



# COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

VENTURA COUNTY'S HUB FOR COORDINATED CARE

## IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the second quarterly Ventura County Community Information Exchange (VCCIE) newsletter! In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, the VCCIE would like to dedicate this issue to the many hard-working health and social service providers who fight stigma, provide support, educate the public, and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

# WE'RE JUST GETTING STARTED



**Kelly Brown, Community Information Officer,  
Interface Children & Family Services**

The Ventura County Community Information Exchange Governance Board and committees have been hard at work on strategic planning and building the needed infrastructure of the VCCIE. The requirements gathering process has begun with Intrepid Ascent leading the way in discovering what systems our county's health and social services organizations are using to serve their clients, and then defining what elements the VCCIE will need to interact with those systems. Intrepid will continue to work with Ventura County partners in order to assist the Governance Board in the development of a CIE platform RFP, that will go out later this year. We are all excited to see the proposals and demonstrations from the various technology vendors that are building innovative CIE systems around the nation.

There will be several opportunities for health and social service partners to help inform on the design of the system, and contribute to the work needed to ensure the result is a sustainable system that improves service delivery efficiency and lowers the cost of care. Just as importantly, there will be opportunities for partners to help design CIE procedures and practices that improve the equitable and inclusive access to health and social services for our county's diverse group of community members.

**If you are interested in learning how you can get involved with the launch of the Ventura County Community Information Exchange, please contact Laura Everest at [Leverest@vccie.org](mailto:Leverest@vccie.org).**

[Check out our first newsletter.](#)

## VCCHIC REPORT

**Erin Slack, MPH, MCAH Epidemiologist,  
Ventura County Public Health**



The Ventura County Community Health Improvement Collaborative (VCCHIC) has been working on the triannual collaborative community health needs assessment over the past couple of months. This process included collecting primary data through a community survey and focus groups to capture the voice of our community members and stakeholders. Secondary data from sources such as the American Community Survey, the California Health Interview Survey, etc. were also analyzed to compare Ventura County to other California counties, the state, and the United States for health outcomes and social determinants of health. After reviewing the robust set of data, stakeholders from VCCHIC met to discuss and develop the final priority health issues over three sessions in late April and early May.

The overarching priorities include:

- Addressing Mental Health and Substance Use Across the Lifespan
- Prevention of Chronic Conditions by Promoting Healthy Lifestyles
- Advancing Equitable Access to Healthcare

The final report will become available sometime in late June 2022.

**Any questions regarding the process or report can be directed to [Erin.Slack@ventura.org](mailto:Erin.Slack@ventura.org).**



# GOVERNANCE BOARD

Meet the dedicated health care and social service leaders committed to bringing the Ventura County Community Information Exchange to life



**Lizeth Barretto**  
Ventura County  
Health Care Agency



**Rachel Cox**  
Clinicas del Camino Real



**Will Garand**  
Community Memorial  
Health System



**Lynette Harvey**  
Camarillo  
Health Care District



**Jack Hinojosa**  
Child Development Resources  
of Ventura County, Inc.



**Jeffery Lambert**  
Ventura County  
Community Foundation



**Melissa Livingston**  
County of Ventura  
Human Services Agency



**Monique Nowlin**  
County of Ventura  
Area Agency on Aging



**Pauline Preciado**  
Gold Coast Health Plan



**Rick Schroeder**  
Many Mansions



**Erin Slack**  
Ventura County  
Public Health



**Kathryn Stiles**  
Adventist Health  
Simi Valley



**Vanessa Teran**  
Mixteco/Indigena Community  
Organizing Project



**Rachael Watkins**  
Ventura County  
Victim Services



**George West**  
Dignity Health

## VIRTUAL CONVENING RECAP

**On Friday, April 22, 2022, over 60 nonprofit, healthcare, and community representatives gathered for the first Ventura County Community Information Exchange Virtual Convening**

Attendees received an introduction to the Community Information Exchange (CIE) system, participated in an interactive, simulated 211 Ventura County call (The Garcia Family), and heard from several industry leaders on how the CIE system is the future of care coordination.

The virtual convening was proudly presented by Ventura County Community Health Improvement Collaborative, Interface Children & Family Services/211 Ventura County, and Ventura County

Community Foundation, with presentations from Ventura County Public Health, Interface Children & Family Services/211 Ventura County, Ventura County Community Foundation, Center to Advance Community Health & Equity, Intrepid Ascent, Adventist Health Simi Valley, and County of Ventura Human Services Agency.

