

Promoting Health Equity

Issue 21 • February 2022

**“Everybody
can be
great...
because
anybody
can serve.”**

- Martin Luther King Jr.

Celebrating Black History Month February 2022

A Proclamation on National Black History Month, 2022

Each February, National Black History Month serves as both a celebration and a powerful reminder that Black history is American history, Black culture is American culture, and Black stories are essential to the ongoing story of America — our faults, our struggles, our progress, and our aspirations. Shining a light on

Black history today is as important to understanding ourselves and growing stronger as a Nation as it has ever been. That is why it is essential that we take time to celebrate the immeasurable contributions of Black Americans, honor the legacies and achievements of generations past, reckon with centuries of injustice, and confront those injustices that still fester today.

As we celebrate National Black History Month, let us all recommit ourselves to reach for that founding promise. Let us continue to fight for the equity, opportunity, and dignity to which every Black American is due in equal measure. Let us carry forward the work

to build an America that is, in the beautiful words of the poet Amanda Gorman, “Bruised, but whole — benevolent, but bold, fierce, and free.”

—JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

[Proclamation on National Black History Month, 2022](#), The White House, January 31, 2022

Driver of Change: Interview with Lisa Safaeinili, Executive Director, Westminster Free Clinic

Serving the Needs of Families



Every issue we feature stories of individuals and agencies that are making a difference in their communities during these challenging times since COVID-19. Today we are talking with Lisa Safaeinili, M.P.H., Executive Director, Westminster Free Clinic.

Since 2002, Lisa has been the Executive Director of the Westminster Free Clinic. She has been able to grow the organization from serving the needs of 500 homeless patients/year to serving the health needs of over 12,000 uninsured working poor and homeless families of Ventura County each year. In addition to growing the many free medical services offered by the Clinic, Lisa has spearheaded many programs and services addressing the social determinants of health and whole person care over the past 20 years.

How did you get interested in your field of work?

Lisa: From a young age I was interested in fitness and nutrition but what solidified my interest was my summer work experience at Cooperative Extension in Delaware County, NY when I was 17. I was hired to develop nutrition education programs for children and adults in rural, low-income communities in upstate New York through a special program funded through Cornell University. I knew from then on that I wanted a profession where I could help

people be well and healthy.

What is your passion for working in the community?

Lisa: I believe everyone should have the opportunity to be well and thrive and that all young people should have the resources and supports necessary to succeed academically and reach their goals.

How are you specifically addressing issues of Health Equity in your work and your community? How are you making a difference?

Lisa: For over 20 years I have been the Executive Director of Westminster Free Clinic & Community Care Center (WFC). In 2000 I received my first 3-year grant from The California Endowment that helped me launch our whole person, public health approach to health equity and access to health care. From the beginning we addressed the social determinants of health including health care access, emotional and social supports, economic supports, environmental change, education equity, and empowering the Latino community to lead and serve their community, starting with the youth who are part of our leadership team.

A core part of our mission is to empower youth to learn about health care and promote healthy lifestyles so they can support the health of their uninsured families and so they can expand their view of what they can do when they graduate from high school. Our program has grown over the years to include 200 high school students, 50 college students, and hundreds of medical and non-medical volunteers annually. We are making a lasting difference on many levels.

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

Lisa: All of our first generation, low-income teens obtaining advanced education after high school that leads to high paying jobs with health insurance. All of the low-income immigrant families staying mentally and physically well so they can work, buy food, stay housed and care for their family in a healthy way.

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

Lisa: I was only able to attend college thanks to the help of many mentors, many scholarships and working four part-time jobs. While I was in graduate school I was uninsured and in a car accident. I was stabilized at the hospital and then released because I did not have health insurance and had no money to pay the bill. My college professors raised money and sent me to Mayo Clinic in Rochester Minnesota to get the health care I needed. Thanks to these generous people, I was able to get better and return to college to finish my degree. Through the work I do, I feel grateful that I can pay forward the gift I was given of an education and access to health care. I know how stressful it is to have many barriers in the way.

If you could give a closing remark for or words of inspiration for

the community during this time, what would it be?

Lisa: I love Ghandi's quote "Be the change you want to see in the world." Our staff at WFC is 95% volunteer, including our medical professionals. There are many caring and kind people, from many different backgrounds in this world and in Ventura County, who want to make a difference and will do so when given the opportunity.

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

Learn more:

Lisa Safaeinili, M.P.H.

Executive Director, Westminster Free Clinic

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Featured Resources

Latino Coalition for a Healthy California (LCHC)



Founded in 1992, the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California (LCHC) is the only Latinx-led statewide policy and advocacy organization protecting and advancing Latinx health equity. We are a cross-sector coalition of community leaders, advocates, policy advisors, administrators and providers united by our common belief in protecting Latinx health and advancing health equity for all. Our work consists of community-centered programming, policy and advocacy development, and strategic communications.

