

**Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid (VIDA) Project, a Coordinated COVID-19 Response Strategy
Providing Wraparound Support**

OVERVIEW: The Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid (VIDA) Project consists of ten community-based organizations and 120 Community Health Workers (CHWs) providing COVID-19 response supportive services to the most disparately impacted communities in Monterey County.

CHALLENGE: The COVID-19 pandemic impacted low-income and Communities of Color in Monterey County far more gravely than any other community. Thousands of Monterey County residents suddenly became jobless, were homeless or facing eviction, and were experiencing hunger. Many live in high-density conditions and lack access to consistent quality health care, becoming more likely to be critically ill or die during surges of COVID-19 positive case rates.

SOLUTION: The VIDA Project is a coalition of ten community-based organization who employ Community Health Workers (CHWs) to conduct outreach and provide COVID-19 education and connections to resources for hard-to-reach disparately impacted communities and support reductions in COVID-19 transmission in Monterey County. The purpose of the VIDA Project is to implement a public awareness campaign and community education strategies centered on culturally relevant messaging delivered by trusted messengers to influence social behaviors, normalizing COVID-19 testing, mask wearing and social distancing, and addressing vaccine misinformation. Adopting a holistic approach, quarantine and isolation supports are provided to individuals and families who test positive for COVID-19. Whether a member of a household or an entire family is ill with COVID-19, the impact is devastating. CHWs assist with doorstep drop-offs of food and water; system navigation to obtain access to wage loss replacement; rental and utility assistance; connect individuals to legal services for individuals struggling to obtain support documents from employers or are at risk of losing their jobs due to having to isolate or quarantine; and access to testing and vaccination appointments. As vaccinations became available, the VIDA Project supported neighborhood based vaccine clinics hosted by VIDA Project partners in churches and community centers. When focus on vaccinations took priority and COVID-19 testing rates declined, the VIDA Project launched a partnership with the State of California Department of Public Health to train and certify CHWs to conduct the antigen self-tests, becoming a critical resource during the surge due to the delta variant.

INNOVATION: Outreach strategies are designed with cultural relevance and humility at the forefront, focused on the lowest quartile of the Healthy Places Index census tracts with the highest COVID-19

positive case rates. In Latino communities where most the residents are migrant farmworker families or hospitality workers, the VIDA Project partnered with agricultural companies, contractors, hotels and labor unions and CHWs provided worksite COVID-19 education workshops and assistance. In densely populated communities, CHWs positioned themselves at storefronts where individuals often returned to the storefront, seeking support after a member of their household tested positive for COVID-19. In African-American communities, CHWs educate congregations during church services and bible studies. In one such case, a parishioner was watching the livestreamed church service from home, contacted the CHW and received the services to be able to isolate properly during recovery from COVID-19. A language access line in the indigenous languages to Oaxaca, Mexico such as Mixteco, Triqui and Zapoteco languages, was launched to address language barriers to access for hundreds of community residents.

Project management includes the partnership between the County and Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC) for distribution of County funding for implementation of the project. Garnering support to further enhance and sustain the VIDA Project has become an objective of a cross-sector COVID-19 collaborative of organizational leaders coordinated by the CFMC.

RESULTS: From February through June, the VIDA Project had over 220,000 outreach interactions with people, assisted 8,204 people with vaccinations at VIDA partner vaccine clinics, helped 8,704 people with vaccination access, and over 1,800 people received COVID-19 isolation and quarantine support. In the first two weeks of this summer’s outreach canvassing campaign, 6,000 doors were knocked on, 3,205 conversations with residents had, and a total 169 people (generally vaccine hesitant) received assistance with vaccination appointments.

REPLICABILITY: The VIDA Project has established process protocols; training modules for community outreach and engagement strategies; communication toolkits and social media protocols to maximize reach to the populations of focus in the most culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate methods. While tailored to serve the communities in Monterey County, strategies and methods for communication can be modified to fit the needs of any County.

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ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Hw_1SeWMJPol1BPDpeSeDpSjkg6SWeUp?usp=sharing