



## Public Health Health Equity

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### **CBO Collaborative Meeting Summary** Sharon Wang, DO, MSHPE, FIDSA Health Officer

**June 03, 2025**

#### **Purpose**

To enhance outreach and promotion efforts throughout the County by fostering collaboration with community-based partners and trusted messengers.

#### **Public Health Officer Update**

**Speaker: Dr. Sharon Wang, [EquityInAction@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:EquityInAction@dph.sbcounty.gov)**

- Juneteenth is acknowledged as a day that honors the end of slavery in the U.S. and celebrates the resilience of Black Americans. It is recognized not only as a historical milestone, but also as a current call to action in public health highlighting the role of systemic racism in creating and sustaining health disparities in Black communities. The observance reinforces a collective responsibility to pursue equity and ensure that every individual has the opportunity to achieve optimal health and well-being.
- Hepatitis C (HCV or Hep C), offering a clear and accessible overview. Hepatitis C is a liver infection caused by exposure to infected blood or bodily fluids. If it goes untreated, it can lead to lifelong liver disease, liver failure, or cancer. Dr. Wang notes that over 2.4 million people in the U.S. are living with Hep C, though the number is likely higher due to inconsistent screening.
- CDC's current guidelines:
  - All adults 18+ should be screened for HCV at least once in their life
  - All pregnant women should be screened during every pregnancy
  - People with risk factors such as: injection drug use or sharing paraphernalia should be screened more often
- Screening and treating Hep C is framed as both a health intervention and a prevention strategy—helping individuals avoid severe outcomes while reducing community spread.
- 60% of new Hep C cases are related to injection drug use, with one-third of users becoming infected within the first two years. Other transmission routes include shared smoking devices, unscreened blood transfusions prior to 1992, unsafe tattooing or piercing practices, and some organ transplants.
- Hep C no longer affects just one age group. It's now a multi-generational disease, with Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials each representing about one-third of reported cases. In San Bernardino County, infection rates are increasing among people of reproductive age across all genders.
- Testing is accessible and begins with a quick fingerstick that provides results in about 20 minutes. A positive result is followed by a confirmatory blood test. Treatment is available, highly effective, and typically consists of 8–12 weeks of antiviral pills with a 95% cure rate. While treatment is expensive, it is covered by Medi-Cal and Medicare. To initiate treatment, patients need basic lab work, and in some cases, additional imaging or referral to a specialist.

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Delaying treatment can result in costly and severe complications such as cirrhosis or liver cancer. Early detection and treatment significantly reduce these risks and can save thousands in long-term healthcare costs.

- Recommendations for CBOs and partners include:
  - Encouraging healthcare providers to routinely screen for HCV
  - Educating staff and clients about Hep C prevention and treatment
  - Referring individuals to primary care for follow-up
  - Using screening opportunities to also engage in broader STI and primary care linkage
- The **Wellness on Wheels Van** is highlighted as a key local resource, offering free Hep C screening at various sites and assisting with linkage to care.
- In recognition of Pride Month, update focuses on Mpox vaccination. Mpox is a contagious skin condition that can be sexually transmitted. Two doses are required, spaced one month apart. Vaccinations are available through the *Wellness on Wheels Van and Easy Access Clinic* (every Tuesday).

[Sexually Transmitted Diseases – Department of Public Health  
Wellness-on-Wheels-Flyer-1.pdf](#)

## San Bernardino County Department of Public Health - Program Updates

### **Nutrition and Wellness Services: Alexis Chaires, [Alexis.Chaires@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:Alexis.Chaires@dph.sbcounty.gov)**

- *A Taste of Wellness* is a monthly magazine designed to highlight topics related to nutrition, physical activity, and overall wellness. The June edition focuses on summer wellness and incorporates Juneteenth content in collaboration with the Health Equity Program. Upcoming issues will explore themes such as breastfeeding, farmers markets, herbs, and sustainability. Partners are encouraged to submit content and subscribe to receive future editions.
- [Nutrition & Wellness Services – Department of Public Health](#)

### **Preparedness and Response Program (PRP): Naomi Orantes, [Naomi.Orantes@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:Naomi.Orantes@dph.sbcounty.gov)**

