

# The Full Mar Monte

SUPPORTER EDITION

## Signing up patients for Medi-Cal at Santa Clara County HCs

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte continues to be a leader in providing health care to our communities during the pandemic by innovating to serve patients and families. Recently, four of our Silicon Valley health centers that provide family medicine began a partnership with Santa Clara County to help patients with low incomes enroll in the state Medi-Cal health insurance program.

Our family medicine patient navigators (FMPNs) who work with clinicians to connect patients to outside referrals and other resources, are expanding their role in the county.

"One of the main issues we're seeing now are people who have lost their jobs because of COVID and are scrambling to find health care," said FMPN Eric P., who works in San Jose.

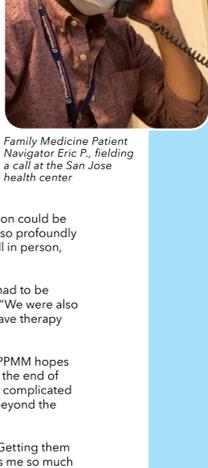
"A patient recently told me she had been calling Medi-Cal a couple times a week and waiting for two-plus hours to get through," he said. "When she came in for a Pap test, I was able to enroll her in Medi-Cal. She called to say how relieved and appreciative she was to finally have that insurance."

Luz R., another FMPN in Silicon Valley, said a patient had asked if her son could be enrolled in Medi-Cal after losing his job. The patient said her son was so profoundly depressed and anxious that he was unable to leave the house to enroll in person, but he needed coverage.

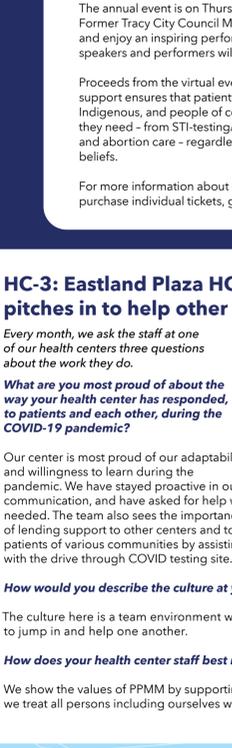
"I was able to sign him up for Medi-Cal, and a very short time later he had to be hospitalized for a health situation related to his depression," Luz said. "We were also able to connect him with our behavioral health services so he could have therapy and help with medications."

If the health centers' Medi-Cal enrollments stay at their current pace, PPMM hopes to enroll hundreds of new Medi-Cal patients in Santa Clara County by the end of this year. It's another way our FMPNs are able help patients navigate a complicated health care system, spending extra time discussing their health care beyond the actual appointment - whether in health centers or via telehealth.

"As FMPNs, our goal is to keep people healthy and away from the ER. Getting them access to Medi-Cal is another great way to do that," Luz said. "It brings me so much joy to be able to help patients by talking to them about their health goals and what's happening in their lives--and get them coverage they really need."



Family Medicine Patient Navigator Eric P., fielding a call at the San Jose health center.



## 2021 VIRTUAL EVENT SERIES MOVING FORWARD, FIGHTING BACK

### Capital Dinner

Thursday, May 13, 2021  
6:30 p.m.

**Lifetime Achievement Award**  
**Dolores Huerta**  
President/Founder of the Dolores Huerta Foundation & Community Organizer

### Join us for the Capital Dinner!

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte's Capital Dinner in May is the third and final event in our virtual series, "Moving Forward, Fighting Back." We are thrilled to be honoring legendary labor leader and civil rights activist **Dolores Huerta** with a Lifetime Achievement Award. The program will also feature appearances by our new California senator and staunch ally, **Sen. Alex Padilla** as well as Nevada **Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto**, the first Latina ever elected to the U.S. Senate and a stalwart champion of reproductive health and rights.

The annual event is on Thursday, May 13 at 6:30 p.m. We will also recognize Former Tracy City Council Member **Rhodesia Ransom** as PPMM's Ally of the Year and an enjoy an inspiring performance by **Sacramento's Gay Men's Chorus**. More speakers and performers will be announced soon.

