

Riverside County Health Coalition (RCHC) | July 15, 2026

Meeting Format: Hybrid (in-person & virtual)

Number of Attendees: In-person (60), Virtual (34)

Facilitator: Irene Hjelmervik | RUHS Public Health, Program Coordinator II

Scribe: Marina Carbajal | RUHS Public Health, Program Coordinator II

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Irene Hjelmervik | RUHS Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- Irene H. welcomed attendees and reviewed meeting logistics, including sign-in procedures, refreshments, lactation room availability, closed captioning access via QR code, virtual participation instructions, and distribution of presentation slides and the meeting recording after the meeting.
 - The meeting opened with a land acknowledgment, a video message from Dr. Sean Melonovich, and a reaffirmation of Riverside University Health System – Public Health's commitment to advancing health equity.
 - The coalition's mission was reviewed, highlighting efforts to expand partnerships, share resources, showcase innovative community practices, and advance health equity.
 - Attendees were reminded that the RCHC website provides community resources and information on upcoming events.
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Guest Speakers

Presentation: Fifth District Supervisor's Office

Speaker: Yxstian Gutierrez, Fifth District Board of Supervisor

- Fifth District Supervisor's Office representative Yxstian Gutierrez highlighted efforts to strengthen collaboration across Riverside County, support marginalized communities, promote local hiring and youth mentorship, expand second-chance employment opportunities, and build partnerships with Blue Zones.
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Presentation: Defeating Epilepsy Foundation

Speaker: Natalie Boehm, President and Founder of Defeating Epilepsy Foundation

- Natalie Boehm, President and Founder of the Defeating Epilepsy Foundation, shared her personal experience living with epilepsy and discussed its impacts on education, employment, housing, mental health, relationships, financial stability, and access to healthcare. She encouraged collaboration with organizations led by individuals with lived experience.
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Presentation: BZ Banning Run Club

Speaker: Karina Mejia, Health Education Professional

- Karina Mejia introduced the BZ Banning Run Club and shared upcoming activities. Performed interactive stretching activity with the group.

Presentation: Blue Zones Project

Speaker: Reuben Gonzales, Executive Director – Banning

- Reuben Gonzales provided an overview of the Blue Zones Power 9® principles and highlighted upcoming community events, including the Saturday Night Farmers Market and Community Care Fair.

15 min. break (11:05 AM)

Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Updates

- Public Health provided updates on the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), promoted the CHA/CHIP podcast, and recognized Public Health's 100-year anniversary.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Speakers: Mindy McFarland, Ebony Staten, Gillian Stucki

- Shared progress on initiatives focused on youth mental health, racial equity in behavioral health outcomes, reducing stigma, and increasing care-seeking behaviors.
- Meeting cadence: Third Tuesday of the month, 2:00 PM-3:00 PM

Housing

Speakers: Terri Smyth

- Provided updates on ongoing collaboration with community and partners through housing workshops.
- Meeting cadence: Second Wednesday of the month 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Access to Care

Speakers: Juanita Irvin

- Highlighted efforts to reduce barriers to healthcare access, prepare for Medi-Cal redetermination beginning in January 2027, present updated objectives at the October coalition meeting, and recruit additional community representatives.
- Meeting cadence: Third Tuesday of the month, 3:30 PM -4:30 PM

Community Engagement Activity

- Participants completed an interactive survey on improving healthy living opportunities and strengthening the inclusion of residents with disabilities and chronic conditions in coalition initiatives.
 - Gift cards were awarded to the first six participants who completed the survey.
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Partner Updates

- Partner organizations shared updates regarding human trafficking survivor services, grant opportunities, leadership development, community workshops, a Back-to-School Health Event, tobacco retail policy updates, support programs for individuals with terminal illnesses and foster youth, autism education, and upcoming community health events.
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Public Health Updates

Public Health promoted its podcast, social media channels, and reminded attendees to utilize the RCHC website for community resources and events.

Next Meeting

October 21st, 2026

The meeting adjourned at **12:22 PM**.