

# THE BRIDGE

A monthly newsletter connecting CSUN public health students, faculty, alumni, and communities



Photo by [Olivia Barkwill](#), 2023

## A Message From the Editors

Hello Alumni, Students, Faculty, and Community Partners- Welcome to a new academic year! The fall 2023 semester is underway and The Bridge team is proud to present the first issue of the semester. We have a fantastic group of public health students, including 2 new contributors, to work on this newsletter for the academic year and you can meet the team on page 2.

Did you know that the CSUN Public Health program has been accredited for more than 50 years? And, even more exciting is our program is the longest CEPH accredited public health program in California! Come celebrate 50 years of CSUN Public Health on November 4th with faculty, alumni, and community partners. We hope you will join us for dinner, dancing, and reconnecting. More information about the event can be found on page 3.

Also in this issue, we are pleased to bring you faculty and alumni updates, a curated reading and listening list, events of interest, and program updates.

We invite you to use our [submission form](#) if you have a suggestion for a future issue; a recent publication, internship or job opportunities, you would like to be featured to share your public health journey and current projects, or perhaps something else of interest. We look forward to hearing from you!

Wishing you a happy and healthy beginning of autumn.

*Carla Valdez and The Bridge Team*

## Newsletter Highlights

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CSUN Public Health  
Anniversary Gala

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Wellness Check

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Faculty Spotlight

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Alumni Spotlight

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This is Public Health &  
October Calendar



### **Priscilla Villalobos-Ayala, BSPH Student**

I chose to study public health because I have always been interested in healthcare-related careers and viewed public health as a flexible field of study that would open many potential career options for me. Additionally, I value health equity and knew public health would help me gain knowledge on how I can increase health equity in the health field. What I am looking forward to while working on the newsletter is building new relationships and networking with others. I also look forward to advancing my teamwork skills while collaborating with the team, time management, creativity, and professionalism, especially when communicating with newsletter participants.



### **Saman Fayaz Rad, BSPH Student**

Hello everyone! Public health is a field that has always excited me as I am interested in further educating our society on mental, physical, and social well-being. Health promotion is not possible without a channel to the community, so I am looking forward to providing our faculty, peers, and alumni with important updates and news. Creating a sense of closeness and bridging our community through this newsletter is incredibly important to me and I am proud to be alongside an incredible team that can help me do



so. I hope to build strong connections throughout this process as well as intertwine my creative and professional passions.

## *Meet The Bridge Team / 2023-2024*

### **Amanda Van Dyke, MPH Student**

Welcome back everyone, it's great being able to join The Bridge newsletter for yet another semester! To position myself, I am a third year



MPH graduate student in Community Health Education and have worked with The Bridge for two years now. Initially helping people is what lead me to the world of health. However it wasn't until I completed a degree in Health Sciences that I came across Public Health. Having the opportunity to work on health related concerns outside of the normal health space like a clinic or hospital intrigued me. As I continue along on my journey in the program and as a professional, my passion for the health and well-being of the community grows.

### **Dr. Carla Valdez**



Hello! I'm thrilled to be the faculty lead for The Bridge. As a program, we wanted a platform to share the outstanding work of our faculty, students, and alumni, and in 2022, we launched The Bridge. We have published 13 issues since March 2022 (check out current and past issues [online](#)) and I couldn't have done it without the dedication, creativity, and hard work of a stellar group of BSPH and MPH students. It is truly their efforts that brings this project to life. In public health we know that it's crucial to stay up-to-date and to have a strong network. The Bridge seeks to connect students, faculty, alumni, and the public health community, to provide resources, and to celebrate our successes.

Thank you for reading!

# CSUN Public Health IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE

THE LONGEST ACCREDITED PUBLIC HEALTH  
PROGRAM IN CALIFORNIA!

50<sup>th</sup>  
*Anniversary*

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary  
of the CSUN Public Health Program

**Saturday, November 4**

***If CSUN Public Health is a part of your story then this party is for you!***

Whether you are a community partner, a member of the alumni, current or former faculty, you are part of our story and we want to celebrate with you.

Join us for the 50th anniversary of the Public Health program being accredited and reconnect with fellow alumni, faculty and staff. Join us for dinner, drinks, dancing, and fun!

*Please  
consider  
sponsoring the  
event*

Date: Saturday, November 4 | Time: 6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Location: CSUN Orchard Conference Center

\$100

***Buy your tickets now!***

# PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM UPDATES

## Introducing brand new Public Health Program and MPH specific logos!

Graduate Coordinators, Dr. Larry Chu and Dr. Suzi Spear engaged in a year long process to consider the future of the Master of Public Health program and how to position, market, and build a strong program identity. We asked Dr. Chu to tell us about the process and logos that were developed.



