



Empowering Community Health Workers to Address Immunization Disparities

Grisel Cisneros

Vaccinate Your Family
Education Coordinator

Marlen Ramirez

Vaccinate Your Family
Program Coordinator

Julissa Soto

Julissa Soto Latino Health Equity Consulting
Chief Executive Officer



Agenda

- The role of community health workers/promotores in public health, with a focus on the immunization landscape
- Vaccination Community Navigator program
 - ✓ Background
 - ✓ Goals
 - ✓ Structure
 - ✓ Results of 2023 nationwide launch
 - ✓ In-person facilitation
- Community operationalization
 - ✓ VCN implementation
 - ✓ Cultural validation
- Key takeaways and opportunities for immunization coalitions



Learning Objectives

- Describe the importance of community health workers as trusted messengers
- Identify two barriers to vaccination for under-resourced communities
- Summarize how immunization coalitions can implement community-based strategies in their work



The role of P/CHWs

Who are promotores/community health workers and what is their role within the healthcare ecosystem?

According to the CDC, a Community Health Worker is defined as a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member or has a particularly good understanding of the community served.

Similarly, according to the American Public Health Association, a Community Health Worker is defined as a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served.



Audience Activity



CHWs Help Address Vaccination Barriers

What are some barriers to vaccination in under-resourced areas?

- Trust, confidence
- Language
- Complacency
- Fatigue
- Misinformation
- Lack of information on how to navigate the system
- Access (e.g., cost, availability, transportation)



Expanding the Role of Promotores and Community Health Workers as “Vaccination Community Navigators”

A collaboration by:



VCN Background

First of its kind!

- A comprehensive training program for Community Health Workers (CHWs)/ *Promotores de Salud* who want to build their communities' confidence in, and access to, vaccines.
- Piloted with 200+ Promotores & Community Health Workers and Instructors in Texas in March – April 2022
- Launched nationally February 2023

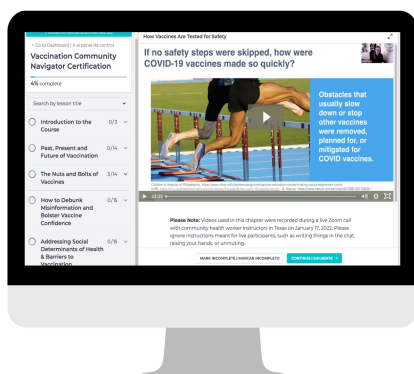


Program Goals

- **Increase P/CHW confidence** in talking about vaccines and navigating people to vaccination services
- **Increase P/CHW knowledge** of vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases
- Create **culturally and linguistically appropriate resources** and tools for P/CHWs to encourage vaccination in their communities/networks
- Provide **an online space for P/CHWs** to share resources, experiences, and insights
- **Increase vaccine uptake** through the use of P/CHWs as trusted messengers
- **Address technology barriers** for P/CHWs by offering in-person facilitation



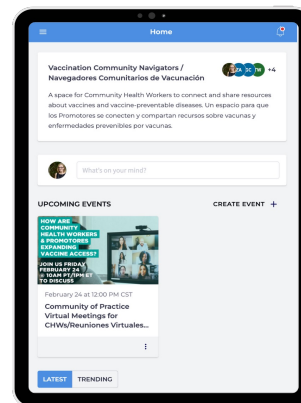
VCN Program Pillars



(1) Vaccination Community Navigator (VCN) Training courses for Promotores and Community Health Workers (P/CHWs).



(2) Live Virtual Meetings for P/CHWs interested in connecting and learning more about vaccine-related issues.

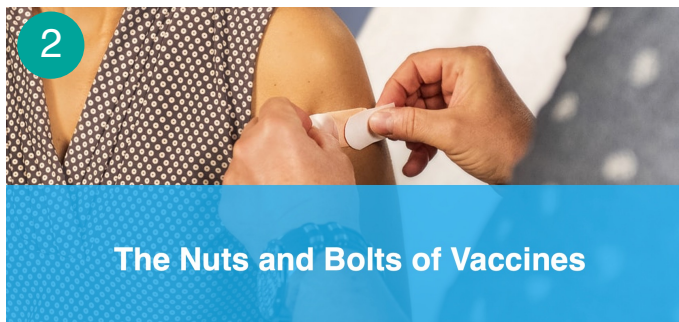


(3) The VCN Online Community is a space where P/CHWs can share resources, ask questions, and connect about vaccine-related issues.



