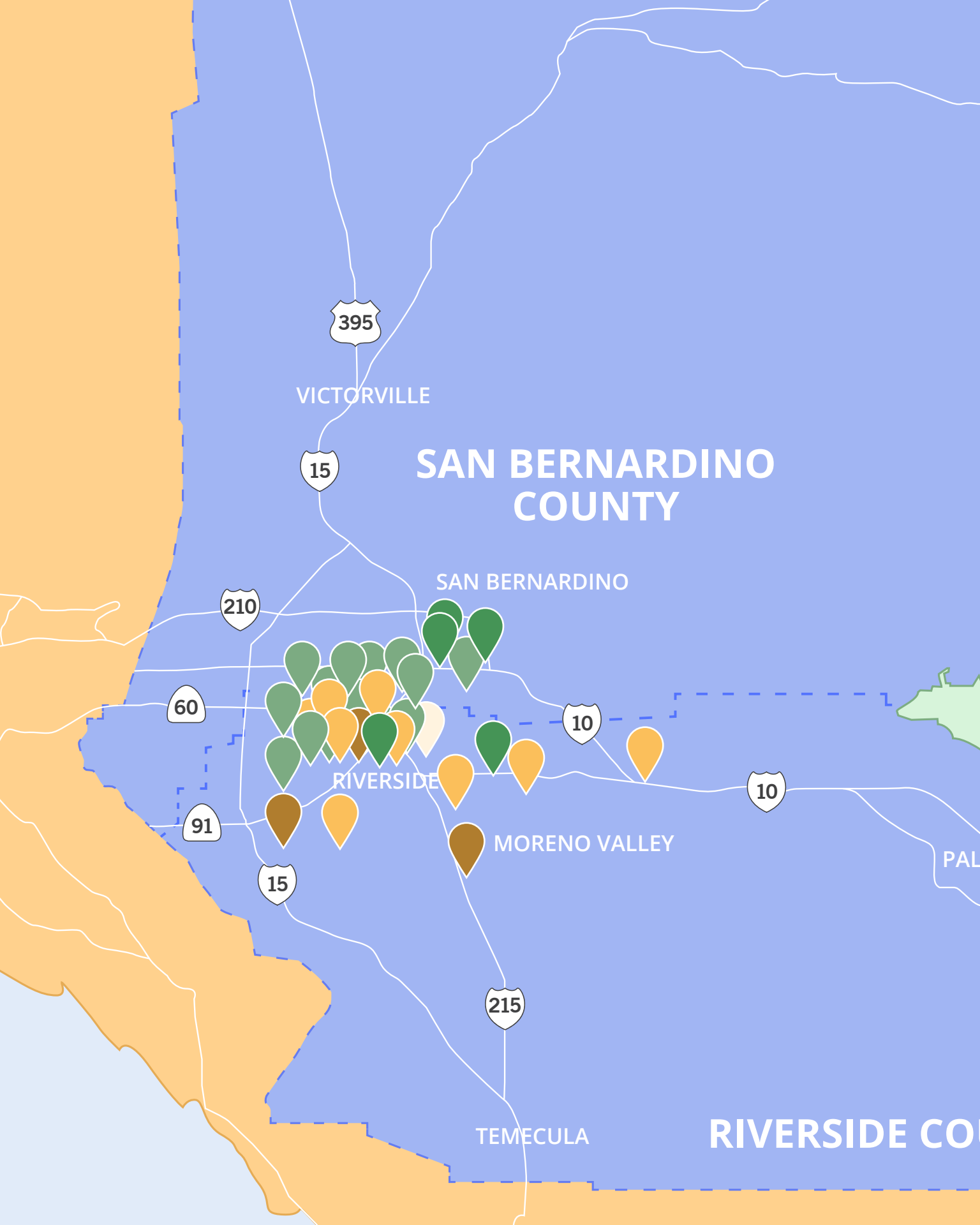
Furthermore, CHC advocates for policies; like AB1970 and AB3161 that promote health equity and address systemic barriers to access and opportunity. Working closely with community partners, CHC helps to mobilize collective action to drive meaningful change at the local and state levels.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to every member of our community for your unwavering partnership in this crucial work. Your commitment to advancing health equity inspires us to continue our efforts and push the boundaries of what is possible. Together, we can build a healthier, more equitable future.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle C. Burroughs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" and "B".

Michelle C. Burroughs, M.P.H.
Director of Community Engagement & Outreach (CHC)
UCR Center for Healthy Communities



395

VICTORVILLE

15

SAN BERNARDINO
COUNTY

SAN BERNARDINO

210

60

91

15

10

10

215

RIVERSIDE

MORENO VALLEY

TEMECULA

RIVERSIDE CO

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at UCR would like to respectfully acknowledge and recognize our responsibility to the original and current caretakers of this land, water, and air: the Cahuilla, Tongva, Luiseño, and Serrano peoples and all of their ancestors and descendants, past, present, and future. Today this meeting place is home to many Indigenous peoples from all over the world, including UCR faculty, students, and staff, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these homelands.

THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

CHC serves the Inland Southern California communities, which includes Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The markers on the map indicate areas where CHC has carried out community engagement activities in service, education, and research, including the following

-  Workshop - Interactive, informative sessions that guide participants through a process to achieve improved outcomes.
-  Speakers Bureau - A collection of expert speakers organized by CHC to talk at community events.
-  Outreach - When CHC team members connect with people face-to-face to provide direct health and wellness services.
-  Research - Community-engaged research conducted in partnership with community members, ensuring meaningful involvement and equitable engagement at every step.
-  Mini-Grants - Awarded to support community engagement activities serving the Inland Empire communities based on submitted proposals (see page 6 for details).
-  Collaborations - Partnerships with other community-based organizations that share our mission to improve the social determinants of health in the Inland Empire.

JOSHUA TREE

M SPRINGS

UNTY

SALTON SEA



OUR VISION

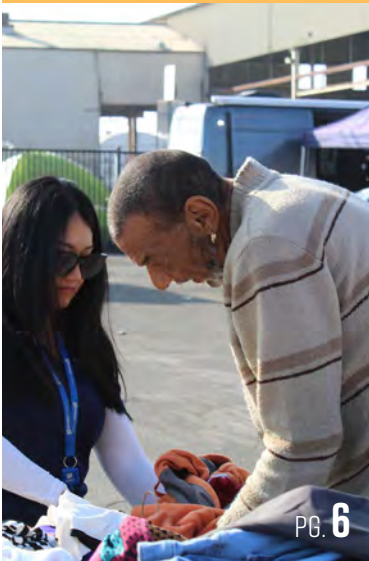
To become a leader in community-based, multi-disciplinary research that engages a broad range of community, academic, and health partners to improve health and promote health equity.

OUR MISSION

Aims to build connections between researchers and the Inland Empire communities through service, education, and research that addresses our communities' needs and promotes health equity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SERVICE



EDUCATION



RESEARCH



**BLACK HEALTH EQUITY
INITIATIVE**

PG. 11

**UNSHELTERED OUTREACH
PROGRAM**

PG. 12

**STUDENT
ENGAGEMENT**

PG. 14

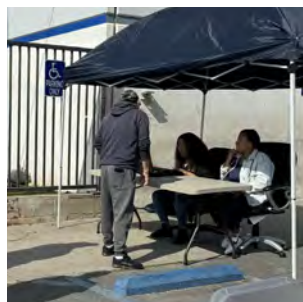
GOALS ACHIEVED

PG. 16

SERVICE

To serve means to be accessible and available, to be a resource and to engage community. As such CHC is embedded in our diverse community and below are highlights of a few community engagement events that CHC was apart of throughout 2023 and 2024.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER SOCIAL SERVICES PILOT



In collaboration with the IEHP's Community Behavioral Health Department, a Community Health Worker Pilot Program was established to address the health outcomes in the Inland Empire. To effectively bridge individuals with much-needed resources, the CHW provides outreach in the community with local community-based organizations to perform a Social Determinants of Health screening to identify social service needs. Through these

efforts, CHC has developed and nurtured partnerships with Healthcare in Action, the Community Access Center - of Riverside County and other nearby shelters.

MINI-GRANT

CHC created the Community Medicine and Population Health Mini-Grant Program which engages medical students, graduate students, residents, and fellows of UCR in service and advocacy projects within Southern California communities.

The team below was the mini-grant awardee for the past year.

INLAND EMPIRE STREET MEDICINE: CHANGING THE CYCLE

The Inland Empire Street Medicine (IESM) clinic is a coalition of SOM physicians, UCR medical and undergraduate students, and volunteers. It provides direct health services to the unhoused, and it's Changing the Cycle program offers menstrual health education and resources. They provided period hygiene kits to over 100 patients, including pads or tampons, heat pads, undergarments, soap, hand sanitizer, and deodorant.



2023 RECIPIENT

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR MINI-GRANTS AT
healthycommunities.ucr.edu/minigrants

SPEAKERS BUREAU

CHC created the Speakers Bureau to connect both communities and healthcare professionals. The Speakers Bureau is a free resource for Riverside and San Bernardino County communities interested in having a knowledgeable and experienced speaker in the field of health and wellness. Additionally, the Speakers Bureau engages local healthcare speakers to educate and inform the public on innovative ways to improve health outcomes.

S E P
2 0 2 3

AMAZON'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS EVENT

CHC in partnership with Dr. Jose Aguilar, a professor of psychiatry at UCR School of Medicine, led a mental health and wellness event for the staff at Amazon. Dr. Aguilar shared a variety of local resources in the area that workers could refer to including how to recognize when they might need support and how to obtain it.



How do we know when we need to seek support?

- Amazon worker



F E B
2 0 2 4

AUBURNDALE INTERMEDIATE MIDDLE SCHOOL CAREER DAY

CHC team members were invited to a career day at Auburndale Intermediate Middle School to offer students direct insight into possible careers in the health and wellness field. Stephanie Sandoval, a Health Educator, provided information on degree roadmaps and job responsibilities, concluding with a hands-on experiment to teach the importance of hand washing. Fara Aidul, Community Health Program Manager, presented students with a career brainstorming worksheet, while Selina Hernandez, Community Relations Specialist, guided students in creating a marketing plan.



I learned the health educator advise community on how to live a healthier life.

- Middle school student



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SPEAKERS BUREAU AT
healthycommunities.ucr.edu/speakers-bureau

EDUCATION

CHC offers trainings and educational opportunities to enhance the communities' knowledge of social determinants of health, public health, and health equity. Our objective is to equip community members with the skills to effectively lead and facilitate real transformation.

HEALTHY DISRUPTIONS



Season two of the Healthy Disruptions podcast was launched in July 2023, in support of the Center for Health Disparities Research (HDRatUCR) Community Engagement and Dissemination Core (CEDC). As a collaborative, the podcast features discussions between researchers, students, leadership, and community members who are working together to highlight disparities and collaborate on action-based solutions. Through the podcast, listeners from around the world can discover medical and non-medical factors that influence health outcomes while learning actionable strategies to advance health equity.



LISTEN TO "HEALTHY DISRUPTIONS" AT
healthydisruptions.buzzsprout.com

IT'S L.I.T.



CHC values innovation and creativity, especially when it comes to improving people's health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a student intern Isabel Escobar (more information on page 14) at CHC had an incredible idea to provide health education services. The idea was to create a YouTube channel series called "It's L.I.T." (Learning, Informing, Teaching) that would feature videos explaining wellness and social concepts. The CHC's team members, including interns, medical students, volunteers, and staff, have all participated in creating these videos for the channel. This initiative is

a testament to the CHC's commitment to empowering people with knowledge and tools to lead healthier lives. As of now, there are more than thirty videos available, out of which six were released this year alone.