**Interested in attending the next convening?**  
[Sign-up to stay informed!](#)

# MEET THE GARCIA FAMILY\*

Cameron, Sarah, Lily (15), and Noah (8) are a young family living in the city of Ventura, experiencing many, all too common, challenges. After learning about the vast and complex needs of the Garcia family, a volunteer at their local food pantry encouraged Cameron to contact 211 Ventura County for support.

On the call with a 211 Specialist, Cameron shared that in early 2020, he lost his construction job after sustaining a significant injury at work, leaving him and his family without their only source of income. Cameron also shared that his wife, Sarah, had been unable to secure work while facing an ongoing battle with opioid addiction, but fortunately, Sarah's mom was able open her home when the Garcia's were evicted from their long-term home. Just when they thought they were on the path to recovery, Sarah's mom contracted COVID-19 and passed away in October 2021, which resulted in the home they were living in being sold, the social security checks supporting them being canceled, and the loss of their only reliable source of childcare. Today, Cameron and his family are living in their minivan and desperately struggling to stay afloat.

With the passing of their beloved grandmother and the loss of their family home and any sense of normalcy, Lily and Noah started to develop challenges of their own. Cameron shared that since the family moved into their car, Lily began self-harming and has become emotionally

removed from their family, while Noah has started falling behind in school, struggles with extreme anxiety around Sarah's failing health, and



needs a safe space to refrigerate his insulin, since being diagnosed with type 1 diabetes several months ago.

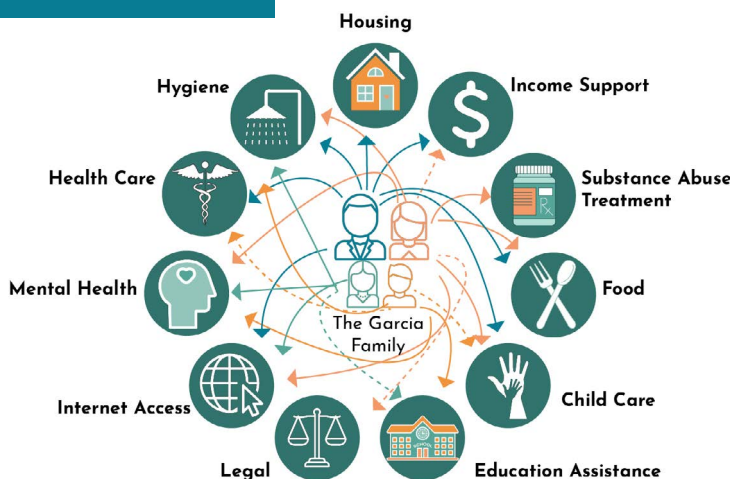
During the call, the 211 Specialist identified 24 local agencies that could meet the 33 immediate needs that the Garcia's have; it is estimated that Cameron could face an estimated 36 hours of making calls, scheduling appointments, and completing intake forms just to get their foot in the door of those agencies. With the VCCIE system in place, the Garcia family will be directly linked to a network of health and social service community care providers all working together to help this family on their journey to stability.

**\*The Garcia family is a simulated family experiencing authentic challenges.**

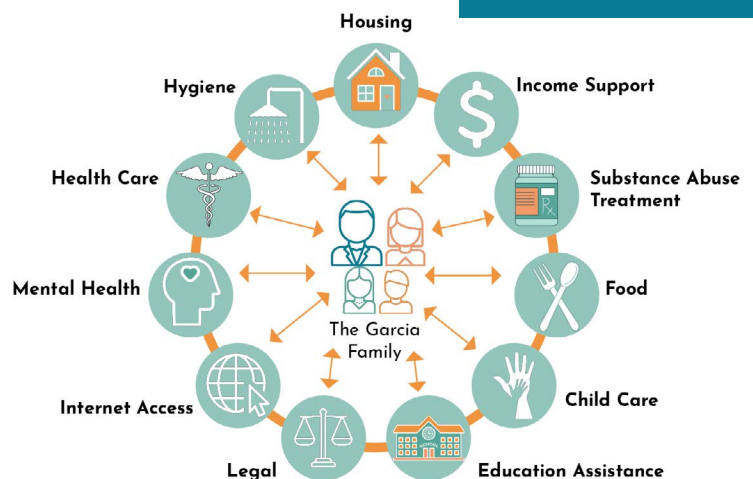


[Listen to the call recording with Cameron and the 211 Specialist.](#)

## BEFORE VCCIE



## AFTER VCCIE



# A CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE WEST



“...bringing this opportunity to the people of Ventura County is part of our obligation...”