(4) VCN in-person facilitation provides support for VCN participants looking to offer in-person training for P/CHWs facing technical barriers.

Program Pillar #1: Core Curriculum (Online Courses)



Four self-guided, free online courses* (in English and Spanish!)

Available to Community Health Workers (CHWs), CHW Instructors, and all those interested in increasing their knowledge and confidence to speak about vaccines

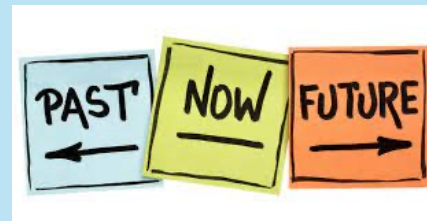
***Curriculum is NOW AVAILABLE for in-person facilitation**

Register at:
vaccinate.thinkific.com

Module 1



The Past, Present, and Future of Vaccination



- ✓ History of vaccines
- ✓ Past successes
- ✓ Current issues
- ✓ Future challenges

Register at:
vaccinate.thinkific.com

Module 2



- ✓ How vaccines work
- ✓ Vaccine safety and side effects
- ✓ U.S recommendations for vaccines

Register at:
vaccinate.thinkific.com

The Nuts and Bolts of Vaccines

Module 3



- ✓ How to bolster vaccine confidence
- ✓ Addressing misinformation in person and online

Register at:
vaccinate.thinkific.com

How to Debunk Misinformation and Bolster Vaccine Confidence

Module 4



Addressing Social Determinants of Health & Barriers to Vaccination



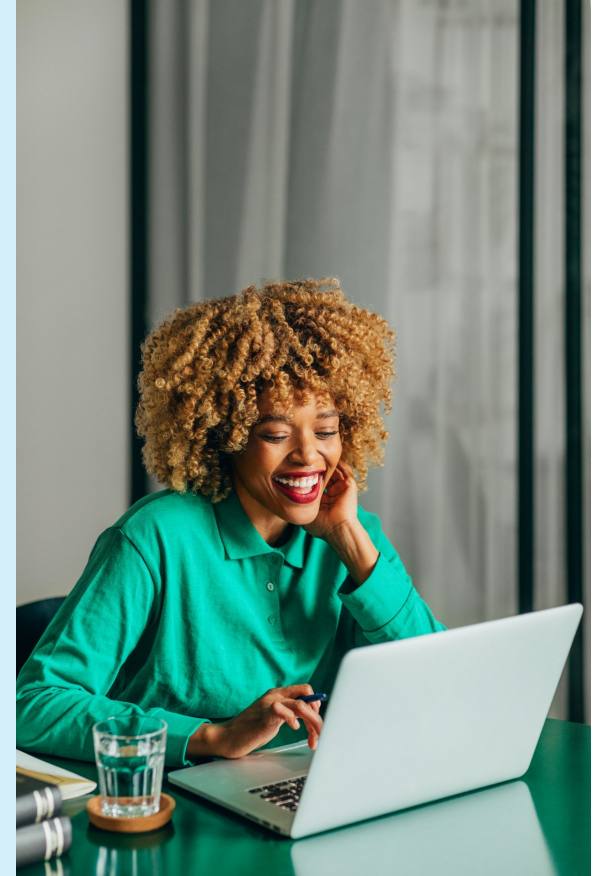
- ✓ Barriers to vaccination in the US.
- ✓ Discuss the impact of social determinants on vaccination

Register at:
vaccinate.thinkific.com

Program Pillar #2: CoP Meetings

- Live virtual quarterly meetings in 2024
- Join fellow CHWs and VYF staff to discuss important topics
- Opportunity for CHWs to share information, ask questions, and connect over resources and best practices
- Meetings held in English, with live interpretation for Spanish-speakers