WATCH OUR IT'S L.I.T. SERIES AT
youtube.com/@ucr_chc

MEDIA

Our director, Michelle Burroughs had the opportunity to write an article that was featured on MedHealth Outlook to share information with the community at large.

READ THE ARTICLE AT bit.ly/CHCBHIE

LOVE & NURTURE INITIATIVE PARTNERSHIP

This year, we partnered with Fatima Baldelomar, CEO of the Love & Nurture Initiative to conduct a series of healing circles and listening sessions with follow-up workshops focusing on the needs of the Latino/Hispanic communities. The sessions were held in both English and Spanish, creating a welcoming environment for individuals from diverse backgrounds to express themselves and gain insights into holistic healing practices. Our team at CHC provided information on the importance of social support services and resources at the end of each session. We are excited to plan future workshops as a follow-up to our successful sessions, providing a safe space for community members to cope with life's challenges and create action-based health plans.

2023-2024 SESSIONS AND CIRCLES



IMMIGRANT/REFUGEE

The primary focus of this session was to address the traumas experienced by immigrants/refugees or individuals from families of immigrants/refugees.



FOSTERING BONDS BETWEEN PARENTS AND YOUTH

The focus of this circle was to provide emotional support and guidance and create a space for effective communication to identify issues impacting youth emotional wellbeing.

PRIME STUDENTS

CHC introduced UCR School of Medicine's Program in Medical Education (PRIME) 2nd cohort of medical students to the community through a three-day summer immersion series with African, Black, and Caribbean (ABC) community leaders. The immersion series included: A visit to the City of Banning to meet Mayor Pro Tem Colleen Wallace and learn about the history of Banning, A meeting with Dr. Nicole Knight-Glass and Dr. Anissa LaCount from Healthy Heart Nation's Pressure Project, A visit to The Civil Rights Institute to meet with Community Activist Ms. Rose Mayes and tour the exhibit, A visit to Mt. Rubidoux SDA in Riverside to meet Dr. Alfonzo Greene and learn about the Black Lives Blue Zones Initiative.

Each site allowed the medical students to learn from local leaders and witness health initiatives in action.



“Initially, I wasn't sure how receptive the students would be. However, they blew me away with their questions and interest in how they could get involved in helping to improve our communities' health outcomes.

— Michelle Burroughs, Director of CHC

”

RESEARCH

Through partnerships, CHC can collaboratively-design research for easy translation to real-world health settings and situations. As a result, CHC is able to improve cultural and language-appropriate interventions that create better services for underrepresented and underserved populations.

A COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE APPROACH FOR CULTIVATING PATIENT SELF-ADVOCACY IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

In collaboration with UC Riverside School of Medicine's PRIME students, CHC and ANT Consulting, this project was proposed under the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) for the next 5 years and targets Black patients with a way to develop stronger self-advocacy skills so that they are able to get the care they deserve.

The patient self-advocacy project focuses on piloting a new program to promote patient self-advocacy during interactions with the healthcare system. This will be achieved by recruiting community health influencers, conducting communities of practice 'circles', assessing participants' knowledge, and evaluating the program.

RECRUITING COMMUNITY HEALTH INFLUENCERS

CHC, in collaboration with ANT Consulting, was responsible for recruiting Community Health Influencers (CHIs). A CHI is a community member who is passionate about their health and the health of their community. By becoming a CHI, individuals would work directly with PRIME medical students to develop their self and group advocacy skills in efforts to make a real impact. As such, there are a total of five CHI's actively learning self and group advocacy skills.



PILOT CIRCLES SESSION

On April 19th, the PRIME medical students and Community Health Influencers conducted the first Community of Practice session, focusing on the theme "What is Self-Advocacy?" During this session, participants engaged in discussions on the significance of self-advocacy and self-compassion. Many community members expressed how excited they were to receive firsthand insight from PRIME medical students on effectively advocating for themselves and their family members. The community health influencers also stated how happy they were to engage with the PRIME students on such an impactful project.

BLACK HEALTH EQUITY INITIATIVE (BHEI)

The elevation of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the acknowledgment of racism as a public health crisis represent crucial strides towards advancing racial equity and justice. In our pursuit of substantial change, we established the Black Health Equity Initiative (BHEI) in 2023.

Initiated by CHC, the BHEI is a grassroots advocacy program designed to champion health equity and confront health disparities prevalent in Black communities. Its primary objective is to cultivate secure and inclusive spaces for dialogue, education, and active participation, recognizing the systemic obstacles hindering access to quality healthcare, such as racism, discrimination, and resource inadequacy. By nurturing a foundation of trust and collaboration between Black communities and healthcare providers, the BHEI strives to enhance health outcomes and advocate for health equity. To realize this vision, the BHEI conducts community-based advocacy, raising awareness about health disparities and encouraging community members to play an active role in their well-being.

BLACK HEALTH EQUITY ADVOCACY WEEK CAMPAIGN

In 2023, Assemblymember Akilah Weber, M.D., with support from the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), officially announced the first week of May as Black Health Equity Advocacy Week (BHEAW) in California. The resolution focuses on a statewide need to address the health disparities gap for Black Californians and improve the health, well-being, and life expectancy of Black Californians. This year, in efforts of raising awareness, CHC has collaborated with UCR School of Medicine PRIME students, future physicians, in asking them what 'health equity' means to them. CHC also hosted a Facebook Live with Dr. Ijeaku, MD, MPH, DFAPA at UCR School of Medicine where she shed light on the topic.

WHAT DOES HEALTH EQUITY MEAN TO PRIME STUDENTS

As part of BHEAW, we reached out to the next generation of healthcare providers from UCR School of Medicine's PRIME program to share their insights on health equity. Take a moment to hear directly from these future leaders and gain valuable perspectives.



HEAR FROM THE PRIME STUDENTS
bit.ly/BHEAW24



FACEBOOK LIVE

To kick off BHEAW, we hosted a Facebook Live with Dr. Ijeaku, MD, MPH, DFAPA at UCR School of Medicine where she answered community concerns.



WATCH DR. IJEAKU'S LIVE AT
bit.ly/BHEAWLive



198 INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED SERVICES

UNSHELTERED OUTREACH PROGRAM (UOP)

BRINGING SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY

In 2022, CHC launched the Unsheltered Outreach Program. What began as a small outreach project has grown and continues to expand. With the support of dedicated staff, interns, volunteers, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and Community Health Workers (CHWs), we provide direct outreach services to unsheltered individuals throughout Riverside County.

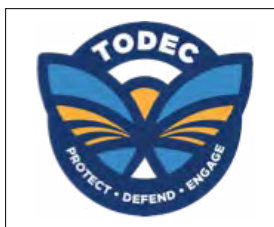
Together, as a collaborative effort, CHC hosts a monthly resource fair at the Community Access Center of Riverside County to connect the unsheltered with comprehensive health and well-being services. These services include but are not limited to, hygiene kit distribution, medical visits at UCR Health Community Clinic – Hulen Place, wellness checks, food and coffee, haircuts, rapid HIV/AIDS tests, health insurance and CalFresh enrollments, case management services, transitional housing assistance, free cell phones, clean clothing, and more.

These face-to-face interactions ensure that the unsheltered community is aware of and understands how to access available healthcare and social services.

HEAR FROM OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



**OPHELIA PENA, SUPERVISOR
OF PATIENT ACCESS CENTER & HULEN PLACE**
UCR Health Community Clinic - Hulen Place



LUIS
Todec Legal Center Inc



RODIAN
Pay it Forward, OC



As the assistant co-director of Riverside/Moreno Valley Pop-Up Clinics under the Vituity Care Foundation, we started the clinic on the mission and basis to help our community in accessing healthcare needs, government needs and any support that we are able to provide. Through meeting Stephanie, Fara and Selina along with UCR CHC, we were able to secure a location where we can provide our services. Their retentive partnership through meetings, emails, program support and overall kind guidance helped led our clinic to have multiple successful clinics so far supporting upwards of 50-100 patients per monthly clinic. Without their help, we would not have come this far so soon in the year!

-Son Tran, VCF Assistant
CO-Director



I have been more than honored to be in partnership with UCR SOM Center for Healthy Communities for the past few months. Without them, I truly believe our Vituity Cares health fairs would not have been possible. Stephanie and her team have provided unwavering support as a partner through exceptional communication, keeping in contact with our external partners, and striving to always provide for the underserved. I can't wait to see what our future has in store while working alongside UCR CHC.

-Sandra Ly, VCF Assistant Clinical
CO-Director



SUPPORT CHC
bit.ly/give2CHC

STUDENT & VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

CHC serves as a host site for student interns at any academic level, as well as for volunteers, fellows, and medical students interested in gaining hands-on experience in understanding community health needs. These individuals have the opportunity to contribute to meaningful projects that develop their skills and drive change. The environment at CHC fosters professional growth and encourages a comprehensive approach to promoting health equity in the community.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW SPOTLIGHT

Over the years, many brilliant minds have passed through CHC and continue to bring about meaningful change. We have contacted our former interns and fellows to provide an update on their current endeavors



"My favorite part was feeling my voice valued and contributions appreciated. As a student assistant i was able to bolster my confidence in leadership roles."

ISABEL ESCOBAR FLORES, HEALTH AND BENEFITS ANALYST AT AON
PAST STUDENT ASSISTANT



"Interning at CHC was one of the greatest experiences I have ever had. My favorite part was meeting the entire team and brainstorming new ideas for projects."

EVAN BHAKTA, UCR STUDENT
PAST INTERN



"My favorite part during my rotation with CHC was working on the Stop COVID-19 in the Black Community project. My time at CHC helped me to efficiently and effectively communicate with different members of the team to meet and achieve our mutual goals."

GELINE PATTERSON, HEALTH ENGAGEMENT CONSULTANT AT CIGNA
HEALTHCARE | PAST FELLOW



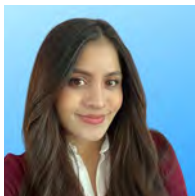
"I enjoyed working with the staff and making an impact on the surrounding IE community. Working at the center, improve my project management and critical thinking skills."

ARPY BARSEMIAN, MEDICAL EDUCATION QUALITY ANALYST AT UCR
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE | PAST FELLOW



"I had the privilege of witnessing my peers launch successful projects that are still ongoing at CHC. My experience at CHC was transformative, it equipped me with the skills and knowledge to pursue a career in public health that is meaningful."

SELINA HERNANDEZ, COMMUNITY RELATIONS SPECIALIST AT CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
PAST INTERN



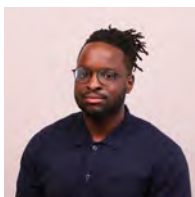
"I loved that we cared for our community and were all hands-in. Personally, [the rotation] helped me grow out of my shell as well as grow a deeper perspective as to what others in our community face. Professionally, I worked as a financial analyst and learned about public health."

CARLA URMENETA, SENIOR FINANCIAL ANALYST DIVISION OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES AT UCR | PAST FELLOW



"My involvement with the Mini-Grants program allowed me to contribute directly to community health initiatives. My experience at CHC shaped my career trajectory focusing on health disparities, it instilled in me a commitment to equitable solutions."

TILAK PATEL, PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT AND INVESTOR AT SQUAREML PAST FELLOW



"I had the pleasure of actually going into the community and directly meeting with both influential or active community members. My time at CHC provided valuable career experience in managing projects, collaborating across multiple disciplines, and developing my soft skills."

