

Researcher Spotlight: An Interview with Cynthia Juarez Nunez



Cynthia Juarez Nunez, MPH, is the Wellness Coach and Community Health Worker (CHWs) Coordinator for the Healthy4You program at the Family Health Centers of San Diego. She holds a bachelor's degree in kinesiology from San Diego State University and a master's degree in public health from CSU San Marcos. Additionally, she is a Certified Health Education Specialist and completed the Leadership and Management Certification program at UCSD Extension.

CIAPM-Funded Project: Advancing a Precision Population Health Approach to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to Reduce Health Disparities (UCSD, Lead Principal Investigator: Dr. Gary Firestein)

1. Why are community partnerships important for health research?

“Community partnerships are crucial for health research because they allow for the development of interventions that are culturally tailored and responsive to the specific needs of the community. Our ACEs project has integrated CHWs, who share similar life experiences, ethnicity, and language with our community. Our CHWs act as vital links between the community and the health care system, ensuring that health interventions are accessible and more likely to succeed. These partnerships also enhance the ability to address complex health issues, like the effects of ACEs, stress, and obesity, by grounding solutions in the combined lived experiences of our community members.”

2. How has your background and experience with this CIAPM-funded project impacted your professional goals?

“My experience with the CIAPM-funded project has significantly shaped my professional goals, particularly in advancing health equity through community-driven solutions. This program has highlighted the importance of fostering partnerships that strengthen resilience among vulnerable populations. Additionally, my involvement in the project addressing ACEs has underscored the critical need to address social determinants of health and the disparities related to stress in my

future work. This experience has deepened my commitment to creating inclusive, sustainable health initiatives that prioritize the needs of the communities we serve.”

3. What impacts have you seen from this CIAPM-funded project addressing the health impacts of ACEs and advancing health equity?

“Our project has made a tangible impact by implementing a community-designed intervention that is tailored to the unique needs of families, particularly Latino families, in the San Diego area. By relying on CHWs to serve as links between the health care system and their communities, the project has improved access to resources and helped families navigate the complex health care landscape. This approach has promoted resilience in the individual patients and families that we serve. Through this targeted, community-based approach, the project has contributed to advancing health equity by ensuring that interventions are accessible and culturally appropriate for the populations most affected by these health challenges.”