

# To *Your* HEALTH *Fresno County*

Bringing you public health issues and ways to improve personal, family, neighborhood and community health



## **Collective Impact and the Future of Public Health in Fresno County**

January 5, 2016

Early on in this position I would occasionally ask myself how I should feel being the health officer of a county that is routinely called out for its negative aspects, that is one of the poorest in the state with areas of concentrated poverty, and that chronically places in the lowest percentiles in surveys measuring healthfulness.

As we begin this New Year let me tell you why I take immense pride in being this county's health officer and why I see remarkable promise for our health and well-being as Fresnans.

To begin with, we are a young and hardy population with amazing strength in our diversity.

Indeed, what truly forecasts a bright future for the health and well-being of the residents of Fresno County are the amazing ways in which public and private agencies and individuals from every corner of our society are converging to address our community health and well-being in new collaborations, in innovative and effective ways, and with intense energy and enthusiasm.

I will mention just a few examples where all eight Pillars of Public Health are aligning straight and tall and in structural unity to create the social and physical environment that promotes good health and that ensures that all Fresnans have the equal opportunity to make the choices that lead to good health for themselves and their children.

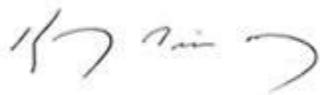
Witness:

- The recent joint use agreement between the City of Fresno and the Fresno Unified School District and Central Unified School District to make available more open recreational spaces for opportunities for physical activity.
- The cooperation between the Fresno Unified School District and Kings Canyon Unified School District and our federally qualified health centers in opening school based clinics.

- The astounding work of the [Fresno Community Health Improvement Partnership](#) in bringing together over 285 individuals and organizations to align our public health assets to effectively impact such important issues as improving health literacy, decreasing diabetes, support for young families, mental health, healthy land use, access to healthy foods, and reducing marketing of unhealthful products.
- The combined work of First Five Fresno County, several school districts, and many other agencies, through the Birth through Third Grade initiative, in engaging families and future students within school districts to assure that all are on-track for age level reading by third grade.
- The Fresno County Preterm Birth initiative bringing together a cross-section of our community to find and implement ways to improve birth outcomes for all young Fresnans.
- The work of Fresno 2015 GradNation in engaging and directing volunteers toward countywide efforts to improve the county's high school graduation rates.
- The extraordinary work by Fresno Council of Governments and our cities in addressing the built environment and active transportation in their regional transportation plan and general plans respectively.
- Our health department's work with the California Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and a multitude of local private public health partners in addressing reduction of chronic disease rates and their adverse effects through initiatives that limit [storefront advertising](#) of unhealthful products, increase availability of affordable [healthy food](#), and link communities and clinics in the [management of chronic diseases](#).
- The Hospital Council and our stalwart local hospitals working in unison to determine the priority health needs of our county and how they can best address those needs at their root causes.

What is truly exciting is that all of these efforts and initiatives, all of these agencies and individuals (and many, many more) currently working toward the improvement of health and well-being of Fresno, know the wisdom of working together for maximum efficiency and effect, and are all coming together in a united front to tackle the myriad of intimately interwoven aspects of community and society that are public health.

Here's to your health!



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