- The upcoming quarterly PRP Partnership Meeting on July 2nd in collaboration with ICEMA will provide updates, discussions, and networking opportunities related to emergency preparedness, including topics like extreme heat. Open invitation extended to all interested in emergency response and hospital preparedness.
- [Healthcare Preparedness Planning Partnership – ICEMA](#)

### **Healthy Communities Initiative: Kimberly Smith, [EquityInAction@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:EquityInAction@dph.sbcounty.gov)**

- July is recognized as Extreme Heat Awareness Month, bringing attention to the increasing health risks associated with rising temperatures across Southern California, especially in San Bernardino County.
- Extreme heat is defined as prolonged periods of high temperatures and humidity above 90°F poses significant health threats, particularly to vulnerable populations such as older adults, children, pregnant or breastfeeding individuals, low-income families, and communities of color.
- Climate change is identified as a key driver, acting like a blanket that traps heat and leads to more frequent and intense heat events. The impacts extend beyond heat-related illness and include poor air quality, unsafe water, and mental health stressors making this a public health issue.
- For individuals without reliable access to air conditioning, public spaces are promoted as safe cooling options. These "Cool Places to Go" include malls, libraries, public pools, and community centers. To support this, a Cool Places to Go Map developed in partnership with

the PRP team is available and includes transit route information to improve access for those without transportation.

[San Bernardino County Cool Places to GO](#)

- Additional resources such as free printable materials, toolkits, and social media messaging are also available to help organizations educate and protect their communities. Outreach partners are encouraged to collaborate and share materials at summer events.

[Extreme Heat Information and Resources – Department of Public Health](#)

## HIV Stigma and Hepatitis Awareness Month

**Presenter:** Zayn Endo, [zendo@llu.edu](mailto:zendo@llu.edu)

### HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)

- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) attacks the immune system specifically helper T cells making it harder for the body to fight off infections and disease. It is transmitted through direct contact with certain bodily fluids, including blood, semen, vaginal fluids, breast milk, and rectal secretions. The most common modes of transmission include unprotected sex, sharing needles, and vertical transmission (mother to child).
- HIV is not transmitted through hugging, kissing, sharing food or drinks, or casual contact like coughing or sneezing.
- There is no cure for HIV yet, treatment with antiretroviral therapy (ART) allows individuals to live long and healthy lives. When the virus is suppressed to undetectable levels, it cannot be transmitted—this is known as *U = U* (*Undetectable = Untransmittable*).
- As of 2022, approximately 5,240 people are living with HIV in San Bernardino County, with a death rate of 1.77 per 100,000, higher than the state and national averages. Most cases occur in individuals aged 25–64, with male-to-male sexual contact being the most common mode of transmission. The Latino/Hispanic community bears the highest burden, followed by white and Black residents.

### Hepatitis C

- Hepatitis C, noting its transmission through blood and its long latency period before symptoms or complications emerge. It is often stigmatized as a "drug user's disease," which can lead to delays in diagnosis and treatment. In 2023, San Bernardino County recorded 26 deaths from Hepatitis C, with an average age of death around 62–63 years. Rates in the county are currently lower than the most recent statewide data.

### Understanding and Addressing Stigma:

- Stigma is defined as negative beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes directed at individuals based on characteristics or health conditions. It can be social (gossip, exclusion), structural (laws, policies), or internalized (self-stigma). In the context of HIV and hepatitis, stigma results in discrimination, delays in care, and worsened mental and physical health outcomes.
- Common roots of HIV stigma include:
  - Moral judgments about how a person acquired HIV (e.g., drug use, sexuality)
  - Fear of casual transmission
  - Association with other marginalized identities (e.g., LGBTQ+ communities, people who inject drugs)
- Despite medical advances, public awareness of *U = U* remains low. Many people still carry misconceptions about how HIV is transmitted and express discomfort with the idea of interacting with individuals living with HIV, even in professional settings.

