

# Tableros Educativos: Developing a Community-Tailored Health Education Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Outreach Promising Practice

Community Health Centers of the Central Coast, Inc (CHCCC) developed portable tableros educativos (educational boards) that are delivered by Community Health Workers (CHWs), also known as promotores. The tableros educativos provide timely and culturally appropriate health education for farmworker communities during regular outdoor food distribution events.

### Organization:

- Name: Community Health Centers of the Central Coast, Inc. (CHCCC)
- Location: San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara counties, California



### About:

Established in 1978, Community Health Centers of the Central Coast (CHCCC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit network of community health centers that provide medical, dental, and chiropractic care as well as health education and specialty care to the most vulnerable in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. CHCCC uses an integrated approach to care, with outreach workers and behavioral specialists included as part of the clinic's care team. CHCCC's outreach relies on the knowledge and dedication of their Indigenous, trilingual staff members who speak English, Spanish, and Mixtec, 90% of whom come from the farmworker communities served.

Because of CHCCC's generational connections with farmworker communities, their team steered county efforts towards effectively reaching these populations. Through collaboration with food pantries, local government agencies, and a trusted partnership with community members, CHCCC continues to protect and elevate the needs of its community.

## Unmet Need Addressed

For many farmworker communities, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic fragmented many services due to the digital divide experienced by farmworkers. In the initial weeks of the COVID-19 lockdowns in California, CHCCC fielded hundreds of calls from farmworkers with questions and various needs. The team quickly realized that remote efforts would not be the most effective way to reach farmworker families nor adequately protect the community. At the same time, CHCCC expanded its weekly food shares in collaboration with a local food bank to continue addressing the food insecurities experienced by the community. CHCCC combined the two efforts to most effectively reach the farmworker community. This advocacy ensured that food distribution events were accessible to community members and proved to be effective in addressing needs while providing targeted outreach and education geared at reducing the infection rates and lowering the stress impact caused by the pandemic.

In addition to food insecurities, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted a need for timely health education materials that would be accessible to the farmworker community. Therefore, CHCCC's behavioral health outreach team and promotores came together to develop and implement a health education program for the community. The program leveraged CHCCC's culturally appropriate food assistance while utilizing COVID-19 safety measures, such as social distancing and being outdoors, to deliver information. CHCCC developed the *tableros educativos* during this time and it has become a well-known and trusted resource in the community.

*“The richness of these efforts – to combine infographics with attentive, appropriate dialogue – is in the trusted promotora’s ability to clarify questions, provide interpretation, and build community connection, all while ensuring the safety of the outreach workers and community members by practicing social distancing.”*

*– Magdalena Sunshine Serrano*

*Director of Behavioral Health and Psychiatry Services*



## Description of the Practice

The tableros educativos are 5–8-minute discussions led by CHCCC’s promotores using graphics on 36”x36” posters accompanied by verbal explanations in Spanish. Discussions happen over the tableros educativos in small groups while community members wait in line outdoors during 1–2-hour weekly food distribution events in their neighborhoods and workplaces.

## Key Strategies

### Accessible Health Education

The topics covered on the tableros educativos include COVID-19 prevention strategies, vaccine myths versus facts, nutrition, mental wellness education, and dental health. This strategy ensures that all community members receive health education with the opportunity to ask questions and converse with trusted messengers while being outside and maintaining a safe distance as part of COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

CHCCC’s tableros educativos are easily adaptable for various topics and audiences and rely heavily on images and graphics to depict COVID-19 mitigation strategies and other health education lessons. Printed handouts of the tableros educativos are also available to community members. This in-person strategy allows outreach workers to remain socially distanced while creating a comfortable, small group environment where community members can engage with the material and ask questions.

### Collaboration

A key strategy for implementing the tableros educativos is collaborating with the Promotoras Network of Santa Barbara County. CHCCC trained the promotores to use the tableros in conjunction with the Nursing Director to address any questions and concerns that may be present in the community setting. Promotores, in conjunction with the outreach team, provided community education using the tableros educativos to bring awareness and education about COVID-19, while implementing prevention strategies in person to allow for questions and discussion from community members. This critical approach created more awareness and delivered direct information to farmworkers at a time and place convenient and accessible to the community and population.

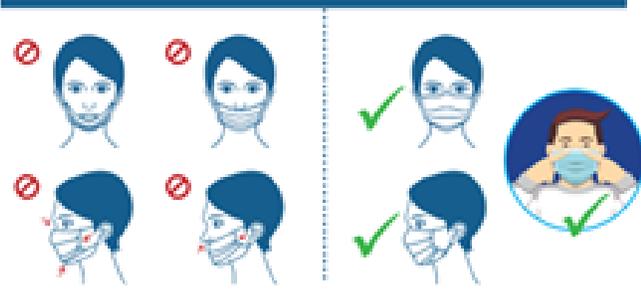
In addition to the tableros educativos, CHCCC also distributed COVID-19 prevention kits that included face masks, sanitizers, and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). CHCCC also provided contact information for relevant social services, COVID-19 prevention strategies, home isolation information, health and clinic locations, immigration resources, financial resources, and behavioral health crisis tips and helplines.

### Tableros Educativos (Educational Boards)

Below are examples of the tableros educativos used by CHCCC. All posters were designed using software from the Adobe Creative Suite, specifically Adobe Illustrator which enabled CHCCC to adjust design settings to be printed clearly in a large or a regular format without distorting the images.

