ISSUE 2: FALL INTO HEALTH

# IMPACT!

## PUBLIC HEALTH AMBASSADORS NEWSLETTER

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health values the important and innovative work that our Parent, Student, and Early Childhood Public Health Ambassadors are doing across Los Angeles County to help stop the spread of COVID-19, address pressing health issues, and keep communities thriving. Impact! is a monthly newsletter for our community partners with valuable health resources and learning opportunities that highlight the great work of our Public Health Ambassadors and the community at large.

How do you make an IMPACT?

## WHAT'S NEW?


01 ***Public Health Ambassador Spotlight***

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05 ***Mindful Breathing for Wellness***


OCTOBER 2022

County of Los Angeles Public Health

# PUBLIC HEALTH AMBASSADOR HIGHLIGHT

## GIVI MCHEDLISHVILI FIGHTS COVID-19 MISINFORMATION

Student Public Health Ambassador and High School Senior, Givi Mchedlishvili combines his interest in public health and molecular biology to respectfully address and correct COVID-19 misinformation in his own community and among underrepresented communities in greater Los Angeles.

**Givi:** Before coming across the Student Public Health Ambassador program for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, I began a project of my own to spread awareness about the COVID-19 vaccine in my community after observing the mass disinformation related to the pandemic and the vaccine among my classmates and fellow LA Citizens on social media and in everyday conversation. The underlying problem, I realized, was the lack of accessible, accurate COVID-19 information for many LA citizens. I researched and made a presentation related to exposing myths about the vaccine. In addition to public health, I have always been deeply interested in molecular biology and enjoyed learning about how the vaccine works on the molecular level. I learned about how the virus enters the body, multiplies, and affects the host. I also learned about therapeutics for COVID-19 such as Paxlovid and Molnupiravir, as well as antibodies that block the virus from entering our cells such as Evulshed and Bebtelovimab and their mechanism of action. I have presented this project at school, to different minority communities, as well as to representatives from the Department of Public Health who gave me the opportunity to join the Student Public Health Ambassador program.

This program has given me a platform to advance my cause for distributing accurate information about the vaccine to my fellow LA citizens.

**"Not only have I learned about the vaccine and COVID-19 safety protocols, but also how to effectively convey this understanding to those around me without offending or disrespecting others."**

**DPH:** How did information in the Public Health Ambassador Program help you prepare for this year's return to school?

**Givi:** The Public Health Ambassador Program has taught me about protective measures against COVID-19 that can be taken on a daily basis in going to school, including wearing my mask (especially indoors), regularly washing hands, and practicing social distancing when possible. As individuals in the Los Angeles community, it is our job to follow these guidelines daily and to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity in the community. Immunity through vaccination is the much safer option, as COVID-19 infection leads to high hospitalization rates, morbidity, and mortality that makes natural immunity far too dangerous. The goal when it comes to herd immunity is to get a high enough threshold of people healthy and immunized to minimize the circulation of COVID-19. In the current day, it is most important that we vaccinate our children, as this past June the FDA approved the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for children 6 months and older.

**DPH:** How have you shared information learned from the Public Health Ambassador Program with other parents and students?

**GIVI:** The skills and information that I have learned from the Public Health Ambassador program have better equipped me to

communicate safety measures and their importance, as well as accurate information about the vaccine and its efficacy to classmates and adults. Not only have I learned about the vaccine and COVID-19 safety protocols, but also how to effectively convey this understanding to those around me without offending or disrespecting others.

See the results from Student Public Health Ambassador training on September 6, 2022 below. Student Public Health Ambassadors increased their knowledge about COVID-19 prevention by more than 8 times and gained 12 times higher confidence in their ability to share accurate COVID-19 information among their peers as compared before their training.

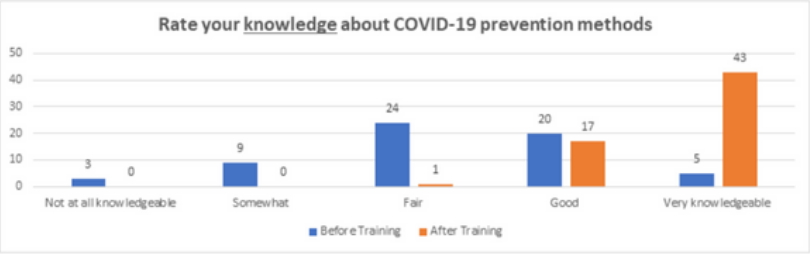


Figure 1. Student Public Health Ambassador Training 9/6/2022 evaluation results- knowledge

Figure 2. Student Public Health Ambassador Training 9/6/2022 evaluation results- confidence

# BECOME A PUBLIC HEALTH AMBASSADOR

### STUDENT PUBLIC HEALTH AMBASSADOR

Calling all middle and high school students! Your community needs you. Join LACDPH and connect to invaluable health and wellness resources including mental health support to cope with the effects of the pandemic. Become a trusted voice. Sign up for our upcoming Student Public Health Ambassador Training today! Register here.

