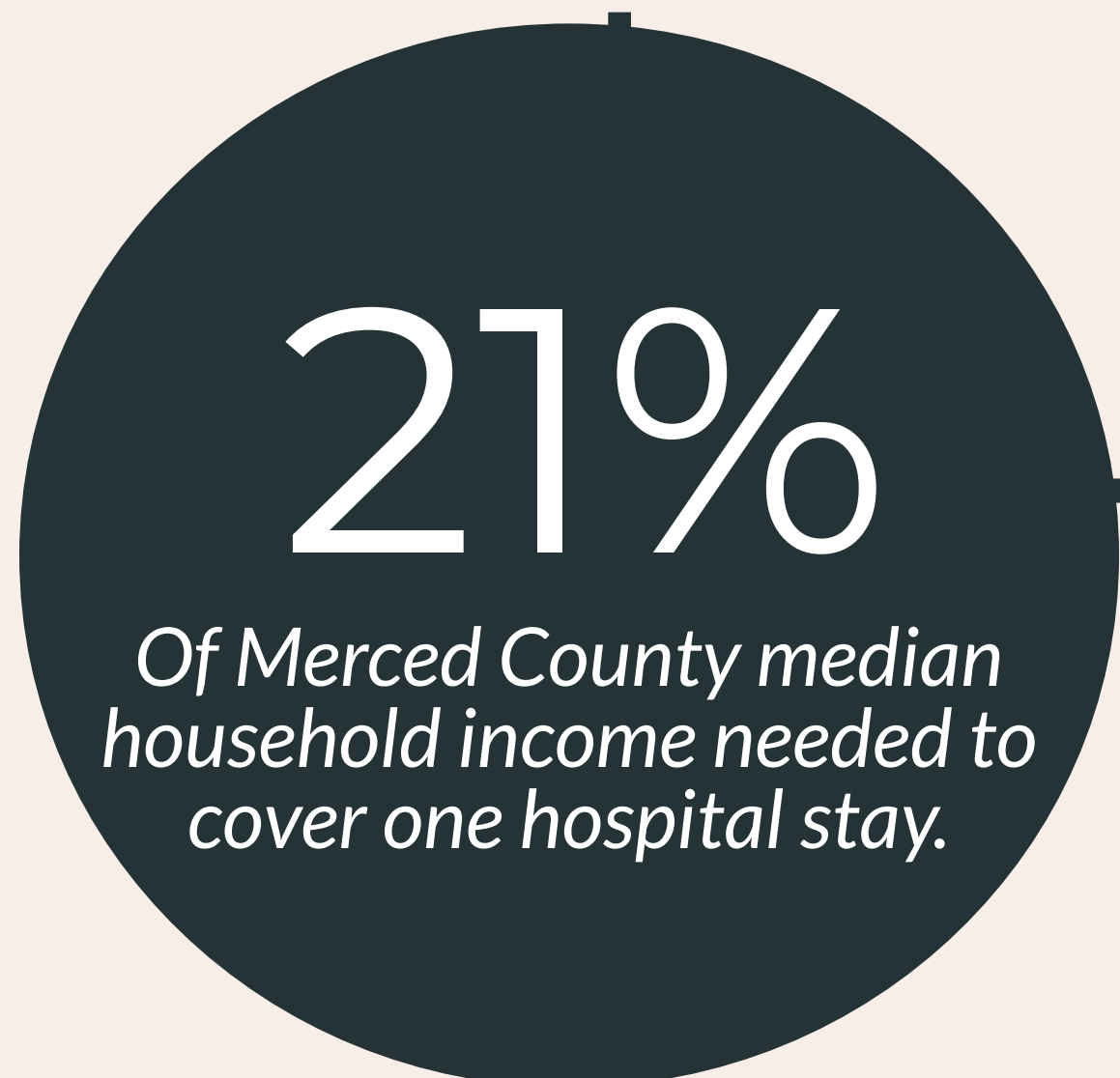
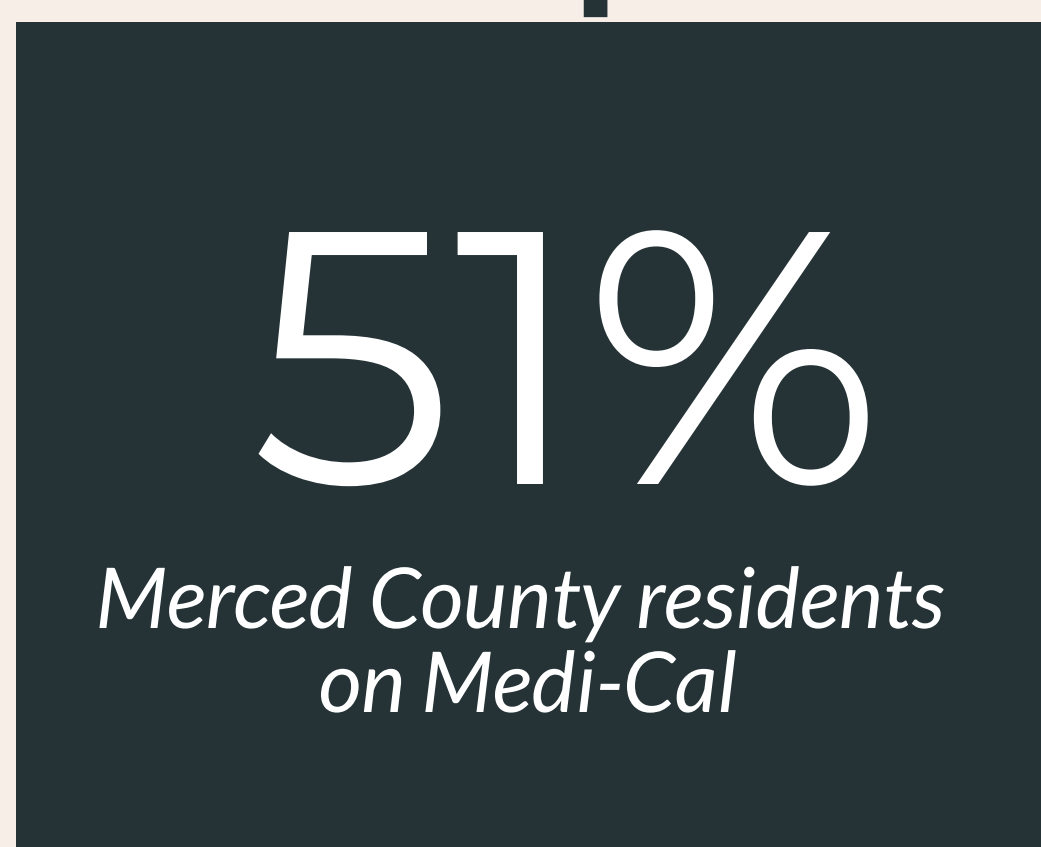
