

FELLOW SPOTLIGHT

Carlos Del Carmen Luna

(Pronouns: He/His)



LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTION HOST SITE
Madera County



EDUCATION
UC Merced
BS Microbiology & Immunology



HOMETOWN
Mexico City, MX

WHY JOIN THE CA PUBLIC HEALTH CORPS (CA-PHC)?

Originally from Mexico City, I grew up in San Jose and eventually ended up in the Central Valley, where I studied at UC Merced, earning a BS in Microbiology & Immunology in 2020. While in college I worked at a wastewater treatment plant, splitting my time between environmental compliance and the lab. After graduation, I briefly worked at a winery lab, a food safety lab, and the UC Agricultural Research Center. My introduction to public health was with the Madera County public health lab in the middle of the pandemic where I performed RNA extractions of clinical samples tested for COVID-19.

WHY JOIN CA-PHC? [CONTINUED]

This opportunity taught me a lot about public health and highlighted the vulnerabilities of low-income communities. While in college, my professor said that we should try to stay in the valley because the valley needs us, and those words echoed in my mind as I processed the increasing number of samples. The Pathways program presented itself to me as an opportunity to do more for a community with limited access to healthcare.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING ON?

Since being accepted to the program, I have been working on several projects at my LHJ: I primarily work in COVID workplace outbreaks, helping businesses navigate the Emergency Temporary Standards, providing support, guidance, and tracking cases for the county. I also serve as the liaison for the jails and prisons reporting their COVID cases. I continue to work with the lab, providing triage for samples to be sequenced based on the criteria set by the state. I also collect and analyze data for the laboratory regarding their turnaround times as part of the continuing improvement metric for the accreditation process. As COVID ramps down, I have been training to do case investigations that are not COVID-related and working with the oral health team to promote preventative treatments.

A special project that I have been working on is bringing back the quarterly communicable diseases report. In addition, I have been looking into the possibility of bringing wastewater surveillance to the county, which would add an early warning system and complement efforts already in place.

WHAT COMES AFTER CA-PHC?

This program has opened many doors and provided me with opportunities to connect with established public health professionals. At its conclusion, I plan to attend graduate school and earn an MPH and continue to work in the Central Valley.