February Newsletter



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

January was a pivotal month for our Collective Impact! Not only did we kick off a new year, but we also held our first in-person Steering Committee Meeting since the pre-COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was held at LUPE in San Juan and was well attended including representatives from all three funders (Knapp Community Care Foundation, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, and Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation). We had a guest presentation from Genentech and a great discussion among all Steering Committee members on the direction of our Collective Impact for the 2024-2025 year.

January also featured some other key highlights! The backbone staff kicked off two Life is Sweet Enough Campaigns, one with the staff at Jorge Rolando Gutierrez Early Childhood School in Elsa, and another with the staff at HOPE Family Health Center in McAllen. We also partnered with Driscoll Health Plan to create and implement custom water bottles and other resources for all grade levels at Essence Preparatory Public School in San Antonio. We were fortunate to present each grade level with the items and attend the 2024 Dream Week Essence Gala the following evening.



Moises Arjona Jr.
Collective Impact Director

STEERING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 13th, 2024

Time: 9:00am-11:00am

Location: Online - Zoom



Meeting Update

All four workgroups met as regularly scheduled in January to discuss and review the 2024-2025 goals and objectives formulated in our December meeting. The backbone implemented a new agenda format for our monthly meetings, utilizing breakout sessions and other tools to create more inclusivity and better discussions. If you have feedback on how we can make our meetings more engaging for you, please email us! (all feedback is welcome)

As we head into February, we are pending guidance from the Steering Committee on the direction of each Workgroup, so we have opted to cancel all meetings this month. The backbone is available to meet one-on-one or in small groups if needed. We look forward to reconvening with everyone in March! Stay tuned for updates.



Policy	Prediabetes Education
Cancelled	Cancelled
Screening	**Data**
Cancelled	Cancelled



New Data and Updated Indicators

American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year supplemental estimates have been updated with 2022 data. These indicators are available for counties with populations of 20,000 to 64,999 and include Adults with 65+ with a Disability, Adults with a Disability, Children with a Disability, and Persons with a disability.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Diabetes Atlas indicators have been updated with 2021 data. These indicators are available for counties. National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP) three-year estimates have been updated with 2019-2021 data, and single-year estimates have been updated with 2021 data. National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP) three-year estimates have been updated with 2019-2021 data, and single-year estimates have been updated with 2021 data. All these indicators are available for counties.

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) indicators used to calculate the U.S. and state comparison values have been updated with 2022 data. The following indicators were updated with 2022 data: Adults who are Obese, Adults who are Overweight or Obese, Adults who are Sedentary, Adults who Visited a Dentist, Adults with Diabetes, and Colon Cancer Screening: USPSTF Recommendation among others.

UCD Reports

This month, three new reports were uploaded to RGV Health Connect: 2023 UCD Social Media Reach, 2023 QR Code Projects, and 2023 Prediabetes Risk Test Results. To learn more about these reports please follow the links and/or contact Sarahi Lozano at slozano@ucdrgv.org.

Funding Opportunities

We have added 10+ new funding opportunities! Please check out these funding opportunities by visiting our website under Resources > Funding Opportunities or by clicking this link.

Subscribe - https://www.ucdrgv.org/login/

Outreach



Outreach:

Healthy Me! Dr. Hector P Garcia Memorial Library

It's Time Texas Community Challenge Kickoff

JuiceUs Weslaco – Grand Opening

Life Is Sweet Enough Kickoff – Jorge Rolando Gutierrez Early Childhood School (Elsa)

Life Is Sweet Enough Kickoff – HOPE Family Health Center (McAllen)

Essence Preparatory Elementary School Presentations & Driscoll Health Plan (San Antonio)

Water Bottle Distribution:

Healthy Me! Dr. Hector P Garcia Memorial Library

Life Is Sweet Enough Kickoff – Jorge Rolando Gutierrez Early Childhood School (Elsa)

Life Is Sweet Enough Kickoff – HOPE Family Health Center (McAllen)

Essence Preparatory Elementary School Presentations (San Antonio)

Sisters on the Run – Proyecto Juan Diego

Diabetes Prevention Presentation – MyCare Medical Group

Sugary Beverage Kit:

School Presentation - Jorge Rolando Gutierrez Early Childhood School (Elsa)

Sisters on the Run – Proyecto Juan Diego

Diabetes Prevention Presentation – MyCare Medical Group

Memorial Library

Sisters on the Run – Proyecto Juan Diego

Diabetes Prevention Presentation – MyCare Medical Group

Highlights

In January, partnered with Driscoll Health Plan to promote awareness of reducing sugary beverages and increasing water consumption to all grade levels (K-6th) at Essence Preparatory Public School in San Antonio, Texas. We were fortunate to present each grade level with custom water bottles and educational literature.

