



**AVANZANDO**  
SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE



HEALTH  
OCCUPATION  
PREPARATION  
EDUCATION



SANTA ROSA  
JUNIOR COLLEGE  
FOUNDATION

# CAMINOS EN SALUD

Pathways in Healthcare

## CONFERENCE

## AGENDA

FRIDAY, MAY 8

10 AM - 3 PM

# PATHWAYS IN HEALTHCARE CAMINOS EN SALUD CONFERENCE

**01**  
**TABLING & STUDENT RESEARCH POSTER PRESENTATION - COFFEE BAR & PAN DULCE** **10 AM - 11 AM**

SRJC & community organizations tabling outside.  
Student posters on display in Lindley 111 & Lindley 131.



**02**  
**WELCOME ADDRESS** **11 AM - 11:05 AM**  
**Alissa Wolters & Arley Rodas Lara**

### Alissa Wolters, PhD (she/her/ella)



Alissa Wolters, PhD (she/her/ella), is the manager for SRJC's HSI-STEM Avanzando Program and the Pre-NURSE Pathway through the HOPE Program, funded by the Strong Workforce grant. She is a culturally responsive educator & researcher deeply committed to advancing equity for first-generation students in healthcare & STEM.

Alissa brings a comprehensive understanding of the academic barriers impacting underrepresented students. Grounded in care & intention, she prioritizes access, belonging, & student success, making her a trusted advocate & impactful leader within the SRJC community.

### Arley Rodas Lara (she/her/ella)

Arley Rodas Lara (she/her/ella) is a Latina, bilingual, first-gen college graduate & proud SRJC & UC Santa Cruz alumna. She serves as Coordinator of the SRJC HOPE Program, advisor for the Pre-NURSE Pathway, Work Experience Associate Faculty, Executive Member of the Latinx Faculty & Staff Association, & Board Member for the Jewish Community Free Clinic. She is also the first in her family to pursue a master's degree and is continuing her journey into counseling & therapy through the MFT program at University of San Francisco.



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03

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT****11:05 AM - 11:15 AM****Brijida “Brijit” Alemán, AMFT, APCC****Brijida “Brijit” Alemán, AMFT, APCC****(she/her/ella), SRJC Student Health Services**

Brijida is a bilingual therapist licensed in California as an Associate Professional Clinical Counselor (APCC) & Associate Marriage & Family Therapist (AMFT), a traditional healer, & a community advocate. Of Northern California Native (Pomo, Wailaki) & Indigenous Mexican (HUAASTECA) lineage, she centers Indigenous

knowledge & generational resilience in her clinical & community practice. Since 2009 Brijida has worked in higher education in roles including College Skills, Financial Aid, Disability Resources, &—most recently—five years in Student Health Services; she is honored to be SRJC’s first full-time psychotherapist.

**SRJC Student & Native American Center Student Outreach employee, David French, will join Brijit on stage to offer a song.**

## **SRJC Land Acknowledgment**

We acknowledge that we gather at Santa Rosa Junior College on the territorial traditional land of the Pomo People in Santa Rosa & the Coast Miwok People in Petaluma, past & present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This land acknowledgement calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit.

We recognize that every member of the Santa Rosa Junior College community has benefitted, and continues to benefit, from the use and occupation of this land since the institution’s founding in 1919.

Consistent with our values of community and diversity, we have a responsibility to acknowledge and make visible the colleges’ relationship to Native peoples. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Santa Rosa Junior College more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.

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03  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

11:15 AM - 12 PM



## **Penny Tovar, RN (she/her/ella)**

Penny Tovar is an internet personality, educator, registered nurse, & advocate for sustainability, clean beauty, disability awareness, & Hispanic culture. While Penny initially launched her channel as the go-to place for all things curly hair, Penny had a stronger message to convey as a First-Gen Mexican American & special needs mother. With over 1 million dedicated followers, Penny has used her platform to advocate for change at the UN, with the Ad Council, & previously on Hispanicize across the topics of sustainability, education, & Hispanic representation in the media. Now, she continues to expand on her passions which includes advocating for inclusion of those with disabilities, like her daughter who has Down Syndrome.



# PATHWAYS IN HEALTHCARE CAMINOS EN SALUD CONFERENCE

04

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL PANEL

12 PM - 12:40 PM

Facilitated by Evelyn Mainz, ACSW Sonoma County Counseling



## Evelyn Mainz, Registered Associate Clinical Social Worker, Nation's Finest (she/her)

Evelyn Mainz is a licensed clinical social worker who specializes in Veteran care. Evelyn's professional career started in ballroom dance as a performer and instructor. Evelyn's passion for helping others led her to earning her Master of Social Work from USC in 2022. She now works at Nation's Finest and Sonoma County Counseling.

