

Promoting Health Equity

Issue 18 • November 2021



Inspiration of the Month

Proclamation on the Death of General Colin Powell, The White House, October 18, 2021

"General Colin Powell was a patriot of unmatched honor and dignity. The son of immigrants, born in New York City, raised in Harlem and the South Bronx, a graduate of the City College of New York, he rose to the highest ranks of the United States military and to advise four Presidents. He believed in the promise of America because he lived it. And he devoted much of his life to making that promise a reality for so many others. He embodied the highest ideals of both warrior and diplomat. He led with his personal commitment to the democratic values that make our country strong. He repeatedly broke racial barriers, blazing a trail for others to follow, and was committed throughout his life to investing in the next generation of leadership. Colin Powell was a good man who I was proud to call my friend, and he will be remembered in history as one of our great Americans.

— Statement of President Joe Biden on the Passing of General Colin Powell

Featured Video: Secondhand Vaping: Why Tiny Particles are a Big Problem



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.

The message behind the campaign is that Secondhand Vaping is like secondhand smoking - when someone vapes indoors, it affects other people too - especially children. Your vape contains a lot of unknown and potentially harmful substances. You might decide you want to vape anyway, but what about the people around you? What about the people you love? Some people are particularly sensitive to being harmed by the substances in secondhand vape - there are simple things you can do to protect them.

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

English videos:

www.vapingfactcheckvc.org

Spanish videos:

www.vapeoverificado.org

**Driver of Change: Interview with
Anita Catapusan, Behavioral Health Manager,**

VCBH Substance Use Services

A Dedication to Service



Every issue we feature stories of individuals and agencies that are making a difference in their communities during this time of COVID-19. Today we are talking with Anita Catapusan, Behavioral Health Manager, VCBH Substance Use Services.

How did you get interested in the field of Substance Use Services? When did you get involved with your work at VCBH?

Anita: It started when I was in college for my Bachelor of Science in Nursing. During my internship in mental health and substance abuse programs, I became interested in helping patients with mental health and substance use disorders and got involved in this field. I moved from the Philippines to the United States in 1991 and immediately worked in mental health and substance use. It's been 30 years since I began working in this field. I started in the geriatric psychiatric unit and adult mental health unit and transitioned to youth services and substance use services.

I worked for three different mental health acute hospitals within the county before I decided to work for the County of Ventura. When I started at the county in 2003, I was hired as a Utilization Review Nurse in Alcohol and Drug Programs (now Substance Use Services). In 2007, I became the Clinic Administrator for Oxnard ADP, Fillmore ADP and New Start for Moms program. I managed the Oxnard DUI program for three years prior to becoming a Behavioral Health Manager in 2017 to manage the Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System of Care for the department.

I oversee the Beneficiary Substance Use Services (SUS) Access and Care Coordination Services, Drug-MediCal-Organized Delivery Services (DMC-ODS), and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

under Substance Use Services. I also oversee the Behavioral Health Integration 3.3 and DMC-ODS Plan for Ventura County Services Providers. The Drug Medi-Cal Program offers outpatient treatment, medication assistance treatment, intensive outpatient treatment, withdrawal management, residential services, recovery support, case management and care coordination. The program is about continuity of care and assistance to the Ventura County beneficiaries who may need substance use services.

What is your passion for working in this field?

Anita: When I was in nursing school I always was fascinated with working in mental health and substance use services. It's the dedication to help, the compassion to help, that drives me. When we help clients, I see how the coordination of care can be successful. I see how an individual can receive withdrawal management, residential services, intensive outpatient, and outpatient services, and complete treatment successfully. They get their lives back, their children, jobs and their families. That's what keeps me going, helping helping clients to get a chance to recover from the disease of addiction.

How are you addressing issues of Health Equity in your work?

Anita: English is my second language and I see that often people cannot understand me. You must respect people, who they are, what they are, and learn to be compassionate towards others. Everyone is unique and different. One must learn to accept and respect that. It is important to educate people about equity.

What areas do you hope to make changes in?

Anita: There is so much stigma about mental health and substance use. I'm hoping to help reduce that stigma within our community and to educate more people about the services that are available to the community. I want to help connect people to services. I am also very interested in workforce development.

Tell us something that helps us get to know you better?

Anita: I am a mother of three and have been married for 31 years. I have three children, ages 19, 23 and 28 and am very proud of them. I raised them to have faith and respect for others. I am very fond of my two dogs, Koda and Jazmin. I enjoy country line dancing and love cooking Filipino food. Helping people is a dedication of mine. It takes patience, compassion and integrity. Public service is a calling and not everyone gets the opportunity to be in this position.

If you could give a closing remark for or words of inspiration for the community during this time, what would it be?

Anita: That it will get better. There is always light. This pandemic is hard for everybody but all we must be strong and have faith and know that there is always tomorrow and hope that it will get better. I really appreciate all the hardworking and dedicated staff in the Access and Care Coordination Team during this time of the pandemic. The team has gone above and beyond to help our clients during this challenging time.

For more information:

[VCBH Brochure](#)

VCBH.org

Substance Use Services Access Line: 1-800-385-9200

Thank you Anita for sharing your experience with us. You are an inspiring Driver of Change!



