

## Riverside County Health Coalition Meeting | April 16, 2025 Meeting Notes

Present: Daisy Ramirez Bell, Juan Landeros-Tavera and 101+ other attendees (in-person & virtual)- 56 online, 45 in person

Next meeting: July 16, 2025, from 10:00 am – 12:00pm

Scribe: James Jo, RUHS-PH

### Welcoming Remarks and Introduction:

Daisy Ramirez Bell, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II  
Juan Landeros-Tavera, RUHS-Public Health, Program Coordinator II

- Daisy and Juan welcomed everyone to the coalition meeting.
- Daisy expressed gratitude to the city for hosting the coalition.
- An overview of the agenda was presented to the coalition.
- Juan read the RUHS-PH land acknowledgment.
- During these uncertain times, RUHS-PH remains steadfast in its commitment to serving communities and encouraged everyone to continue their impactful work.
- The mission and purpose of RCHC were shared, along with an invitation for members to engage with and learn more about its ongoing efforts.
- A special video (based on the theme of Mean Girls) produced by the Health Equity Program Team was presented to the coalition.

### Land Acknowledgement

Dr. Sean Milanovich, University of CA at Riverside

- Dr. Milanovich provided an introduction to the land acknowledgment, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all people and the importance of working together. He concluded with a traditional song in the Cahuilla language.

### Presentation: What Can Environmental Data Tell Us About Our Health

Aviva Goldman, Epidemiologist, RUHS- Public Health

- Aviva explained the nature of environmental pollution particles and their harmful effects on human health.
- The Air Quality Index (AQI) is accessible through the AQMD website.
- She discussed various vector-borne diseases and their modes of transmission.
- The EPE Data Request Form can be submitted to obtain information related to environmental health.

## Q & A

- What initiatives are in place to address heat-related illness? Initiatives should focus on Individuals vulnerable to extreme heats such as those with chronic conditions, pregnant individuals, and the elderly—are particularly at risk. Also, exploring the relationship between heat and mortality rates should be examined. Data will be essential in guiding initiatives aimed at protecting communities from heat-related health impacts.

## Panel Discussion:

1. Diego Centeno, Doctoral student at UCLA
  2. Ivanna Uriarte, Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability
  3. Aydee Palomino, Alianza Coachella Valley
  4. Conchita Ozar, Unidas Por Salud
- Dr. Milanovich outlined the purpose and goals of the panel discussion, which focused on exploring actionable strategies to support and collaborate on local initiatives. Key issues included water concerns and illegal dumping, among others.
  - What are some of the key Environmental Health issues of concern from the communities?
    1. Hydrogen Sulfide
    2. Unsafe drinking water, including arsenic and other poisons found in water.
    3. Built-in infrastructure and increase in mobility for community members.
  - What challenges do you face when advocating for policy and initiatives?
    1. **Lack of data:** We have partnered with academic institutions to collect critical data, such as measurements of hydrogen sulfide.
    2. **Community hesitancy:** Community participation is often limited due to the current political climate. Additionally, there is a lack of political will and insufficient funding to support initiatives.
    3. **Need for regional collaboration:** There is a strong need for increased education, communication, and trust-building across communities, as well as access to funding for underserved areas.
    4. **Housing concerns:** Many homes are outdated and may pose environmental health risks. There is a need for more accessible, safe housing—free from hazards like arsenic and other environmental pollutants.
  - How can community engagement drive environmental justice and what action can the coalition take?
    1. **Translate research into policy:** Collect data on water and air quality and stay curious about the issues affecting our communities. Use this data to inform and advocate for policy changes.
    2. **Address community health impacts of development:** Examine how ongoing development affects public health. Engage youth through creative outlets like art and storytelling, and support youth-led meetings and events. Collaborate to address housing challenges and encourage participation in housing element meetings.
    3. **Get involved in local projects:** The *Thriving Salton Sea Community Trail Network* is one example of a project where coalition members can take part and make a difference.
    4. **Empower youth through education and advocacy:** Encourage youth to pursue scholarships and education focused on climate change. Support their efforts to bring knowledge back to

their communities. Recognize the lack of resources for young people and the importance of parental involvement in climate-related initiatives.

- How can initiatives be more equitable?
  1. **Invest in youth:** The future depends on empowering young people through mentorship, leadership, and motivation. Equip them with tools to understand and use data effectively.
  2. **Center community voices:** Listen directly to residents—they understand their needs best and can offer valuable insight into what solutions will be most effective.
  3. **Build local capacity:** Address the lack of resources and support at the local government level by exploring ways to strengthen capacity and infrastructure.
  4. **Promote data transparency:** Encourage academic institutions to share relevant data with the community to support informed decision-making and foster trust.
- Q & A
  1. What is SB 534 – Salton Sea Region Green Empowerment Zone? Salton Sea Region Green Empowerment Zone is a proposed initiative under California Senate Bill 534 (SB 534) that aims to stimulate economic development and environmental justice in the Imperial, Eastern Coachella, and Palo Verde Valleys. This zone would coordinate public and private investments to support clean energy industries, infrastructure, and workforce development, particularly benefiting historically underserved communities.

#### **Coalition Satisfaction Survey**

- Juan encouraged participants to take a moment to complete the coalition survey.

#### **Gift Cards**

- Email RUHS-PH Health Equity with your reflection on what you learned to enter a drawing for a chance to win one of ten \$25 gift cards.

#### **Communication Team Update**

- Greg and Dorothy spotlighted the CAPIO award received by RUHS-PH for the Equitea Podcasts.

#### **Action Groups Update**

- Miguel provided an update on the Mental/Behavioral Health, Housing, and Access to Care groups.
- Mary expressed gratitude to the participants and mentioned that the finalized CHIP document will be shared with the coalition.

#### **HARC Update**

- Jena provided an update on Health Assessment and Research for Communities (HARC), noting that data is collected every three years for the Coachella Valley on topics such as air quality, disaster preparedness, and other key issues. She asked participants to complete their surveys.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:03 pm.**