## What prompted you and Dr. Spear to consider the need for brand development for our program?

Suzi Spear and I began as MPH Graduate Coordinators in AY22-23 and we were discussing our vision for improving the MPH program during our tenure. Our conversations highlighted our solid programs, dedicated faculty, strong internship networks in the community, and the many successful alumni over the years in employment, professional and doctoral programs. Despite these acclaims, however, our program felt unseen by the public at large, and we wanted to provide some identity, some brand for our current students and alumni that would make us proud to be a part of CSUN MPH. Additionally, marketing our brand would help to entice future prospective students to our program.



## Tell us a bit about the process for designing and selecting the logos and tagline.

We applied for and were awarded funding from the Office of Graduate Studies to work with IntersectLA, a CSUN student-operated creative brand agency, to help design logos, taglines, and statements for the MPH program. It was a year-long process and it was very exciting to see the artists' logo conceptions during this time. We asked for input from students and faculty to come up with the finished products we have today. We continue to work with IntersectLA to produce a marketing video and utilization of social media so this will be a long, but productive journey that will hopefully make our MPH program well-recognized in the field of public health.



“ I really like the new logos. They're simple, yet bold with the school's red and black colors to make it really stand out and identify with CSUN. I hope that students and alumni will also appreciate the new branding.

-Dr. Larry Chu

”



# PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM UPDATES



**Interested in pursuing a Master of Pubic Health (MPH) degree with a concentration in Community Health Education (CHE)?**  
*Attend an info session with CSUN professor, Dr. Bobbie Emetu!*

3 sessions on Zoom for your convenience:

Tuesday, 10/17/23 at 6 pm

Tuesday, 11/7/23 at 12 pm

Tuesday, 11/7/23 at 7 pm

Please join us to learn more about the CSUN Master of Public Health Program.

Zoom Link



**Calling all recent CSUN BSPH and MPH Grads from Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer 2022!**

We would really appreciate if you could complete this alumni survey to help collect data for our accrediting agency. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes of your time!

**BSPH Alumni Survey**

**MPH Alumni Survey**

(Community Health Education, Applied Epidemiology, or Tseng Community Health Education)

Thank you in advance for your help.

**HELP  
NEEDED**

Need a break?



The Department of Health Sciences is proud to offer HSCI students, staff, and faculty free massages in our new massage chair donated by CSUN's Oasis Center.

You can schedule a 15-minute massage anytime from 8:30am-5pm in JD 2500.

Scan the QR code to book your massage now!



# Wellness Check

In this month's issue we reflect on and check in with the many dimensions that make up our health.

Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy, founder of the non-profit, Fountain of Health, breaks down five key actions you can implement in your life to enhance your long-term health and well-being. Their approach integrates key findings from scientific research on well-being, brain neuroplasticity, resilience, preventive medicine, and behavior change.

## Physical Activity

Treat your brain and body well by participating in physical movement. Just 30 minutes a day 5 times a week is enough to give you better sleep, increase your mood, and lessen your stress.



Engage in walking using the [CSUN Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing walkability map](#).

Utilize the [SRC](#) and participate in one of the many [group exercise classes](#) offered to students.

## Social Activity

Whether it's friends family, or people in your community; *take the time get to know one another*. Not only can this make you feel good, it also lessens the affects of mental health issues and prevents against stress related illness.



Join a Public Health student organization (see next page), sign up with the Public Health [Alumni chapter](#), or get involved with a [social club on campus](#).

Meet new people by volunteering on campus at [The Food Pantry](#) or [Institute of Sustainability](#).

## Brain Challenge

We've talked about working out the body, but what about the brain? Challenging the mind with new and effortful activities *can increase plasticity* and support you in your ability to cope with stressors.



Challenge your brain by learning something new at an [event or exhibition](#) at the University Library.

Explore the [Creative Maker Studio](#) inside the CSUN library to put your creative abilities to the test.

## Positive Thinking

Thoughts play a big role in the quality of our attitude and behavior. Practicing the *power of positive thinking* not only balances the way we think and feel, but can lessen experiences of isolation and lower the risk of chronic disease.



Need a break? ["Laugh Your Class Off"](#) at a CSUN comedy show.

Take a trip to the [Oasis Wellness Center](#) to relax, nap, or participate workshops and activities to help soothe your mind.