EZEKIEL ADU-GYAMFI, DIRECTOR OF COMPLIANCE AND RISK AT CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND MEDICINE PAST FELLOW



"My favorite part was collaborating with different members of the team to create successful events like outreaches and townhalls. My time at CHC helped me in project and time management, I learned how to prioritize and organize action items."

NNENNAYA AKABOGU, PROGRAM COORDINATOR FOR THE OFFICE OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AT UCR SCHOOL OF MEDICINE | PAST FELLOW



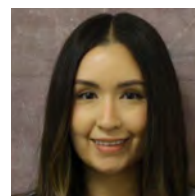
"Working with the homeless was a great experience as being out in the community is always incredibly rewarding. My time as an intern helped me gain the experience needed to be entrusted with complex data driven projects in my current role."

KRISTEN WEST, PROJECT/POLICY ANALYST AT UCR SCHOOL OF MEDICINE | PAST INTERN



"CHC's community engagement, rooted in the lived experiences of the Inland Empire's underrepresented communities, fueled my passion for public health, particularly in social epidemiology. I plan to apply to public health scholars training programs to gain practical experience before applying to graduate school for a master's in public health."

HEMEN MEKONNEN, SENIOR AT UCR PUBLIC POLICY & STUDENT ASSISTANT AT CHC | PAST INTERN



"I loved collaborating with the CHC team and learning from one another. Another favorite member is being a part of the initial Mini-Grants kick-off and seeing all of our work come to fruition. The project improved my professional skills such as project management, leadership experience, and so much more."

MARINA CARBAJAL, ACCREDITATION/PROGRAM COORDINATOR AT RIVERSIDE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM IN EPIDEMIOLOGY AND PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT | PAST FELLOW

GOALS ACHIEVED

At CHC, our long-term goal is to create synergies with UCR's campus community and community partners to improve the health outcomes of the Inland Southern California region and move the needle in advancing health equity for all.

CONTRIBUTE TO TRAINING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY.

CHC will provide opportunities for student engagement with the community on research, and health disparity issues that are relevant to the Inland Empire communities.

GOAL:

BY JUNE 30, 2024, CHC WILL CREATE FIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN MEDICAL/GRADUATE STUDENTS AND THE IE COMMUNITY.

OUTCOME:

CHC achieved 39 community engagement opportunities in fiscal year 2023/2024.

- 1 Mini-Grant awardee
- 11 UCR SOM Internships
- 3 CBE medical student rotations
- 12 PRIME medical students
- 8 Unsheltered Outreach Program - resource fairs
- 4 Volunteers

CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY.

CHC will serve as a portal for engagement and be the bridge between UCR researchers and the IE community.

GOAL:

BY JUNE 30, 2024, CHC WILL CREATE TEN PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UCR AND IE COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

OUTCOME:

CHC was able to achieve 2 research partnerships in fiscal year 2023.

- The Banning Report: Health Impacts of a Distribution Center in Banning
- A communities of practice approach for cultivating patient self-advocacy in underserved communities

CONTRIBUTE TO IMPLEMENTING HEALTH PROMOTION EFFORTS TO ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY.

Engaging UCR campus community through the CHC, who can invest, learn from, and teach the community healthy behaviors and empower them to take control over their own health.

GOAL:

BY JUNE 30, 2024, CHC WILL HAVE OFFERED 16 HEALTH PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE INLAND EMPIRE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR (FOUR PER QUARTER).

OUTCOME:

CHC came close to this goal with virtual health promotion activities.

1. It's L.I.T. (6 virtual videos)
2. Speakers Bureau (5 in-person events)
3. Unsheltered Outreach Program - resource fairs (8 in-person events)
4. Listening to Black Californians: Health Care Town Hall Edition IV
5. PRIME medical students visit to Valley View High School
6. Black Health Equity Advocacy Week Campaign (5 social media post, 1 Facebook live video, 7 Instagram reels)
7. Healthy Disruptions (6 podcast episodes)
8. Black Health Equity Initiative - Diabetes Workshop to Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.
9. Journal of Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry Published article on "Continuum of Trauma: Fear and Mistrust of Institutions in Communities of Color During the COVID Pandemic"



Working collaboratively with the community has given us the opportunity to train and retain a diverse workforce, build our research partnerships, and increase our health-promotion activities which has moved us closer to increasing health equity in the Inland Southern California communities.



Thank you

to our community, who has welcomed and partnered with CHC, and joined our calls to action for social transformation. Your support and dedication to improving the health outcomes of our communities, inspires hope and creates opportunities for a better tomorrow.

UC RIVERSIDE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

*School of Medicine Education Building I
92521 Botanic Gardens Dr.
Riverside, CA 92507*

*(951) 715-2700
chc@medsch.ucr.edu*

healthycommunities.ucr.edu



[LINKEDIN.COM/IN/UCRCENTERFORHEALTHYCOMMUNITIES](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ucrcenterforhealthycommunities)



CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

IMPACT REPORT

2024-2025

OUR VISION

To become a leader in community-based, multi-disciplinary research that engages a broad range of community, academic, and health partners to improve health and promote health equity.

OUR MISSION

Aims to build connections between researchers and the Inland Empire communities through service, education, and research that addresses our communities' needs and promotes health equity

MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Dear Inland Empire Community,

This past year, July 2024 through June 2025, has been one of both extraordinary challenge and unwavering resilience. Amidst a backdrop of federal executive orders that stand in direct opposition to the very values we hold dear inclusion, integrity, innovation, excellence, accountability, and respect we at the Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) have remained steadfast in our commitment to equity and justice.

Despite the uncertainty and systemic barriers, CHC continues to be a united force with our community. Together, we have mobilized to protect the most vulnerable, advocate for policy change, and provide safe, welcoming spaces where people can share their lived experiences, access vital services, and work to heal.

This work has taken many forms:

- Collaborating with trusted community partners to deliver culturally responsive education and outreach.
- Equipping individuals with tools to understand and assert their fundamental rights to healthcare, treatment, and dignity.
- Creating trauma-informed spaces where honest dialogue leads to collective healing and actionable solutions.
- Elevating community voices to inform policies that directly impact their health and well-being.

CHC's proud of the progress made, but know the work continues. In the face of adversity, CHC remains guided by our mission to advance health equity and social justice throughout Inland Southern California and beyond.

To our community partners, advocates, faculty, students, and supporters: Thank You! Your strength, passion, and commitment remind us that even in difficult times, we are never alone. As we look ahead, CHC is committed to continuing to fight for our shared values and the communities we serve.

With deep appreciation,

Michelle Burroughs, DHA, M.P.H.
Director, Center for Healthy Communities
UCR School of Medicine

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OUR COMMUNITY

“My experience at the CHC has been a pivotal step in my journey into the world of public health and community advocacy. The CHC not only introduced me to the foundational concepts of public health but also instilled in me the crucial principle of equity over equality. This insight has been instrumental in shaping my aspirations to pursue a master’s in public health and eventually continue my education in medical school. Through its community focused programs, the CHC has equipped me with the necessary skills to be a strong community leader, help underserved communities, and to emerge as a more effective physician in the future.”

— Leilani Tull, Master of Public Health Student at UC Riverside School of Medicine

“My volunteer experience at the UCR School of Medicine Center for Healthy Communities My volunteer experience at the UCR School of Medicine - Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) profoundly impacted my l educational and professional journey by deepening my understanding of how physicians use community health to improve the quality of healthcare that patients receive in the Inland Southern California. This experience solidified my decision to pursue medical school as I gained invaluable skills such as advocating for the personalized needs of patients and engaging with community stakeholders to raise awareness about health disparities. The CHC staff and their physician colleagues also gave me advice that helped my professional development. I am grateful for my CHC volunteer experience.”

— Jonathan Ogbogu, Medical/PRIME Student Year 2 at UC Riverside School of Medicine

THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

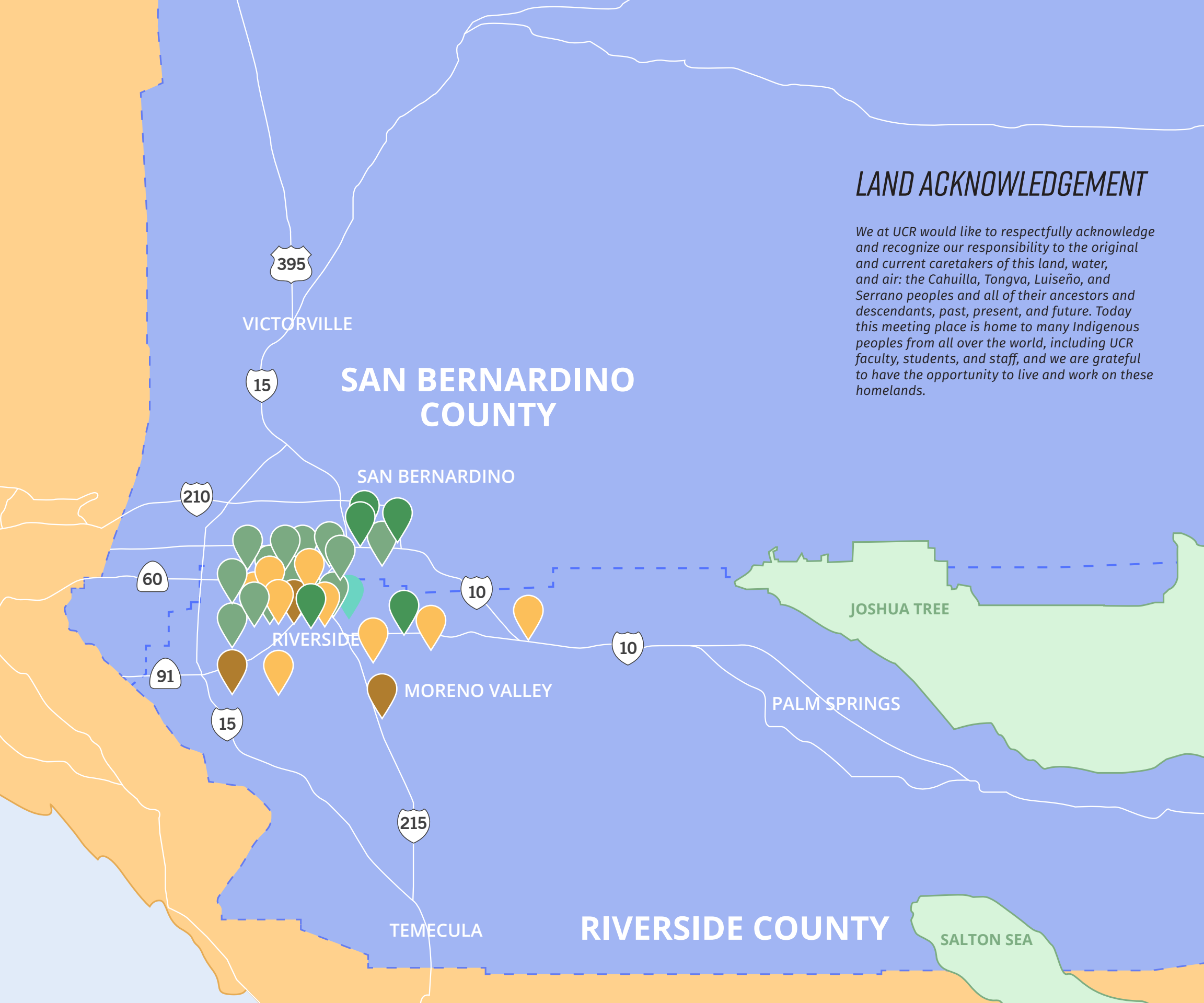
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-  Speakers Bureau - A collection of expert speakers organized by CHC to talk at community events.
-  Outreach - When CHC team members connect with people face-to-face to provide direct health and wellness services.
-  Research - Community-engaged research conducted in partnership with community members, ensuring meaningful involvement and equitable engagement at every step.
-  Mini-Grants - Awarded to support community engagement activities serving the Inland Empire communities based on submitted proposals.
-  Collaborations - Partnerships with other community-based organizations that share our mission to improve the social determinants of health in the Inland Empire.