Register: <https://tinyurl.com/VCN2024>



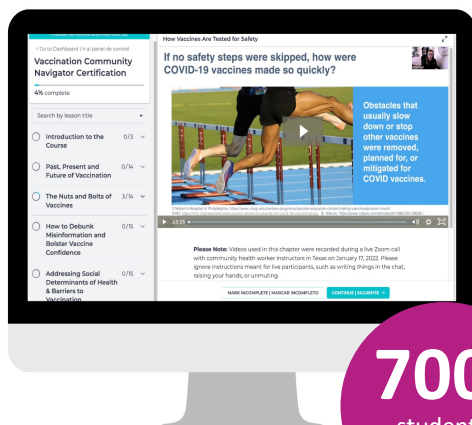
Program Pillar #3: Online Community

- Free, online space for Community Health Workers (CHWs) and anyone looking to network
- An opportunity to ask questions about vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases, share resources, and be notified about additional events and training
- This community is available in both English and Spanish

Connect at: tinyurl.com/vcn-community



VCN Program: Results*



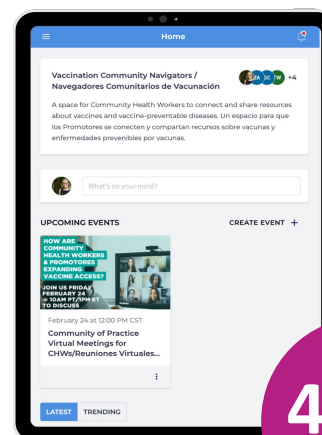
700+
students
enrolled

(1) Vaccination Community Navigator (VCN) Training courses for Promotores and Community Health Workers (P/CHWs).



~100
attendees
per meeting

(2) Live Virtual Meetings for P/CHWs interested in connecting and learning more about vaccine-related issues.



470+
members

(3) The VCN Online Community is a space where P/CHWs can share resources, ask questions, and connect about vaccine-related issues.

