

Sharing and Caring

As a Communications Specialist with Get Healthy San Mateo County, I help strategize how to communicate our four priorities for building healthy, equitable communities for all in San Mateo County to create policy level change. I have the privilege of working with a smart, dedicated team of public health practitioners who work hand-in-hand with you – our cities, partners, county agencies, hospitals, schools, and leaders – to help San Mateo County residents live longer and better lives.

Being able to clearly describe the relationship between health and our four priorities of healthy housing, neighborhoods, schools, and the economy opens the door to collaboration across disciplines that allows us to advance the health of us all. Not everyone immediately recognizes the health connection between these important parts of all our lives that contribute to how healthy we can be. By consistently communicating our leading data points and tagline for each priority, we are able to more clearly present health across our four strategies.

We share our research, data, and strategies with partners, decisionmakers, and the public by developing presentations, factsheets, and written comments that engage the community in decision-making processes. We do this by:

- **Using plain language** that everyone from the savviest public health practitioner to the lay person on the street can easily understand and take action for community health.
- **Including local photos** (as we have in this month's newsletter) to clearly communicate health needs in our county, show that change is possible, and allow people to recognize themselves in photos so they are more prone to take action.
- **Consistently using taglines and messaging** throughout our communications so stakeholders understand and are inspired to act.
- **Regularly communicate with stakeholders** to foster collaboration and share best practices and important public health information. We do this through our [monthly e-newsletter](#), our social media accounts on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and our [website](#) – and hope to engage with you more as we undergo a website redesign.

If you haven't already, [please take our survey](#) so we can hear from you how our website can be a better resource for your work!

We are also keenly aware that San Mateo County's population is expected to increase 30% by 2060, with Latinos surpassing Whites as the largest race/ethnicity group by 2050 and the Asian population surpassing the White population by 2060. As our county demographics change, the way in which we communicate and advocate for healthy policy change will need to reflect our growing population across ethnicities and races.

I look forward to connecting with you more as we advance this ambitious and achievable policy agenda together. Drop us a line if our communications support can ever be of service to you – aherson@smcgov.org.

Allie Herson
Communications Specialist

Staff Perspective: November 2015