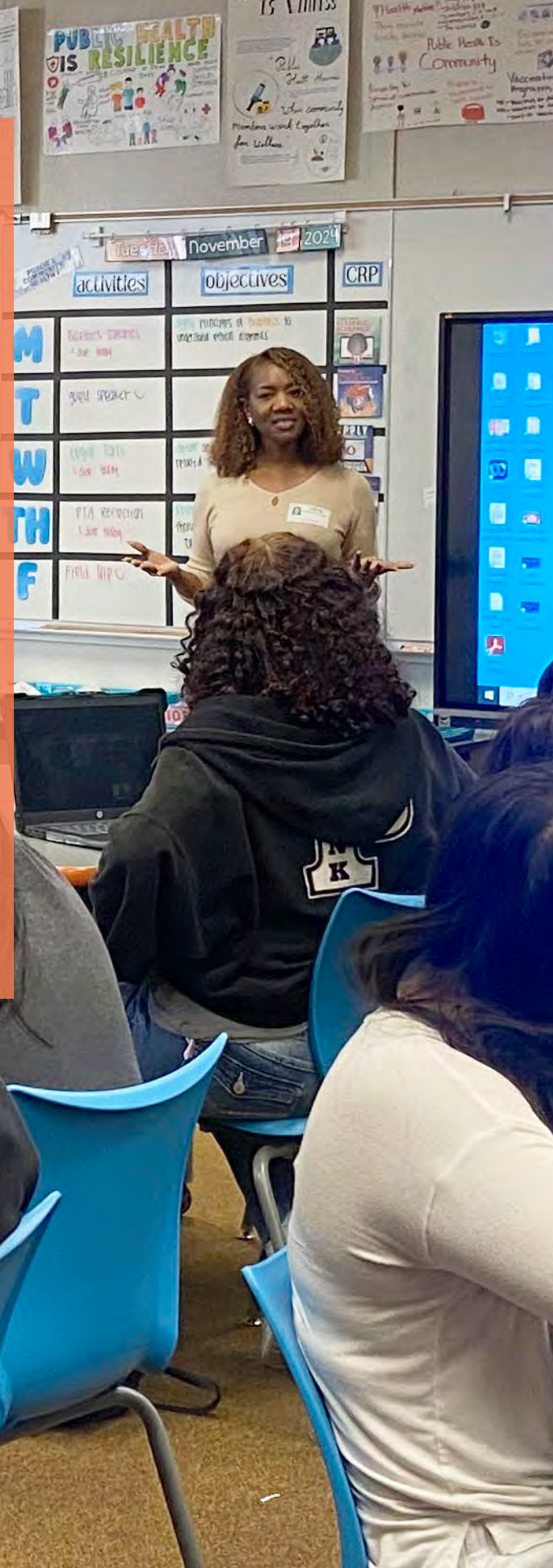
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at UCR would like to respectfully acknowledge and recognize our responsibility to the original and current caretakers of this land, water, and air: the Cahuilla, Tongva, Luiseño, and Serrano peoples and all of their ancestors and descendants, past, present, and future. Today this meeting place is home to many Indigenous peoples from all over the world, including UCR faculty, students, and staff, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these homelands.



SERVICE

TO SERVE MEANS TO BE ACCESSIBLE AND AVAILABLE, TO BE A RESOURCE AND TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY. AS SUCH, CHC IS EMBEDDED IN OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY AND BELOW ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF A FEW COMMUNITY SERVICE ENGAGEMENT EVENTS THAT CHC WAS A PART OF THROUGHOUT 2024 AND 2025.



MINI-GRANT

The Impact of a Breast Milk Depot on Mothers and NICU Babies of the Inland Empire



Breast milk plays a critical role in the health of premature infants, reducing risks of complications like necrotizing enterocolitis and supporting faster recovery. However, socio-economic barriers in the Inland Empire make access to this vital resource challenging.

The UCR Breast Milk Depot aims to help 50-100 community members annually through the program while educating donors on the importance of breastfeeding and its impact on infant health. Long term, the project will ideally secure funding for infrastructure, including tissue bank licensing and storage facilities, to ensure sustainable operations and expand outreach.

ThriveHer: Nurturing Girls' Strength Across the Inland Empire

ThriveHer is addressing the urgent mental health needs of girls aged 12-21 in the Inland Empire. In partnership with Adrian Dell and Carmen Roberts Foundation, the program featured workshops during the 24th Annual Empowering Young Women Conference emphasizing mental wellness, self-expression, and resilience. Participants engaged in interactive wellness sessions, arts-based projects, and mentorship opportunities to foster community connection and emotional strength. The initiative also provided mental wellness kits, equipping participants with tools to manage stress and anxiety long after the conference. With plans for sustainability, ThriveHer is in the process of integrating two (2) mental wellness follow-ups as a cornerstone of future conferences while expanding partnerships and youth leadership opportunities to ensure long-term impact.



LEARN MORE ABOUT MINI-GRANTS AT
bit.ly/Mini_Grant2024

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Anaheim Western High School’s Public Health Presentation



“ You made me realize that in life there are always ups and downs and to never give up”.

- Misha, Student at Anaheim Western HS.

CHC Director Michelle Burroughs was invited by Jessica Corona, a teacher at Western High School in Anaheim, to speak with students about careers in Public Health and other healthcare fields. During her presentation, Michelle emphasized the importance of community-engaged research and introduced students to a variety of career pathways within the healthcare sector. To make the session interactive and engaging, students participated in a bingo card activity that reinforced key public health terms and concepts. The presentation not only sparked curiosity but also encouraged students to explore meaningful careers that make a difference in their communities.

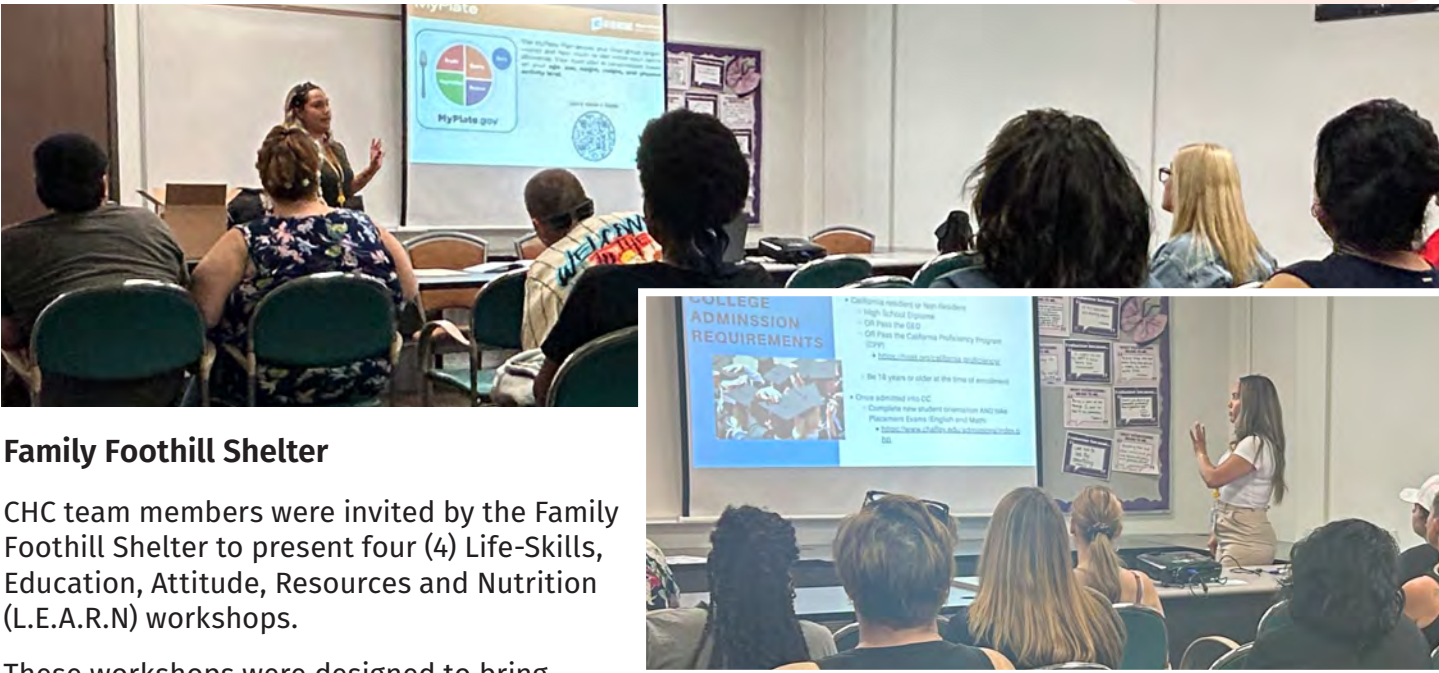
Temalpakh Farms After School Program Nutrition Workshop

CHC and Inland Empire Medicine (IESM) partnered with Temalpark Farms to host a two day nutrition workshop for Nova Academy High School Students. The event marked a new collaboration that brought together UCR undergraduate and medical student volunteers to educate and inspire local youth through hands-on learning activities centered around the importance of proper nutrition on one’s health and longevity. Nova Academy students were especially excited to view a live blood pressure demonstration and actively discussed strategies to maintain healthy blood pressure through diet and exercise.



El Sol’s Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges Event

CHC in partnership with Dr. Ijeaku, a professor of psychiatry at UCR School of Medicine, served as a panelist, where the discussion centered on navigating challenges to mental well-being. The conversation explored how social media, academic pressures, and identity struggles are shaping youth mental health today. She shared strategies to foster resilience, promote self-care, and encourage advocacy among young people. Participants left feeling more confident in navigating mental health challenges.



Family Foothill Shelter

CHC team members were invited by the Family Foothill Shelter to present four (4) Life-Skills, Education, Attitude, Resources and Nutrition (L.E.A.R.N) workshops.

These workshops were designed to bring community leaders and professionals together with clients to expand their knowledge. CHC discussed a wide range of topics including, mental health, cardiovascular health, nutrition, public health, and much more!

“Your sessions were all highly engaging and informative. Our residents found the information and insights you provided to be incredibly valuable. Several of them mentioned feeling more motivated and empowered to take steps towards their personal goals in health.”

- Rita Vargas, Family Foothill Shelter Coordinator.

UNSHELTERED OUTREACH PROGRAM (UOP)

UOP enhances health equity by increasing access to care for unsheltered individuals across the Inland Empire. To this date, CHC has hosted 20 monthly resource fairs and direct street outreach, connecting over 1,000 individuals to vital services including: primary care, mental health referrals, hygiene supplies, housing assistance, and social services. Additionally, in partnership with Wound Walk, CHC has expanded access to care for the unhoused by providing essential items such as hygiene kits, water, and basic wound care support directly in the community. This collaboration helps address both physical health and underlying social needs, while also creating opportunities for deeper engagement and connection to services. By meeting individuals where they are, the program enhances community well-being and supports pathways to stability and improved health outcomes.

