

# Promoting Health Equity

Issue 13 • June 2021



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## Quote of the Month

*"During LGBTQ+ Pride Month, we recognize the resilience and determination of the many individuals who are fighting to live freely and authentically," Biden wrote in a presidential proclamation declaring June Pride Month. "In doing so, they are opening hearts and minds, and laying the foundation for a more just and equitable America."*

— Statement by President Joe Biden, June 1, 2021

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## FACT SHEET: The Biden-Harris Administration Champions LGBTQ+ Equality and Marks Pride Month

*The White House, June 1, 2021*

President Biden issued a proclamation affirming June 2021 as

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) Pride Month, marking a time a time of hope, progress, and promise for LGBTQ+ Americans across the country. After four years of relentless attacks on LGBTQ+ rights, the Biden-Harris Administration has taken historic actions to accelerate the march toward full LGBTQ+ equality. From protecting the civil rights of every LGBTQ+ American, enabling all qualified Americans—including transgender Americans—to serve their country in uniform, ensuring that LGBTQ+ Americans are leaders at every level of the federal government, to protecting and defending the human rights of LGBTQ+ persons around the world, the Biden-Harris Administration is a consistent and reliable partner in the fight for equality at home and abroad.

Too many LGBTQ+ Americans across our nation continue facing discrimination and hate, especially LGBTQ+ people of color and transgender Americans, and some states are attempting to roll back the clock on equality with discriminatory bills that target LGBTQ+ people and families. The Biden-Harris Administration reaffirms that no one should face discrimination or harassment because of who they are or whom they love.

As President Biden said during his first joint address to Congress, the President has the back of LGBTQ+ people across the country and will continue fighting for full equality for every American - including through continuing to urge the U.S. Senate to pass the Equality Act and provide overdue civil rights protections to LGBTQ+ people and families across the country.

This Pride Month, the Biden-Harris Administration celebrates the historic progress made towards LGBTQ+ equality since President Biden took office.

**Learn more:**

[\*\*FACT SHEET: The Biden-Harris Administration Champions LGBTQ+ Equality and Marks Pride Month\*\*](#), The White House, June 1, 2021

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## **In the News: FDA Commits to Evidence-Based Actions Aimed at Saving Lives and Preventing Future Generations of Smokers**

### **Tobacco & Health Equity**

*FDA News Release, April 29, 2021*

***Efforts to ban menthol cigarettes, ban flavored cigars build on previous flavor ban and mark significant steps to reduce addiction and youth experimentation, improve quitting, and address health disparities.***

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced it is committing to advancing two tobacco product standards to significantly reduce disease and death from using combusted tobacco products, the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.

The FDA is working toward issuing proposed product standards within the next year to ban menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes and ban all characterizing flavors (including menthol) in cigars; the authority to adopt product standards is one of the most powerful tobacco regulatory tools Congress gave the agency. This decision is based on clear science and evidence establishing the addictiveness and harm of these products and builds on important, previous actions that banned other flavored cigarettes in 2009.

*“Banning menthol—the last allowable flavor—in cigarettes and banning all flavors in cigars will help save lives, particularly among those disproportionately affected by these deadly products. With these actions, the FDA will help significantly reduce youth initiation, increase the chances of smoking cessation among current smokers, and address health disparities experienced by communities of color, low-income populations, and LGBTQ+ individuals, all of whom are far more likely to use these tobacco products,” said Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock, M.D.*

*“For far too long, certain populations, including African Americans, have been targeted, and disproportionately impacted by tobacco use. Despite the tremendous progress we’ve made in getting people to stop smoking over the past 55 years, that progress hasn’t been experienced by everyone equally,” said Mitch Zeller, J.D., director of the FDA’s Center for Tobacco Products. “These flavor standards would reduce cigarette and cigar initiation and use, reduce health disparities, and promote health equity by addressing a significant and disparate source of harm. Taken together, these policies will help save lives and improve the public health of our country as we confront the leading cause of preventable disease and death.”*

Learn more:  
[FDA News Release](#)

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## Snapshot: Making Multifamily Housing Smoke-Free for His Community

### Healthy Environments & Health Equity

Dominic Aliano, Vice Mayor of Concord, CA championed the city’s smoke-free multifamily housing ordinance, which prohibits smoking inside units of all

apartments. In January 2021, the ordinance went into full effect and all tenants who live in multifamily housing are no longer able to smoke in their units or in spaces near other units, even if it is outdoors.



