

To *Your* HEALTH *Fresno County*

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



The Individual Pillar

June 27, 2019

At the Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH), we continue to speak about the [Eight Pillars of Public Health](#), which together, support the structure that is a Healthy Fresno County. It wasn't until I began researching an upcoming trip that I came across the coincidence that there are eight pillars, or columns, on each end supporting the historic Parthenon that sits atop the famous Acropolis in Greece.



What fascinated me more was learning that these pillars are constructed from individually cut short cylinders (called drums) that are carefully stacked and masterfully fit, one upon the other, and crowned with an elaborate capital to adequately support the structure.



It reminded me that each of our Pillars of Public Health is constructed similarly, with each drum carefully crafted and locked in place on the one supporting it.

As an example, I see our first Pillar of Public Health (the Individual) as a sturdy, functional column composed of ten specific drums built up in exact order from the foundation, and crowned with its particular capital.

See how this pillar is constructed below:

Base Drum – Regular preventive care visits to a consistent health care provider. These visits will assure early diagnosis or prevention of chronic illnesses with appropriate testing and intervention. They will also assure prevention of severe acute illnesses with appropriate and timely immunizations. If you need assistance in finding such a stable medical home please call the Valley 2-1-1 Helpline or visit www.valley211.org.

Second Drum – Cessation of illicit drug use and/or misuse of prescription medications, and avoidance, or moderation of, alcohol consumption. This is absolutely critical to a healthy, productive future. Your health care provider can assist you with the resources necessary for this. You can also call SAMHSA's National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357), (also known as the Treatment Referral Routing Service). SAMHSA is a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. Callers can also order free publications and other information.



Third Drum – Recognition, and appropriate treatment, of any chronic or acute emotional or mental health illness: “There is no good health without mental health”. It is quite impossible to make consistently appropriate choices toward better health and wellness if you are struggling with such illness. Your health care provider, family, and friends are essential in the effort. For more information you can contact the Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health at 1-800-654-3937.

Fourth Drum – Stop smoking: For those that smoke, this could be the single, most important step you can take to prevent chronic illness and extend longevity. This includes all vaping products and avoidance of secondary smoke and vapors. This is often not easy and will probably require assistance from your health care provider. Help can also be obtained from 1-800-NO BUTTS. FCDPH can also assist with smoking cessation resources and assistance with problems with second hand smoke. Visit www.dontblowitfresno.com for more information.

Fifth Drum – Improve diet and physical activity: These are included within the same drum because they go hand in hand in assuring a longer, more productive, and satisfying life. Start with reductions of salt, processed and fast foods, and sugary drinks, and check out www.choosemyplate.gov for nutritional information and advice. Ensure that you get a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days a week. Pick activities that you enjoy and make it a habit. Remember, walking is one of the very best exercises.

Sixth Drum – Consistent adequate sleep: Be sure you are getting seven to eight hours of sleep each night. Numerous causes of inadequate sleep exist (including poor sleep hygiene, insomnia, and sleep apnea). Check with your health care provider if you just can't seem to get to sleep at night, wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep, doze off during the day, or snore exceptionally loudly.

Seventh Drum – Limit your risk of injury: This requires persistent alertness and situational awareness, especially while driving; in water; walking in or near traffic or near bodies of water; or when you are around electricity, power tools, machinery, chemicals, open flame or heights. Injury proof your home by removing objects that can cause falls, installing and regularly checking smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and correctly labelling all containers. We need to include sun injury prevention here as well, against both skin cancer and hyperthermia.

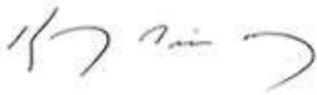
Eighth Drum – Reduce your risk of acute illness with proper hygiene practices: This includes consistent hand washing and respiratory hygiene, proper food preparation and storage procedures, and appropriate use of insect vector repellants.

Ninth Drum – Reduce stress: Life is stressful, and some degree of stress is beneficial. Chronic excessive stress, however, is toxic. Limit stress by organizing, planning ahead, and prioritizing you day. Mitigate stress with meditation, spiritual activities, exercise, or hobbies.

Tenth Drum – Minimize the effects of air pollution and climate change: Reduce indoor pollutants and limit time and activities outdoors when pollution levels for either ozone, particulates, or smoke are high. Do your part to decrease air pollution and carbon dioxide emission by driving less, driving energy efficient vehicles, avoiding wood burning, avoiding use of two-stroke engines, making your home more energy efficient, and reducing, reusing, and recycling whenever possible.

The Capital – Do what you can to make life easier for your fellow human beings, especially those struggling more than you: Emotional well-being results from stepping outside of yourself on occasion and considering how to ease the stressful circumstances of others. There are countless ways to volunteer or give to assist others in need, even if it is merely extending a friendly smile or hello. According to Professor Andrew Fiala, Director of the Ethics Center at Fresno State in a recently published article, “Morality ... [teaches] that we make ourselves better by helping those who are worse off.” This assures the place of the Individual among the Eight Pillars of Public Health in maintaining the structure of community wellness.

Here's to your health!



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Please follow us on Facebook where we keep the community informed on all Public Health issues and ways to improve personal, family, neighborhood and community health.



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Better Together