Vice President for Dignity Health, CommonSpirit, George West, discusses what he sees for the future of the Ventura County Community Information Exchange

## What does the Ventura County Community Information Exchange mean to you?

CIE systems are deployed elsewhere, so bringing this opportunity to the people of Ventura County is part of our obligation as a collaborative health system; it offers the best opportunity, going forward, to meet our community's needs with improving social determinants of health.

The majority of our community interacts with technology on a daily basis (dating, food delivery, bill management), so they expect technology to meet their health and social needs, too; the CIE system will get us past the anecdotal story and the anecdotal problem and straight to the real data.

## How does the Community Information Exchange system align with Dignity Health, CommonSpirit's vision?

Dignity Health, CommonSpirit and St. John's is always looking for solutions to meet people's broader needs, not just health care, and technology like the CIE offers us a real opportunity. As one of our core values, collaboration is key and the CIE system strengthens those networks, allowing Dignity Health, CommonSpirit to work alongside many different healthcare providers to successfully address our community's diverse and evolving needs.

## Where do you hope the Community Information Exchange will take Ventura County in the next five years?

The CIE system will take us to the next level of providing holistic care and increasing our access to data that impacts societal function and informs policy change to address social determinants of health.

## What are barriers you see the Community Information Exchange facing during its launch?

My concern from the beginning has been that we are going to focus too heavily on customization, which will delay the launch. We need this now and we need to be able to negotiate with ourselves how much we're willing to change down the road versus changing now. If COVID taught us anything, we must be agile, especially when addressing social needs.

## Any final thoughts?

The CIE system is going to be beyond our wildest imaginations of what we can do and what pitfalls there might be, we are going to learn as we go, and like Thomas Edison said, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

# DATA PROTECTION

## CIE SECURITY AND LIABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The ability to share information and coordinate care among providers, hospitals, and community-based organizations (CBOs) is critical to addressing social determinants of health and improving the well-being of individuals and communities. Ventura County, like many other communities across the country, aims to use data to promote individual well-being as a more holistic approach to community health. The community information exchange ecosystem will enable partners to integrate data from multiple sources, make bi-directional referrals, coordinate care, and create a shared longitudinal record for each individual served.

Data sharing is as much about relationships as it is about technology; the degree to which a community has built collaborations and trust within and across sectors will largely determine its success in sharing data. Establishing effective data governance is an important step toward building trust, which includes ensuring data privacy and security across the network.

Data sharing between health care and CBOs involves a multiplicity of users and data types that may have their own protections, such as clinical data, education records, housing information, victims of domestic violence, and criminal justice records. Standards about what data may be shared across sectors and for what purposes are difficult to interpret and can vary widely; as such, many initiatives invest time and effort developing a clear, comprehensive data governance framework that addresses the legal and regulatory requirements and resolves conflicts among those laws to promote trust and confidence in the use of the network and technology platform.

Building a network that results in broad systems change means ensuring that the right information is available when and where it is needed for care. Because data travels at the speed of trust, strong and effective data governance ensures consistent and proper management of data across the network which helps improve data quality and gives users a higher level of confidence in the information being used to make decisions.[1]

This begins with defining the types of data to be collected to effectively supporting the shared goals and objectives, developing standards based on best practices and regulatory obligations, and establishing a training program to educate all stakeholders involved. Concerns about collecting, using, and sharing data are valid but working collaboratively to develop guidelines for how data will be controlled, accessed, and exchanged will be a critical component going forward.

**Karen Ostrowski**  
**Vice President, Policy Innovation**  
**Intrepid Ascent**

[1] EHR Intelligence, "Data governance best practices for healthcare, health IT", July 2013, <https://ehrintelligence.com/news/data-governance-best-practices-for-healthcare-health-it>

# LEVERAGING EXPERTISE TO SUPPORT CIE DEVELOPMENT

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One of the many exciting aspects of the Ventura County CIE is how the initiative has brought together an array of organizations, as members and consultants, to ensure an effective design and development. Communities Lifting Communities, a 501(c)3 associated with the Hospital Association of Southern California, provides key start up and administrative support as the CIE solidifies its organizational structure. Interface Children & Family Service/211 Ventura County leads community engagement ensuring local stakeholders stay abreast of the evolving activities. Center to Advance Community Health and Equity, a program of the Public Health Institute, led the initial design for the program including governance and the request for proposal process to secure a technology consultant to lead the requirements gathering process.