HYDRO made a big splash! **Click Here** to see Hydro in action!



Announcements

Upcoming Holidays & Important Dates:

2023 Annual Survey - ***Take Now!***

Valentines Day - Wednesday, February 14, 2024

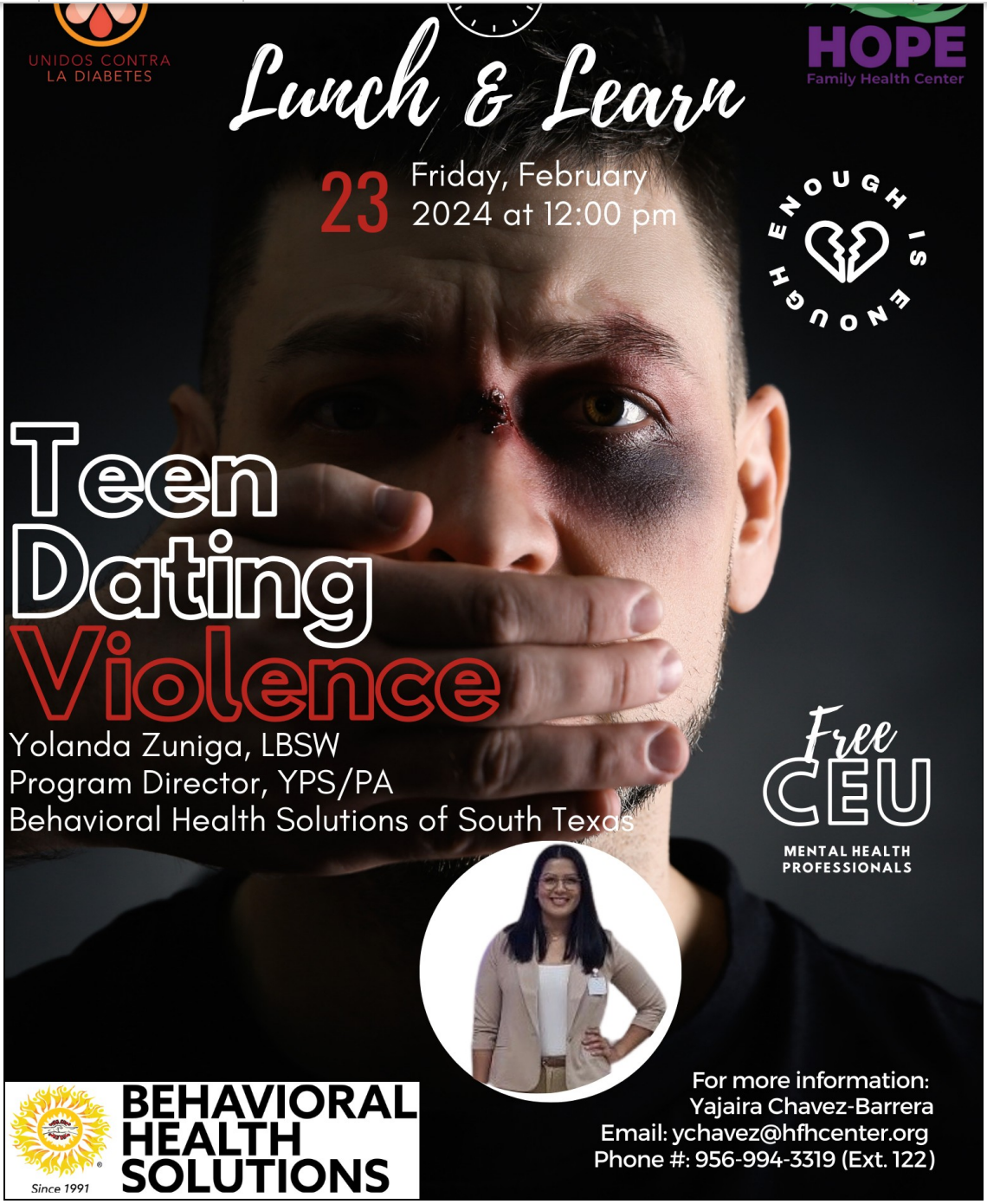
2024 Diabetes Alert Day - Tuesday, March 26, 2024