## Mental Health

Caring for your mental health means practicing positive forms of *self care and stress management*. By paying close attention to your mental state and taking action when necessary you can live a more fulfilling lifestyle.



Check out the [University Counseling Services](#) to find mental health resources, alongside individual and group counseling.

Use this [guide](#) to find CSUN's nature spots. Allow your mind to unwind and ground yourself in the nature around campus.



fountain of health



# STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

## Welcome to your student organization and association guide.

On this page you will find the latest information and happenings with our Public Health student clubs!

Whether you are an undergraduate or graduate student, learn more about how to get involved to help further your professional development and build long lasting connections.

### MPHSA

#### Master of Public Health Student Association



Top row: Miranda Ortiz, Duaa Mohammed-Hameem,  
Dharni Arunkumar Patel

Bottom row: Amanda Van Dyke, Eric Shanazari, Mikaela Rojas

"The MPHSA organization seeks to guide, support, and empower students enrolled in the MPH program to achieve their academic, professional, and social goals."

#### Fall 2023 Meeting Schedule

Program Meetings  
bi-weekly:  
Saturdays  
via zoom

Starting  
10/7/2023  
@11 am



### HESO

#### Health Education Student Organization



Left to right: Sarah Hernandez, Stephanny Salas,  
Kathya Sanchez, Belen Contreras, Jaylene Ayar,  
Madaly Recinos, Mary Monosyan

"With a diverse group of majors in HESO, members can collaborate with one another and think of new ideas to make a difference on campus."

#### Resources

Check out HESO's  
Club Flyer

Application OPEN for new  
undergraduate members

Application  
closes  
10/1/2023



# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Toledo-Corral talks about her background and training, being director of “MeSA”, and her most recent conference experience with the International Society for Psychoneuroendocrinology.



**Claudia Toledo-Corral, PhD, MPH**  
**Associate Professor**

Dr. Toledo-Corral graduated from UCLA with a B.S. in Psychobiology and Anthropology, followed by a M.S. in Biology from CSU Northridge. As she refined her research interests to the field of Public Health, she then completed an MPH and PhD in Preventive Medicine at USC. Since then, she worked as a post-doctoral research associate at USC, followed by her first faculty position at CSU Los Angeles starting in 2014. In 2018, she was recruited to join the Health Equity and Research Education (HERE) Center as a researcher. Since that time, Dr. Toledo-Corral directs the “Metabolism and Stress Assessment” or “MeSA” Lab.

Collectively, she has over 20 years of research training and experience in the field of cardiovascular and type 2 diabetes risk in minority youth. Specifically, she has studied the roles of body composition, inflammation, and the biological stress response and their relationships with cardio-metabolic health in Black and Latino/a/x children in Los Angeles.

In more recent years, her work has focused on the roles of psychosocial and environmental stressors on cardiometabolic risk and mental health in youth populations. The goal of her current NIH-funded study, “Allostatic Load in Los Angeles Youth” or the “ALLY” study is to investigate how discrimination and environmental racism contributes to cardio-metabolic risk in young adults of Los Angeles. Although the target demographic is for those who identify as Latina/o/x, young adults of any racial/ethnic group who are ages 18-24 years old are welcome to participate. The end-goal of all of Dr. Toledo-Corral’s work is to prevent later life chronic disease by understanding complex disease risk factors that are experienced earlier in the life course.

“Public health is about achieving health **equity** across **all** populations and providing solutions for even the **smallest** minority groups.”

*Dr. Toledo-Corral*

Click the icons below to learn about the MeSA Lab, read a recent publication, and connect through social media.





# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Claudia Toledo-Corral attended the International Society for Psychoneuroendocrinology (ISPNE) conference along with three of her students, Renee Medina (MPH student), Kimberly Felix (MPH graduate), and Brenda Jauregui (MPH graduate).

Kimberly and Renee co-presented a poster on the role that biological stress hormones on risk for type 2 diabetes. Brenda presented a poster on how sociodemographic factors are associated with cumulative biological stress markers.



Applied Epidemiology MPH faculty and students at the Broad Street Pump in London. From left to right, **Dr. Claudia Toledo-Corral**, **Renee Medina** (1st year MPH student), **Kimberly Felix** (Summer '23 MPH graduate), and **Brenda Jauregui** (Spring '23 MPH graduate)

*The Bridge asked Kimberly and Brenda to reflect on the conference and share their experiences.*

I had the honor of presenting a part of my master's thesis examining the associations between morning serum cortisol, impaired hemoglobin A1c, and socioeconomic status among youth from minoritized communities. I am grateful for the opportunity to attend this conference as it enhanced my public health career by being exposed to a variety of research questions surrounding the impact of stress mechanisms on emotional regulation and health. If you have the opportunity and time, I recommend scheduling an afternoon tea while in London. It is quite the experience!