Addressing both health and social needs through community collaboration, UOP expands access to mental and behavioral health services while fostering long-term community and economic opportunity through support for the stability and well-being of vulnerable populations. To further support our mission, CHC built an essential partnership with IEHP’s Community Health Worker (CHW) Training Program. CHC deployed two seasoned CHWs to support the unhoused population in addressing physical, mental, and social health needs. Using the Social Determinants of Health Assessments (SDOH), hands-on fieldwork, and targeted outreach, CHWs provided education, screening, advocacy, and navigation support to 165 individuals, connecting them with vital resources and services.



SERVICING OUR COMMUNITY



EDUCATION

CHC OFFERS TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE COMMUNITIES' KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND HEALTH EQUITY. OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO EQUIP COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH THE SKILLS TO EFFECTIVELY LEAD AND FACILITATE REAL TRANSFORMATION.



MSI ORIENTATION



CHC coordinated a series of community engagement activities to connect medical students with local health and social service organizations. Events included educational spotlight Riverside: From History to Health Outcomes, featuring Dr. Geoffrey Leung, Public Health Officer of Riverside County, and community partner tours of the Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) Riverside Community Wellness Center and TruEvolution's Project Legacy, which included a resident panel Q&A. Students found these experiences valuable, with feedback highlighting a deeper

understanding of the region's history, public health challenges, and the impact of community partnerships. Additionally, CHC hosted a Health Professionals Serving the Community panel, featuring Ali K. Hariri, Project Manager for the Office of Housing and Human Services, and Joyce Clarke, Commissioner for the City of Riverside's Commission on Aging (Ward 3). These activities provided students with firsthand insight into the social determinants of health and the vital role of community engagement in medical practice.



CHC COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS INITIATIVE



CHC partnered with Reach Out to provide four 4 community health workers (CHWs) with over 600 hours of structured field-experience and outreach opportunities that are essential to both workforce development and improved service delivery. CHWs participated in the UOP monthly resource fairs, connecting unsheltered clients to essential health and social services. Also, in partnership with Wound Walk Free Clinic provided valuable, hands-on services to unsheltered populations, fostering trust, and connecting individuals to health services. These outreach activities not

only strengthen community ties but also enhance CHWs’ practical skills in field-based care. Complementary initiatives—such as public speaking opportunities and resume development support—further empower CHWs by building their confidence and preparing them for future employment opportunities within the healthcare and social service sectors. Collectively, these efforts contribute to a more skilled, responsive, and empowered CHW workforce equipped to meet the evolving needs of underserved communities.

BLACK HEALTH EQUITY INITIATIVE

ALPHA PHI ALPHA SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DISTRICT CONFERENCE / JANUARY 2025

CHC collaborated with the Divine 9 to present a session on diabetes and hypertension prevention, as well as lifestyle changes. Ninety Black men attended the event and walked away with a greater understanding, resources and tools to prevent and manage diabetes and hypertension through lifestyle changes. The session empowered them with knowledge on the impact of nutrition, physical activity, and regular health screenings in reducing risk factors.



“I appreciate the practical ideas that were presented.”

“I need to take a deeper look at what I consume.”

- Fraternity Brothers

BLACK EXCELLENCE STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE / MARCH 2025



In collaboration with Dr. Joi A. Spencer, Dean of the School of Education, we hosted a School of Medicine tour and an engaging panel discussion for over fifty high school students. Duringa the tour, students explored the medical school environment, sparking excitement and inspiring many to envision themselves as future medical students at UCR. The panel discussion, featuring Master of Public Health graduate student Chaselyn Amos and medical students Emmanuel Scaife (MS1) and Chiemelie Onyekonwu (MS4), provided valuable insights into their academic journeys and careers in healthcare. The students were highly engaged, asked insightful questions, and left feeling motivated about pursuing careers in medicine and public health.



LATINX HEALTH EQUITY INITIATIVE

The Latinx Health Equity Initiative is part of an ongoing series offered to the Spanish-speaking community at the Community Settlement Association, focused on building resilience, creating brave spaces, and strengthening the Latinx community. Participants shared that they especially appreciated the meditation segment, noting it helped them feel grounded and reduced their stress. Many remarked that, unlike past workshops, these sessions allowed them to visualize an experience and then express it through art, an approach they found both meaningful and enjoyable.

HEALING CIRCLES



30 Healing Circles

CHC has partnered with Fatima Baldelomar, CEO of the Love and Nurture Initiative to conduct 24 healing and listening sessions to address the needs of the Latino/ Hispanic communities. The sessions are held in Spanish, creating a welcoming environment for individuals from diverse backgrounds to express themselves and gain insight into holistic healing practices. Our team at CHC helped in curriculum development and facilitation during sessions.

Topics ranged from “Addressing Grief and Loss” to “Learning about Financial Wellness and Its Effects on our Mental Health”. Each session thoughtfully and deeply addressed each topic, including a hands-on activity to engage members. We are excited to continue supporting these healing practices to provide a safe space for community members to cope with life’s challenges and create action-based health plans.

INSPIRING LASTING CHANGE WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY



RESEARCH

THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS, CHC CAN COLLABORATIVELY DESIGN RESEARCH FOR EASY TRANSLATION TO REAL-WORLD HEALTH SETTINGS AND SITUATIONS. AS A RESULT, CHC IS ABLE TO IMPROVE CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE-APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS THAT CREATE BETTER SERVICES FOR UNDERREPRESENTED AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.

PRIME: SELF-ADVOCACY PROJECT



Recent findings from the California Healthcare Foundation's Listening to Black Californians project highlight the urgent need for patient self-advocacy to address racial disparities in healthcare. With one in three Black Californians reporting unfair treatment from healthcare providers and 77% emphasizing the importance of increasing Black community health advocates, the PRIME Self-Advocacy project aims to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills to navigate the healthcare system effectively.



Over the past PRIME Scholars have dedicated to raising awareness of healthcare issues, and equipping Black Californians to advocate for themselves and their families. Topics covered range from chronic conditions to maternal health concerns such as preeclampsia. For the past six months, CHC has refined the "Empowering Your Healthcare Journey: A Guide to Support Your Development or Self Advocacy" from broader use to be disseminated into the community to support advocacy efforts.



"As a senior citizen concerned about wellness and seeing caring providers, it was refreshing to listen to presentations and thought leaders who were fully invested in a paradigm shift in primary care. After listening to us, they came back with real-world, useable, clearly written guides, that in their organic form were professional enough for publishing and distribution."

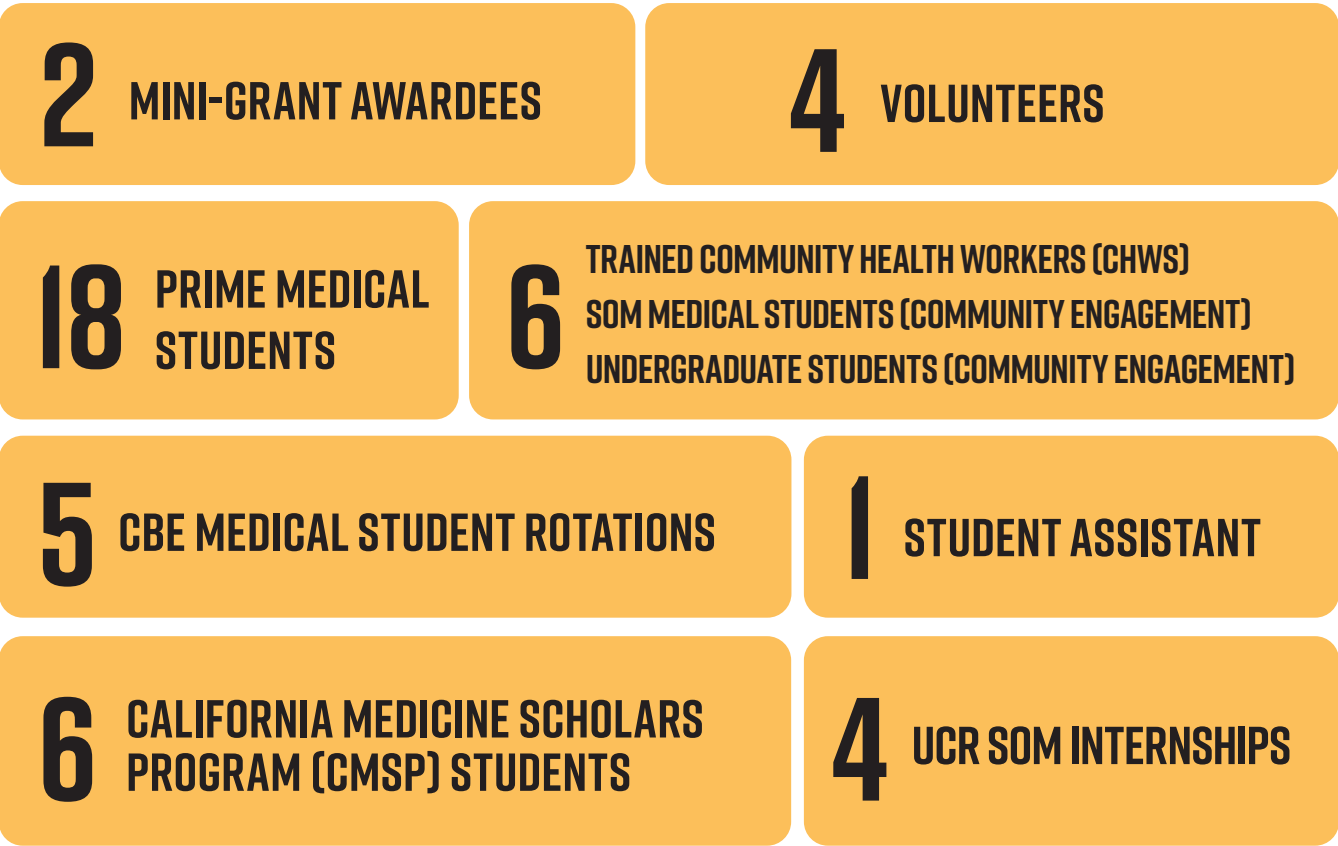
- Joyce Clarke

GOALS ACHIEVED

At CHC, our long-term goal is to create synergies with UCR’s camput community and community partners to imporve the health outcomes of the Inland Empire California region and move the needle in advancing health equity for all.

CONTRIBUTE TO TRAINING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY

OUTCOME: CHC ACHIEVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES.



CHC CAME CLOSE TO THIS GOAL OF PROMOTION ACTIVITIES



CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY

CHC WAS ABLE TO ACHIEVE 2 RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS.

- A communities of practice approach for cultivating patient self-advocacy in underserved communities
- California Air Resources Board (CARB): Community Air Grant Program

THANK YOU

To our community, who has welcomed and partnered with CHC, and joined our calls to action for social transformation. Your support and dedication to improving the health outcomes of our communities, inspires hope and creates opportunities for a better tomorrow.



Michelle Burroughs, DHA, MPH
Director of Community Engagement
and Outreach for CHC



Stephanie Sandoval, MPH, CHW
Health Educator



Shaleta Sultan-Smith
Executive Administrative Assistant



Giara Wright
Student Assistant

UC RIVERSIDE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

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Designed by Wendy Fierro, Senior Graphic & Digital Communications Specialist, UCR School of Medicine.





