



# Longevity for San Joaquin Valley Residents:

## Individual and Neighborhood Characteristics in Fresno County

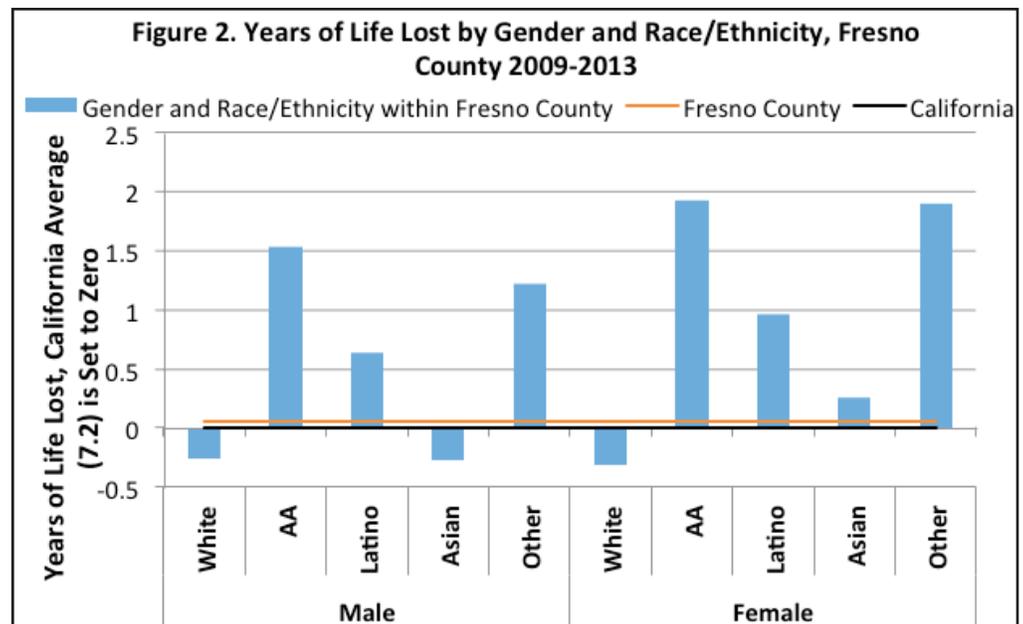
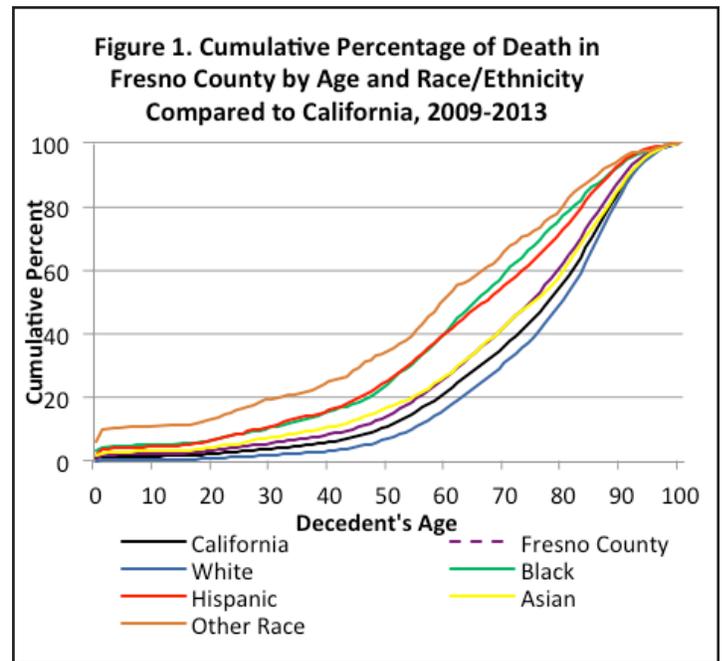
### Background and Implications

For residents of the San Joaquin Valley, both demographic and socio-economic characteristics are linked to longevity. Individual and neighborhood characteristics combine to produce disparities in health that accumulate over a life time. Race/ethnicity serves as a proxy measure of both individual and social determinants of health such as access to healthcare, fresh produce, and environmental air quality. This report examines premature mortality prior to age 65 as well as years of life lost after 65 within Fresno County compared to the state.