## Dr. Daniel Ayala-Ortiz Family Medicine at Kaiser (he/him/el)

Dr. Ayala-Ortiz is a family physician with a strong commitment to full-spectrum, community-centered care. He currently practices at the La Clínica module in Santa Rosa at Kaiser Permanente, a clinic dedicated to providing equitable, bilingual, and bicultural healthcare, primarily serving Spanish-speaking patients.



## Lizette Vergara (she/her/ella), Social Worker & Program Director at La Plaza – Nuestra Cultura Cura (she/her/ella)



Lizette Vergara is a bilingual social work professional & nonprofit leader with over 16 years of experience advancing health equity through culturally rooted, community-centered care. As Program Director at La Plaza – Nuestra Cultura Cura, she supports immigrant, Latine, & underserved families through program development, partnerships, & direct service. She holds an MSW from Loyola University Chicago with an emphasis in clinical work with immigrant populations & is committed to trauma-informed, strengths-based approaches that center culture, community, and healing.

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## PATHWAYS IN HEALTHCARE CAMINOS EN SALUD CONFERENCE

### HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL PANEL - CONTINUED



**Dra. Patricia Padilla, Chief Medical Officer Santa Rosa Community Health (she/her/ella).**

Dr. Patricia Padilla is the chief medical officer for Santa Rosa Community Health that cares for over 42,000 people with low incomes in the greater Santa Rosa area every year. An accomplished, Spanish-speaking physician & Latina leader, she has almost 30 years of clinical & leadership experience leading virtual care initiatives, overseeing chronic disease management programs, & directing family medicine services, all driven by a passion for improving and providing inclusive & high-quality patient care.

**Richard Thompson, Sutter ICU Nurse (he/him).**

Richard has been a nurse for nearly 13 years at Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital. As a proud graduate of the SRJC ADN program, he began his career in the Cardiac Telemetry Unit, where he spent 4 years, including 1 year as a charge nurse. He transitioned to the ICU, where he has been for the past 9 years.



Throughout his career, he has learned the immense value of committees & has been fortunate to contribute to several, including the Professional Improvement, Safety, Code Blue, and Resuscitation Committees.

**05  
BREAK**

**12:40 PM - 1 PM**

**06  
HIRING IN HEALTHCARE PANEL**  
Facilitated by Genesis Schloss

**1 PM - 1:40 PM**



**Genesis Schloss (she/her/ella).**

Genesis Schloss is a first-generation college student & nursing student at SRJC. A young mother & emerging leader, she is actively involved in the Student Nursing Association, supporting outreach to future healthcare students.

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## Deena Truco, Director of Human Resources, Alliance Medical Center Inc. (she/her)

Deena Trucco is the Director of Human Resources at Alliance Medical Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center serving communities across northern Sonoma County. In her role, she oversees workforce development, talent strategy, employee engagement, and HR operations for a growing healthcare organization dedicated to expanding access to care for underserved populations.



## Ana Onofre Leon, Clinical Nurse III, UC Davis Medical Center (she/her/ella)

Ana Onofre Leon is a UC Davis Health Clinical Nurse III & proud HOPE alumna. She immigrated from Mexico to the United States at age six and grew up in Sonoma County, where she witnessed her family's resilience as her father worked multiple jobs to provide and secure a better future.



Ana was her family's medical translator, navigating healthcare systems where language barriers made access to care difficult. This experience sparked her passion for culturally responsive & equitable healthcare.

## Fefe Asfour, MBA, RRT Respiratory Care Manager at Kaiser (she/her)

Fefe Asfour, MBA, RRT has more than 17 years of experience in the field of Respiratory Care and currently serves as the Respiratory Care Manager at Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa.

Previously, Fefe worked as an instructor in the Respiratory Care Program at Napa Valley College, where she mentored and supported the development of future respiratory therapists. She holds an associate degree in Respiratory Care, a bachelor's degree in Biology, and a master's degree in Business Administration.



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07

### FINAL ADDRESS

1:40 PM - 2 PM

Alissa Wolters and Arley Rodas Lara will return to thank participants and community partners, share any future opportunities to engage with SRJC students and Health Sciences and STEM programs, introduce La Agencia, and guide audience members to the buffet.

08

### SOCIAL HOUR - LUNCH AND LIVE MUSIC

2 PM - 3 PM

Live Music by local norteno band, La Agencia. Five musicians of Mexican decent unite their passion for music to form La Agencia, a norteño group with an authentic style that will keep the fiesta going. The talented musicians of La Agencia are; Luis Lopez (drums), Erik Lopez (bajo quinto), Israel Lopez (bass), Emmanuel Lopez (accordion), and Christian Solorio (vocalist). Lunch by Tlahco Mexican Grill.



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### THANK YOU TO OUR COLLABORATORS!



SPANISH TRANSLATION &  
INTERPRETATION PROVIDED BY:

California  
Bilingüe



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**THANK YOU  
FOR JOINING US!**