HCN Connect is dedicated to keeping our community informed about the contributions that individuals and organizations are making to improve community and individual health in the Riverside County region.

Let us feature your story, event or resource in HCN Connect!

Do you have a plan, program or endeavor designed to improve your community’s health? Do you have a resource you would like to share with the HCN? Please let us know!

Please submit ideas for the next publication by: February 15, 2020

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The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the largest Metropolitan Planning Organization in the United States. It serves six of the ten counties in Southern California.

These include Imperial County, Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside County, San Bernardino County, and Ventura County. As of December 2014, SCAG serves a total of 191 cities and one tribal government, the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians, which is a federally recognized tribe based in Riverside County.

SCAG represents a more than 18 million people in the area. It is led by a governing board, the Regional Council. It includes elected representatives of 67 districts. SCAG also considers all members of the Los Angeles City Council as part of its Regional Council.

As the lead agency committed to developing a mission to create long-range transportation plans and a Sustainable Communities Strategy, SCAG has developed Connect SoCal, a 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

In collaboration with local, state and federal agency partners, SCAG examined current conditions in order to create a shared vision, outlining transportation and land use goals.

Under this planning document, SCAG’s vision for Connect SoCal includes improving the existing transportation system through demand management strategies and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

The benefits of the 2020-2045 Regional Transportation plan align with regional goals towards improved sustainability, transportation equity, improved public health and safety – all of which improve the overall quality of life for Southern California residents.

Connect SoCal also includes future population, employment, housing, and land use forecasts, and a financial plan that includes areas of revenue to finance the 25-year plan. It also includes future projects and analysis reports for transportation, environmental justice, highways, land use, land conversation, public health and public transportation safety.

These focus areas were submitted by the transportation commissions for each of the six counties, based on their own regional needs.

The Connect SoCal Plan draft will be brought to SCAG’s Regional Council and the final plan will be adopted by the Regional Council in the Spring of 2020.

SCAG also allows for public involvement. SCAG has released a draft of the Connect SoCal Plan, which is available for public review and comments. The final version is set to include a Public Participation & Consultation Sub-Appendices cataloging an archive of any comments received.

After learning more about the Connect SoCal Plan Draft, you can get in touch with SCAG and submit your feedback. Keep updated on SCAG’s news here. These are factsheets detailing how Connect SoCal will improve each of the counties overseen by SCAG.
**INTERN’S CORNER**
A monthly introspection on health, curated by Mariana Osorio

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<th>DID YOU KNOW?</th>
<th>TRENDS/MOST-SEARCHED</th>
<th>RIVERSIDE COUNTY IN THE NEWS</th>
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<td><strong>Fun Fact</strong>: January 9th was National Apricot Day! Rich in antioxidants, eating apricots can help with age-related eyesight damage, are anti-inflammatory, and they provide fiber and are high in Vitamin A. Yummy and healthy!</td>
<td>The most-searched health term this month (as of January 12th) was health insurance. For California, the search for health insurance was most popular in the cities of Sacramento, San Diego and Los Angeles. In these cities, the search for Emergency Medical Insurance was the viewed item. Within California, Emergency Department use has been increasing for young children and the elderly.</td>
<td>According to <em>The Press-Enterprise</em>, various healthcare facilities in Riverside county are currently rolling out new emergency rooms and state-of-the-art technology. The goal is to improve patient care, reduce wait times, and address increasing demand for healthcare services. Further renovations and the addition of other technological equipment is yet to come.</td>
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For more information, please visit [here](#).
I recently went abroad and got the opportunity to visit the city of Merida, which is located in the Mexican state of Yucatan. The city of Merida is not only the largest city of the Yucatan Peninsula, it is also one of the most populated.

As a graduate student studying public health, it was easy for me to take notice of some health innovations the city of Merida has employed in an effort to keep its large population healthy.

One of the ways it does so is through its sustainability and air quality improvement strategies that also double as health promotion efforts.

As of a few years ago, Merida’s town council has promoted the biciruta event, which has become a weekly tradition where one side of the designated streets are closed off from traffic to allow its residents to travel throughout the city on bike or foot.

Every Sunday from 7am to 1pm, some of the city’s most iconic streets such as Paseo de Montejo, (which is named after Francisco de Montejo, the man who founded the city in 1542), is shut down to promote physical activity.

Don’t own a bicycle? Never fear! For a very cheap cost, there are shops that let you rent bicycles to use along the route.

However, the biciruta, is not just for bicyclists’ enjoyment. The weekly event is also open to runners or kids in their scooters.

During my time in Merida, I got to experience this innovative event myself. I got to see people of all ages – and sometimes even whole families along with their pets – take part in the tradition.

For me, it was a fun way to see some of the city’s most popular buildings and monuments. I also got to learn about the city’s history, immerse myself in the culture and traditions, and also maintain healthy habits even while abroad!
During this trip, my awareness to some more traditional ways to stay healthy was reinforced. As we know, natural remedies are often based in botany or herbal plants that provide individuals with methods of home-made medicine that is oftentimes passed down through generations.

In some areas of Mexico, these beliefs and their methods are used for illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious ones, like asthma or bronchitis, or just to promote healthy living.