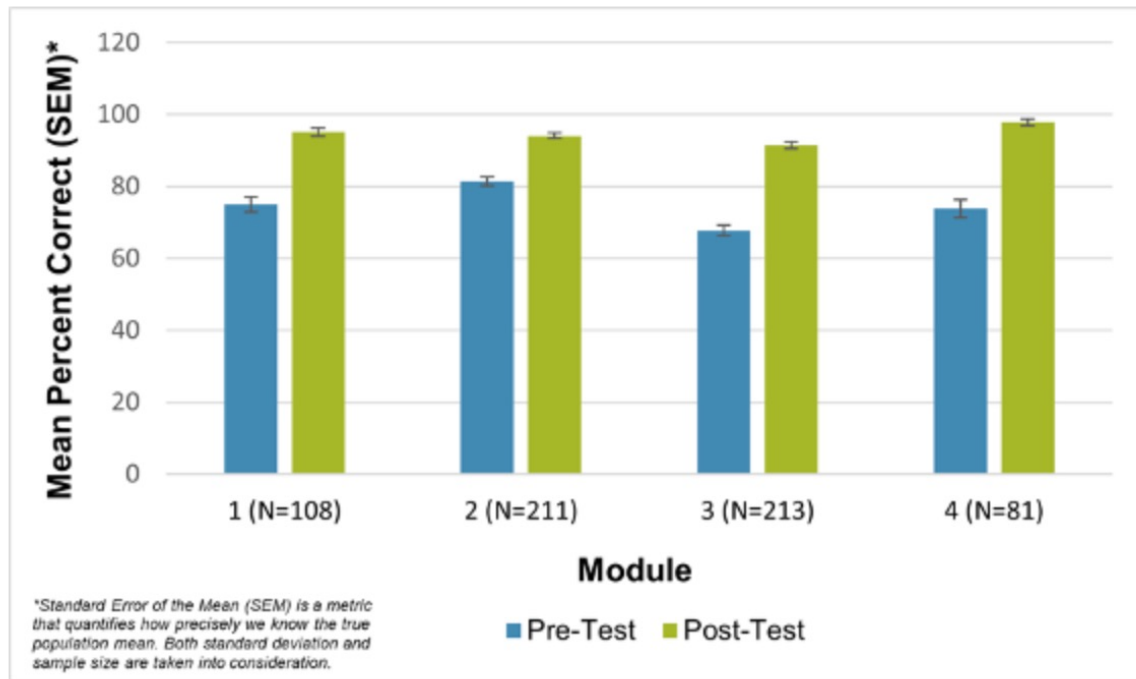
VCN Nationwide Launch: Data Collection

- Surveys and quizzes assessed participants' capacity, measured as knowledge and self-reported confidence prior to and immediately following the training.
- Pre- and post-tests were conducted for each training module to assess learning using a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions.
- Paired t-tests were used to assess the statistical significance of differences in knowledge assessment. Percentages were determined to analyze the average self-reported confidence immediately after training.

VCN Nationwide Launch: Data Analyses*

Knowledge Assessment

Figure 1. Average Pre and Post-Test Scores Among Participants, by Module



Confidence Assessment

93% of post-course survey respondents said the courses increased their confidence in their ability to **talk about vaccines** and **connect people to vaccination services**.

VCN Testimonials

“The training gave [me] more insight into how I can play a more effective role as community health worker. Education is important but not enough to encourage people to get vaccinated. Listening is a great communication tool that allows for greater understanding and access to people reluctant to get vaccinated.”

— Community Health Worker, South Houston

“I learned how misinformation is affecting communities, much more than I thought.”

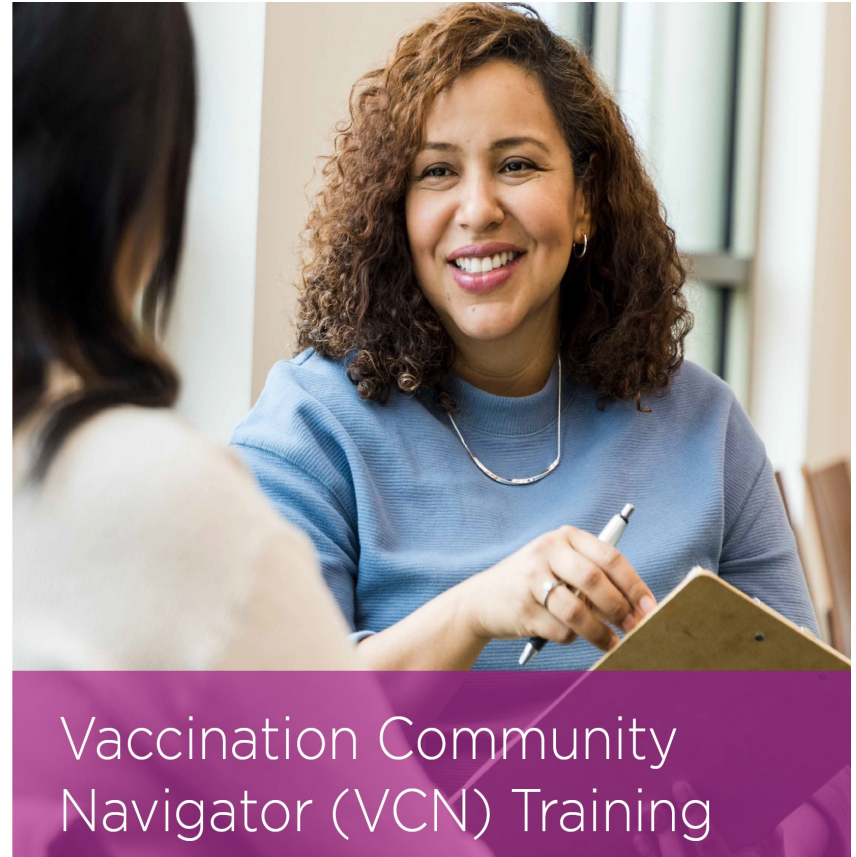
— Community Health Worker, Dallas

Program Pillar #4: In-Person Facilitation

Bring the VCN modules to your community!