*Annual Conference Planning Committee - Sign Up Today! (**info@ucdrgv.org**)*

January Social Media Influencer - Marisol Vidales, Library Director


UTRGV
UT Health Rio Grande Valley
HEALTH EDUCATION AND PROMOTION
PACHANGA
Saturday April 13, 2024
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Alfonso Flores All Star Park
107 Sunflower Rd, Edinburg
FREE
Health Screenings
Food Distribution
Kids Activities
Bingo, Music
Food
Giveaways and More!
Presented by: UTRGV, UT Health RGV AHEC Program and Commissioner Ellie Torres, Hidalgo County Precinct 4
HIDALGO COUNTY
4
PRECINCT FOUR


6 Days of
Happiness Challenge
DAY 01
take a nap
DAY 02
give back
DAY 03
take a walk
DAY 04
call a friend
DAY 05
pride shrine
DAY 06
get a plant
#bluezonesofhappiness


UNIDOS CONTRA LA DIABETES
Lunch & Learn
HOPE Family Health Center
23 Friday, February 2024 at 12:00 pm
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
Teen Dating Violence
Yolanda Zuniga, LBSW
Program Director, YPS/PA
Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas
Free CEU
MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS
Since 1991
For more information:
Yajaira Chavez-Barrera
Email: ychavez@hfhcenter.org
Phone #: 956-994-3319 (Ext. 122)



Tell FDA: 5 Best Ways to Curb Sugary Drinks!

Submit a comment **to tell FDA to use pediatrician-approved ways to limit added sugars and sugary drinks.** Sugary drinks represent a large portion of the added sugar intake among Americans, upping risk of obesity and disease.



Staying Connected

January 2024 - Updates and Important Information

- January 15, 2024 – UCD Director Moises Arjona Jr. met with the City of Edinburg Mayor, Ramiro Garza Jr. UCD will be invited to participate in various

Wellness Committee meetings.

- January 15, 2024 - The Steering Committee Slide Deck with Updates was emailed to all Steering Committee Members and Workgroup Co-Chairs. Included with the slide deck was the UCD Worksheet containing the 2024-2025 Goals & Objectives, along with a breakdown of our Cross-Cutting Indicators. Our Steering Committee was tasked with formulating goals for each workgroup that align with our Cross-Cutting Indicators. Our February Workgroup meetings have been canceled, however, we look forward to reconvening with a clearer picture in March.
- In the next couple of weeks, UCD will be launching a new survey to better serve our partners. The survey will reference each of the cross-cutting indicators, this way we can begin to work closer with each of you.

Community Resources

Click the link below to request any of the following:

UCD Community Resources

Sugary Beverage Kit

Traveling Exhibit

Children's Loteria

Health Posters

Workplace Wellness

Take the Steps for a Healthier Lifestyle with personalized QR Code

Blog



Ignacio Almaguer

A Never Ending Fight

Ignacio Almaguer has not always had an easy health journey, but it is one that he still feels blessed for despite the hardships. Growing up, Ignacio loved to box, and wrestle, but as he got older, his body started to feel the wear and tear of years of training. In 2008 he was diagnosed with devastating news, Thyroid Cancer! This came as a shock, recalling the memory as "scary and nerve-wracking". On March 16, 2009, just a little over a year after his diagnosis, Ignacio would undergo a successful surgery to remove the cancer in his thyroid. As a result of this surgery, he was diagnosed with hypothyroidism – "Hypothyroidism happens when the thyroid gland doesn't make enough thyroid hormone" (mayoclinic.org). Due to this, he began to feel intense weight gain, fatigue, tiredness, and other effects. After overcoming both obstacles, one thing was clear to Ignacio, he needed to maintain routine checkups with his doctor every three months for blood work and listen to his body to dial in his medication needs.

In 2015-2016, Ignacio decided it was time to get back to doing what he loved most, going to the gym. He joined a local gym practicing jiujitsu and working out at least 2-3 times per week.