For example, honey is often used in Mexican homes to treat a variety of symptoms. Due to its antimicrobial and antibacterial properties, honey is thought to help heal wounds, but can also help with colds, sore throats, coughing, and to reduce the appearance of pimples. Honey is also turned into hard candy to help soothe the throat and as a natural cough suppressant. These can either be made at home or bought in markets.

For someone traveling abroad, hearing about popular natural remedies is both a way to learn about cultural traditions passed down between family members but also an interesting method in which the natural or local resources are used in everyday health.

Another interesting health remedy can be found through the use of natural herbs for cooking. Achiote, is a red-colored condiment popular in Mayan food recipes. This highly-pigmented item is used as an ingredient in traditional cuisine because it’s considered to be good for the digestive system and is a parasiticide.

Ocean water is also considered a natural option for curing skin conditions. The high levels of minerals and salt in ocean water are said to produce benefits that serve as natural remedies. Seaside air is also said to help individuals who suffer from respiratory illnesses.

Sea water is thought to help reduce the itchiness of mosquito bites.

Pictured: The village of Chelem in Yucatan boasts access to the beach’s saltwater.

Pictured: An example of the dulces de miel (honey candy) used to alleviate throat or coughing issues.
ChangeLab Solutions works across the nation to advance equitable laws and policies that ensure healthy lives for all. ChangeLab has an interdisciplinary team consists of lawyers, planners, policy analysts, and more. ChangeLab prioritizes communities whose residents are at the highest risk for poor health.

Recently Published:
- Ensuring Every Child Can Learn, Heal and Thrive
- Leveraging Juvenile Justice Food Environments to Advance Health Equity

Click [here](#) to access ChangeLab’s Blueprint for Changemakers on how to achieve health equity through law & policy.

To subscribe to their email newsletter, click [here](#)
The CDC Announces the Active Communities Tool (ACT): An Action Planning Guide and Assessment Modules to Improve Community Built Environments to Promote Physical Activity

The Assessment Modules assesses strengths and weaknesses of community plans, policies, and resources for improving community built environments for physical activity. The tool can also monitor progress toward achieving community conditions known to promote physical activity. It is designed to help cross-sector teams create an action plan for improving community built environments that promote physical activity.

Who can use The Active Communities Tool (ACT)?
The Active Communities Tool is best suited for use with a single municipality (also referred to as a community). It should include representatives from a variety of disciplines, such as public health, transportation, public works, and land use planning.

How to complete the Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules?
We encourage you to review The Active Communities Tool (ACT): An Action Planning Guide and Assessment Modules to Improve Community Built Environments to Promote Physical Activity to understand how the Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules fit into the broader action planning process. Information about each of the six assessment modules (e.g., purpose of the module, type of technical expert(s) to involve in completing the module, length of time to complete the module) is noted on each module’s cover page and in The Active Communities Tool Action Planning Guide.

The Active Communities Tool has two parts:

ACT: Action Planning Guide

ACT: Assessment Modules

The Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules:
• contains six self-assessment modules designed to help users to identify opportunities for action, or engagement, to improve community built environments for physical activity;
• aligns with current scientific evidence as reflected in the Community Preventive Services Task Force recommendations on Built Environment Approaches Combining Transportation System Interventions with Land Use and Environmental Design and the Active Travel to School, and;
• is based largely on items from existing rating and assessment tools commonly and successfully used in the field.

For more information, please visit the Active Communities Tool Assessment Modules.
Riverside County PACT

Dear Community Leader:

As the City of Riverside continues its strides towards the innovation of active transportation in Riverside County through various projects: The Pedestrian Target Safeguarding Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Complete Street Ordinance, and Trails Master Plan (PACT)—the City seeks pivotal input from the community. These projects will provide the City of Riverside with a complete road map to support the development of not only active transportation projects, but also with the resources to secure funding for future trail-blazing projects. The PACT will promote safe and sustainable transportation alternatives in order to reduce traffic, pollution, and transportation related injuries in coordination with various agencies.

We have completed our walk audits and are in the process of conducting our public outreach efforts.
If you are interested in having us come share the project information with your organization, would like additional information to share with your organization or have an event that your organization would like us to attend, please email RiversidePACT@altaplanning.com. We appreciate your assistance on delivering this project information and look forward to receiving your feedback.

The City of Riverside and Alta Planning + Design are working on creating a Pedestrian Target Safeguarding Plan, Active Transportation Plan, a Complete Streets Ordinance, and a Trails Master Plan for Riverside. These Citywide Plans will provide a framework for a multi-modal network for the City of Riverside’s future bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects. The City of Riverside wants to hear from you. Please share your thoughts with us!

Please take a moment to share the project information sheets below, encourage your constituents to participate in the attached survey which can also be taken online here and visit the project website at www.riversideCA.gov/PACT.
The 2020 American Planning Association California Conference will be hosted in Downtown Riverside in September 2020. The Call for Sessions/Speakers/Moderators is out and proposals are due by 2/21/20. I hope to see some fantastic proposals from my planning colleagues! [https://lnkd.in/gCYe86u](https://lnkd.in/gCYe86u)