

WE ARE PUBLIC HEALTH

BY CALIFORNIA'S LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS

CHEAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS BEST PRACTICES FOR HEALTH EQUITY, ONGOING WORKFORCE NEEDS

CHEAC hosted its annual conference titled ["Public Health Equity and Readiness Opportunity \(PublicHERO\) - Achieving an Equitable and Resilient Workforce and Recovery"](#) earlier this month. The 2022 event was CHEAC's first in-person annual meeting since the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic began. The annual meeting brought together over 140 public health leaders and professionals representing nearly all of California's local health jurisdictions. The event was an opportunity to network, share best practices, and collaborate on California's efforts to strengthen the governmental public health workforce pipeline, and lead the way in developing and cultivating a workplace centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Learn more about our annual conference and access our extensive conference resources, including best practices and lessons learned, here: [CHEAC Annual Conference Materials.](#)

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Left to Right: Kim Saruwatari, CHEAC President, Public Health Director, Riverside County, Elsa Jimenez, Public Health Director, Monterey County, Deirdra Wilson, Associate Professor, Public Health Program, Touro University California, Michael Rodriguez, Director, California Alliance of Schools and Programs of Public Health, Kamiar Alaei, Chair, Health Science Department, California State University, Long Beach

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a dark top, stands at the front of a room, presenting to a group of people. She is pointing at a flipchart that has some diagrams on it. The audience consists of several people, mostly women, seen from the back or side, some holding notebooks. The room has large windows with blinds in the background.

CHEAC LAUNCHES NEW PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING CENTER TO DEVELOP FUTURE PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS

In September, CHEAC launched the CHEAC Training Center to provide education and professional development to local health departments on leadership, management, and public health topics. CHEAC partnered with UC Davis Continuing and Professional Education to offer courses with support from The California Endowment. Local public health department staff are currently registering for November courses covering a range of topics related to coaching for performance, leading an inclusive organization, and managing a remote team.

LOCAL, STATEWIDE PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS PUSH URGENCY OF #PUBLICHERO WORKFORCE INVESTMENTS

On the heels of CHEAC's annual conference, local and statewide leaders continued to urgently push for California to [dedicate additional #PublicHERO funding](#) to support workforce recruitment and retention and conduct a comprehensive assessment into our current and future workforce needs.

In this [CalMatters article](#), local public health departments report their workforce is aging, primed for retirement, and exhausted from two years of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic emergency response and harassment that ensued. These workforce challenges are compounded by the inability to fill crucial positions due to private sector competition and lack of a highly skilled and technical workforce. California's public health leaders continue to voice concern that without an assessment and strategy in place to address their immediate and long-term workforce needs, the local public health workforce risks further erosion just as new state funding is intended to help begin to rebuild their workforce that was depleted over the past decade and more.

LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECEIVES VIOLENCE PREVENTION GRANT

The U.S. Department of Justice [recently awarded a grant](#) in the amount of \$1.5 million to Contra Costa Public Health's Violence Prevention Program to support countywide efforts to reduce community violence. Funding from this grant will allow Contra Costa Health to provide communities disproportionately affected by violence, poverty and health disparities with supportive services that are informed by evidence-based practices, social determinants of health, and equity principles as drivers of positive social change.

Contra Costa Public Health's Violence Prevention Program works with [community stakeholders](#) including cities, law enforcement and community-based organizations to develop a strategic violence reduction plan and utilize strategies that promote positive social and physical conditions, enhance community resources, bolster economic opportunities, and advance racial equity in an effort to decrease violence-related injury, death, trauma; improve mental/emotional health; and build strong partnerships with the community.



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS RAISE AWARENESS OF WEST NILE VIRUS

Earlier this month, the San Bernardino County Public Health Department reported that mosquitoes collected in the City of San Bernardino [tested positive for West Nile virus](#). San Bernardino's announcement follows the identification of West Nile in other California counties, including [Sacramento](#) and [Santa Clara](#), and the first human case of 2022 that was [identified in Yolo County](#) in early August.

Local public health departments continue to work in coordination with local vector control agencies to reduce the risk of infection. Californians can protect themselves from West Nile virus by [following these tips](#) to prevent mosquito bites and control the presence of mosquitos.

ADDRESSING SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AS A HEALTH EQUITY STRATEGY

California's local public health departments are at the forefront of delivering health equity throughout local communities, oftentimes leading partnerships with community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and local governments to address social determinants of health that contribute to poorer health outcomes.

In Alpine County, the local public health department is deploying a non-conventional and creative approach to address community health and well-being, working with the County Board of Supervisors and the California Indian Legal Services to [address housing concerns](#) for residents with low incomes. Funded by the California Equitable Recovery Initiative (CERI), county public health conducted a survey of residents in historically low-income housing to address issues that could negatively impact health, identifying issues that ranged from water, sewer, and garbage issues to electrical and ventilation problems. Alpine County Public Health also uses their CERI funding to provide community events and activities that promote healthy and active lifestyles and educational initiatives like early childhood literacy.

The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) created the [Equity in Orange County \(EiOC\) Initiative](#) to address health inequities and disparities throughout the county. Their [Office of Population Health and Equity](#) focuses on mobilizing partners and collaborators to advance health equity and address social determinants of health for individuals and underserved communities more impacted by health inequities contributing to COVID-19 health related disparities. Using an improvement science framework, HCA is coordinating with community partners and industry experts to help to reduce health inequities and health disparities, improve health literacy, and identify outcomes and performance outcomes to advance health initiatives.

Building on successful efforts addressing racial equity, the Sacramento County Public Health Department formed a Health and Racial Equity (HRE) unit to advance health and racial equity programs, policies, and practices to address social determinants of health that historically impact Black, Indigenous, and people of color and underserved communities. The HRE unit is developing an equity-focused community partners survey to help inform their community health assessment and guide how to improve community health. Sacramento County Public Health is also partnering with local racial equity consultants to facilitate an organizational assessment, strategic plan, and develop a racial equity action plan to implement racial and health equity efforts throughout their culture, programs, and policies. Taken together, these initiatives will help Sacramento County build the infrastructure needed to support and prioritize health and racial equity.

PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERS ON YOUTH FENTANYL AWARENESS INITIATIVES

In Napa County, members of public health, behavioral health, health care, law enforcement, education, impacted parents, and community-based organizations came together to form the [Napa Opioid Safety Coalition](#) to raise youth awareness on fentanyl and life-saving Narcan. Together, the coalition is leading initiatives on safe opioid prescribing, harm reduction, education, and easy access to treatment, with the Napa County Public Health leading countywide Narcan distribution efforts through the California Department of Health Care Services' Naloxone Distribution Project. Napa County Public Health facilitated the receipt of more than 500 kits of Narcan to coalition partners and community members, and has supported efforts to train staff on Narcan administration and how to identify signs of overdose.

COMMUNITY WELLNESS FAIR SUPPORTS MIGRANT SEASONAL FARMWORKERS

As part of the ongoing COVID-19 emergency response, Siskiyou County Public Health and Modoc County Public Health partnered with state and county representatives on a Community Wellness Fair to support migrant seasonal farmworkers and their families as part of their health equity initiatives. The Community Wellness Fair provided an opportunity for local public health departments to connect disproportionately impacted communities with crucial resources, including COVID-19 vaccines, health checks, and testing services.



Health Checks

Immunizations



COVID-19 Testing