Featured Local Resources

We are featuring new resources regularly on the website at www.healthequityvc.org/resources. Healthy Equity resources include behavioral health, education, health equity, healthy communities, housing, racial equity, tobacco prevention, local Ventura County resources, and more.

Food Share Ventura County

foodshare.com/covid19

COVID-19 Vaccine Information

www.venturacountyrecovers.org

Housing is Key

housing.ca.gov

Featured Resource: Nothing About Us Without Us.

Can Area-Based Social Indices Effectively Advance Health Equity?

From California Pan-Ethnic
Health Network

“When our migrant communities who speak indigenous languages are asked to mark their race/ethnicity, there is no current race/ethnicity question that allows them the



California Pan-Ethnic
HEALTH NETWORK

opportunity to identify as Mixteco, or Zapoteco, etc. It was only this past year in 2020 where our community was able to self-identify in this manner with a pre-filled box. Whereas before it was leading to confusion on marking Latino/a or White or leaving us to the option of “other,” further othering us instead of uplifting us because there was not an option to list which “other” community we were from, and even more there are no services in their primary/preferred language. Our indigenous communities are rarely reflected on these maps.”

— Vanessa Teran, Policy & Communications Associate,
Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)

Disparities in health outcomes and life expectancy persist for California’s communities of color, LGBTQ+ and individuals with disabilities, despite concerted efforts to address them. As COVID-19 cases and deaths accumulate, disproportionately impacting communities of color, the imperative to address these disparities has never been more urgent.

National, state and local policymakers including those at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the State of California are increasingly using quantitative tools like area-based social indices to identify and prioritize disadvantaged communities during and beyond the public health crisis. These indices can be helpful tools in identifying and targeting interventions to certain at-risk populations. However, questions remain about their effectiveness in directly addressing racial disparities and health inequities.

To better understand the strengths and limitations of area-based social indices, CPEHN conducted an analysis of California’s recent COVID-19 response strategies which relied on these tools to address COVID-19 inequities.

Read the Report

[Nothing About Us Without Us. Can Area-Based Social Indices Effectively Advance Health Equity?](#)

California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

About CPEHN

We bring together and mobilize communities of color to advocate for public policies that advance health equity and improve health outcomes in our communities.

Featured Resources: White House Proclamations Related to Health Equity

Executive Order on White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans

Over the course of America’s history, Black Americans have

helped to build, strengthen, and lead our Nation towards becoming a more perfect Union. Although for far too long, Black Americans were denied even the most basic access to education, the vital contributions of Black Americans in the fields of science, academia, business, and public service, among others, are a testament to the resilience of Black Americans and the steps our Nation has taken to expand access to education and opportunity.

It is the policy of my Administration to advance educational equity, excellence, and economic opportunity for Black Americans and communities from early childhood until their chosen career.

[Read the Proclamation](#)

Executive Order on the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities

It is the policy of my Administration to advance equity, excellence, and justice in our Nation's education system and to further Tribal self-governance, including by supporting activities that expand educational opportunities and improve educational outcomes for all Native American students. My Administration will help expand opportunities for Native American students to learn their Native languages, histories, and cultural practices; promote indigenous learning through the use of traditional ecological knowledge; and enhance access to complete and competitive educations that prepare Native American students for college, careers, and productive and satisfying lives.

[Read the Proclamation](#)

In the News: San Jose to Ban Smoking Inside Apartments, Selling of Flavored Tobacco Products

Protecting Youth from Secondhand Smoke

From Salud America!

Lots of small cities in California have taken two big steps to protect youth from smoking addiction and secondhand smoke —banning flavored tobacco products and smoking inside all apartment homes.



Now San Jose will become the state's largest city to take both steps. "An estimated 44 percent to 53 percent of multi-unit housing residents that do not allow smoking in their home, have experienced secondhand smoke infiltration in their home from elsewhere in or around the building," according to the American

Lung Association. San Jose is joining over 60 other cities in California in adopting smoke-free policies for multifamily housing. Public health and civil rights groups have long argued people of color have been disproportionately harmed by flavored, menthol cigarettes. The tobacco industry has targeted its ads at Black and Latino communities for decades.

Learn more:

[In the News: San Jose to Ban Smoking Inside Apartments, Selling of Flavored Tobacco Products](#)

Salud America!

Salud America! is a national Latino-focused organization that creates culturally relevant and research-based stories, videos, and tools to inspire people to start and support healthy changes to policies, systems, and environments where Latino children and families can equitably live, learn, work, and play.

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

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

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

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

About Us

Supporting Health - Preventing Harm

Ventura County Behavioral Health, Substance Use Services - Prevention, works upstream to reduce alcohol and drug-related problems in our community. Initiatives are aimed at limiting harms related to impaired driving; underage and binge drinking; marijuana and vaping, especially as it relates to harms to youth; prescription drug abuse; and addressing health disparities among vulnerable populations.

A primary goal is to delay the onset of first use of alcohol and or other drugs by youth. We collaborate with schools, parent groups, government agencies, medical partners, law enforcement and community-based organizations.

Contact Us

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STAY CONNECTED

