



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-DRAFT

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#### \*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\*

### “THE HEART OF ACCESS” DOCUMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS SAN FRANCISCO’S COMMUNITY-DRIVEN COVID-19 EQUITY RESPONSE

*San Francisco Department of Public Health and Community Partners premiere film elevating compelling stories of community public health partnerships at the center of San Francisco’s COVID-19 equity response*

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** – From the San Francisco Department of Public Health’s Center for Learning & Innovation and the COVID-19 Task Force, in partnership with OLU8 Film and Culture and AllThrive Education comes **The Heart of Access, San Francisco’s Fight for Health Equity during the COVID-19 Pandemic**, elevating compelling stories of community, academic, public health partnerships at the center of San Francisco’s COVID-19 equity response.

The upcoming short film documentary will premiere in August and September at three community screenings hosted by collaborating community-based organizations featured in the film. The Heart of Access honors the memory of the lives lost to COVID-19 and uplifts the partnerships that helped San Francisco achieve one of the lowest pandemic-associated death rates of any metropolitan area in the U.S.

The Heart of Access community screenings will show at the following times and locations:

- **Friday, August 4 at 4:00pm, Bayview Screening**  
Southeast Community Center  
1550 Evans Avenue  
[Get Tickets for Bayview Screening](#)
- **Thursday, August 17 at 6:00pm, Mission Screening**  
Brava Theater Center  
2781 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
[Get Tickets for Mission Screening](#)
- **Thursday, September 7 at 2:00pm, Tenderloin Screening**  
GLIDE Memorial Church  
330 Ellis Street  
[Get Tickets for Tenderloin Screening](#)



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Immediately following the community screenings, The Heart of Access director, ShakaJamal, will join health and community leaders on a panel to discuss community-driven approaches in public health.

“San Francisco, having lived through HIV/AIDS, has a strong history of community advocacy and community leadership, and we certainly built upon that in the COVID response,” said Dr. Susan Philip, Health Officer, City and County of San Francisco and Director of Population Health Division San Francisco Department of Public Health.

The Center for Learning & Innovation (CLI) is a branch of the Population Health Division in the San Francisco Department of Public Health that works to promote a diverse and talented workforce and advance health equity. The documentary is part of CLI’s efforts to build partnerships across sectors and support community-based organizations in their workforce development efforts.

“We’ve been gratified to see how our hyperlocal COVID-19 response has sparked real interest in public health careers by many young San Franciscans of color,” said Dr. Jonathan Fuchs, CLI’s Director and one of the film’s producers.

During the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, San Francisco mounted an aggressive strategy to mitigate the spread of disease in the community and lower the incidence of severe illness. The strategy used a health equity lens to prioritize neighborhoods and populations disproportionately impacted, resulting in greater accessibility of tests, vaccines, and financial support for these populations. The strategy also included targeted funding for community-based organizations to help centralize resources.

The documentary highlights crucial lessons learned such as the importance of community partnerships in the joint planning and collective action needed to respond effectively to COVID-19 as well as future pandemics. The film equally uplifts voices from health experts and community members who united and supported each other through the shared challenges, emerging stronger after the crisis.

One of the community partners that work with low-income Latino immigrants and other communities of color in San Francisco’s Mission and Excelsior neighborhoods, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Justice (PODER), pivoted during the pandemic to provide culturally responsive services to communities hard hit by COVID-19. PODER member, Amparo Alarcon, shared, "Lo hacemos porque lo sentimos, por y para nuestra comunidad - We do this work because we feel it, for our community, by our community."

The film will be distributed broadly through conferences, film festivals, and an interactive website that will feature the film and a discussion guide for public learners.



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“It is an honor to debut the documentary at the American Public Health Association Film Festival in November to a wider audience,” said ShakaJamal. “I am humbled to partner in showcasing San Francisco’s work that encourages and inspires a shift towards healthcare equity for all.”

**A trailer of the film is available for preview at [heartofaccessfilm.org](http://heartofaccessfilm.org)**

The Heart of Access thanks the many supporters who have contributed to the development and distribution of the film including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through its Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity and Public Health Infrastructure grant programs and the California Department of Public Health.

After the community screenings, the film will be available at [heartofaccessfilm.org](http://heartofaccessfilm.org).

Additional screenings available on request.

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