

Riverside County Health Coalition Meeting | July 16, 2025

Meeting Notes

Present: Irene Hjelmervik, Miguel Vasquez, and 45 other attendees (in-person & virtual)- 64 online, 45 in-person

Next meeting: October 14, 2025, from 10:00 am – 12:30pm

Scribe: James Jo, RUHS-PH

Welcoming Remarks and Introduction:

Irene Hjelmervik, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

Miguel Vasquez, RUHS-Public Health, Health Equity Urban and Regional Planner

- Irene and Miguel warmly welcomed attendees to the coalition meeting.
- The July meeting agenda was presented to the coalition.
- Housekeeping guidelines were shared with participants.
- The mission, purpose, and objectives of the RCHC meeting were highlighted.
- Interactive polls were conducted to identify represented sectors, with each sector making their unique noise with provided noisemakers.
- The guest speakers were introduced, and the Healthy Jurupa Valley award recipients were acknowledged.
- City of Menifee staff members were recognized.

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: Family Service Association (FSA)

Kim Bustillos-Chacon, HOPE Program Manager

- Kim presented the organization's mission and vision.
- She highlighted services offered at the 10 child development centers, including low-to-no-cost childcare for qualifying families.
- Community Centers and Senior Services support seniors and their families in maintaining independence, including meal services. For details, contact (951) 342-3057.
- Family and Mental Health programs provide parenting classes, CalWORKs Home visitations, and child abuse treatment services.
- The HOPE (Healing, Outreach, Prevention, Education) collaborative was introduced, with monthly regional meetings held regularly.

Q & A

- **What are the requirements for the Child Mental Health program?** Participants must be county residents.

- **What are the qualifications for childcare programs?** Eligibility is based on family income level. For more information, call (951) 779-9623.

Presentation: Blue Zones Project- Riverside

Erin Edwards, Executive Director

Paloma Montes, Public Policy Lead

- Miguel introduced the speakers.
- The purpose and origin of the Blue Zones project were outlined, highlighting five (5) different Blue Zones- Okinawa, Japan; Sardinia, Italy; Ikaria, Greece; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Loma Linda, USA- known for their residents' exceptional longevity and health.
- Paloma outlined nine (9) commonalities shared by residents of the Blue Zones, such as plant-based diets, physical activity, and social ties. Over 80 cities have adopted the Blue Zones project framework.
- Public-private partnerships are critical for the project's success, fostering community engagement and enthusiasm. Implementing health-focused policies is also essential.
- Three pillars of the Blue Zones project to foster healthier, longer-living communities include built-environment, policy, and social network.
- The evaluation focuses on measurable health outcomes, such as lower smoking rates, reduced obesity, and increased life expectancy.
- Lastly, the speakers shared opportunities for participation, including joining local Blue Zones initiatives, volunteering, or advocating for policy changes.

Q & A

- **How was Riverside selected for the Blue Zones Project?** Riverside's selection was driven by the vision and mission of Riverside University Health System-Public Health (RUHS-PH) to become the healthiest county in the nation, aligning with BZP goals.
- **Does the project collaborate with city planners?** Yes, the five-year project requires close collaboration with city officials and planners to implement changes, ensuring long-term success.

Break/Networking

Presentation: Training Occupational Development Educating Communities (TODEC)

Luz Gallegos, Executive Director, TODEC

- Irene introduced the speaker.
- Luz discussed the immigration challenges faced by residents, exacerbated by the current political climate, impacting community well-being.
- TODEC (Training Occupational Development Educating Communities) offers free legal services, including immigration assistance, and advocates for policies to create safe, inclusive communities.
- Legal tools and support are provided to help communities navigate crises. All resources are accessible at www.TODEC.org.

- Luz shared the tragic story of a resident who died by suicide, illustrating the severe emotional and social challenges faced by the community in the region.
- TODEC accepts donations, e.g., groceries, monetary contributions, to support vulnerable residents and sustain its programs.

Q & A

- **Are you addressing the decline in crisis center support by reaching out to local hospitals?** Yes, TODEC has a team bridging resources to community members. Contact us for updates on progress or to access resources.
- **How can we arrange a presentation?** Visit www.TODEC.org, and navigate to the resources section, and request a presentation. Clients can also be referred to our programs.
- **Are translation services available?** Yes, TODEC provides translation services in various indigenous languages as needed.

Action Group and CHIP Updates

Marina Carbajal, RUHS-PH, Program Coordinator II

- Marina briefly introduced the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for Riverside County.
- The purposes of the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and CHIP were explained, emphasizing their roles in identifying and addressing community health needs.
- Marina highlighted why CHIP matters, outlining the most critical health issues facing Riverside County residents. Key priorities include mental health challenges, a shortage of health professionals, and barriers to accessing health care.
- A brief timeline was shared, detailing the process of identifying RCHC priority areas and the developing the CHIP.
- The objectives and activities for the three priority areas- Mental and Behavioral Health, Housing, and Access to Care- were discussed, focusing on actionable strategies to address these issues.
- Marina encouraged attendees to join an action group, emphasizing the importance of community participation in driving CHIP's success.

Breakout Discussion

Mary Obedeyi, Program Coordinator II

- Each action group convened to address the questions provided by the Riverside County Health Coalition, focusing on priorities outlined in the Community Health Improvement Plan.
- Each group shared key themes/insights, identified common challenges and opportunities, and proposed ideas for next steps and future collaboration with the broader coalition.

Survey/Gift Card Activity

Irene Hjelmervik, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- Members were encouraged to complete the Riverside County Health Coalition survey by scanning the QR code.

- To enter a drawing for one of six \$25 gift cards, participants were invited to submit a response detailing how they or their organization can support one of the CHIP priority areas (Mental/Behavioral Health, Housing, Access to Care) and one specific action they will take within the next 30 days to advance a CHIP priority in their community.
- The winners of the gift card drawing were announced during the event.

Health Equity Updates/Wrap-Up

Irene Hjelmervik, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- The next RCHC meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2025.
- Irene thanked all attendees for participating in the coalition meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:23 pm.
