

COUNTY SNAPSHOT – MERCED COUNTY

CONTACTS

Interview Participant:

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Suicide Prevention Activities:

Sharon Jones (*see above*)

Stigma & Discrimination Reduction Activities:

Sharon Jones (*see above*)

Primary/Behavioral Health Care Integration:

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Crisis Hotline Contact:

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OVERVIEW

Method of Data Collection Utilized: In-Person Interview January 9, 2012

Merced County is located in California’s Central Valley, north of Fresno and southeast of San Jose. The county seat is Merced. The county has a total area of almost 1,972 square miles, of which 43 square miles is water.¹

The 2010 U.S. Census reported Merced County’s population as 255,793, with a 21.5% population increase in the past decade. The racial makeup is: 58.0% White, 3.9% African American, 1.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, 7.4% Asian, 0.2% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 4.7% reporting two or more races, 54.9% Hispanic or Latino, 31.9% White persons not Hispanic.²

Strengths: Community-driven—county department staff get out into the community to discuss community needs and issues; supportive executive staff; strong child health component; strong partnerships with surrounding schools

Challenges: Getting people “onboard” because of the sensitivity of the topic; funding and staffing with commitment to developing innovative ideas

Government Advocacy: Generally a conservative county that demands outcome-based programs; Board of Supervisors and city councils are generally supportive of mental health/suicide prevention activities

Centralized Website(s): www.co.merced.ca.us/index.aspx?nid=78 (this website could be expanded)

¹ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merced_County,_California

² U.S. Census Bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06047.html>

Resource Directory: Network of Care (<http://merced.networkofcare.org/mh/home/index.cfm>); Mercy Hospital *Community Resource Book* (there is an ongoing need to develop a more comprehensive resource directory)

Social Media Presence: NO—County does not use Facebook or Twitter, though there is no policy against

Task Forces/Councils: Occasionally participates in the Madera County-run Central Valley Suicide Prevention Task Force (headed by Debbie DiNoto, Division Manager at Madera County Department of Behavioral Health Services)

CURRENT PEI MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Student Mental Health Initiative: NO

Suicide Prevention: NO

Stigma & Discrimination Reduction: NO

Other County Activities and Programs:

	Walks/Run	Events	Speaker's Bureau	Media Praise/Protest	Outreach	Trainings (e.g., ASIST or QPR)	Specific Events during Suicide or MH Awareness Week/Month	Other
Suicide Prevention	X			X				
Stigma Reduction						X	X	X

CURRENT PEI OUTREACH EFFORTS

Suicide Prevention: “Out of the Darkness” walk in Merced County. Sharon Jones has been featured in articles in the *Merced Sun-Star* newspaper on Prevention and Early Intervention projects.

Stigma Reduction: During Mental Health Awareness Week a banner was hung in downtown Merced with the slogan “Mental Health Happens in the Community” featuring contact information for the Mental Health Department. Trainings include California Brief Multicultural Scale training and Mental Health First Aid training provided by Health House, a Merced County-based preservation project serving Hmong, Spanish and Punjabi communities (contact: Candice Adam-Medefind, Executive Director of Healthy House). Merced County has a contract with the Southeast Asian Community Advocacy Program to broadcast TV spots on local Hmong stations focusing on mental health and wellness.

Media: There is no central Public Information Officer for Merced County. Each county department is training its own PIO. The PIO for Merced County Mental Health & Alcohol and Drug is Manuel J. Jimenez, Jr.

COUNTY CRISIS NUMBERS AND RESOURCES

Suicide Crisis Hotline: County ACCESS line: 209.381.6800 ext. 3301
 The ACCESS line is connected to the Crisis Stabilization Unit after hours: 1.888.334.0163 or 209.381.6800 ext. 6819

Mental Health Crisis Hotline: County ACCESS line 209.381.6800 ext. 3301

Other Resources: Crisis Stabilization Unit

DIGITAL STORIES

NONE

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Dr. Isabel Manuel, Merced County Medical Director: 209.381.6800 ext. 6877. Primary health care centers in Merced County include: Livingston Medical, Castle Family (FQHC), Golden Valley, Mercy Hospital and Livingston Medical Group.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NONE

SPECIFIC COUNTY NEEDS

Additional Language Needs: Hmong and Spanish (threshold languages)

Desired Outreach Materials:

TV Spots	Radio Spots	Printed Materials	Print Ads ^a	Billboard Ads	Bus Ads	Outreach Materials	Social Media	Website	Training	“How to” Manuals ^b
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

^a E.g., magazines.

^b E.g., how to reach out to the media, how to start a speaker’s bureau, etc.

Additional Information: Particularly interested in print materials that can be tailored based on specific risk factors (e.g., warning signs and suicide prevention for those who have recently lost a job) and specific communities and ethnic populations (e.g., what suicide means to different ethnic groups and how it is accepted).

Topics of particular interest for “How to” manuals include how to deal with grief and loss, warning signs and how to decrease access to lethal means. Also interested in video and DVD materials.

County currently has a contract with the Southeast Asian Community Advocacy Program to broadcast mental health/wellness topical discussions on Hmong TV stations; has a relationship with local *Merced Sun-Star* newspaper which might be open to publishing materials.