### What Can We Do?

- Use inclusive, stigma-free language ("diagnosed with HIV" instead of "infected with HIV")
- Educate staff and community members about HIV, Hepatitis C, and *U = U*
- Promote testing and linkage to care

- Advocate for funding, policy changes, and equitable access to treatment
- Normalize conversations around HIV and Hepatitis C to reduce shame and misinformation

## CBO Business

**Speaker: Karen Rodriguez,** [EquityInAction@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:EquityInAction@dph.sbcounty.gov)

### July Learning Topic Poll:

1. Overdose Awareness
2. Breastfeeding Awareness
3. Immunization Awareness.

### Poll Results – Overdose Awareness

We encourage you to fill out the survey—All feedback will support us to better support our community. [CBO Collaborative Feedback](#)

## Community Partner Roundtable

- **St. John's Community Health** is hosting its *Diva Con Youth Talent & Art Show* on July 12<sup>th</sup> at the San Bernardino Clinic. SJCH is also promoting the availability of their *Mobile Clinic* for community events.  
Contact: [Cofoob@sjch.org](mailto:Cofoob@sjch.org)
- **Love Your Best Life** promotes *Doula Certification Training* to help expand access to maternal care. A virtual training is available in June, and an in-person training will be held in July at Victor Valley College.  
Sign Up Here: [Victor Valley College | Doula Certification Training](#).
- **Blue Zones Health** will be hosting a series of *Holistic Health Presentations* and a recurring community event – *Walking Moai at Brookside Park*. The next walk takes place on Saturday, June 28 at 9 AM, with additional walks held every Saturday in July starting July 12<sup>th</sup>, at 9 AM.  
Register Here: [Walking Moai | BZH Redlands Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)
- **Project Fighting Chance** hosted a *Free Boxing Camp* from June 9–20<sup>th</sup> and will offer a *Summer Enrichment Program* in July, Monday–Friday, 8 AM–6 PM, with activities including STEM, arts, yoga, meditation, boxing, and etiquette classes. The team will also present at the *Fatherhood Breakfast* on June 21 and participate in the Foster Youth Sports Fair.  
Visit: [Project Fighting Chance](#)
- **San Joaquin Valley College** offers *free dental services* to the community, serving patients ages 5 to 96 with no insurance or documentation required. Services include X-rays, exams, cleanings, sealants, fluoride treatments, and temporary fillings, all provided by supervised students. Clinics operate daily, with additional availability on select Friday mornings in August.  
Visit: [SJVC campuses provide free dental services to the public - San Joaquin Valley College](#)
- **Molina Healthcare** is launching a *free mobile clinic* this summer and fall for Molina members in the Inland Empire. The clinic will focus on child-focused services like vaccinations and dental checks. Partners are encouraged to reach out to coordinate bringing the mobile unit to local events.  
Contact: [Mimi.velazquez@molinahealthcare.com](mailto:Mimi.velazquez@molinahealthcare.com)

- **C&C Center for Healing** is hosting a *Summer Therapy Camp* for youth ages 10–17, with two sessions available. Activities include therapeutic programming and Dungeons & Dragons, with lunch provided. IEHP is accepted to cover the cost of camp. The center also has immediate openings for psychiatry and therapy services, including free therapy through on-site interns.  
Contact: [Center4healingoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:Center4healingoutreach@gmail.com)
- **Pacific Clinics** will be hosting their *Pride & Pins event* in Yucca Valley and mobile services for the high desert region.
- **Brother to Brother Fellowship** held its meeting on June 28<sup>th</sup> in Riverside, this meeting is open to Black men across the Inland Empire. The monthly space is created by Black men, for Black men, offering a supportive environment to connect and discuss meaningful topics. June's theme is mental well-being and forgiveness.  
For more information visit: [Brother2Brother Fellowship | Empowerment & Self-Care for Black Men](#)
- **Planned Parenthood** hosted its *San Bernardino Town Hall* on June 11<sup>th</sup>.  
Contact: [Miguel.Katheen.reyes@pposbc.org](mailto:Miguel.Katheen.reyes@pposbc.org)

The next meeting will be on  
**July 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**9 AM – 10:30 AM**  
Via Zoom: [CBO Collaborative Meeting Link - Zoom](#)