

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Issue 45 • Summer 2025



**Plática con Café Podcast Series**



Our community is facing ever-shifting drug trends that may harm those we care about. We sit down to review commonly asked questions and how best we can respond as a community. Join the conversations and stay informed!

### **Episode 7: Compartiendo Conocimiento y Sabiduría (The Act of Sharing Knowledge and Wisdom)**

In this latest episode, Alma and Erika tackle commonly asked questions about marijuana legalization and health risks. They emphasize that legal doesn't always mean safe. The conversation also clarifies that vaping often involves THC oils. They share practical tips for parents to find reliable information and counter misinformation.

So, grab your cafecito and enjoy!

*Note: Episode 7 is available in Spanish with English subtitles.*

Watch on [youtube](#)

English: [positivepaths.venturacounty.gov/platica](https://positivepaths.venturacounty.gov/platica)

Spanish: [positivepaths.venturacounty.gov/es/platica-con-cafe](https://positivepaths.venturacounty.gov/es/platica-con-cafe)



## **Out & About With Alma, Ignacio & Erika**

### **Connecting with the Community**







*By Alma Ixta, Ignacio Ixta & Erika Fernandez, Intensive Services Coordinators*

Community outreach involves being in the community and learning from you about what matters, what concerns you, and the ways in which we can best work together to educate and strengthen our communities. We share our prevention messaging, informing families about the risks of marijuana, vaping, opioids, fentanyl, meth, and alcohol to help prevent and reduce alcohol and drug-related issues in our County. We strive to develop relationships with partner organizations and members in the community for collaboration and support regarding substance use prevention.

We offered presentations throughout the county on various prevention topics including opioids and fentanyl, marijuana and vaping, and alcohol and youth.

You can stay in touch with us by watching our [Plática con Café Podcast Series](#).

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### Highlights from Alma:

This quarter was a busy one with several Open House School events, community events and parent presentations. We were present in several cities in our county. Parent presentations are one of my favorite things about my job. I really enjoy the face-to-face interactions with parents. It brings me great satisfaction when I am able to answer their questions and bring awareness about all the different substances their children are exposed to in their environments. Many working parents can't keep up with everything that is on the news or social media around the topics of drugs and alcohol trends and new drugs that keep coming up in our communities.

I enjoy seeing their eyes light up with new tools and prevention strategies that they can use to help their kids grow in a healthier way. I understand that it's hard being a working parent because we can't always supervise our children like we wish we can. I always remind parents about the importance of staying vigilant and knowledgeable about all the substances our kids are exposed to in their environment.

One of the events that stood out to me this quarter was the Open House at **Conejo Valley High School** in May. I was very impressed by the staff that put this event together. They provided a meal to families that they cooked on site. They were so welcoming to all families in attendance. Staff also donated many gift cards that were raffled for their students and parents as incentives for their participation in the resource fair. It was very well organized and there were several community agencies providing resources and services for their families. This event was very well attended and all the families there seemed very happy to be there taking advantage of all the great information and resources provided to them. We were able to engage with most families that attended, and we were able to provide naloxone rescue kits to several families that attended. Overall, it was a very successful event that evening and I felt very happy to be a part of it.

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### Highlights from Ignacio:

I have always loved working with people, especially educating them on topics

that affect their family members, like substance use. I liked working for the overdose prevention program but it limited my experience to work with specific populations. Being part of the community outreach prevention team allows me to reach out to more people and agencies through our outreach events and presentations.

Recently I attended a meeting at **Gold Coast** and saw many of the agencies that I worked with before. They were happy to see me, sharing comments like “great to see you come back Ignacio.” At our outreach events I saw many families that I helped before and they also told me that it was nice seeing me back educating the community. The warmth and friendly responses from the community makes me appreciate and love my job, because through the community I can see the fruits of the years of working with the Prevention Services team.

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### Highlights from Erika:

*A few events we attended this past quarter were: Oxnard Union High School District Healthcare Pathways, HOSA Spring Challenge, Ventura High School Parent Presentation, Earth Day Wellness Fair, Día Del Niño Resource Fair, Community Forum on “Tobacco Old and New: Why Should We Care and What Can We Do?”, Oxnard High School Mental Health Fair, Oxnard Union High School District Resource Fair, Kamala School Parent Presentation, VCBH Mental Wellness Symposium, Fillmore High School Wellness and Resource Fair, Naval Base Ventura County Opioids Presentation, SBHIP Celebrate Resource Fair, and the CET Resource Fair.*

We had another wonderful quarter out in the community and I am grateful for all the collaboration and invites from community organizations to make sure that our information and services are out there for the community. I attended several school events and shared the risks of vaping and marijuana use and educated many families on the importance of overdose education and prevention.

Ventura County Public Health had a great event that we collaborated with and it was a great success. The event was a community forum on tobacco that took place at our VCBH facility in Oxnard on April 30th. There were local experts that presented updates on issues regarding tobacco and the cannabis industry and talked about ongoing initiatives throughout Ventura County aimed at protecting public health and creating healthy communities.

It was great to attend several resource fairs at our local schools and in the community. I love that schools celebrate and include the importance of mental health and substance use prevention and provide opportunities where students can learn what resources and services are available in their own community.

