

# Health Matters for Rural Women

DECEMBER 2007

A Publication of the Arizona Rural Health Office at the University of Arizona Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, Part of the Arizona Rural Women's Health Initiative (AzRWHI) project.

## Looking back to look forward

Health Matters for Rural Women was created to be a source for sharing news and information about the health of rural women in Arizona. The newsletter aims to present relevant and useful topics, create conversations, and provide a space for rural communities, health professionals, and women living in rural communities to explore health. The newsletter is framed by the discussions and goals of the RWHI. A shared belief is that ensuring the health of women living in rural, frontier, border, and tribal communities is essential for healthy communities and a healthy state.

At the first meeting, the purpose of the Arizona Rural Women's Health Initiative Council was discussed. Members of RWHI would serve as "champions" in the broad area of rural/frontier women's health issues. The RWHI would identify collective resources through development of a network of collaborating rural/statewide agencies/programs, align efforts with broader national and state women's

health initiatives, inform the process for a statewide plan, recommend statewide standards/promising practice models, and nurture community leadership and participation.

As we take a pause to think about where we are going, it is useful to reflect on where we have been. In this issue of Health Matters, in addition to the short history of the AZRWHI, you will find information about the status of rural women's health in Arizona. Taking a step out to a larger stage, the pieces on page 3 address local health issues presented in a national arena and a national perspective on a local issue. Comments about the newsletter are always welcome. Also see below for information about survey on efforts to address Arizona rural women's health.

Your Feedback is Requested  
We would appreciate your feedback and comments. Please take a few minutes to answer our brief survey about the projects and direction of the AZRWHI. Surveys will be anonymous. Click [here](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=5iglAia9D0Mtgl857kPxmg_3d_3d) or enter this address: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=5iglAia9D0Mtgl857kPxmg\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=5iglAia9D0Mtgl857kPxmg_3d_3d)

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## Timeline of the Arizona Rural Women's Health Initiative

- March 31, 2006 First Council meeting, 21 participants representing 16 agencies/offices
- June 23, 2006 Second Council meeting, 14 participants representing 12 agencies/offices
- September 2006 A proposal was submitted to the Arizona Foundation for Women for \$87,000+ to fund Council activities
- October 2006 Website created [www.rho.arizona.edu/azrwhi/council.htm](http://www.rho.arizona.edu/azrwhi/council.htm)
- October 27, 2006 Third Council meeting, 17 participants representing 14 agencies/offices
- April 2007 Listserv created
- April 2007 First issue of the newsletter, Health Matters for Rural Women, distributed via listserv and website
- May 17-18<sup>th</sup> 2007 2-day Collaborative Leadership Training offered, 19 participants representing 14 agencies/offices
- September 2007 Proposal submitted for a federal Rural Health Network Planning Grant for \$180,000 to strengthen AzRWHI network,



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## Snapshot: Rural Women's Health Status

The Rural Health Office has put together a report on the status of rural women's health in Arizona. The purpose of this report is to identify current health concerns and gaps as well as positive markers of Arizona women's health.

This report draws from two main sources: AzDHS Bureau of Public Health Statistics and HHS Office on Women's Health Quick Health Data Online. Additional information was drawn from the Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts to compare Arizona to other

states. Where possible, data are presented by county to illustrate differences within Arizona and differences between rural and non-rural areas.

The data are presented by what is most recently available but do not reflect trends over time. The aim of this report is to present a snapshot of rural women's health in Arizona.

Much of the data available about women's health concerns maternal and reproductive health. However, women have

health concerns beyond reproduction and other health topics are presented based on available data.

The topics for the report are divided into the following sections: Demographics; Access; Disease; Maternal Health; Reproductive Health; Mental Health; and Mortality.

We are working to make this report available on our website. In the meantime, we will be highlighting data on specific topics in Health Matters.

## Assessing Rural Women's Health

A major finding of this process has been the incomplete data available for rural areas. Mortality, maternal health, STDs, and insurance numbers are available by county but some data are not complete. Also, there is little information on prevention, mental health, and disease at a county level. Using a county level may provide more detailed and precise information however one cannot simply average the rural county numbers to get a total number that describes rural areas overall.

On the other hand, by looking at data county by

county, major variations are seen between the rural counties. This could be because of differences in reporting or disparities in access or it could highlight how different rural areas have different needs.

According to Arizona Women 2007: A Status Update, Arizona ranks 14th for maternal and child health, 19th for female disease and mortality, and 42nd for health insurance coverage. The report notes the health insurance ranking has risen from 49th in 2000. The Institute for Women's Policy Research ranked Arizona as 19th for women's

general Health and Well-Being. Arizona Women 2007 notes many disparities between racial and ethnic groups, but does not mention rural and urban differences. Arizona Women 2007 also presents data on women's economic status, education, social justice, and political participation, but similarly does not offer differences for rural and urban women.