Despite the body aches and pains, he felt in his 40-year-old body, he tried to maintain a steady regimen of working out around his other obligatory duties. Fast forward to 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic hits, bringing with it uncertainty across not only the United States but the whole World. Ignacio felt it as well, sitting in his house for many days on end, not having access to his outlet to work out and practice his jiujitsu, the negative effects it had on his health started to become prevalent. He described never "truly liking cheese and crackers" before the pandemic, but after, he "loved them"!

Entering the pandemic in 2020, Ignacio was around 230lbs. After coming out of the pandemic in 2022, he was 285lbs. The first thing he did was go see his doctor in McAllen to get blood work run. The results came back, and he was diagnosed with metabolic syndrome – "Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of conditions that occur together, increasing your risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes (mayoclinic.org). He had two options, get put on injectable insulin medication, or a new injectable to help with weight loss, Ozempic. Weighing his options and doing his research on each option, he chose to go with Ozempic – "Ozempic is a weekly injection that helps lower blood sugar by helping the pancreas make more insulin.



It is not approved for weight loss, but some physicians prescribe it to be used for weight loss" (health.ucdavis.edu). Before being put on this medication, Ignacio was consuming 4500 calories a day and was still hungry, due in large part to the fact that his insulin wasn't absorbing the sugars correctly. After taking the medication for a short period, he noticed instant results. He lost 20lbs, his knee pain went away, and he became more health conscious of what kinds of foods and nutrients his body needed.

In April of 2022, the craze for Ozempic across the US resulted in a shortage of medication. As a result, Ignacio's doctor offered to prescribe him another similar medication, Mounjaro – "Mounjaro is an injectable prescription medicine that is used along with diet and exercise to improve blood sugar (glucose) in adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus" (mounjaro.com). In July of 2022, he started to notice positive effects of the medication, including significant weight loss. After dialing in his other thyroid medications and maintaining consistent checkups with his Doctor, Ignacio felt like he was at a good point in his life throughout the remainder of the 2022-2023 year. That is, until December hit.

In December 2023, Ignacio decided he would switch over to his wife's insurance plan, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas. Little did he know that the insurance company would not cover the cost of the medications Ozempic or Mounjaro, stating that "it was only covered for patients who were diagnosed as Type 2 diabetics". Despite combating these claims and going back and forth with the insurance company, Ignacio has yet to receive the positive outcome he is hoping for. He feels like he has used the medication in the right way to turn around his metabolic syndrome diagnosis and reduce his prediabetes. As we concluded our conversation, Ignacio noted that he truly believes that these medications "can and will help you" if they're taken correctly in conjunction with a professional doctor's advice. We look forward to checking back in and seeing the outcome of this situation.

Sources:

mayoclinic.org
health.ucdavis.edu
mounjaro.com

FOR THE health OF IT

Green Machine Smoothie



INGREDIENTS

Makes 2 Servings

2 medium

You can adjust recipe serving sizes for leftovers (and company!) in your menu.

Banana (2)
Frozen pineapple (2 cups)
Kale (2 cups)
Spinach (2 cups)
Hemp seeds (¼ cup)
Ground ginger (1 tsp)
Coconut water (2 cups)



DIRECTIONS

Directions
(5 min • Super easy)

- The night before, peel the banana and break it into chunks. Freeze overnight.
- In the morning, combine frozen banana chunks with the frozen pineapple, kale, spinach, hemp seeds, ground ginger and coconut water in a blender. Blend until completely smooth.

SOURCE:BLUEZONES.COM

Maquina Verde

Zalamero



INGREDIENTES

Rinde 2 porciones

2 medianos

Puede ajustar el tamaño de las porciones de recetas para las sobras (¡y compañía!) en su menú.

Plátano (2)
Piña congelada (2 tazas)
Col rizada (2 tazas)
Espinacas (2 tazas)
Semillas de cáñamo (¼ taza)
Jengibre molido (1 cucharadita)
Agua de coco (2 tazas)



DIRECCIONES

Direcciones
(5 min • Súper fácil)

- La noche anterior, pela el plátano y pártelo en trozos. Congelar durante la noche.
- Por la mañana, combine los trozos de plátano congelados con la piña congelada, la col rizada, las espinacas, las semillas de cáñamo, el jengibre molido y el agua de coco en una licuadora. Licue hasta que esté completamente suave.

FUENTE:BLUEZONES.COM

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