CENTER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IMPACT REPORT 2025-2026





OUR VISION

To become a leader in community-based, multi-disciplinary research that engages a broad range of community, academic, and health partners to improve health and promote health equity.

OUR MISSION

To build connections between researchers and the Inland Empire communities through service, education, and research that addresses our communities' needs and promotes health equity.

MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Dear Inland Empire Community,

The period spanning July 2025 through June 2026 marked a pivotal moment for the Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) as we began to experience a heightened awareness of shifting dynamics within the Inland Empire's health equity landscape. Across our region, communities demonstrated an increased urgency to understand, navigate, and advocate within a rapidly changing healthcare and social service environment.

We saw this awareness reflected in meaningful and measurable ways. More community members than ever before attended CHC-facilitated workshops focused on understanding their healthcare rights, accessing services, and strengthening self-advocacy. In parallel, our community partners increasingly requested engagement from CHC's Speakers Bureau to provide trusted health and social service expertise on topics such as

mental and emotional well-being during times of uncertainty, and navigating health coverage systems including Medi-Cal and Medicare.

These engagements reaffirm a core truth that continues to guide our work: when self-advocacy education is paired with intentional, sustained community engagement, it strengthens the collective voice of underrepresented populations and advances more responsive, culturally aligned systems of care. CHC's participation across these spaces reflects our enduring commitment to building community capacity, advancing health equity, and fostering collaborative leadership throughout the Inland Empire.

Through all our efforts in service, education, and research, CHC has continued to lean into the needs of the community by listening first, responding with intention, and connecting individuals and families to critical resources and services. In doing so, we are not only addressing immediate needs but also strengthening long-term community capacity, resilience, and trust.

As we reflect on this year's work, we remain grounded in the belief that health equity is not achieved in isolation, but through sustained partnership, shared accountability, and collective action. The Center for Healthy Communities will continue to stand alongside our community, amplifying voices, bridging resources, and advancing systems that honor dignity, access, and health justice for all.

With gratitude,

Michelle Burroughs, DHA, MPH
Director, Center for Healthy Communities
UCR School of Medicine

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MPH STUDENTS



“My practicum experience with the Center for Healthy Communities deepened my understanding that meaningful community engagement is not simply about providing resources, but about building trust, listening intentionally, and allowing communities to shape the solutions meant to serve them. Working on initiatives focused on health equity, outreach, and culturally responsive programming exemplified how public health can bridge gaps between institutions and underserved communities by centering cultural humility, accessibility, and long-term partnership. This experience strengthened my commitment to becoming a physician who not only cares for patients individually, but also works to address the broader community conditions that shape their health.”

- Leilani Tull



“My practicum with the Center for Healthy Communities was by far one of my favorite public health experiences as it showed me what community engagement looks like in practice, not just in the classroom. At participating community locations, I witnessed volunteers give their time, energy, and personal resources to prepare meals, provide clothing and hygiene supplies, and support unhoused individuals with consistency and compassion. Through outreach, I was also able to build trust with unhoused community members, provide supplies, and engage in meaningful conversations about their experiences and needs. These conversations helped me better understand the limitations of my own service ideas, hear directly why certain approaches may not work in their community, and learn how to make public health solutions more accessible, practical, and meaningful. This experience made me want to help even more by supporting partner organizations, strengthening what they are able to provide, and continuing to pursue community-centered public health work guided by trust, humility, and lived experiences.”

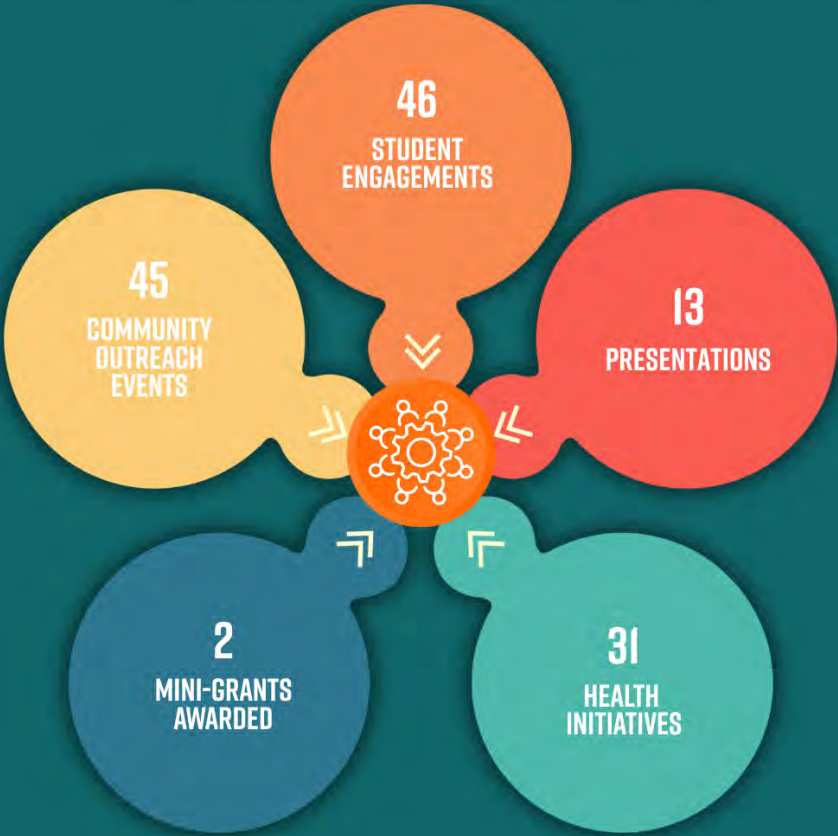
- Kenneth Chiu



“My practicum experience with the Center for Healthy Communities showed me that meaningful public health work starts with building trust and meeting people where they are. Working directly with community members helped me better understand the value of listening to people’s experiences and involving them in conversations about the services and resources that affect their daily lives.”

- Jorge Delos Santos

IMPACT AT A GLANCE



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INLAND EMPIRE STATE OF LATINO HEALTH – COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

The Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) actively contributed to the Inland Empire State of Latino Health, hosted by the Latino Health Collaborative, an organization dedicated to empowering Latino/Hispanic communities through holistic health and wellness initiatives that advance equity, access, and community well-being.

As part of this regional convening, Michelle Burroughs, DHA, MPH was invited to serve as a featured panelist on the “**Breaking Barriers: Leading with Purpose for Community Well-being**” panel. This session brought together cross-sector leaders to explore strategies for advancing health equity and strengthening community-driven solutions across the Inland Empire.

Drawing on her extensive experience in community health leadership, Burroughs emphasized that servant leadership is foundational to advancing equity-focused initiatives. She highlighted that

meaningful and sustainable impact requires leaders to listen first, build trust, and intentionally create space for community voices to inform priorities and solutions. She underscored that equity is not something delivered to communities, but rather co-created through authentic partnerships, shared decision making, and sustained engagement.

In addressing the most urgent actions needed to improve the health and well-being of Latino communities, Burroughs identified **healthcare self-advocacy** as a critical priority. She emphasized the importance of equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills to effectively navigate healthcare systems, communicate confidently with providers, understand their rights, and make informed decisions about their care.

This approach helps to mitigate systemic barriers, language challenges, and cultural misunderstandings that often contribute to health disparities.



8TH ANNUAL ULTIMATE BIOMED RETREAT

The Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) Speakers Bureau Program continues to create meaningful opportunities for dialogue and learning by connecting dynamic speakers with diverse audiences. This year, CHC’s community influencer Tomi the Encourager delivered an engaging and impactful presentation at a Biomedical Retreat, reaching both faculty members and students.

During the session, Tomi the Encourager led a thoughtful discussion centered on the importance of mental health, overall wellness, and health equity. Drawing from both lived experience and professional insight, the presentation emphasized the critical role that self-awareness, resilience, and community support play in both personal and professional success, particularly within high-demand academic and healthcare environments.

Attendees were encouraged to reflect on how mental health intersects with their work and how prioritizing wellness can enhance not only individual well-being but also quality of care and research outcomes. The session also highlighted health equity, underscoring the importance of addressing disparities and fostering inclusive practices within biomedical and healthcare spaces.

This event exemplifies the mission of the CHC Speakers Bureau Program: to bring relevant, community-centered discussions to the forefront and to equip audiences with knowledge and tools that promote healthier, more equitable communities.



PRIME SCHOLARS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



CHC continues to advance its commitment to community engagement and workforce pipeline development by providing meaningful, hands-on experiences for students in the UCR School of Medicine (SOM) PRIME Program. Through this initiative, PRIME medical scholars participated in a dynamic **Community Engagement Experience** designed to inspire and educate youth in the Inland Empire.

PRIME scholars visited Landmark Middle School, where they engaged 116 students in an interactive and impactful session focused on health, education, and career exploration. During the visit, the scholars shared their personal journeys to medical school, offering candid reflections on their motivations, challenges, and the perseverance required to pursue careers in medicine. This dialogue created a relatable and encouraging environment, helping middle school students envision pathways into health professions.

To deepen engagement, the PRIME scholars facilitated two interactive role-playing scenarios: “**The Restless Student**” and “**The Dizzy Basketball Player**.” These activities introduced students to real-world health situations, encouraging them to think critically, practice communication skills, and gain insight into how healthcare professionals assess and respond to patient needs. Through experiential learning, students were able to actively participate in problem-solving while building foundational health literacy skills.

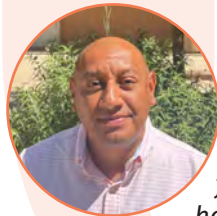
The event proved to be both educational and inspiring, fostering curiosity, confidence, and enthusiasm among participants about future opportunities in health and medicine. The experience also reinforced practical health behaviors among students.

UNSHELTERED OUTREACH PROGRAM

This year, we are excited to expand the reach and impact of our Unsheltered Outreach Program through the development of three new community partnerships. CHC has teamed up with Kansas Avenue Seventh-day Adventist Church, Allen Chapel AME Church, and TruEvolution to better serve individuals experiencing homelessness across the Inland Empire.

These collaborations strengthen our ability to provide consistent, community-based support by connecting individuals to essential resources such as healthcare services, hygiene supplies, food assistance, clothing, showers, vaccines, social services, and housing referrals. By working alongside trusted community organizations, we are able to meet individuals where they are and respond to their immediate and long-term needs with dignity and compassion.

Through these partnerships, the program continues to grow its presence and deepen its impact, creating more accessible pathways to care while fostering trust within the communities we serve. This expansion reflects CHC’s ongoing commitment to advancing health equity and addressing the social determinants of health that disproportionately affect the unhoused population.



“It was very heartbreaking to see the need in our community for trust. This made me realize how important it is to create a relationship with the community before they are able to open themselves to us.”

- CMSP student Ariel Galindo Escobar



“One of the most memorable moments during outreach was connecting with an unhoused community member over our shared roots in Nayarit, Mexico. That sense of familiarity created an immediate bond and reminded me how deeply personal this work is. It reinforced my passion for serving underserved communities and highlighted how housing insecurity can impact people from all backgrounds, including those who share my own story.”

- CMSP student Kevin De La Torre



“This experience transformed the way I view street medicine and the challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness. It gave me a deeper understanding that it’s not just about providing resources, it’s about showing people they are seen, heard, and valued. It’s about connection, dignity, and trust. Many of the people we met carried heavy burdens, yet they still welcomed us with grace, gratitude, and strength to the best of their ability and comfort level.”

