

August 27, 2024

## Announcing California's Immunization Champion Award Winner

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The California Department of Public Health is proud to announce that Michelle Contreras, a Medical Assistant working with the Indian Health Council has been selected as the Immunization Champion for California. The Indian Health Council, Inc. is a nonprofit that occupies two health centers and serves nine federally recognized consortium tribes of the Native American reservations in San Diego's north county region. The [Immunization Champion Award](#), hosted by the Association of Immunization Managers (AIM) and funded by the Centers for Disease Control, recognizes exemplary individuals who are going above and beyond to protect their communities through their immunization efforts.

Ms. Contreras was nominated and selected from a pool of health professionals, community advocates, and other immunization leaders for making a significant contribution to public health in California through her work with the Indian Health Council. Her collective efforts as an Immunization Champion in the areas of leadership, mentorship, and advocacy has made a powerful impact on immunization within the community. Immunization rates have surged by over 25% in the past year. Her mentorship and advocacy foster a strong team of providers within the Indian Health Council dedicated to promoting immunizations. Beyond her

Council duties, Ms. Contreras has engaged with tribal leaders in the community, organized numerous community outreach events to raise awareness about the importance of vaccines and dispel myths, and spearheaded successful mobile vaccination clinics and reminder systems for vaccine schedules.

Michelle Contreras is an inspiration to all of us who care passionately about ensuring equitable access to vaccines and increasing vaccine trust. We are pleased and honored to congratulate Ms. Contreras on this well-deserved award. To read Ms. Contreras's profile on the AIM website, and to learn more about AIM's Champion Award program, please visit [Champion Awards – Association of Immunization Managers](#).

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## Recommendations for Hepatitis C Testing Among Perinatally Exposed Infants and Children

CDPH has released a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) which shares valuable information about Hepatitis C testing among perinatally exposed infants and children and reminds providers of the need to screen for HCV in pregnancy, and provide related resources.

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