

## **PICH Partners' Post**

*Merced County Partnerships to Improve Community Health  
Newsletter Vol 3, Issue 9, June 2017*

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# **PICH Partners' Post June 2017**

**Highlighting PICH Partners' activities and successes  
throughout Merced County.**



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## Letter from the Public Health Department

Dear Merced County PICH Partners:

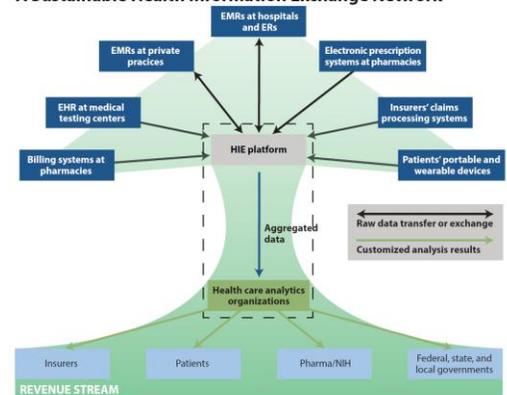
Health care is a big topic these days and locally PICH is working with health care partners to find ways to improve care and health outcomes.

For patients who have been diagnosed with diabetes or heart disease, self-care management can be hard to do. Changing eating habits, becoming more physically active, taking new medications, and feeling overwhelmed are among the challenges that these patients face. PICH aims to create referral pathways from a provider to a clinic or community-based health education program, such as the Chronic Disease Self-management Program, that can help patients manage their health.

PICH partner United Way Merced County has also been involved by creating a Lifestyle Improvement Program section on the 2-1-1 website so that residents can more easily find health programming in the community to fit their needs.

Another innovation that PICH is working on is Health Information Exchange (HIE). HIE is an electronic platform, like a central hub, that connects with multiple providers' medical records systems, allowing each participating provider to share a patient's health information. HIE has the potential to improve patient care, reduce costs, and save time and resources for both the patient and the provider. To learn more about HIE, see the article below.

A Sustainable Health Information Exchange Network



Sincerely,  
Kathleen Grassi, R.D., M.P.H.  
Director, Merced County Department of Public Health



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## ***Recent Highlight:* Health Information Exchange**



Merced County stakeholders, led by PICH Partner Alex Horowitz, Intrepid Ascent, have worked to build an efficient and cost-effective electronic medical data sharing system called a Health Information Exchange (HIE). An HIE can improve clinical access to patient data, enable meaningful use of electronic health record systems, and improve health care in Merced County by allowing health organizations to share information in electronic medical records systems while adhering to privacy and quality standards. The implementation of an HIE will not only streamline care and allow health care providers to make informed clinical decisions, but will also allow the collection of pertinent health data, allowing public health to

conduct population health analytics to monitor trends in health conditions and direct community and clinical approaches to address those trends.

Starting in 2015, PICH staff convened stakeholders from clinics and hospitals, public health and behavioral health agencies, and the Medi-Cal managed care organization to determine the guiding goals for an HIE in Merced County and defined what services were important for accomplishing these goals.

In June of 2016, HIE stakeholders made the decision to contract with an existing HIE rather than building a new organization. After conducting a rigorous evaluation of HIEs operating in the San Joaquin Valley, the stakeholders decided to join the San Joaquin Community HIE (SJCHIE), which offered the best combination of technology services combined with a sustainable business model for Merced County. By late 2016 HIE stakeholders started the implementation process and began executing participant agreements with SJCHIE.

In 2017, Merced County HIE stakeholders will move toward the full implementation of the HIE and its services. The connectivity available through a fully functioning HIE will provide a powerful tool to improve patient care and to better understand the health status of the Merced County community.

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## ***Recent Highlight: Healthy Lifestyle Resources 2-1-1 Referral Update***



The Merced County Department of Public Health has been partnering with United Way's Mountain Valley 2-1-1 (2-1-1) since 2015 to help community members throughout Merced County find and access healthy lifestyle resources such as farmers' markets and disease management classes. A system has been put in place to screen and refer callers to Healthy Lifestyle Resources resulting in approximately 15-20 referrals per month to programs such as chronic disease self-management, diabetes self-management and tobacco cessation. Recently both Livingston Community Health and Golden Valley Health Centers launched the [National Diabetes Prevention Program](#) (NDPP) at their sites and this resource has been added to the 2-1-1 database. In addition, the NDPP [prediabetes screening test](#) is now available on the 2-1-1 website. Those who qualify for NDPP will be routed to either Livingston Community Health or Golden Valley depending on where they live.

In March of 2017, PSAs promoting the Healthy Lifestyle Resources section of 2-1-1 began running on local radio stations including 98.7 LOBO and K97.5. Billboards promoting 2-1-1 and featuring local residents will be on display throughout Merced County by the end of June.