- CMSP student Lisbeth Ortiz-Carrillo



“During this experience I was exposed to another side of what public health and service looks like. The emphasis on the unhoused really stuck with me because we tend to group those in need all together. Some people may need food from a food distribution and others may need clothing, but it was amazing to see the effort that went into renovating a whole new space, so those who need it could take showers and relax at their own convenience.”

- Community-based Learning Experience (CBE) MS3 Onyinye Onwuzulike



“I recognize the value of human connection and plan to engage more intentionally in the future. What struck me most was how impactful small acts, like a private shower or clean socks, can be. Health extends far beyond prescriptions and lab results; it encompasses dignity, community, and meeting people where they are. The line between being housed and unhoused can be thin, often defined by a single diagnosis or financial setback. As future physicians, understanding available community resources allows us to better support not only our patients but also their families and neighbors.”

- Community-based Learning Experience (CBE) MS3 Chelsea Logo



“One of the most impactful moments came during a community service event hosted in partnership with the Kansas St. Seventh-day Adventist Church. Alongside fellow volunteers and community leaders, we organized essential resources, including food, clothing, hygiene kits, and showers for Riverside’s unhoused residents. I left feeling grounded and hopeful, reminded that service with structure and compassion is what truly creates impact.”

- Community-based Learning Experience (CBE) MS3 Arturo Chavez



“Ultimately, preparing students to care for unhoused and marginalized populations requires medical education to cultivate humility, curiosity, and a commitment to justice. By integrating community engagement, structural awareness, and advocacy into training, medical schools can graduate physicians who are not only clinically competent, but also equipped to care for those most often excluded from traditional healthcare systems.”

- Community-based Learning Experience (CBE) MS3 Sabika Rehman

COMMUNITY MEDICINE AND POPULATION HEALTH MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

CHC advances its mission of health equity and community impact through the **Mini-Grant Program**, an initiative designed to empower medical students, graduate students, residents, and fellows at UCR to develop and lead innovative, service-driven projects that address pressing health needs across the Inland Empire.

This program serves as a critical platform for cultivating the next generation of health leaders by supporting community-engaged work that directly benefits underserved populations.

CHC was able to fund one mini-grant directly during the 2025–2026 cycle. The program’s impact was extended through the generous support of Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP), which recognized the importance of this work and sponsored an additional project. This partnership highlights the value of cross-sector collaboration in advancing community health and innovation.

MILO AND THE CALM CREW: A STORYBOOK FOR GROWING CALM MINDS



This innovative project introduces Milo and the Calm Crew, a bilingual children’s picture book designed to promote early emotional wellness through accessible, evidence-based strategies. The book integrates techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, grounding, visualization, and self-soothing touch into an engaging, child-friendly narrative. By equipping children with practical coping tools, the project supports the development of emotional regulation skills at an early age. Initially implemented at the Coachella Valley Free Clinic, this initiative aims to expand its reach to additional clinic sites, broadening access for children and families across the region.



NDD CIRCLE: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

The NDD Circle project addresses the complex challenges faced by parents and caregivers of children with neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs). Recognizing the significant emotional and logistical burden that often follows a new diagnosis, this intervention creates supportive, community-based learning environments where participants can share experiences, exchange resources, and build critical self-advocacy skills. By fostering connection and knowledge sharing, the NDD Circle strengthens caregiver capacity, promotes resilience, and enhances the ability of families to effectively navigate systems of care and support their children’s developmental needs.



EDUCATION

CHC OFFERS TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE COMMUNITIES' KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND HEALTH EQUITY. OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO EQUIP COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH THE SKILLS TO EFFECTIVELY LEAD AND FACILITATE REAL TRANSFORMATION.

ADVANCING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

CHC was invited to participate in UCR School of Medicine (SOM) Chairs Retreat to share CHC's community engagement expertise and explore opportunities to strengthen partnerships across the SOM.

CHC facilitated an interactive planning session where department chairs identified ideas related to departmental collaboration, student engagement, and research/community partnerships using a color-coded brainstorming activity followed by group voting to prioritize the most impactful opportunities.

The discussion generated valuable ideas focused on expanding community-engaged education, strengthening academic-community partnerships, and increasing opportunities for students to engage directly with Inland Empire communities.

CHC is now partnering with Strategic Initiatives to turn these priorities into actionable goals that will help advance community engagement throughout the SOM and further support healthier, more connected communities across the region.



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION SUMMER STEAM ACADEMY

CHC partnered with the School of Education to support their summer STEAM Academy, a program designed to expose middle and high school students to careers in health and science. Through this collaboration, CHC connected students with graduate-level scholars and future healthcare professionals who shared their educational journeys, personal experiences, and passion for serving their communities.

As part of the program, Master of Public Health professional Stephanie Sandoval and medical students Arturo Chavez (MS3) and Kimberly Najera (MS2) participated in Lunch & Learn sessions with students from Riverside County, Moreno Valley, and Jurupa Valley. During these sessions, presenters spoke openly about their paths into public health and medicine, the challenges they overcame, and the importance of representation within healthcare professions.

The sessions created meaningful dialogue for students, many from communities historically underrepresented in medicine and public health, to see themselves reflected in careers they may not have previously considered attainable. By engaging directly with students who shared similar

backgrounds and lived experiences, presenters helped foster inspiration, confidence, and a greater understanding of educational pathways into healthcare careers.

Elizabeth Benitez, School of Education Initiative Coordinator, reflected on the impact the presenters had on students and staff alike. Arturo Chavez's presentation was described as "inspiring and incredibly engaging," with students remaining fully invested even after the session had officially ended. Stephanie Sandoval's story left a "lasting impact" on students as she shared her personal journey into public health. Kimberly Najera's presentation also resonated deeply with students, particularly young women who appreciated seeing strong female representation in medicine.

Through partnerships like STEAM Academy, CHC continues to advance its mission of promoting health equity through education, mentorship, and community engagement. By investing in youth and creating opportunities for mentorship and representation, CHC helps empower the next generation of public health and medical professionals.





PRIME EXHIBITION: HOPE, HEALTH, AND HEALING

The UCR School of Medicine Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) proudly launched the PRIME Exhibition: Hope, Health, and Healing at the Civil Rights Institute of Inland Southern California. The exhibition highlighted the journeys, experiences, and voices of PRIME students who are committed to advancing healthcare equity within the African, Black, and Caribbean (ABC) communities. CHC was grateful for the support of Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP), whose sponsorship helped make the exhibition possible and further demonstrated a shared commitment to health equity and community engagement.

The exhibition provided community members, students, faculty, and partners with an opportunity to engage with stories centered on resilience, representation, and service. Through student storyboards, personal quotes, historical reflections, and visual displays, attendees gained insight into the importance of culturally responsive healthcare and the impact of representation in medicine.

In addition to showcasing student experiences, the exhibition honored the legacy of leaders and community advocates who have worked to address healthcare disparities and improve access to care for underserved populations.

The PRIME Exhibition served as both a celebration and a call to action, encouraging future healthcare providers to lead with compassion, cultural humility, and a deep understanding of the communities they serve. It also provided inspiration and representation for individuals aspiring to pursue careers in medicine, demonstrating that their goals and dreams are achievable.

SKILLS IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



Each year CHC provides a lecture for the PRIME scholars focused on developing the foundational skills needed to build meaningful and respectful community partnerships.

The session emphasized key concepts including understanding community context, building trust, practicing cultural humility, achieving effective cross-cultural communication, and empowering communities through collaboration. Scholars also explored the importance of advocacy, inclusive research practices, and the engagement of communities as equal partners in improving health outcomes.

Through this lecture, PRIME scholars strengthened their ability to work alongside diverse communities in ways that promote trust, equity, and community-centered healthcare.

GUBERNATORIAL HEALTH MATTERS WATCH PARTY



UCR SOM's CHC continued its commitment to community education and civic engagement by hosting the Health Matters Forum Watch Party. Community members, students, faculty, and local leaders gathered to hear directly from four California gubernatorial candidates about the future of healthcare across the state while ensuring Inland Empire voices were included in these important statewide conversations.

The event created an opportunity for residents to engage in meaningful discussions about healthcare issues that directly impact the region, which reflects the rich diversity of California. The statewide forum, streamed live from the UC Riverside Highlander Union Building by NBC4/Telemundo 52, featured Xavier Becerra, former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services; Betty Yee, former California State Controller; Tony Thurmond, California Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Antonio Villaraigosa, former Los Angeles Mayor and former Speaker of the California State Assembly.

Participants identified several key concerns affecting Inland Southern California, including healthcare access, affordability, and the need for greater representation within healthcare systems and leadership.

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICUM PROJECTS

CHC developed and facilitated the MPH Practicum experience for the inaugural cohort of Master of Public Health (MPH) students, providing hands-on, community-based learning opportunities centered on health equity and underserved populations. Serving as preceptor for three students, CHC guided projects that addressed important community needs, including the pilot implementation of Spanish-language self-advocacy workshops, “Mejorando Tu Camino en el Cuidado de la Salud (Empowering Your Healthcare Journey);” an evaluation of SB 1152 implementation for unhoused patient discharge planning in partnership with a local hospital and community-based organizations; and a pilot HOUSED BEDS: A tool for taking a history on an individual experiencing homelessness, to assess needs and make appropriate medical and social referrals.

The practicum gave students meaningful opportunities to apply public health knowledge in real-world community settings while supporting initiatives focused on improving healthcare access, patient advocacy, and coordinated support services for vulnerable populations throughout Inland Southern California.



RESEARCH

THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS, CHC CAN COLLABORATIVELY DESIGN RESEARCH FOR EASY TRANSLATION TO REAL-WORLD HEALTH SETTINGS AND SITUATIONS. AS A RESULT, CHC IS ABLE TO IMPROVE CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE-APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS THAT CREATE BETTER SERVICES FOR UNDERREPRESENTED AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.

AFRICAN AMERICAN CITIZENS PANEL HIGHLIGHTS COMMUNITY-DRIVEN HEALTH PRIORITIES

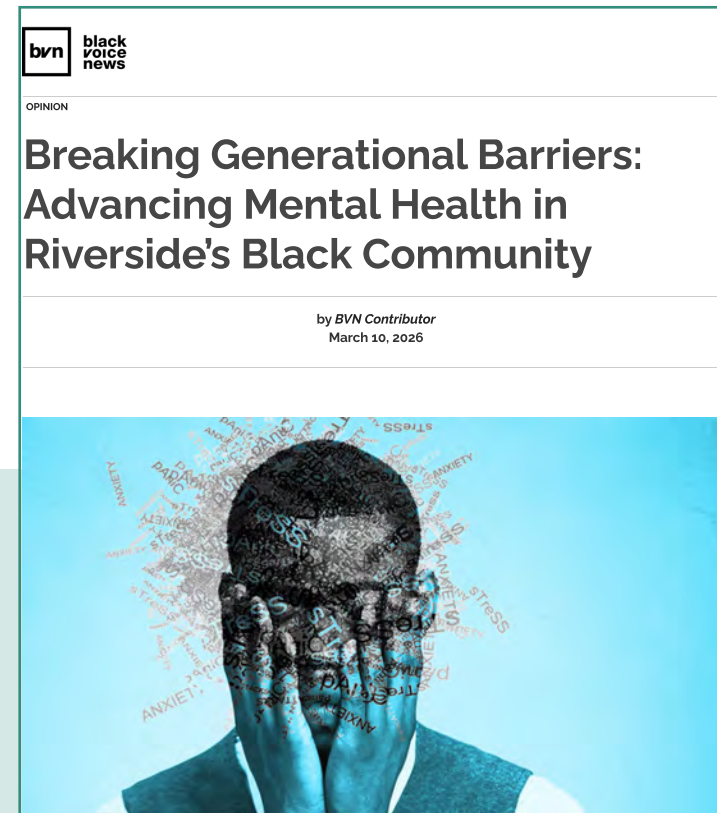
In partnership with Michelle Burroughs, DHA, MPH, Andrew Subica, PHD, and Aerika Loyd PHD, graduate student researchers (GSRs) Leilani Tull and Ashley Trinidad, and PhD candidate Chelsea McElwee, CHC hosted an African American Citizens Panel focused on understanding the health priorities and lived experiences of African American residents in Riverside.