Upcoming Training Dates/Times
Tues. 10/4 @4:30-6:00pm

### PARENT PUBLIC HEALTH AMBASSADOR

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is looking for parents committed to supporting their community in COVID-19 recovery. The Parent Public Health Ambassador Training Program offers parents a unique opportunity to learn about ways to support family and community resiliency. Parent Public Health Ambassadors receive certification and earn a $25 stipend for their training participation. How can you make a difference?

View upcoming Parent Public Health Ambassador Program training dates here.

## AN EXCLUSIVE INVITATION TO OUR DPH TRAINED PUBLIC HEALTH AMBASSADORS

### ATTEND OCTOBER'S COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS WITH A DOCTOR

Join a public health physician for insightful dialogue on the most pressing health and wellness issues impacting Los Angeles. October's discussion will focus on the flu. Keep an eye on your inbox for more information.

Upcoming Dates/Times
Wed. 10/12 @4-5pm (English)
Join the meeting by clicking here.
Wed. 10/12 @5-6pm (Spanish)
Join the meeting by clicking here.

## TEAM UP WITH AMERICORPS AND LACDPH

### BECOME A PART-TIME OF HALF-TIME AMERICORPS MEMBER

LACDPH is recruiting those 18 years and older, with an interest to support community outreach, health education, and resource sharing in Los Angeles County communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. AmeriCorps volunteers will support community outreach and Community Field Office activities focusing on substance abuse disorders, HIV/STDs, nutrition, physical activity, violence prevention, environmental health and more. For more information and to apply click here.

## MONKEYPOX UPDATE

The risk of Monkeypox in the general population remains very low, based on the information available. Click here for the Monkeypox Frequently Asked Questions.

## MASKING AND COVID-19 TESTING GUIDANCE UPDATES

### LOS ANGELES COUNTY HAS REACHED CDC LOW COMMUNITY LEVEL DESIGNATION

COVID-19 is spreading less quickly and the risk of transmission has declined.

Follow the latest data using the LA County COVID-19 Surveillance Dashboard.

LACDPH has changed masking guidance to align with new guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). As of Friday September 23rd, indoor masking in LA County is up to individual preference, however still required in some settings. Visit Mask Wearing Rules and Recommendations for more details.

LACDPH has revised its Health Care Worker Vaccination Requirement Health Officer Order and K-12 School Protocol to align with CDPH policies. As of September 17th, health care facilities, other congregate settings, and schools are no longer required to administer weekly COVID-19 testing of unvaccinated and under-vaccinated workers. Please note that any site, facility, organization or business can continue to require testing for their employees, if desired.

# WARNINGS OF A NEW FENTANYL TREND

### STATE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS WARN OF A NEW BRIGHTLY COLORED "RAINBOW FENTANYL" DRUG POSING A THREAT TO YOUTH

This highly addictive and potentially deadly drug has been found in at least 18 states, per the United States Drug Enforcement Agency. Get more facts about Fentanyl from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Visit the CDPH Overdose Prevention Initiative site for more information, including resources for adult role models and educators.

# HOW TO STAY HEALTHY THIS FALL

Fall is here and that means cold and flu season is upon us. Viruses spread quickly in cold weather. Follow the tips below to stay healthy and slow the spread of disease in your community:

- Get your flu shot
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wash your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

# WELLNESS CORNER

### BIVALENT BOOSTERS AVAILABLE

Fall 2022 COVID-19 Boosters for everyone 12+ are now available! Bivalent boosters offer protection against two strains of COVID-19 – the original coronavirus and the newer Omicron subvariants (BA.4 and BA.5) that are spreading widely. An updated booster is recommended for everyone ages 12 and older at least 2 months after getting fully vaccinated OR after their most recent booster dose. Click here to find a site near you.

### MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

California's Safe Schools For All Hub offers key resources and information to support safe, in-person learning in K-12 schools and help control the spread of COVID-19.

### WELLNESS ACTIVITY: MINDFUL BREATHING

This is a powerful way to relax your body when you're feeling stressed. Practice a few rounds of this 3-step Balloon Breathing to help you become calm:

1. Place one hand on your belly and breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds (like you are filling up a balloon)
2. Slowly breathe out through your mouth for 6 seconds feeling the balloon deflate.
3. If you have a calm place you can imagine, go there in your mind while you are doing this breathing exercise.

Watch this and other wellness videos supporting parents, students and educators, and visit the California Healthy Minds Project for more wellness tips.

## CONNECT WITH LACDPH

### FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LIVE UPDATES VIA PODCASTS, VIDEOS, Q&A AND SO MUCH MORE

LACDPH Instagram
LACDPH Twitter
LACDPH Facebook

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to keeping your community healthy and safe.

-Los Angeles County Department of Public Health