Tablero educativo: How to Use Masks

#### Uso de Mascarillas



- ➔ Todos necesitamos asumir que es asintomático (que no tenemos síntomas como tos, fátiga, etc.)
- ➔ Parte del equipo de protección personal
- ➔ Úsalo si está enfermo, cuida a alguien enfermo o si estás a lugares públicos
- ➔ Lávate las manos antes de ponerlo
- ➔ Que cubra la nariz y la boca y quede ajustado debajo del mentón/barbilla
- ➔ Asegúrate de que puedas respirar fácilmente
- ➔ No lo pongas una mascarilla a un niño menor de 2 años

#### No compartir platos, vasos o otros artículos de uso personal





Promotores and community members engaging with the tableros educativos



Food share box



COVID-19 Prevention Kit

## Results

The ability to build close relationships and meet with the community in safe spaces like their neighborhoods allowed CHCCC's efforts to grow and reach more farmworker families in need. CHCCC maintains a list of families served and updates the list as new migrant families arrive in the area. CHCCC utilizes the Microsoft Access database management system to track contacts. This software has enabled the CHCCC team to quickly find and enroll participants, track key demographics, and report data based on zip codes.

By keeping a registration list, CHCCC measured its reach in the community. In 2020, when CHCCC's *tableros educativos* initiative began, outreach workers connected with 5,044 families and 17,031 individuals. In 2021, CHCCC connected with 3,456 families and 13,831 individuals served. As of January 2022, CHCCC has already served 1,193 families and over 5,278 individuals during 2022.

CHCCC leadership and outreach team remained closely engaged with county public health departments. The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department created the Latinx & Indigenous Migrant COVID-19 Response Task Force, in conjunction with the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB), which met weekly during the peak of the pandemic to keep organizations and community leaders informed. This collaborative workspace enabled agencies to engage in dialogue with the Public Health Director and bring forth population-specific concerns. This working relationship allowed CHCCC the opportunity to update county officials on heavily impacted neighborhoods while also receiving updated COVID-19 case counts every ten days. Moreover, the group was able to collectively address systemic issues that posed barriers to care for isolated community members.

This created county-wide accountability across organizations and promoted equity in the distribution of state and local resources. As education and outreach continued, county public health officials reported a downward trend in COVID-19 case numbers.

## Key Challenges and How to Address Them

Due to this practice being low-cost, community-specific, and easily replicable, CHCCC did not encounter many challenges with disseminating information and resources with the *tableros educativos*.

However, CHCCC did encounter vaccine hesitancy as many patients obtained information from social media or community conversations that did not seem to be centered on evidence-based research or facts. In response, CHCCC approached the issue at two levels: on an individual level, CHCCC bridged established patients to their primary care provider for personalized clinical information regarding the vaccine based on their unique health status. This connection was important, as the provider was viewed as a trusted messenger. At the community level, myths and facts surrounding the COVID-19 vaccine were addressed utilizing the *tableros educativos* as a means to mitigate misinformation and facilitate positive, productive, and culturally respectful conversations. In general, CHCCC was able to counter misinformation through pointed education addressing the myths and facts surrounding the vaccine.

## Resources Needed and Expenses

The collaboration between CHCCC, the Promotoras Network of Santa Barbara County, and local government agencies helped alleviate some of the burden of resources spent on planning, designing, implementing, and scaling up the reach of the practice to be used by other community-serving entities.

Costs included training staff, staff time at events, and printing costs. CHCCC was able to secure grant funding to cover much of these expenses. Overall, the costs associated with the *tableros educativos* were very low, especially as the staff was already well acquainted with the subject material and the community.

## Partnerships

- **Latinx & Indigenous Migrant COVID-19 Response Task Force:** A collaboration between the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), and community-based organizations working with Latinx and Indigenous migrant communities in Santa Barbara County by providing advocacy and resources for agencies working collectively at the grassroots level.
- **Iniciativa de Intérpretes Indígenas:** A collective of Indigenous Interpreters who advocated for the use of interpreters, inclusive spaces, and adequate information to be given in the language of Indigenous communities.
- **Health Linkages:** Promotoras Network of Santa Barbara County: The Santa Barbara County Promotoras Network partnered closely with CHCCC to expand its reach to a larger sector of the community as trusted messengers. The promotoras provided verbal and visual information in the language that the community understood by utilizing the tableros educativos.
- **Foodbank of Santa Barbara County:** Throughout the pandemic, the food bank team provided culturally accessible food paired with nutrition education utilizing the same model as utilized for general COVID-19 education. This partnership enabled CHCCC the ability to provide healthy food access, nutrition education, and COVID-19 prevention and education in one centralized setting.



## Learn More

CHCCC Website: <https://www.communityhealthcenters.org/>

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## Tools and Resources

- Microsoft Access database management system from Microsoft combines the relational Access Database with a graphical user interface and software-development tools. This software has enabled CHCCC to quickly find and enroll participants, track key demographics as well as report data based on equity zip codes.
- Adobe Creative Suite software, specifically Adobe Illustrator. This enabled CHCCC to adjust design settings to be printed clearly in a large or regular format without the images being distorted.



*Pro tip:*

*Consistency is a crucial aspect of effective outreach. CHCCC built a system of weekly health education and healthy food access, while also giving community members opportunities to ask questions, build relationships with outreach workers, and seek out additional resources as needed. In addition to consistency, consider providing additional resources as part of outreach. The *tableros educativos* initiative brought health outreach and food assistance directly into the neighborhoods and communities most in need of support.*

This publication was supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$4,000,000 with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.