### Summary of Findings

Figure 1 illustrates all deaths (n=31,043) in Fresno County between 2009 and 2013. Compared to California, Fresno County experiences greater premature loss of life. In Fresno County, 34% of all mortalities were prior to age 65 as opposed to the 28% for the state. There are also notable racial/ethnic differences in premature mortality within Fresno County. While 28% (below state average) of White and 31% of Asian deaths occurred prior to the age of 65, African Americans and Latinos experience higher than average premature mortality at 50%, and 48%, respectively. Forty-eight percent of Native American, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, biracial, and self-identified other racial/ethnic groups combined also experience premature death.

Years of life lost was computed for older adults (65+) in Fresno County in relation to California's age- and gender-specific life expectancy estimates. Older adults in California, on average, have 7.2 years of life lost at the time of death. In comparison to the state average, older adults in Fresno County have similar years of life lost. However, within Fresno



County there is great variability between gender and race/ethnicity.

Figure 2 illustrates years of life lost by gender and racial/ethnic groups within Fresno County. All gender and racial/ethnic groups, on average, have years of life lost greater than the state with the exception of Whites and Male Asians. African Americans, Latinos, and Other—regardless of gender—are dying prematurely in older adulthood. Risk for years of life lost is likely due to lower socio-economic status, less access to equal preventive care opportunities, and less walkable communities.

## Current Elder Health Activities in Fresno County:



There are several key programs underway at the Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) that are aimed at improving the health and wellness of elders, with most programs focused on primary prevention of chronic disease and improved self-management of chronic conditions. FCDPH also oversees key interventions including:

- Training for seniors to engage in community-driven health initiatives
- Voluntary smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing complexes
- Increased community opportunities for no to low-cost physical activity
- Joint use agreements to open school campuses for community use
- Development of systems to facilitate:
  - Early healthcare provider identification of risk for diabetes and heart disease
  - Health plan coverage of community prevention programs such as tobacco session program, chronic disease self-management classes, and physical activity classes, and walking clubs
  - Healthcare provider referral to nearby community prevention programs

To improve the health of all Fresno County residents the FCDPH leads the **Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH) Program:**



PICH is a 3-year initiative that supports implementation of evidence-based strategies to improve the health of communities and reduce the prevalence of chronic disease. PICH builds on a body of knowledge developed through previously funded Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) programs and encourages collaborations with a multi-sectoral coalition to implement sustainable changes in communities where people live, learn, work, and play. PICH initiatives include:

- Storefront Advertising aims to reduce advertising of tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drink to youth at convenience stores
- Farm to Table aims to improve access of fresh local produce
- Prescription for Health provides lifestyle change referrals for individuals with chronic conditions to programs such as the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP)

Over 275 individuals from different sectors of the community have come together to form Fresno Community Health Improvement Partnership (FCHIP) for measurable improvements in health through collaboration, alignment, and leveraged resources. FCHIP builds on the existing good work in our Fresno County community and coalesce these efforts into one cohesive Fresno County Community Health Improvement Plan with focus and alignment.

### Proposed Strategy to Reduce Premature Morbidity and Mortality in Fresno County:

FCHIP is a platform for the genesis of future intervention and implementation of programs that promote health and well-being for Fresno County residents. Currently, partners are focused on 6 strategic priority areas: infant health, health literacy, land use and planning, healthy food access, diabetes prevention, and alignment of health assessment. FCHIP aims to identify specific community needs and establish specific goals and objectives for each of these priority areas. Other proposed areas of work includes analysis of falls in older adults and developing targeted outreach and education to impacted population on fall prevention.