

PICH Partners' Post

*Merced County Partnerships to Improve Community Health
Newsletter Vol 3, Issue 11, AUGUST 2017*

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PICH Partners' Post

August 2017

Highlighting PICH Partners' activities and successes throughout Merced County.



In This Issue:

Letter from the Public Health Department

Recent Highlight: Breastfeeding Initiatives Support

Partner Profile: Susana Ramirez, PhD, MPH

Resources: Merced County Farmers Markets & Roadside Stands

Upcoming Events

Letter from the Public Health Department

Dear Merced County PICH Partners:

August is [National Breastfeeding Month](#) and this year's theme—*Charting the Course Together*—is focused on how data can be used to build and reinforce the connections between breastfeeding and a broad spectrum of other health topics. The U.S. Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) is developing a **Discussion Guide** on the four "Foundation Health Measures" of Healthy People 2020:

- **Breastfeeding and General Health Status**
- **Breastfeeding and Health-Related Quality of Life and Well-Being**
- **Breastfeeding and Determinants of Health**
- **Breastfeeding and Disparities**

Check out the USBC website for more resources.

PICH has been busy building breastfeeding community support capacity. In addition to partnering with local hospitals to further pursuit of Baby-friendly Hospital status, and hosting the year-long *Grow Our Own* course to train more than 20 health professionals aiming for IBCLC certification, PICH has supported the development of a LATCH clinic – a safe and inviting space for new mothers to find information about and assistance with breastfeeding. ***Join us for the LATCH Clinic Grand Opening on Friday, August 25, 2017 at 4:00 pm at the Public Health Department!***

I hope to see you there.

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



Join us for the
GRAND OPENING
&
RED RIBBON CUTTING
New Breastfeeding Services
LATCH Clinic
260 E. 15th St. in Merced



Babies are born to breastfeed.



Recent Highlight: Breastfeeding Initiative Support



Latch Clinics

In the April edition of PICH Post the development of the LATCH clinic was featured. A LATCH Workgroup was formed in the second year of PICH to develop a LATCH clinic, a drop-in center for breastfeeding mothers that would, to name a few, do the following:

- Address breastfeeding challenges and questions;
- Educate on a breast milk pump's function;
- Offer support and reassurance for new mothers.

An additional goal for the LATCH clinic includes letting newly trained International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) gain clinical hours and mentorship on-site. The workgroup consisted of various community based organizations, healthcare organizations, public health home visiting programs, and lactation support providers who worked closely with the Public Health Department to ensure that the LATCH clinic would extend breastfeeding knowledge and support both prenatally, during the postpartum period, and beyond.

With the official launch of the LATCH clinic, appointments can be made at **(209) 381 – 1023** between **8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday**. The LATCH clinic will offer the Sliding Fee Scale for clients who present at registration without insurance. LATCH clinic will also accept Medi-Cal and bill private insurance as a courtesy.

Worksite Policies

Worksite policies supporting breastfeeding have also been underway. Below are updates on the progress of these efforts to support breastfeeding in the work place:

McSwain School has made revisions to their breastfeeding support policy which now includes specific language on breastfeeding accommodation. The revised policy was unanimously adopted by the school board – a gold standard – in April 2017. [On May 23, 2017, McSwain was awarded a Mother-Baby Friendly Workplace Award in Sacramento.](#)

Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce is also developing a breastfeeding policy and has partnered with Emily Bernard, a PICH subcontractor, to create a webinar and materials for use for Chamber members.

Livingston Community Health, a Federally Qualified Health Clinic, has started an intensive training for their Livingston-based staff to ensure breastfeeding is understood and that patients are supported. LCH's efforts includes rolling out a referral method that is built into the electronic health records (EHR) system as well as providing breastfeeding support within the clinic through a certified IBCLC.

With an increase of community organizations and workplaces contributing to changes in their current breastfeeding policies and the launch of the LATCH clinic, Merced County continues to foster a supportive

breastfeeding community environment for current and future breastfeeding mothers.

Partner Profile: Susana Ramirez, **PhD, MPH**



Dr. Susana Ramirez is an assistant professor at University of California, Merced who is leading PICH communication efforts as part of the PICH team. Ramirez earned a B. A. in Communication from Santa Clara University – a Jesuit school with a strong focus on social justice – and after graduating, she provided strategic communication and change management consulting for a multinational organization.