*“This legislation and ones like it are really important for people, especially those in the communities that I represent, who are mostly renters in multi-family housing complexes,” he said. “Sometimes landlords take advantage of those families. It’s about making sure that you put policies in place that make sure they are in a healthy environment regardless of who they are or how much money they make.”*

**Read his story:**

Salud America!

[Dominic Aliano: Making Multifamily Housing Smoke-Free for His Community](#)

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## Featured Campaign: Vaping Historietas

**Increasing Awareness. Safer Homes.**



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

**Learn more:**

Secondhand Vaping Historietas

English videos: [www.vapingfactcheckvc.org](http://www.vapingfactcheckvc.org)



## Inspiration: Student from Migrant Family Overcomes Many Hurdles to Make it to UCLA

### A Shining Star

*This story is part of a series of profiles the Ventura County Office of Education is presenting about outstanding graduating seniors in the Class of 2021. Read this inspirational profile.*

Imagine four students attending class remotely on their computers from the same small hotel room for a month. That was the reality for Maria Oregel Lopez and her siblings after a fire displaced her family from their Oxnard apartment earlier this year. “There were six of us living in one room with two beds,” she recalls. “It was pretty chaotic.”

The fire was just the latest in a series of challenges that haven’t stopped this Oxnard High School senior from achieving her goals. When she was seven years old, her father was deported to Mexico and all but disappeared from her life. Later, her mom suffered an injury that forced her to give up her job picking crops.

Maria realized from a young age that education was the key to building a better life, and she threw herself into her studies. Her hard work and determination are paying off in a big way. She is about to graduate near the top of her high school class, and she’ll be attending UCLA this fall.

Throughout high school, Maria also shined beyond her academic achievements. She threw discus and shot put on the school’s track and field team. She also participated in debate competitions for students from migrant families and helped her team make it to the state competition. “It really helped my presentational skills,” she says. “Having to present in front of judges made me more open to talking in front of people.”

Maria was also very involved in her school’s AVID Club, which gives students from underrepresented groups extra support to help them get into college. She eventually rose to become the club’s president, and she credits club director Wendy Henchy with helping make her college dreams a reality. “She’s always been there for me, guiding me. She helped me a lot with my college applications.”

So, what’s her secret to refusing to be knocked down by the roadblocks that have been thrown at her? “The main thing for me is not complaining about it when taking all of these hits,” she says. “It’s just one of those things you have to deal with and not get caught up in it.”

Maria intends to pursue a career as an attorney and practice family law. “I want to be able to help kids when their parents divorce and they feel displaced.” she says. We have no doubt this star senior will achieve whatever she sets her mind to.

**Read her story:**

[Student from Migrant Family Overcomes Many Hurdles to Make it to UCLA](#)

Ventura County Office of Education

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## Featured Resources

[CalHOPE](#) offers safe, secure, and culturally sensitive emotional support for all Californians who may need support relating to COVID-19.



[Empowering Pacific Islander Communities \(EPIC\)](#)

advances social justice by engaging Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities through culturally relevant advocacy, research, and leadership development.



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## Upcoming Events

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

**Advancing Awareness in LGBTQ Care, Part 1: History of Specialized Treatment for LGBTQ+ Clients**

June 18, 12:00pm - 2:00pm, ET

NAADAC

[Register](#)

**Health Equity Series: Partnering with Communities of Color to Mitigate COVID-19**

June 23, 11:00am - 12:00pm, CT

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

[Register](#)

**Advancing Awareness in LGBTQ Care, Part 2: LGBTQ Youth, Community & Alcohol Misuse**

July 16, 12:00pm, ET

NAADAC

[Register](#)

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**Nominate a Driver of Change**

# Share your Stories

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



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

## **Learn more:**

Social Determinants of Health, Drivers of Change  
[www.healthequityvc.org/drivers-of-change](http://www.healthequityvc.org/drivers-of-change)

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## Stay Connected

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

### **Social Determinants of Health**

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

[www.healthequityvc.org](http://www.healthequityvc.org)

### **Ventura County Limits**

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

[www.venturacountylimits.org](http://www.venturacountylimits.org)

### **Ventura County Behavioral Health**

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

[vcbh.org](http://vcbh.org)

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## Contact Us

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