Proceeds from the virtual event series help sustain PPMM's critical work. Your support ensures that patients who depend on us, of whom 78% identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), will receive the quality health care they need - from STI-testing/treatment and cancer screenings to contraception and abortion care - regardless of their income, identities, immigration status, or beliefs.

For more information about event speakers, sponsorship packages, or to purchase individual tickets, go to [pparmonte.org/CapDinner2021](http://pparmonte.org/CapDinner2021)

## HC-3: Eastland Plaza HC in Stockton pitches in to help other centers

Every month, we ask the staff at one of our health centers three questions about the work they do.

**What are you most proud of about the way your health center has responded, to patients and each other, during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Our center is most proud of our adaptability and willingness to learn during the pandemic. We have stayed proactive in our communication, and have asked for help when needed. The team also sees the importance of lending support to other centers and to the patients of various communities by assisting with the drive through COVID testing site.



Eastland Plaza staff, Stockton

### How would you describe the culture at your health center?

The culture here is a team environment where everyone supports each other and is willing to jump in and help one another.

### How does your health center staff best reflect the values of PPMM?

We show the values of PPMM by supporting the mission day in and day out, we ensure that we treat all persons including ourselves with respect and the best care we can give.

## FROM THE EDUCATION DESK

### Hablado de las relaciones y la sexualidad ¡Con Confianza! / Talking About Sex and Relationships with Trust and Confidence

By **Viola G. (she/her/ella)**  
Sr. Educator, Digital Learning Channel

Like many of the students we serve, my parents emigrated from Mexico to work in the fields of California's Central Valley. And, for my family, culturally, the topic of sex was always off-limits. But it didn't have to be. We just didn't know how to break through to have these important conversations on our own terms, in our own way.

After PPMM Education surveyed our community partners, parents, and students, it is evident that many Spanish-speaking youth and families also are hungry for unbiased, medically accurate information to help young people make healthy and informed decisions about sex and relationships.

This is why we're co-creating with youth: ¡Con Confianza!

Meaning, "With Trust and Confidence," Confianza is the first-ever gamified mobile sex ed platform developed with and for Spanish-speaking students in 6th-12th grades. Designed by students whose first language was Spanish, Confianza will ensure that middle and high school English Language Acquisition (ELA) students (and their families) no longer face a language barrier when it comes to accessing engaging, evidence-informed comprehensive sex education. There are 500,000 such students in California alone.

In order to be effective, sex ed needs to take into account the learner's context. Young people don't make decisions about their sexual health in a vacuum - they are influenced by their culture, family and community's norms and expectations.

To design Confianza last spring, PPMM Education launched the Digital Learning Advisory Group (DLAG), which includes Spanish-speaking middle and high school ELA students and their family members. The DLAG is comprised of youth learning designers, ages 16 to 25, who applied to participate from across the affiliate's territory and who dedicate time to co-design sex ed that is accessible and relevant to our learners and their peers.

"My sex ed experience was very surface-level, and heterosexual, cisgender-centered--it didn't touch on LGBTQ+ issues, and didn't enable me to feel comfortable to ask questions," said DLAG member Brenda, age 20. "There wasn't representation [of me]. And it really inspired me to become part of Confianza. We need to de-stigmatize sex, sexual health, and sexuality."

Starting in FY20, PPMM Education has been pivoting our program design values and process to be learner-led, using evidence-informed frameworks to engage learners as the key researchers and designers of our their sex ed experiences.

### NEEDS - BUILDING CONFIDENCE & COMFORT

Stigma, taboos, and shame around the topic of sexuality came up time and time again. Youth and adult respondents highlighted the need to approach the topic of sex ed with cultural sensitivity, patience, and respect. Below are suggestions on how the ¡Con Confianza! program can help build confidence and comfort.

#### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Acknowledge the taboos/stigma that may exist around sexuality/sex ed.
- Frame sex ed as part of general health.
- Emphasize confidentiality and work to build trust with learners.
- Give learners opportunity to ask questions anonymously.
- Connect learners to digital tools
- Include:

It's important to provide a perspective that sexual education is a part of regular health care and not something to be seen as taboo or strange."

Photo: iStockphoto

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### ¡Con Confianza! Timeline

- **Dec. 31, 2019:** Concept pitched in PFFA Fund for the Future grant application--\$50,000 in seed funding granted.
- **March 2020:** PPMM Education Digital Learning Channel launched early due to the pandemic.
- **April-June 2020:** PPMM Ed launches the Digital Learning Advisory Group (DLAG), which includes Spanish-speaking middle and high school English Language Acquisition (ELA) students and their family members.
- **July-Dec 2020:** DLAG and Digital Learning channel study game theory and human-centered design; create design brief for learner-driven, gamified sex ed learning; dub it: ¡Con Confianza!
- **Jan.-June 2021:** Program Brief finalized for pilot; PFFA Mission Investment Fund grants \$75,000 for further development.

We also surveyed 46 youth, community partners, and bilingual PPMM educators--across nine representative counties--about the sex-ed needs of Spanish-speaking youth and families. The result is a 15-page *Community Input Report*, with findings and design guidelines to ensure Confianza meets the needs of our target audience.

"Latinx youth are seeking health information on their own and quickly forming their own opinions that may differ from their parents' perspectives," shared one partner respondent from Kern County.

All youth surveyed said they would like their sex ed to include guidance on how to identify and talk to other trusted adults in their lives such as aunts, uncles and older siblings.

The first iteration of ¡Con Confianza! is scheduled to pilot in June. The pilot game will focus on how to create healthy, respect-based relationships. The final game will have 10 levels, each exploring through stories and challenges, as well as other required sex ed topics including anatomy, communication, consent, and birth control. The game will be aligned with California and national standards for sex ed.

To support the learner's journey, we will include supplemental content for parents and guardians. And schools will even have the opportunity to use Confianza as part of their strategy to meet their requirements to provide CSE in the future.

"When my parents attempted to have that first sex ed talk with me, it was very negative and not very thorough," says another Confianza designer, Bianca, age 25. "In our community sex and sexuality can be very taboo, and it's not something we talk about. With Con Confianza, we're being positive, fact-based, and supportive."

## Being Memorable

In this space, we spotlight health center staff members who have been mentioned by name in patient surveys for delivering a fantastic patient experience.

### Clinician and HSS teamwork at the Roseville, HC

Here's what a patient said about an appointment with HSS Stefanie S. and Clinician Brittany A. after a recent visit to the Roseville health center near Sacramento:

*"Stefanie and Brittany were very patient, answered all my questions and let me reiterate some things I couldn't remember if I had already told them. I was very happy that Stefanie asked me if I was in a safe home. Some people won't tell anyone without being prompted. I have recommended your practice to friends and family."*

#### HSS Stefanie S.



When patients come into the Roseville health center, HSS Stefanie S. said she approaches them with the kind of attitude and helpfulness that she would want if she came in for health care.

"I think it's really important to answer all the questions that they have and make sure to give them all the resources they need," Stefanie said. "I would want a well-informed answer to any question I had about my health from the person I have an appointment with. So I want to provide every patient with an answer that shows we are experts in providing reproductive health care."

Stefanie also speaks Spanish and often answers the questions about cultural aspects of health care that many Spanish-speaking patients have. "For some of these patients, it's especially difficult to ask questions about things like STIs that others just don't talk about in their communities. I'm really happy that I can talk about these topics to them and make them feel comfortable about asking questions in a safe space."

#### Clinician Brittany A.



Because PPMM provides sensitive reproductive health services, Clinician Brittany A. says it's not unusual for patients to feel uncomfortable when they first come in.

"I really do my best to 'normalize' people's experiences," she explained. "For example, abortions are very common medical procedures that are unfortunately shrouded in stigma. I reassure patients. 'This is health care.'"