-Kimberly Felix



**Kimberly Felix** (left) and **Renee Medina** (right) presenting a poster during this year's International Society of Psychoneuroendocrinology conference.



**Brenda Jauregui** presenting a poster during this year's International Society of Psychoneuroendocrinology conference.

Being able to present my research project at the international level was a nerve-racking but exhilarating experience. The level of support and interest from other conference attendees was motivating and reassuring of the work that they do in public health. It was an amazing feeling to be able to learn from professionals with more experience in the field, but also from those with varying and challenging perspectives. I am beyond thankful to Dr. Toledo-Corral for her continuous support and for helping her make this experience possible.

-Brenda Jauregui

# Have you ever experienced any discrimination?

Did you know that discrimination may lead to poor health?

## About our Study

Understanding how discrimination and physical environments may relate to health risks

### Who can Participate?

- Young adults ages 18-24
- Reside in certain zip codes

### What will you Receive?

For complete participation you will be eligible for up to **\$85 in gift cards** and additional gifts

### If you qualify, you will be asked to:

1. Complete an online survey from home about your health and stressors
2. Provide samples of saliva and blood
3. Have measurements of your body taken
4. Be asked to complete steps 1 - 3 in two years

### Contact Information

Please contact our project coordination team for any additional questions:  
**mesalab@csun.edu**

This study is funded by the NIH; Study PI: C. Toledo-Corral, Department of Health Sciences, CSUN

Scan to see if you qualify



California State University Northridge  
IRB-FY22-276  
Approval on 06-21-2023  
Expires on 06-20-2024



# ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

## Catching up with CSUN Public Health Alumna, Erica Nieves!

Erica graduated from CSUN in 2013 with a B.S. in Public Health Promotion. Erica achieved a Master Gardener certification from the UC Cooperative Extension in 2016, a Horticulture and Gardening certification from UCLA Extension in 2020, and a Diabetes Prevention Program Lifestyle Coach certification in 2020. Afterward, Erica graduated from American University in 2022 with an M.S. in Nutrition Education.



**Erica Nieves, MS**

**What does public health mean to you?**

From my perspective, public health is all about promoting and protecting the health and well-being of communities. As a Latina woman, I am in a unique position to significantly impact public health by addressing health disparities through representation, health equity, cultural sensitivity, and sharing my expertise and knowledge to help bridge cultural gaps in healthcare access and outcomes.

**Can you give us a summary of the work you are doing now?**

In July 2023, I began working in the Health Promotion and Policy Development Division at the Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD) as a Program Coordinator for the Promotores Program. My role is to expand the program beyond COVID-19 outreach to include a broad spectrum of health programs and services that align with the community’s needs and values. Utilizing findings from the Community Health Needs Assessment of Greater Pasadena, I am to set goals and define the scope of work based on the health status and needs of Pasadena residents. One of my favorite parts of the job so far is learning about the various health programs at PPHD and partner organizations to develop the curriculum and training materials for promotores. Other components of my role include supervision, support, monitoring and reporting, and community engagement, which I enjoy and work on daily. Since this program is community-driven, it is my responsibility to facilitate relationships, build trust, and act as a liaison between the promotores and the community. This also includes managing the resources needed for the program so that the promotores have the tools to effectively carry out their work. As a coordinator of this program, I not only have the responsibility to advocate for the program within the broader healthcare system and the community to expand the program’s reach but to also advocate for the promotores to ensure they receive the support and recognition they deserve.



**Do you want to learn more about the Promotores Program Erica works in? Use the link below to connect to the program website.**

[PPHD Health Promotion and Policy Development Division](#)



# ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

## How did your previous position prepare you for this new role?

While I am now solely working on one program, it is multifaceted and requires me to coordinate, train, and supervise a larger team, among other things. I am most prepared for my current job because of everything I learned from the work and my mentors at Seeds of Hope, the food justice ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, where I worked for ten years. There, I worked on multiple projects, such as CalFresh enrollment, CalFresh Healthy Living Food Distribution, a Diabetes Prevention Program, volunteer recruitment, and community engagement. This included contributions to securing grant funding and fiscal and programmatic management. During my first six years there, I was a health educator in the nutrition education program and worked in Los Angeles County with community members leading garden workshops, cooking and nutrition education, food distributions, and food policy advocacy.