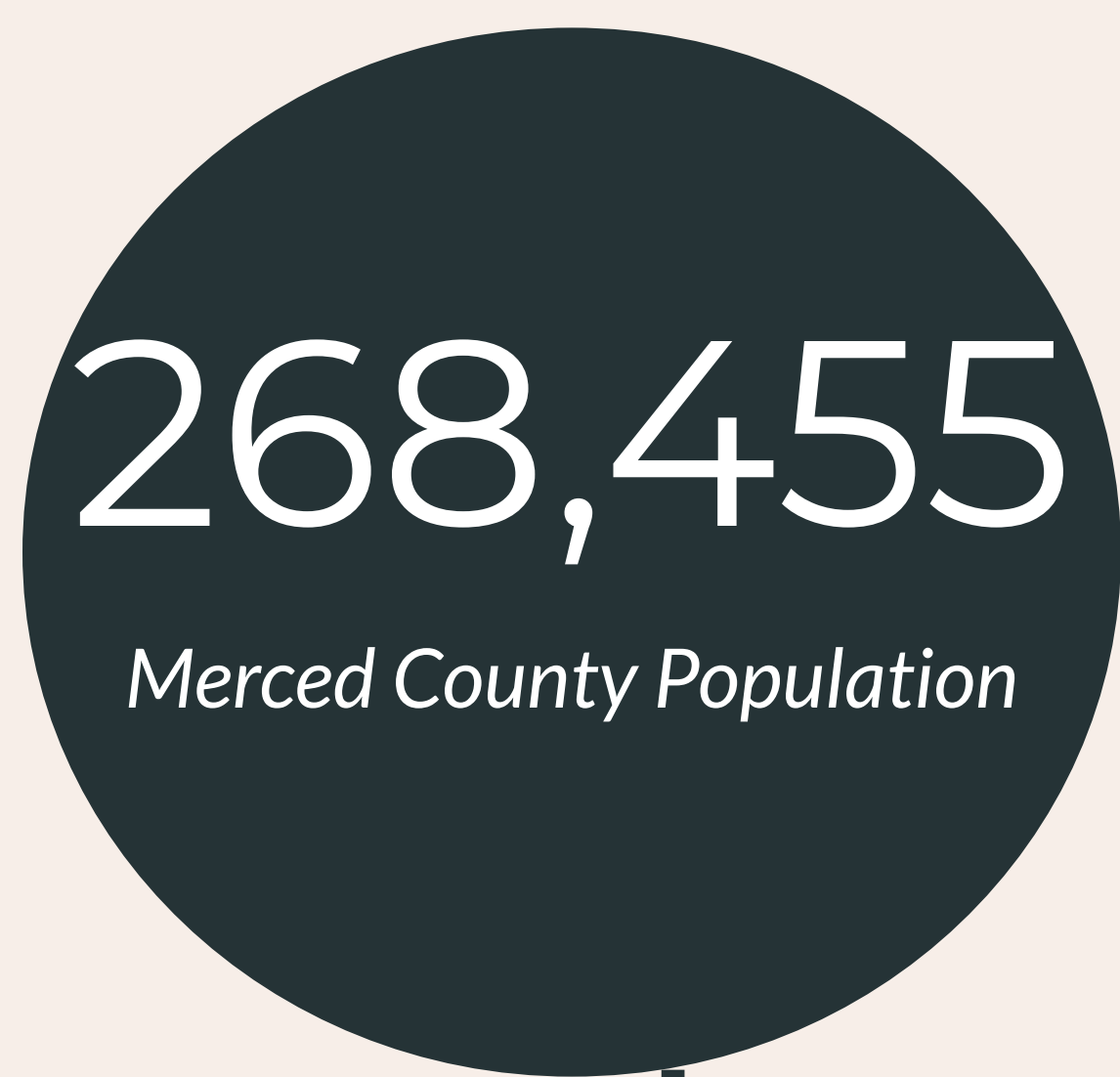


