

Improving Population Health in Riverside County by Mariana Osorio

Riverside County is comprised of a diverse community, all of whom have various barriers to receiving quality care which can exacerbate social determinants of health.

Did you know that compared to its neighboring county (Los Angeles County), where almost 28% of residents are considered obese, **32%** of the total population in Riverside County classify as obese? This is because the average body mass index (BMI) of Riverside County is of **30** or higher. Keep in mind that a BMI over 25 is considered overweight.

As health leaders have proved, lack of physical activity and infrequent consumption of fruits and vegetables increases the likelihood of developing heart disease issues, suffering from a stroke, or getting diagnosed with type-2 diabetes.

With this in mind, Riverside University Health System – Public Health has developed Healthy Communities Element, with the aim of addressing the intersection of public health and city/urban planning. This includes focusing on issues such as transportation and active living, access to nutritious foods, access to health care, mental health, quality of life, and environmental health.



There have been **3** major initiatives undertaken to bridge the gap between public health and city planning:

1. The SB1000 Forum and Roundtable, where environmental justice and public health stakeholders met to collaborate on ways to implement and improve regional implementations of SB1000, a policy that requires counties and cities in California to address environmental health concerns and implement environmental justice ideals into their city planning objectives.
2. The preparation and publishing of the HCN Connect Newsletter on a monthly basis
3. The creation and publication of profiles on all 28 Riverside County cities based on various health indices

The dissemination of city profile fact sheets/ infographics would be a good way for stakeholders and residents of these cities to understand whether their cities are in good health standing or if residents are experiencing poor health outcomes.

These infographics have the potential to impact city policies if taken to a city official and would be crucial in justifying future public health initiatives within Riverside County.

Breaking down the data will allow the public health department to tailor their programs to the needs within their communities and implement innovative strategies for residents in various geographical areas shown in poor health.