- Technical support for CHW sites interested in offering the VCN curriculum in-person
- An opportunity for CHWs to follow the VCN curriculum in a classroom setting
- Available in English and Spanish

For more information, visit:
tinyurl.com/vcn-community



In-Person Facilitation – Partners

- Illinois Public Health Association- Springfield, IL
- Immunize Kansas Coalition – Topeka, KS
- South King Healthcare Services – Federal Way, Washington
- Julissa Soto Latino Health Equity Consulting – Denver, Colorado
- Consulting Solutions LLC – Chula Vista, California / San Diego California
- Latinx Voces LLC / Latinx Task Force – Cameron County, TX
- Southwest Youth and Family Services - Seattle, Washington



In-Person Facilitation – Partners

Colorado



California



VCN – Next Steps

- **Continued promotion** of VCN modules for new enrollments
- **Updating of VCN modules** to remain current
- Continued **management of online community**
- Ongoing **quarterly Community of Practice Meetings**
- Continued **data collection** for program validation and quality improvement
- **Partnering with community-based organizations** nationwide to expand the reach of the VCN
- Additional cohorts of **in-person facilitation**



VCN In-Person Facilitation: Julissa Soto



Testimonials

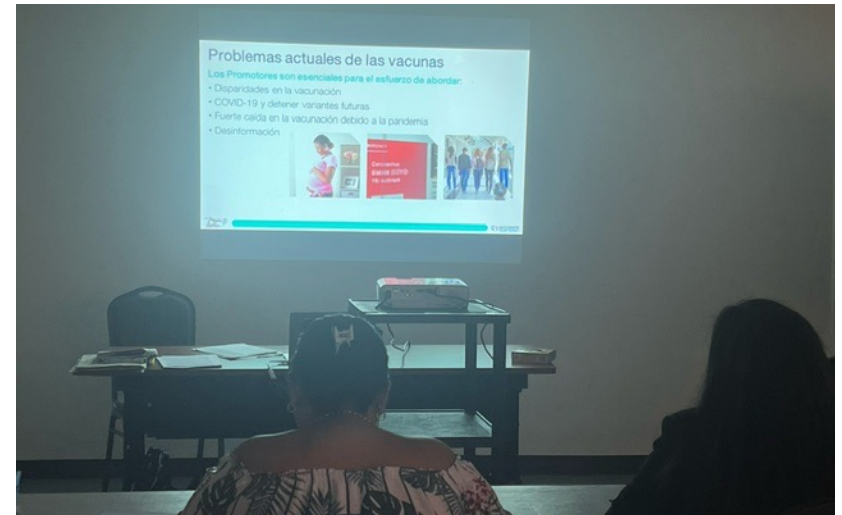


"Promoting immunizations within our locality holds significance for fostering better health practices. Introducing fresh vaccine guides will enhance the assurance of our population to receive vaccinations without being hindered by societal constraints. This instruction has enriched my comprehension regarding the imperative nature of counseling and raising awareness within our societies."

Ashley Vargas | MSU Student | Vaccination Community Navigator

"Advocating for vaccinations around our community is important for a healthier lifestyle. Bringing new vaccine navigators will increase the confidence of our people to vaccinate without having to worry about their social limitations. This training helped me to have a better understanding of why it is so important to advise and spread awareness to our communities."

Naomi Martinez Barron | MSU student | Vaccination Community Navigator



The Power of Cultural Validation



Healthcare Disparities ➡ Immunization Disparities

COLORADO HEALTH ACCESS SURVEY

Racial Discrimination and Access to Care in Colorado

Colorado Health Access Survey Findings Suggest the Need to Address Racial Discrimination in the Health Care System

OCTOBER 2022

Bias & Prejudice = DISPARITIES

An estimated 148,000 Colorado adults reported being treated with less respect or receiving worse care than others while seeking health care, according to data from the 2021 Colorado Health Access Survey (CHAS). Of this group, over 52,000 were people of color. Race or cultural or ethnic background were the most common reasons why people of color felt they were disrespected when accessing the health care system.

[Racial Discrimination and Access to Care in Colorado | Colorado Health Institute](#)



Authentic Community Engagement

Colorado Health Institute

Community engagement by providers or health systems can facilitate productive collaborations and trust with community that can, in turn, improve health and well-being. Community engagement is fundamentally about changing behaviors, environments, policies, programs, and practices within communities.

