



## ***Valley forum focuses on regional agenda to improve health inequities***

The first of its kind, *Place Matters: San Joaquin Valley Regional Equity Forum*, will bring together over 100 regional key stakeholders spearheading initiatives that address air and water quality, food access, physical activity environments, access to health care, and affordable housing and development. The forum will address how the environments we live in shape our health and determine our years of productive life.

“Our hope is that this gathering will lay the groundwork for a cross-cutting regional equity and civic engagement agenda,” explained Dr. John Capitman, executive director for the Central Valley Health Policy Institute.

The forum will be facilitated by the Central Valley Health Policy Institute at California State University, Fresno and will be held on Wednesday, May 26 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the St. Paul Newman Center (1572 East Barstow in Fresno). **During the forum, researchers from the Central Valley Health Policy Institute will release a ground-breaking report on years of productive life lost in the region as it relates to one’s zip code.**

Guest speakers will be highlighting local and regional efforts to address inequities in health and well-being, living conditions and service access in the Valley. *Speakers for the event, include:*

**Keynote Speaker:** *Brian D. Smedley, Ph.D.* Vice-President and Director, Health Policy Institute Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. *“Building stronger communities for better health”*

### **Panelists:**

- ✚ **Cassandra L. Joubert, ScD** - Director, Central California Children’s Institute. *“Social and emotional development of children and effectively engaged parents”*.
- ✚ **Keith Bergthold**, Director, Planning and Development Department City of Fresno. *“A higher density platform to begin establishing affordable housing”*.
- ✚ **Phoebe Seaton**, Directing Attorney California Rural Legal Assistance. *“Economic justice and human rights of migrants, farm workers and other communities in rural California”*.
- ✚ **Genoveva Islas-Hooker, MPH**. Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program Coordinator. *“Inequities in Food Access and Physical Activity”*.
- ✚ **Jenny Saklar**, Campaign & Programs Manager Central California Air Quality. *“San Joaquin valley chronic air pollution and epidemic sickness due to poor air quality”*.

### **Moderator:**

**John Capitman, PhD**, Executive Director, Central Valley Health Policy Institute

**Special note to reporters/editors:** Speakers will also be available for Spanish interviews. For more information, please contact Marlene Bengiamin at: 559-273-1721 or [marleneb@csufresno.edu](mailto:marleneb@csufresno.edu) . Additional resources: [www.cvhpi.org](http://www.cvhpi.org) .

The Central Valley Health Policy Institute is committed to engaging residents and decision makers in health policy discussions and activities related to leading public health issues. Since its inception in 2002, the institute has evolved as one of the region’s leading repositories for health policy education, research, trainings, technical assistance and leadership in the San Joaquin Valley. Funding for this initiative was made possible by The California Endowment and the California Wellness Foundation. The Central Valley Health Policy Institute is housed under the Central California Center for Health and Human Services and College of Health and Human Services at Fresno State.