It's also important to her to talk to STI patients in a way that neutralizes any feelings of shame. "Our patients who need STI treatment also experience stigma, but STI testing and treatment are services that impact public health in powerful ways," she said.

Brittany said that HSSes, like Stefanie, are also crucial to helping her be at her best for patients because HSS staff provide a quality experience for people as soon as they walk in the door or call in for telehealth.

"I try not to seem at all rushed when I see patients and really listen to all of what they have to tell me," she said. "Sometimes what they're talking about might go back several years, and then I bring it back to, 'How is this affecting you?'"

Brittany said it's critical that we provide a sense of calm and comfort for patients who often have very stressful lives. "It's an honor to be able to provide these services, be experts in this care, and help people feel that this is a place where they will be taken care of."

## Milestones

### PPMM doctor's video-appeal to California legislators

For the first time, PPMM sent video-telling by one of our family medicine doctors to California legislators who are considering a bill (AB 32) that would give Medi-Cal funding parity for telehealth services. Dr. Danielle H., at Family First HC in Fresno, was Zoom-recorded talking about her experience providing essential health telehealth care to her patients, over the phone.



In addition to COO Dominique Lee's and CMO Dr. Laura Dalton's testimony to public affairs earlier this year, these stories are a vital part of our Public Affairs team's effort to advocate for this important health-equity legislation!



### PPMM's own Clinician Roza F. among first PPFA Beacon Award winners!

Our intrepid Director of Quality/Nursing Clinician Roza F. - who has been a one-woman transport system for COVID vaccines to PPMM health centers - was a winner of one of PPFA's inaugural Beacon Awards this spring! The new award celebrates one health center staff person from each affiliate across the country who has gone above and beyond during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Roza was recognized for supporting colleagues, serving patients, and upholding Planned Parenthood's mission/workplace values during this once-in-a-century public crisis.

Dir. of Quality/Nursing Roza F. providing COVID vaccines at N. Stockton health center.

Dr. Danielle H., at Family First HC in Fresno, was Zoom-recorded talking about her experience providing essential health telehealth care to her patients, over the phone.

## Love Notes

**Appreciation for PPMM staff, from donors and supporters**

*The daughter of a friend of mine is receiving care from your organization. I am so grateful!*  
- **Donor from Felton, in Santa Cruz County**

*I'm sorry you have to deal with those protesters/activists outside of the Redwood City site. Every time I drive by I give them the stink eye.*  
- **Volunteer from Silicon Valley**

*We know how dedicated you are and know you are giving your best to all the patients, in spite of my best changes and restrictions.*  
- **Donor/volunteer from Fresno**

## COVID Care STORIES

These are stories about how our amazing staff is caring for the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can read more from the PPMM blog at [pparmonte.org/blog](http://pparmonte.org/blog).



### Abortion patients are grateful for this essential care

Since the pandemic began, Dr. McClellan has provided abortion care for patients who have come to our health centers from a wide array of shelter-in-place situations.

Some have been students, taking classes remotely. Some already had abortions but are trying to keep them busy while working at their paying jobs in makeshift home offices - like their kitchens. Some are in the food industry, worried about how to stay afloat financially while also staying safe.

All of these patients have told Dr. McClellan how thankful they are for their care - most of whom have incomes barely above the poverty level and face stark health care disparities - that they completely rely on telehealth visits. In fact, half of all their patient visits in the past year have been via telehealth, primarily audio, due to the pandemic. That's what our patients prefer.

Still, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and California's Department of Health Care Services want to decrease or eliminate reimbursements for audio telehealth services under the theory that when the pandemic is over, patients can easily go in to the doctor's office. But the truth is that many of these patients can't and never really could. Not easily.

It's also a myth that all care in the exam room is better than audio telehealth. There are many kinds of preventive care services that can be done just as effectively or even more effectively when a patient doesn't have to come in.

