

Riverside County Health Coalition Meeting | October 15, 2025

Meeting Notes

Present: Irene Hjelmervik, Mary Obedeyi, Daisy Ramirez-Bell, and 91 other attendees (in-person & virtual)- 44 online, 47 in-person
Next meeting: January 21, 2026, from 10:00 am – 12:30pm

Scribe: James Jo, RUHS-Public Health

Welcoming Remarks and Introduction:

Irene Hjelmervik, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- Irene warmly welcomed attendees to the coalition meeting, setting a collaborative tone right from the start.
- The October agenda was shared with members, ensuring everyone was aligned on the key agenda topics.
- Housekeeping guidelines were highlighted.
- The mission and purpose of the RCHC meeting were presented, followed by a clear presentation of RCHC's mission and purpose.
- Engaging polls were conducted to identify diverse sectors represented in the room, with each sector making their unique noise with provided noisemakers.

Land Acknowledgement

Dr. Sean Milanovich, University of CA at Riverside

- A short video clip of Dr. Milanovich introducing the land acknowledgment, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all people and the importance of working together, was shown to the coalition.
- Irene read the Land Acknowledgement, recognizing the various native tribes of the region.

Presentation: Youth Leadership Institute

Ashley Vega, Staff

Danna Garcia, Staff

- Irene introduced the speakers.
- Speakers shared inspiring stories of how students have actively engaged in a range of community initiatives.
- One highlight was the student-led Art Gallery, which showcased their creative works and attracted over 100 attendees.
- It served as a vital haven for youth to express themselves through art centered on mental health, touching on the themes of healing, resilience, and identity.
- Data Walk was highlighted. Students conducted surveys on the local environment and engaged in a narrative campaign to spotlight key findings, including air quality challenges in the ECV-Thermal, CA area.
- A compelling short video clip illustrated how environmental threats like pollution are taking a toll on community health.
- The team unveiled a Public Service Announcement (PSA) born from on-the-ground visits to document polluting land uses across the ECV.

- Speakers showcased the Zines—a longstanding work of the Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI)—which weave together explorations of environmental justice, mental health, and shared stories from their communities.
- They amplify youth and resident voices on the topics they've uncovered, with a special launch slated for October 17th.
- These efforts honor the community by casting a warm light on the places and people that make it resilient and strong.

Q & A

- **How can coalition help to amplify your work?** Coalition can play a pivotal role in amplifying our efforts by actively listening to the voices and stories of youth, while maintaining an open-minded approach to integrating these insights.
- **How can we view the results of your work?** The outcomes of our initiatives are showcased through our social media platforms and the data visualizations presented during today's session. A QR code has been shared, providing direct access to the organization's comprehensive resources.
- **Have you present to local leadership and how was it received?** We are scheduled to present to the local city council next week, with the aim of broadening our commitment to include the wider community.

Presentation: Special Service for Groups, Asian Pacific Counseling and Treatment Center (APCTC)

Harold Custodio, Program Coordinator

Estee Song, Program Coordinator

- Irene gave a brief introduction of the speakers.
- The Asian Pacific Community Training Center (APCTC) operates from its main office in Los Angeles with outreach across surrounding regions. It provides mental health-focused services to adults, children, and diverse populations.
- Key initiatives include the CDC-RUHS COVID-19 Grant, which educated API communities on prevention through four subcontractors. Local outreach emphasized culturally sensitive communication with ethnic groups.
- A needs assessment collected 500 surveys from Inland Empire API residents, partnering with UC Riverside on geospatial maps.
- The CDSS Stop the Hate program offers cultural/arts activities and youth leadership workshops to promote cross-cultural understanding.
- The API VELOCITY program empowers API high school leaders to boost mental health literacy via arts and film production, including student-created films.
- The 10-week KITE Parenting program has reached 1,482 API families with children ages 6-17 since inception.
- The CMHP program addresses mental health needs of older adults, parents, community leaders, and general adults.

Q & A

- **Are programs open to other insurance providers?** Programs are available exclusively to Medi-Cal patients.

- **How do you handle difficult situations?** The intrinsic satisfaction of supporting others provides the resilience needed to navigate challenges effectively.

Break/Networking

Presentation: Respiratory Illness Update by RUHS-Public Health

Misty Plumley, RUHS-Public Health, Immunization Program Chief

- Irene introduced the speaker.
- Misty presented the SMARTER steps for preventing respiratory virus transmission, emphasizing targeted strategies to reduce spread.
- The session also featured an overview of the West Coast Health Alliance's (WCHA) core principles, guiding collaborative public health efforts.
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Respiratory Virus Dashboard, a key resource for residents to access up-to-date immunization data, was presented.
- WCHA's consensus recommendations for the 2025-26 respiratory virus season were shared, providing evidence-based immunization guidance tailored to community needs.
- Participants were encouraged to self-assess their risk, pursue vaccination, prepare in advance, and develop personalized strategies for support and well-being.
- Vaccination remains the most effective measure to prevent serious viral infections—empowering individuals to make informed choices for their health.

Q & A

- **A participant shared a harrowing personal account of contracting severe COVID-19, emphasized the importance of getting vaccinated, and extending appreciation for sharing the essential information regarding vaccines.**

Get Vaccinated PSA

Salomeh Wagaw, RUHS-Public Health, Health Equity Program Director

- A video clip of Salomeh encouraging all to get vaccinated was shared with the coalition.

Coalition Satisfaction Survey

Irene Hjelmervik, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- Irene encouraged all attendees to complete the survey.

Action Group and CHIP Updates

Mary Obedeyi, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- Mary shared that there are no new updates, though additional information will be forthcoming.
- A QR code was shared with attendees to join relevant Action Groups.

Gift Card

Irene Hjelmervik, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- Members were encouraged to share a small win by emailing it to RivCoHealthEquity@ruhealth.org for a chance to win a \$25 gift card.
- The winners of the gift card drawing were announced.

Coalition Members of the Year Award

Irene Hjelmervik, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

Mary Obideyi, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- Coalition Members of the Year Award:
RUHS- Public Health- Curley Palmer
One Legacy- Adriana Jovonov
Sheehan Little Bears Childcare- Marta Sheehan
Youth Leadership Institute- Olivia Rodriguez
HARC- Jenna Lecomte-Hinely
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians- Dr. Sean Milanovich.
- Outstanding Coalition Leadership Award:
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians- Dr. Sean Milanovich
- Salomeh Wagaw, Health Equity Program Director, delivered congratulatory remarks via a pre-recorded video message.
- Dr. Milanovich accepted the Outstanding Leadership Award with brief remarks, followed by a heartfelt native song honoring relatives and the coalition.

Health Equity Updates/Wrap-Up

Irene Hjelmervik, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- Tobacco Control Project (TCP) is collaborating with multiple counties on initiatives to curb tobacco use through policy development.
- Progress continues on the Tobacco Moratorium for Riverside County, addressing tobacco retailers in the area.
- Blue Zones Coachella meeting on November 15, with further details available upon request.
- A town hall is scheduled for October 29 from 1:00–2:00 p.m.
- The latest episodes of the Equitea podcasts are available—tune in for insightful discussions on health equity.
- For ongoing resources, visit the RCHC website's Community Resources and Events section.
- The next RCHC meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2026.
- Irene extended sincere thanks to all attendees for their active participation and contributions.

Meeting adjourned at 12:14 pm.