I AM MEDI-CAL

Fidel's Story



Fidel, 29, Los Banos Resident



I woke up laying on the left side of my body, along the warm brown leather seat, covered in shards of glass, with a bloody right elbow, and a strange numbness throughout my body. My legs and my fingers were unresponsive and my arms felt extremely heavy. I had been in a terrible car accident.

I had suffered a spinal cord injury and I **became a quadriplegic at the age of fourteen.** The intervertebral disk between my fifth cervical vertebrae and sixth cervical vertebrae made contact with my spinal cord during the impact and impaired my spinal cord's function.

The realization that I may never walk again was the most difficult thing to accept, but the love and support of family, friends, and the hospital staff kept me strong, motivated, and positive. Overall, I was in the hospital for three months learning how to adapt to my body and how to manage it.

At the age of 18, I enrolled in Medi-Cal and in the Supplemental Security Income Disability program. These programs were, and continue to be, a **crucial assistance** for me. The healthcare coverage and the monthly income support my disability and my living expenses. Things can get ridiculously expensive when you live with a chronic disability.

For myself, Medi-Cal provides medical supplies, such as catheters; it also covers my medications, unexpected surgeries, dental, some medical equipment, and eye care. In 2012, I needed surgery to remove a bladder stone. I had to stay in the hospital for two weeks. Medi-Cal covered all of the expenses. **There's no way I could have afforded the cost of the surgery on my own.**

I am Medi-Cal is a campaign under the Health Care Consortium. The Consortium has worked to gather these stories to highlight the importance of Medi-Cal. Fidel's story is one of many that will be showcased.