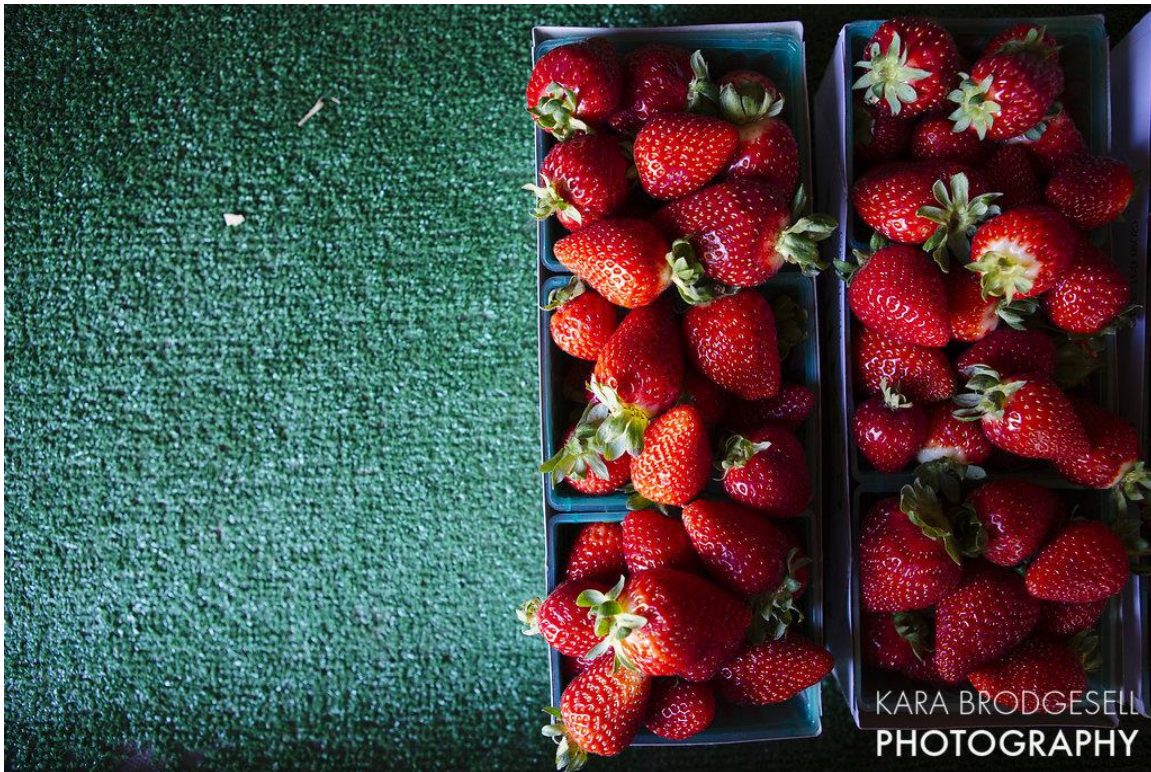
During her years as a consultant, Dr. Ramirez worked with Fortune 500 companies to help them use communication strategically. Eventually, she found that she wanted to fulfill herself intellectually and begin working towards the social justice perspective she had internalized from her time at SCU. To achieve this, she decided to further her education and earned a Masters Degree in Public Health from Harvard University and a PhD in

Communication from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. She currently utilizes her skills to conduct research that advances the science of communication, using it as a tool to better health while also working with students, who are the next generation of public health leaders.

Dr. Ramirez met Merced County Department of Public Health Director Kathleen Grassi four years ago when she arrived in Merced, and she was thrilled when she was invited to lead the communication efforts for the PICH grant in partnership with Kathleen and Stephanie Nathan. Over the past three years, Ramirez and the UC Merced Communication, Culture and Health Lab has facilitated internal communication between PICH Partners through the monthly newsletter, using social media to inform the public, and connect all Partners on various other platforms.

Dr. Ramirez feels that the Merced County PICH grant is unique because it is not focused on a single priority area, but on all 4 pillars of chronic disease prevention, which is quite ambitious but after 2.5 years, Merced PICH partners have had some great successes. She also hopes that the “*All in for Health*” brand that was created in partnership with the Department of Public Health and John Snow, Inc., will live on past the ending of the PICH grant and come to signify the best of Merced County. More broadly, Dr. Ramirez hopes that “*we have been successful at reframing the conversation about chronic disease prevention to consider the role that context plays in determining the extent to which people have the ability to make healthy choices.*”

Resources: Merced County Farmers Markets & Roadside Stands



Certified Farmers Markets in Merced County:

- [Gustine Farmers Market](#) – Thursday evenings
- [Livingston Farmers Market](#) – Thursday evenings
- [The Original Merced County Certified Farmers Market](#) - Saturday AM (downtown) and Wednesday AM at the Merced Promenade
- [Los Banos Farmers Market](#) – Tuesday evenings

Merced County guide to local farm stands provides information on farm stands within Merced County. It is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Upcoming Events

08/24, 9:00 am to Noon – Youth Leadership Institute Training: Three Ways to Start Engaging Youth Now

This training will review the basics for newcomers to youth engagement and offer fresh and practical tools for all, including those who have participated in past training. Training will take place in the auditorium at the Public Health Department.

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

Partnerships to Improve Community Health is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Merced County Department of Public Health. The views expressed in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the CDC or imply endorsement by the U.S. Government or Merced County. Learn more about Partnerships to Improve Community Health at www.cdc.gov/communityhealth.



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