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## ***Partner Profile: Felicia Batts, M.P.H.***



Felicia Batts works for Livingston Community Health (LCH), a federally qualified health center operating in the communities of Livingston, Delhi, and Hilmar in Merced County. LCH provides medical, dental, and behavioral health care services. For the past 25 years, Felicia has worked in healthcare and has spent the past 12 years working in the community health system. Prior to working at LCH, she worked at Golden Valley Health Centers for 10 years. Batts obtained her Master's in Public Health from California State University, Fresno and feels that working within the community health sector has allowed her to put her public health knowledge into practice.

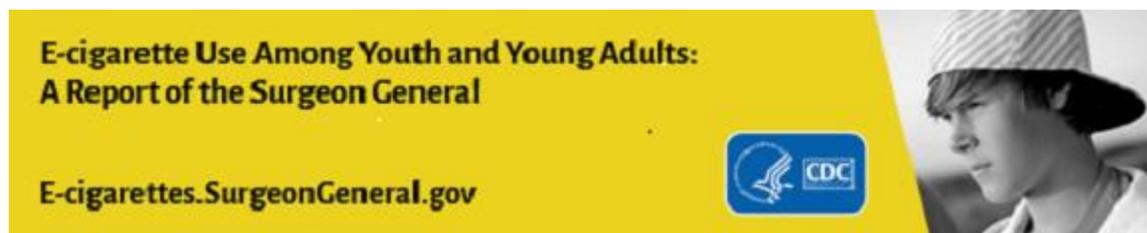
To provide a network of care to their patients, LCH partners with the Merced County Department of Public Health (Public Health) and other organizations, linking community members to the services they need. Batts is currently working on a GIS mapping project in collaboration with Public Health. Through this project, they will map patient outcome data for various diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes, and identify "hot spots" at the neighborhood level. They will also map available physical activity and healthy food resources, so that they can connect residents with opportunities to help prevent or improve many chronic health conditions. The map will also track high-risk factors such as extreme poverty and low

education levels in order to pinpoint areas of greatest need. This will allow for precisely targeted interventions that aim to reduce the barriers to healthy behaviors in high-risk areas.

Batts feels that working at a small health center like LCH provides her and her colleagues with an advantage: they are small enough to grow and adapt efficiently to the ever-changing health care environment in innovative ways. It also allows them to quickly implement and test different health interventions and strategies, which adds to the sustainability of their projects. Batts hopes to continue collaborating with Public Health and other community organizations, because she believes it is important to the growth and future of the healthcare system, and ultimately, to improving community health in Merced County.

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## ***Resources: E-cigarettes & Youth***



Check out the resources provided at [Know the Risks E-Cigarettes & Young People](#) to learn more about e-cigarette risk to youth and young adults.

Use the [Parent Tip Sheet](#) to help start the conversation with your children about e-cigarette use, but make sure to know the facts about e-cigarettes and young people by using this [Fact Sheet](#).

Help reduce young people's exposure to e-cigarettes using the strategies on the ensuing cards:

### Restrict E-cigarette Use Around Young People

Don't let anyone use e-cigarettes or other tobacco products around young people. Not only are they watching the behaviors of others as an example, but they're also at risk of exposure to nicotine and other chemicals that can be harmful to their health.

### Visit Tobacco-Free Locations

Avoid restaurants and other locations that allow use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

### Ensure School is Tobacco-Free

Check with your school administration to ensure your child's school, college, or university is completely tobacco-free, including being free of e-cigarettes.

### Make Your Home Tobacco-Free

Make your home and vehicles tobacco-free by prohibiting use of all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, by family members, friends, and guests. This is an important step to fully protect your children from exposure to secondhand cigarette smoke or secondhand aerosol from e-cigarettes.

### Be an Example

Be an example to youth by living tobacco-free. Even if you're quitting tobacco, share the reasons why you want to be tobacco-free and ask for support in your journey.

[Start a conversation](#) with your health care provider and child to discuss health risks including nicotine addiction and nicotine's impact on the developing brain.

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## *Upcoming Events*

### **PICH Leadership Team Meeting – June 27, 12:30-2:30 pm.**

Leadership Team meeting will include a demonstration of the soon to be released Merced County Healthy Communities Institute All in For Health website as well as a presentation by marketing subcontractor John Snow Inc. To RSVP contact Xee Lor at [xlor@co.merced.ca.us](mailto:xlor@co.merced.ca.us) or (209) 381-1272

### **Le Grand Community Design Workshop – July 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30 pm.**

The Local Government Commission in collaboration with Merced County Community & Economic Development Department and Public Health will hold a design workshop to get input for the Le Grand Community Plan . The workshop will focus on ways to improve walking and bicycling and promote healthy active neighborhoods for all. For more information, Brian Guerrero at (209) 385-7654 ext 4578.

*For questions or information on any of the events above please contact Marie Pickney at (209) 381-1104 or [mpickney@co.merced.ca.us](mailto:mpickney@co.merced.ca.us)*

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*for* HEALTH  
MERCED COUNTY

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**Prepared by the PICH Communication Team at UC Merced. Email us at: [mercedpich@gmail.com](mailto:mercedpich@gmail.com)**

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