The discussion created a space for community members and leaders to openly share concerns surrounding environmental, social, and systemic inequities that continue to impact health outcomes within African American communities. Through meaningful dialogue and reflection, participants identified key barriers to health and wellness while also discussing opportunities for change and community-driven solutions.

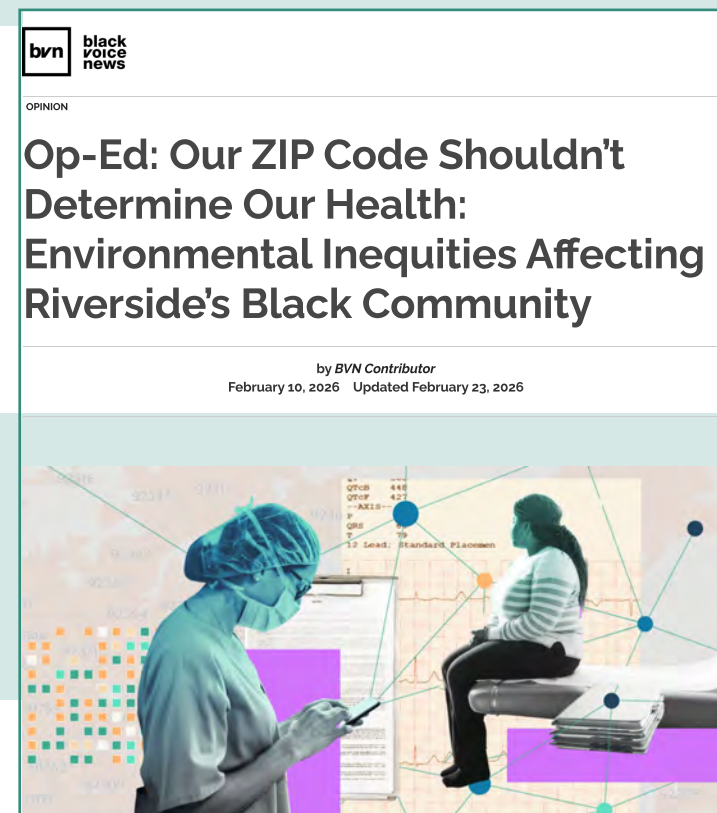
Three major priorities consistently emerged across all discussion groups:

- Mental health
- Racism in healthcare
- Environmental health disparities

The Citizens Panel reinforced the importance of engaging community voices in research and decision-making processes. Insights gathered from the discussion will help inform future research, partnerships, and community-centered strategies aimed at advancing health equity in Riverside and beyond.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE

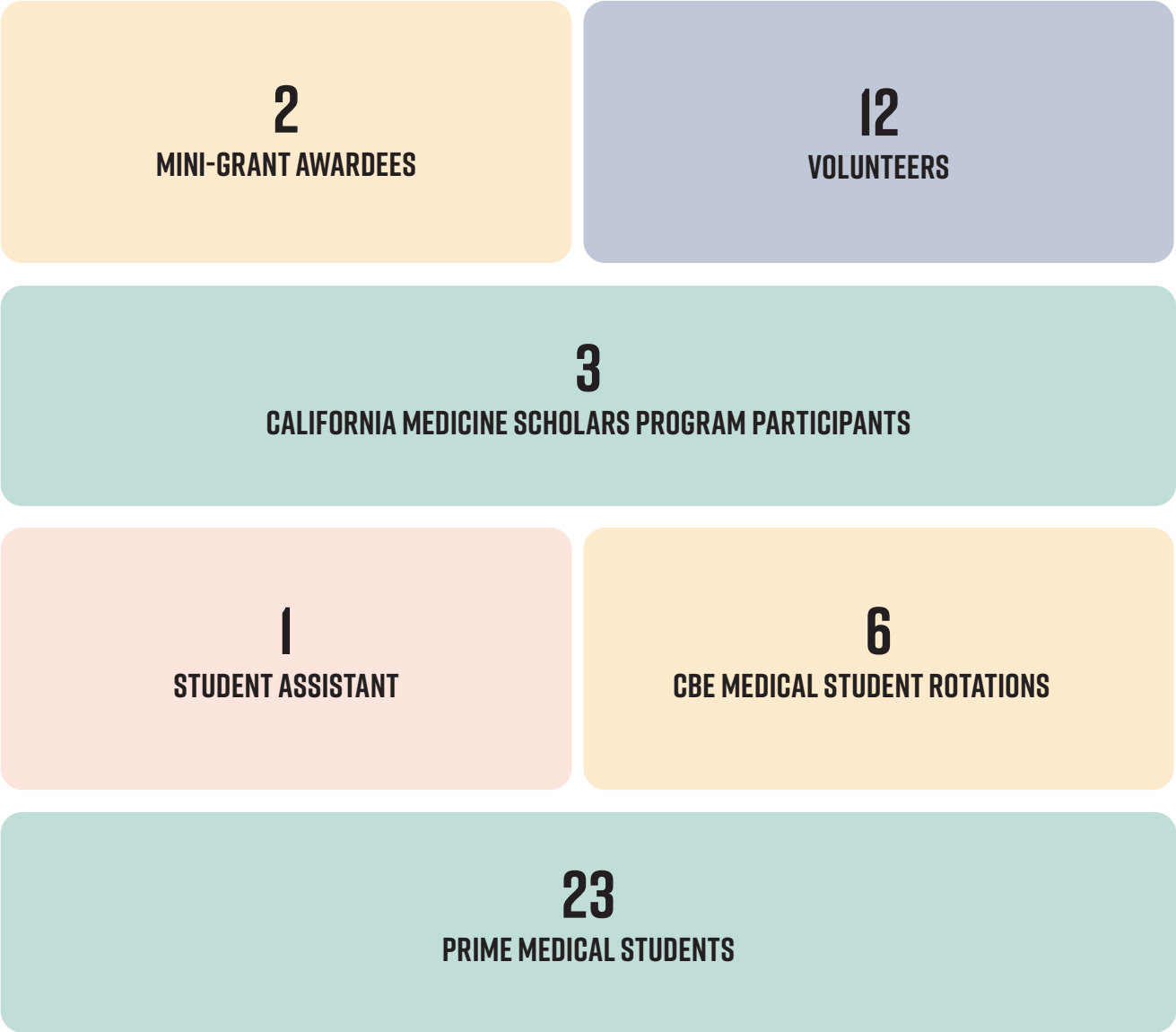


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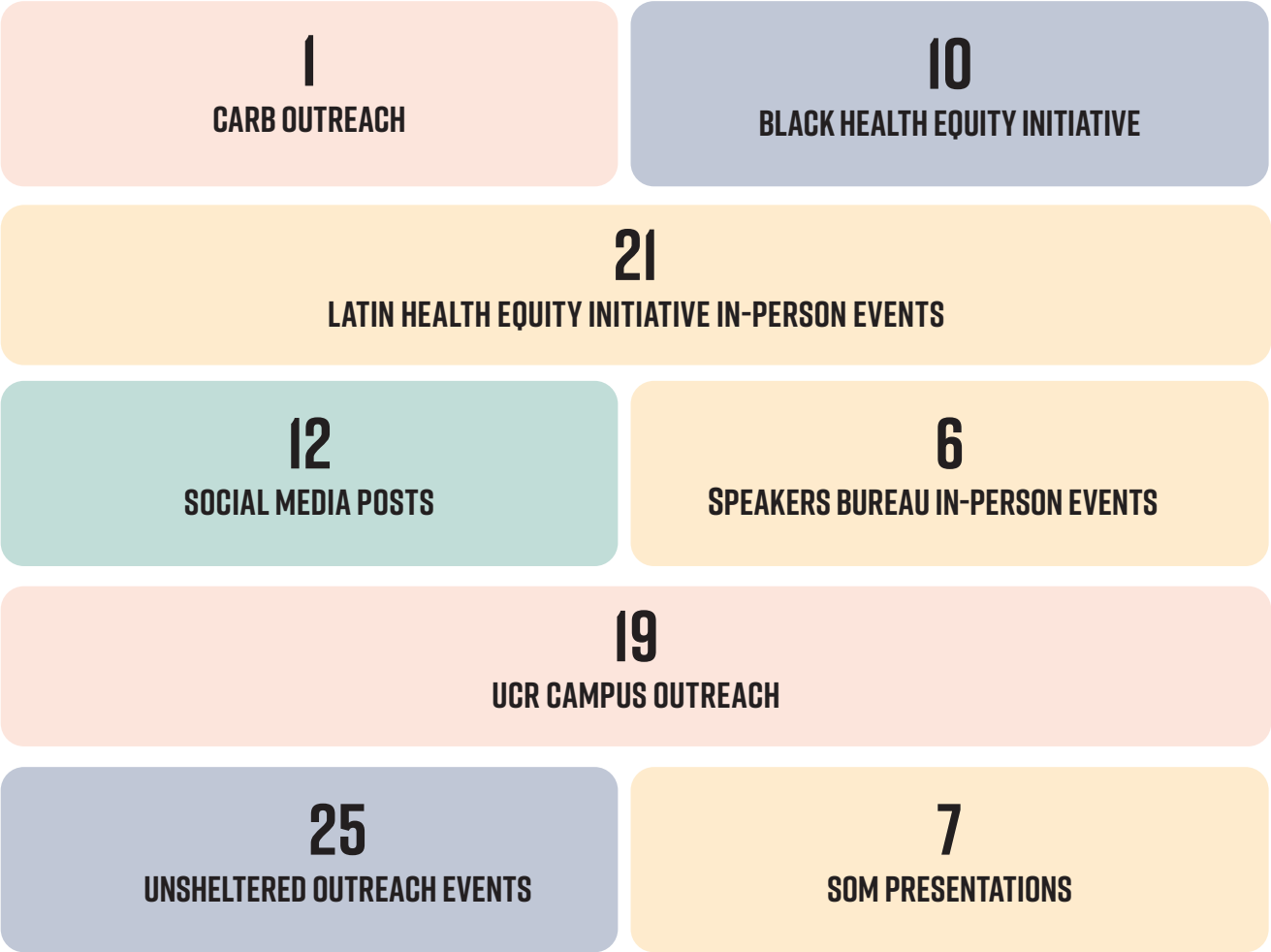
GOALS ACHIEVED

At CHC, our long-term goal is to create synergies with UCR’s campus community and community partners to improve the health outcomes of the Inland Empire California region and move the needle in advancing health equity for all.

CONTRIBUTE TO TRAINING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY



CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY



CONTRIBUTE TO TRAINING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY



THANK YOU

To our community, who has welcomed and partnered with CHC, and joined our calls to action for social transformation. Your support and dedication to improving the health outcomes of our communities inspires hope and creates opportunities for a better tomorrow.



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