



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
5/10/21

Contact: Sigolène Ortega  
831-305-1060  
[sigolene@hipscc.org](mailto:sigolene@hipscc.org)

**Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County's 2021 Annual  
Community Forum: *Juntos y Adelante: Advancing Recovery and Equity  
Beyond COVID-19***

**Santa Cruz County:** The Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County (HIP) invites our community to its 2021 Community Forum, *Juntos y Adelante: Advancing Recovery and Equity Beyond COVID-19*. The Forum will be convened online on Thursday, May 27th, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm. Register [here](#). HIP's Annual Community Forum unites and engages the greater Santa Cruz County community in meaningful conversation about strategies for improving healthcare access and health outcomes, with a special focus on ending racial health disparities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened pre-existing inequities in our communities of color. Intersecting crises have united local residents, healthcare, housing, education, business, and government agency leaders to innovate and construct new avenues to mitigate racialized inequities and support communities to heal. We invite residents and those working in health, education, business, and faith-based organizations, to join HIP staff, local policymakers, and our esteemed special guests to explore ways to address the root causes of health, economic, and social inequities. Together, we will shape an equitable future where all Santa Cruz County residents can thrive!

Ysabel Duron will serve as keynote speaker. Ms. Duron, a pioneering, award-winning Latina journalist and cancer survivor leads the Latino Cancer Institute (LCI). LCI is a national nonprofit community and research network promoting education, services, research, and policies that support Latinos around cancer-related issues. Her current efforts aim to strengthen racial and

ethnic communities to participate in systems change to address racialized health and social inequities.

Ysabel Duron will be joined by local experts in our community who have adopted racial equity as central to their organizations' mission and work. HIP welcomes DeAndre James, Executive Director of the Community Health Trust of Pajaro Valley, as Forum moderator. Guest panelists include Cat Willis, Founder, and Executive Director of the Tannery World Dance and Cultural Center; Jennifer Herrera, Chief of Public Health for the County of Santa Cruz's Public Health Division; Maria Cadenas, Executive Director of Santa Cruz Community Ventures; and Steve McKay, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for Labor Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

This year's forum aims to re-energize our community around an equitable recovery plan as we emerge from and yet continue to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. During the Forum, panelists will describe strategies for promoting individual and communal well-being through infrastructure, policies, and systems that prioritize security, connection, and equitable access to necessary care and support. The Forum will demonstrate what HIP's Executive Director, Elisa Orona, affirms: *"HIP supports healthcare system improvement, emphasizing prevention and equity, through integrated, coordinated approaches designed to yield better outcomes for patients, staff, providers, and the community overall. Working through an equity lens, we focus on ensuring that individuals and families facing barriers to fullness of health are ensured equitable access to resources they choose and need to thrive. We push toward better care and well-being for everyone."*

For more information about our Annual Community Forum, please visit <https://www.hipscc.org/forum>.

###