

JULY 17, 2020



SCFHC'S MISSION IS: "TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES OF SOUTH LOS ANGELES AND SOUTHEAST LOS ANGELES COUNTY BY PROVIDING AFFORDABLE AND COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION IN A WELCOMING AND MULTI-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT."

Dear SCFHC Staff:

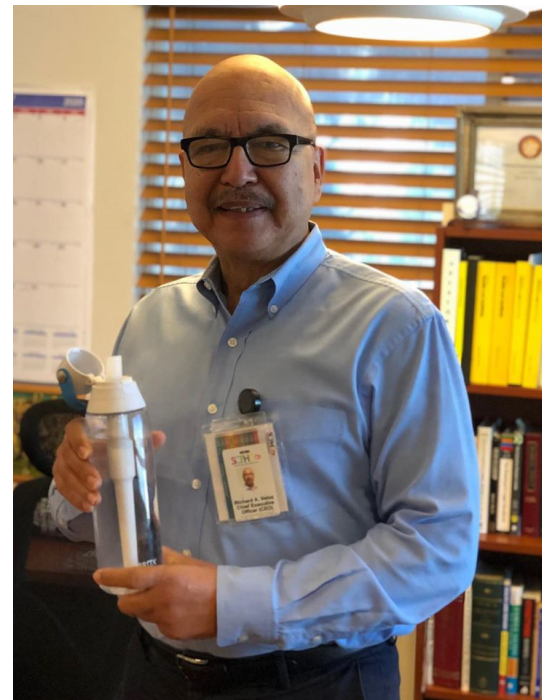
Together, we are overcoming the challenges of COVID-19; we are practicing high levels of health and safety standards; we are providing high-quality medical service to our patients over the phone; we are learning new job skills that allow us to be flexible and responsive to the needs in our clinic and in the community; and, we have conducted more than 2,000 COVID-19 tests for our patients since May 3rd.

We have learned to adapt in the face of challenge, and those efforts have put new pressure on all of us. Not only are we essential workers that put the needs of our patients first, but we are parents adjusting to a lack of child care; we are social distancers that find ourselves far from friends and family; and we are people that worry about what COVID-19 will mean for all of us.

That is why we asked our Director of Behavioral Health, Christopher Ifekwunigwe, to share a few thoughts on how we can better cope in the Age of Covid-19. I hope you find these suggestions and resources helpful.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Veloz, M.P.H., J.D.
Chief Executive Officer





Coping with COVID-19 at SCFHC

by Christopher Ifekwunigwe, LCSW

We are working during an unprecedented time in terms of the challenges that the coronavirus pandemic presents medically, socially, and financially. Activities we once took for granted seem like distant memories and for many of us, the juggling of things like childcare, work schedules and family drama seems like it will never end. In times of crisis, we can usually rely on coping mechanisms like gathering with our family, our friends, and our extended families as part of the healing process. Stay-at-home orders and social distancing have reduced our ability to rely on one another within our neighborhoods and communities.

The social isolation caused by Covid-19 is increasing the likelihood of depression, anxiety, substance use, and relationship violence in residents of our community. Additionally, there are children who have gotten so comfortable with online learning and being with their families 24/7 that they would prefer not returning to school. The absence of drama, distractions, or a strict schedule makes staying at home attractive. The anxiety of returning to school and giving up virtual schooling, coupled with the probability of new pandemic-related rules (stricter hygiene, masks in classrooms, and social distancing in schools) could trigger anxiety in many children.

Coping with COVID-19 at SCFHC

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SOLUTIONS

At South Central Family Health Center, the Behavioral Health Department has been assisting patients with the anxiety, depression, grief and sense of hopelessness that has swept through our community. Just as real are the anxiety, depression, grief and sense of hopelessness facing SCFHC staff. We are heroes who suit up and show up every day. Who or what can WE rely on in this difficult time? As always, you can talk to your supervisors and others when you are feeling overwhelmed by circumstances. There are also options that can be taken advantage of like the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). A unique aspect of this pandemic is it gives everybody the opportunity to be a hero, even if only in small ways. For example, we can help keep ourselves and others safe by cleaning, wearing masks, and practicing social distancing. Positive psychology research has shown that the positive feelings of altruism--

selfless concern for the well-being of others--last much longer than the feelings derived from doing something pleasant or fun.

At times like this, some of us may seek comfort in the spiritual realm, while others may throw themselves into physical pursuits like running. We as a staff can refocus on aspects of life that we can control—like practicing compassion, spreading kindness and engaging in activities that promote a sense of unity. The coronavirus should not alter our capacity for sympathy, empathy and harmony. We must recognize our worth as people and acknowledge one another in the hallways as we labor to overcome the challenges presented by the pandemic. Also, you can encourage staff to talk to supervisors and others if feeling overwhelmed, and remind staff that we have an employee assistance program that can be taken advantage of. Without a doubt, the coronavirus affects our bodies--but it cannot defeat our spirits.

RESOURCES

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others, call the numbers at the right.

If you are feeling suicidal or having suicidal ideations, call 911 immediately.



**Los Angeles County's
Department of Mental
Health's 24/7 hotline at**

**800-854-7771 OR TEXT "LA"
TO 741741.2)**

**Substance Abuse and Mental
Health Services
Administration's (SAMHSA's)
Disaster Distress Helpline**

1-800-985-5990

**text [TalkWithUs](#) to [66746](#).
(TTY 1-800-846-8517)**

STATISTICS

Based on responses collected June 25 through June 30, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 49.1% of American adults live in households which have experienced a loss in employment income
- 34.9% of American adults expect to experience a loss in employment income
- 10.4% of Americans lived in households where there was either sometimes or often not enough to eat in the previous 7 days
- 41.5% of adults had delayed getting medical care in the previous 4 weeks
- 23.9% of respondents reported having little interest or pleasure in doing things more than half the days/nearly every day last week
- 22.0% of respondents reported feeling down more than half the days/nearly every day last week
- 31.3% of respondents reported feeling anxious or nervous more than half the days/nearly every day last week