Intrepid Ascent applied and was selected to support the technical requirements gathering process for the initiative. As a California-based consulting firm, Intrepid Ascent works with safety net organizations, state and local agencies, health information organizations, technology vendors operating in the CIE space, and leaders in other regions (including Interface through their 211/CIE work in other California counties) to support the adoption of technology tools for CIE and cross-sector collaboration. Intrepid has had the opportunity to work with various communities in California, including six Whole Person Care pilots, and a behavioral health integration CIE initiative in Orange County. They have engaged directly with providers, social service agencies, health information exchanges, payors, government agencies, and other organizations to define and meet their health information technology (HIT) needs, which have increasingly, over the last 3-4 years, focused on cross-sector, person-centric CIE-like initiatives.

Through these and prior initiatives, they have supported the integration of behavioral health care, substance use disorder treatment, and medical care within and across HIT systems, in addition to specific experience working with community-based organizations (CBOs) to enable their equal contribution to such initiatives. In one particular circumstance (on Long Island, New York, one of the nation's most inequitable communities from an income and social/health outcomes perspective), Intrepid worked with local CBOs to conduct an assessment of CIE systems requirements by categorizing the needs of over 200 CBOs and healthcare partners to provide the community with technical requirements to inform a procurement as well as associated strategic recommendations on how to use, manage, measure the outcomes of, and expand their CIE effort. As part of the assessment, they helped prioritize CBO participation in the initial implementation of the shared technology platform as part of a phased approach towards a broader, integrated system of care.

Like other communities, Ventura County is unique and will require solutions that are grounded in local priorities that are person-centered and support the essential service providers. This community has established a strong group of local partners who are inclusive, dedicated, and passionate about improving access to health and social services to residents and their families. Intrepid's goal is to help this community establish a CIE through the technical requirements gathering process that not only enables critical new functionality, but that also integrates this functionality with existing technology systems in the community in an impactful way.



# DID YOU KNOW?

## Learn about two community initiatives influencing the health and community information exchange systems



### Data Exchange Framework

#### What is Data Exchange Framework:

A single data sharing agreement and common set of policies and procedures that will govern the exchange of health information among health care entities and government agencies beginning in June 2024.

Every Californian, and the health and human service providers and organizations that care for them, will have timely and secure access to electronic information that is needed to address their health and social needs and enable the effective delivery of services to improve their lives and wellbeing.

#### About Data Exchange Framework:

California Health and Human Services Data Exchange Framework was set in motion with Governor Newsom's signature on [AB 133](#) (Chapter 143, Statutes of 2021) on July 27, 2021. The legislation provides CalHHS with the authority to establish a Data Exchange Framework that will improve how health information is shared across the health and social services systems — protecting public health, improving care delivery, and guiding policies aimed at caring for the whole person, while maintaining patient privacy, data security, and promoting equity.

The Data Exchange Framework must be finalized by July 1, 2022. The legislation includes a mandate requiring providers' full participation in the exchange beginning January 31, 2024.

**To learn more about the Data Exchange Framework and/or access the public advisory and focus meetings:** <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/data-exchange-framework>.



### Gravity Project

#### What is Gravity Project:

A national public collaborative that develops consensus-based data standards to improve how we use and share information on social determinants of health (SDOH).

#### About Gravity Project:

The Gravity Project convenes stakeholders from across the globe through an open and transparent collaborative process where they develop and test standards to facilitate social determinants of health (SDOH) data capture and exchange across a variety of systems and settings of care and social services.

The Gravity Project develops data standards to represent individual-level SDOH information in digital platforms. These national standards support the consistent use of the data across organizations, providers, and caregivers, and help to facilitate payment for social risk data collection and intervention activities such as referrals, counseling, and care coordination.

**To learn more about the Gravity Project and/or join this critical initiative:** <https://thegravityproject.net>.



## Stay Connected!

For more information

[Contact@vccie.org](mailto:Contact@vccie.org)