Source:

https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/CHAS%20Brief%20Discrimination.pdf#page=4



Connect with the Community

Identify Community Leaders & Create Partnerships



Identify organization leaders, influences and leaders within the community



Meet with leaders to explain and articulate goals and outcomes



Ask questions to learn about community needs and outcomes



Create partnerships and ask community leaders to promote events and activities from their personal point of view



Spanish-language TV advertisements on Telemundo

A 30-second TV ad for immigrant Latino Moms in Colorado, featuring collaborator Julissa Soto, **aired 140 times** on Telemundo Colorado from Aug. 1 – Dec. 12, 2023, and reached **631,000 households**.



© Vaccinate Your Family, 2024



720-427-5542

julissasotoconsulting.com

Julissa Soto

Embajadora de Vacunas



"I wanted the community to understand that vaccines were really important, [and] I wanted them to hear it from someone who looks like them."

— Julissa Soto





Spanish-language Radio, Digital, & Social Media

Ads posted on Denver's KBNO radio station, website, and social media accounts reached over **131,000 households** in December 2023.



VACCINATE YOUR FAMILY

Julissa Soto LATINO HEALTH EQUITY CONSULTING

Colorado ACCESS
Caring for you and your health

COLORADO
Mobile Public Health Clinic
Division of Disease Control and Public Health Response

Fiestas de vacunas del otoño

Sábado 28 de octubre
11:30am – 2pm
Grand Ranch K-8 School
5400 Jay Circle
Denver CO 80123

Miércoles 1 de noviembre
3:30- 6:00pm
Goldrick Elementary
1050 S Zuni St
Denver CO 80223

Jueves 9 de noviembre
3:30-7:00pm
Boston P-8
1365 Boston St
Aurora CO 80010

Vacunas serán aplicadas en forma gratuita
Infórmate sobre jornadas de vacunación
(720) 427-5542
<https://www.julissasotoconsulting.com/>

Targeted social media ads for Latinx moms in Colorado placed between Oct. 16 – Dec. 12, 2023 garnered **4.2 million impressions**.



Key Takeaways & Lessons Learned

- **Community health workers are trusted messengers** who may be instrumental in addressing immunization disparities through programs like the VCN.
- Community health workers should be **routinely considered and included as part of the healthcare ecosystem** as they have a direct relationship with the communities they serve.
- The **VCN program successfully increased participants' vaccine knowledge and confidence**. This program can easily be incorporated into professional development frameworks.
- Efforts to address immunization disparities must **include authentic community engagement**. Utilize the cultural validation model!



Opportunities for Immunization Coalitions

- Coalitions can utilize the VCN to provide professional development for their members to increase their confidence when talking to community members about vaccines.
- Engage with P/CHWs in your community!



Opportunities for Immunization Coalitions

How can coalitions operationalize cultural validation?

Integrate immunization information at non-health-specific events.



Join **Julissa Soto** for Vaccine Sundays

Are you worried about your family's health during these uncertain times?

Are you looking for information that can keep your family safe?

Join **Julissa Soto for Vaccine Sundays** and learn more about what you can do.

WHAT ARE VACCINE SUNDAYS?

Vaccine Sundays is a project designed to provide vetted information from trusted resources to the underserved Spanish-speaking community in Colorado. **The goal is to make prevention education and outreach part of the Church's ministry.**

Julissa provides trusted, and vetted information on COVID-19 information that fosters preparedness rather than stoking fear and perpetuating myths. She provides information in Spanish on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. She educates the congregation on infection prevention habits, like proper handwashing techniques and other common practices frequently taught to combat influenza. She



What Success Looks Like

“When Cultural Validation is done right you should see more of this when you are in the community.”



QUESTIONS?



Thank You!



Website: [Vaccinateyourfamily.org](https://vaccinateyourfamily.org)

Facebook: Vaccinate Your Family

Twitter/X: @Vaxyourfam

Instagram: Vaccinate Your Family

YouTube: Vaccinate Your Family

LinkedIn: Vaccinate Your Family



Website: [Julissasotoconsulting.com](https://julissasotoconsulting.com)

Phone: 720.427.5542

Email: Julissamolinasoto@gmail.com

LinkedIn: Julissa Soto



Don't delay, sign up today!