***I look forward to seeing everyone in the community!***

***Stay in touch with us! Read our [Newsletters](#).***

*Photos: SBHIP Celebrate Resource Fair; OUHSD Healthcare Pathways, HOSA Spring Challenge, Community Forum on “Tobacco Old and New: Why Should We Care and What*



## Get the facts about Kratom

A new **Prescribers Care** campaign has launched with educational materials for both prescribers and patients about the risks of kratom. Kratom is a traditional herbal extract that is being sold in a variety of forms in places like convenience stores. People use it as a stimulant in low doses and a sedative in higher doses. What is not promoted is that there can be dangerous side effects. In the US there is no regulation and kratom is usually manipulated and mixed with additives. Batches vary significantly. Locally, there have been reports of addiction, overdose and deaths associated with kratom.



## Talking To Our Kids: Summer Edition

Summer is here and for many of us it is the best time of the year. When I was young summer was my favorite time of the year. I had no school, no responsibilities, rode bikes, spent time with friends from the neighborhood, went to the park, and enjoyed the freedom of no structure at all.

Throughout the years I began to get into trouble, which thankfully wasn't anything too crazy, but as a parent summertime can be stressful. With work and adult responsibilities, summer takes a lot of research and planning. I learned that it is important to make sure our kids have fun structured activities for the summer.

I know how hard it can be to find affordable day care for our kids during the summer, however, sometimes all it takes is some research and planning. Check in with your kids' school about summer programs or look up local community youth organizations for summer camps or classes your kids can take. Many programs are free or at a very low cost. One important reason to keep our kids active during the summer is to prevent them from becoming bored or interested in unhealthy habits, such as substance use. If you haven't started the talk on alcohol and drugs with your children, the summertime might be a great time to start, particularly if your kids are transitioning from elementary to middle school or high school.

Even if the conversation has been had it is a great time to continue that conversation. Let's remember, **prevention is an active process**, and as parents we need to keep up to date with the new drug trends to educate our kids of the harmful effects drugs can have on them. Make the conversation fun and relatable. It's better to be clear and simple so they can better understand what we are trying to teach them. Allow them to ask questions and share their stories about what they know about substance use. Peer pressure back in my summer days was hard, and I can't imagine with social media and the trends nowadays how intense peer pressure must be for our kids, so keeping them busy and having open conversations can go a long way.

Learn more with these helpful links:

[Children & Teens - Wellness Every Day](#)

[Just Not Worth It](#)

[Parent Resources: Five Goals - Talk. They Hear You | SAMHSA](#)



**Featured Website: Positive Paths**

**Check out our Prevention Services Website**





## POSITIVE PATHS

*Supporting Health • Preventing Harm*

The best time to prevent substance use issues is before they begin. The second-best time is today. This website contains information and resources that can be used for outreach and education in schools, in the community, and for yourself and your loved ones.

Learn more about the many pathways toward healthier living.

### Teens & Young Adults

The best time to prevent substance use issues is before they begin. The second-best time is today. This website contains information and resources that can be used for outreach and education in schools, in the community, and for yourself and your loved ones.

Learn more about the many pathways toward healthier living.

**Learn more:**

**Positive Paths**

[positivepaths.venturacounty.gov](https://positivepaths.venturacounty.gov)



## Awareness Events

### International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31

August 31 is recognized as International Overdose Awareness Day the world's largest annual campaign to end overdose, remember those we have lost to an overdose, acknowledge the grief of the family and friends left behind, and renew our commitment to end overdose and related harms.

The campaign raises awareness of overdose, which is one of the world's worst public health crises and stimulates action and discussion about evidence-based overdose prevention and drug policy.





## Staying in the Know: Latest Research

### **SAMHSA Releases Annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health**



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released the results of the **2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)**, which shows how people living in United States reported their experience with mental health conditions, substance use and pursuit of treatment.

[Read the report](#)

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## Calendar

### **Community Meetings**

- **Circle of Care Monthly Meeting**  
[One Step A La Vez](#)  
1st Wednesday of every month at 1:00 PM
- **Outreach Coordinator Meeting, OUHSD**  
1st Wednesday of every month at 10:30 AM  
Contact: [teresa.telles@oxnardunion.org](mailto:teresa.telles@oxnardunion.org)
- **Santa Paula Social Services Coalition Meeting**  
3rd Thursday of every month at 2:00 PM  
Contact: [SPSocialServiceCoalition@gmail.com](mailto:SPSocialServiceCoalition@gmail.com)  
[Santa Paula Social Services Coalition](#)
- **Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) Prevention Committee Meeting**  
4th Tuesday every other month at 3:15 PM.  
[BHAB Prevention Committee](#)



## Stay Informed

### Websites

- [Positive Paths](#)
- [COAST Ventura County](#)
- [Ventura County Behavioral Health](#)

### Follow us on Social Media

- [www.facebook.com/PositivePathsVC/](https://www.facebook.com/PositivePathsVC/)
- [x.com/PositivePathsVC](https://x.com/PositivePathsVC)

### Check out our Newsletters

- [www.positivepaths.org/newsletter](https://www.positivepaths.org/newsletter)
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## About Us

### Supporting Health – Preventing Harm

Prevention means working upstream to reduce alcohol and drug-related problems in our community. We are involved in outreach in our communities, educating and increasing awareness about the risks and realities of alcohol and drug misuse and abuse. Read about our Prevention Services initiatives and our work in Ventura County.

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## Contact Us

*Interested in presentations or publications to share with your communities? Contact Us!*

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