Abbott's BinaxNOW at-home test kit for ...  
At PPMM, all of our primary care services were converted to telehealth early in the pandemic. There has been no decline in their health outcomes, and, in some cases, the outcomes are better. In fact, 85% of all of our telehealth patients have requested phone-only appointments, and all telehealth patients have reported a 90% satisfaction rate with their visits, based on survey results done by an independent company.

Here are some everyday stories of health care that's cutting-edge - because it happened with our patients and clinicians entirely on the phone:

An elderly man with diabetes, who can't take public transportation, has regular audio telehealth appointments to manage his symptoms and medication. Now his blood sugar levels are under control without him having to make an arduous trip to the doctor's office.

A mother who has small children at home and no childcare speaks on the phone with her family doctor to treat her hypertension and anxiety issues, still receiving the counseling she relies on to stay healthy.

A woman who is slowly recovering from hospitalization for pneumonia speaks weekly with her physician to monitor her symptoms and adjust her medication. She is safely recuperating at home - and staying out of the emergency room.

There are thousands of stories like these from all over the state. The California Legislature is now considering a bill, AB 32 (Assemblywoman Cecilia Aguilar-Curry, D-Winters) that maintains payment parity in Medi-Cal reimbursements for all telehealth services, and legislators should support it.

Earlier this year, PPMM's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Laura Dalton testified to lawmakers that telehealth remains essential to her patients because long-existing barriers, ranging from lack of transportation to inflexible work schedules, make it difficult to get the health care they need and deserve.

"Going back to health center visits when they are not indicated or requested by the patient is harmful," Dr. Dalton testified. "And I cannot imagine a system that would tell me, as a primary care provider, that I must do something that I think is not in the best interest of my patients' lives."

All telehealth services must be equally funded as a matter of justice. We urge health care policy makers to listen to patients and health care providers - and do no harm.

Stacy Cross is president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Mar Monte.



## LETTER FROM THE CEO

### Confronting racial injustice and reckoning with Margaret Sanger's legacy

Hello Friends,

I know we all breathed a sigh of relief when a Minneapolis jury took only 10 hours to convict on all three charges - the former police officer who murdered George Floyd. Yet, as we've heard from so many leaders in the Black community, this brief moment of accountability cannot even begin to bring justice to the grievous wounds caused by racism in our country.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee members, who have had open discussions with me about how the toll of systemic racism has affected so many areas of our society.

As part of this important racial reckoning, I am so glad that PPFA has finally addressed the legacy of Planned Parenthood's founder, Margaret Sanger, and her eugenicist, racist beliefs. You may recall that PPMM grieved with her and put out our own statement last summer. And it's so important that our national organization has done the same, on the large platform they command.

PPFA's CEO Alexis McGill Johnson recently had an op-ed in the New York Times, which acknowledged that Planned Parenthood's focus on white women throughout the decades has been a stark failure in our efforts to serve everyone in our communities. She also proclaimed that in Planned Parenthood's second century, we have an opportunity to heal the harms that Sanger created. Here is a link to Alexis' commentary, headlined, "We're done making excuses for our founder: We must reckon with Margaret Sanger's association with white supremacist groups and eugenics."

Still, this acknowledgment does not erase how elements of the movement for reproductive freedom has significantly improved the lives of many women by giving them control of their bodies and lives. Both of Sanger's legacies are true.

I hope you feel proud to be a crucial supporter of an organization that firmly believes all people have the right to determine their own future and decide, without coercion or judgment, whether and when to have children.

Also, since April was STI/STD Awareness month, I want to acknowledge the important role our staff - from Patient Services to PPMM Communities with Essential media - play in providing our patients and communities with essential testing, treatment, and information about how to prevent sexually transmitted infections. Our affiliate has also taken a leadership role in providing critical data about STI cases in California, at the request of state health department officials.

In closing, I want to thank you again for making our work possible, especially throughout this pandemic. It means the world to every one of our more than 180,000 patients. I am grateful to work with you in service to our communities.

In Solidarity,

Stacy