Learn more:

lchc.org

Resources for Farm Workers

UFW Foundation

For 15 years, the UFW Foundation has mobilized farm workers and their organizations across the country to

advocate for more equitable policies, such as immigration reform, pesticide protections, heat standards, hazard pay, and other worker protections. We engage constituents in systemic change to break the cycle of poverty while also providing critical services.

Learn more:

[UFW Foundation](#)

[Human Services Agency](#)

Recursos Para Trabajadores Agrícolas

\$1,000 ASISTENCIA FINANCIERA

¿Qué recursos están disponibles?

- Asistencia financiera GRATIS
- Transporte GRATIS
- Estancia GRATUITA en un hotel por 14 días
- Revisión de salud GRATIS
- Alimentos GRATIS

¿Quién podría calificar?

Trabajadores agrícolas del condado de Ventura que han estado expuestos o han dado positivo por COVID-19 en los últimos 14 días.

- Trabajadores de campo
- Trabajadores de viveros o invernaderos
- Trabajadores de empacado de alimentos

Centro de Información de la Comunidad UFW
Domingo - Viernes de 9AM - 5PM

1-877-881-8281

ufwfoundation.org & siapuede.org

Resources for Farm Workers

\$1,000 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

What resources are available?

- FREE Financial Assistance
- FREE Transportation
- FREE Food
- FREE Hotel up to 14 Days
- FREE Health Check-ups

Who could qualify?

Farm workers from Ventura County who have been exposed to or tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

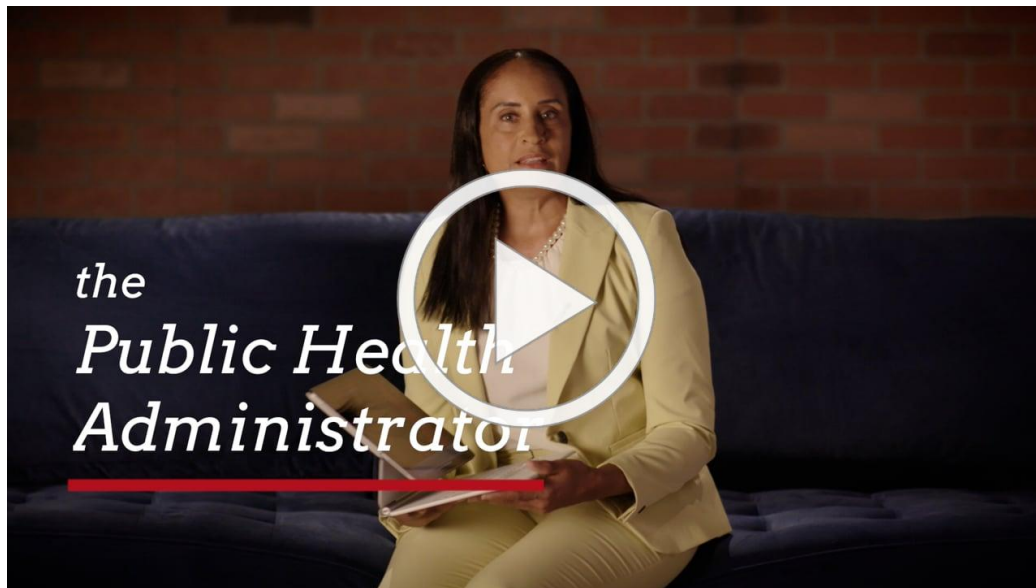
- Field Workers
- Nursery Workers
- Food Packing Plant Workers

UFW Foundation Call Center
Sunday - Friday from 9AM - 5PM

1-877-881-8281

ufwfoundation.org & siapuede.org

Spotlight: Fentanyl is Forever Campaign



Reflecting the United States struggles with tragic drug overdoses exceeding 100,000 deaths in 12 months, Ventura County's local accidental fatal overdoses have also risen dramatically. In both cases, the increases are driven and sustained by illegal fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid that has flooded the illicit drug supply.

In response to the covert dangers of fentanyl, Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) just released a new community campaign, "Fentanyl is Forever" (English) and "El Fentanilo es para Siempre" (Spanish). The prevention messages unfold through five diverse short stories that allow people to experience and understand the risks of fentanyl to their friends, families, and communities. In addition to warning the public about the dangers of fentanyl, viewers are then linked to local resources for more information and help.

The goals of the campaign are to increase awareness of fentanyl risks and its impact on communities, and to decrease the stigma related to talking about substance misuse and addiction. It complements messaging related to naloxone preparedness and substance use disorder treatment.

Learn more:

Campaign Websites

www.FentanylVenturaCounty.org - English

www.FentaniloVentura.com - Spanish

Ventura County Responds

www.venturacountyresponds.org/preventing-overdose

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

www.healthequityvc.org

Ventura County Limits

www.venturacountylimits.org

Ventura County Behavioral Health

vcbh.org

Nominate a Driver of Change

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! It enriches our newsletters to feature our local heroes and gives us inspiration.



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

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