## What skills did you acquire as a CSUN undergraduate that you use in your current position?

My classes taught me skills in health promotion and education strategies for training and guiding promotores in their community health outreach efforts, program planning and evaluation, conducting community health needs assessments, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting health data, cultural competence for effectively working in diverse communities, policy and advocacy, skills in communication and leadership, and the ability to work with a team. I was also able to apply these concepts and gain practical skills through my internship.



### *Erica's advice for current students:*

Achieving public health is a team effort. Therefore, seek those mentors and positions that help you gain the tools to build community and cultivate partnerships.



Want to learn more about the certifications Erica earned?  
Use the links below to connect to the program websites.

[UCLA Extension's Horticulture & Gardening program](#)



[UC Master Gardener Program](#)

[Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists \(ADCES\)](#)





# THIS IS PUBLIC HEALTH

The Bridge will share recommended readings, podcasts, and job/internship opportunities every month. Click the underlined hyperlinks below to learn more.

## Relevant Readings

[Headed Back To School: A Look at the Ongoing Effects of COVID-19 on Children's Health and Well-being](#)

[History of Public Health and Its Evolution](#)  
(USC)

[From Individual to Industry: How We Can All Improve Disability Inclusion](#)  
(Johns Hopkins)

## Conference

[2023 Youth and Health Annual Conference: Enhancing Whole Youth Care](#)

This daylong conference will focus on youth health and social support topics and content will be designed for health educators, social workers, counselors, case managers, and other health service providers. The goal is to examine how to effectively address and guide youth in challenging times.

## Listen to This

[Back to School: How One K-8 School is Getting Ready for the Fall](#)

Principal Matt Hornbeck addresses how the school is preparing for chronic absenteeism and mental health challenges.

[The Occupational Dimension of Public Health](#)

Take a deeper dive into the status of public health in the working population after the COVID-19 pandemic. (AJP)

[What experts are doing to combat the rise in maternal mortality among Black Americans](#)

Amna Nawaz reports on individuals working towards helping Black women have safer pregnancies.

## Volunteer Opportunity

**Interested in Lactation, Advocacy, and/or Equity?**

Breastfeed LA is looking for volunteers during Fall 2023 and could provide you a scholarship in Spring 2024! If you are interested in this opportunity, send an [email](#) including your resume and a writing sample.

## Continuing Education Opportunity

Interested in earning free CE (CHES/MCHES, CPH, and more) from the CDC Learning Connection? Utilize the webinars below on timely public health issues!

[New RSV Vaccines for Adults: General Information and Clinical Guidance](#)

[2023-2024 Recommendations for Influenza Prevention and Treatment in Children: An Update for Pediatric Providers](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine Training: What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know](#)

[Clinical Vaccination Guidance for Pregnant People](#)

Join us for a continuing education event



**Zoila Reyna, MPH**

Has been in public health for over 16 years. She is also the Founder of Public Health Hired and has been helping thousands of colleagues across the nation find, apply, and interview for competitive public health jobs.

**Fee: \$10**

**1 CECH available for  
CHES/MCHES**

**Register and Pay**



**Alternate payment option  
Check payable by mail to:**

**Southern California SOPHE  
P.O. Box 11233  
Santa Ana, CA 92711**



[www.scsophe.org/join-renew-or-donate-now/](http://www.scsophe.org/join-renew-or-donate-now/)

# GET HIRED IN PUBLIC HEALTH

**SEPTEMBER 28, 2023  
6:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.  
ON ZOOM**

**Learn how to prepare for a successful  
job search and increase readiness for  
employment by:**

- Reviewing how to find the best jobs
- Understanding what makes a resume get interview callbacks
- Getting a sneak peak of interview prep techniques that secure a job offer
- Tips on salary negotiation



**Public Health  
HIRED**





# OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month!



- 3 Addressing Implicit Bias Training
- 3 Health Literacy in Action Conference
- 4 Womens Health and Environmental Justice Conference
- 4 Virtual California Health Interview Survey Annual Data Release
- 6 ConnectED virtual Learning Day: An opportunity to learn from eating disorder thought leaders from across the nation
- 15 National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day

October is the continuation of National Hispanic Heritage Month!



### SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTERS!

Click the link below to subscribe to our email list and get monthly access to our newsletters!

**SIGN UP**

### GOT A STORY TO SHARE?

Let's stay informed! Contribute to The Bridge by filling out our content form so we all stay updated and connected!