It is hoped that this report can begin discussions about the particular concerns for rural women's health and well-being in Arizona. Stay tuned for more information.

## American Indian Multimedia Resources

ArizonaNativeNet announces the launch of a new searchable multimedia library of video, audio, and distance learning packages on topics related to indigenous governance, law and policy, language, culture, and health. We have over 100 items for you to download, all for free at:

<http://www.arizonanativenet.com/multimedia/index.cfm?sect=med>

Health Care Needs of American Indian Women  
This video is part of the ArizonaNativeNet Distinguished Lecture Series series recorded January 11, 2005.

Part 1 of 2 of the video is available at:

<http://www.arizonanativenet.com/multimedia/Info.cfm?medialD=75>

Part 2:

<http://www.arizonanativenet.com/multimedia/Info.cfm?medialD=76>

## Rural AZ Health Concerns on the National Stage

The American Public Health Association Annual Meeting was held Washington D.C., November 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>. The theme of the meeting was "Politics, Policy and Public Health". Two posters were presented on current projects in Southern Arizona, both of which are using a community-based participatory research design. Both projects are the result of partnerships between communities and the University of Arizona.

Poster: The Challenges to Farmworkers' Health at the U.S.-Mexico Border

The University of Arizona collaborated with two community-based organizations to conduct a comprehensive health survey of farmworkers in three border agricultural communities at the US-Mexico Border.

Analysis of the survey data especially examines relationships between the characteristics of border residence and the experience of stressors such as depression and stress, and relationships between the characteristics of border residence and access to health services.

A discussion was included regarding the process of community forums held in the study municipalities to

disseminate survey results and engage the community in interpretation of the findings and on engaging community members to join the study team in generating hypotheses appropriate for a large-scale policy intervention.

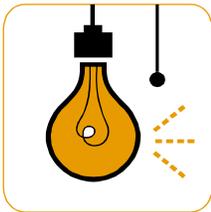
Poster: Ensuring the rights of immigrant survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence at the U.S.-Mexico border

In order to better understand women's experiences in applying for immigration status through the VAWA self-petition process, the Southern Arizona Battered Immigrant Women Project conducted interviews in three border counties with a number of applicants. Findings from these qualitative interviews will be presented and illustrate how policy, politics and practices facilitate or obstruct access to these rights.

For more information about either poster, contact [Jean McClelland](#).

## Unnatural Causes of Health Inequities

From: [www.unnaturalcauses.org/](http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/)



"The U.S. is one of the richest countries on the planet. Yet, we rank 30th in the world for life expectancy, worse than every other industrialized nation - and even less developed countries like Cuba, Malta, and Costa Rica. Why? Because inequality in America is - literally - taking years off our lives. This affects not just the poorest among us, but the middle classes too.

Unnatural Causes will, for the first time on television, sound the alarm about America's glaring socio-economic and racial inequities in health - and search for root causes. The four-hour series (for PBS broadcast and DVD release) sifts through the evidence to discover there

is more to our health than bad habits, health care, or unlucky genes. The social conditions in which we are born, live and work profoundly affect our health and longevity"

This documentary series was introduced and previewed at APHA. Viewers were able to watch excerpts from one episode that focuses on the Tohono O'odham and Gila River Reservations.

From the website:  
Episode Four: Bad Sugar  
"O'odham Indians, living on reservations in southern Arizona, are marked with the dubious distinction of perhaps the highest rates of Type 2 diabetes in the world - the body's response to decades of poverty, oppression and historical

trauma. A new approach shows us how collective hope for the future is fundamental to regaining health."

The series will be broadcast on PBS Thursdays at 10p.m. March 27<sup>th</sup>, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, April 10<sup>th</sup>, and April 17<sup>th</sup>. Dates and times may vary. You can call your local PBS station to ask about and request they air the series.

The website offers several ideas for advertising the series and effectively using it to bring together key players and start dialogues. On the website you all can find more information about each episode and additional resources.

## Community Diabetes Grants Available

Arizona Diabetes Program  
Community Grants

Applications are due January  
30, 2008.

Application deadline:  
January 30, 2008

Successful applications will be notified of awards by February 15, 2008. Two awards for up to forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) will be given to applicants that meet the intention of the grant guidance. Projects must be completed within 6 to 12 months of award, or no later than February 14, 2009.

The University of Arizona Canyon Ranch Center for Prevention and Health Promotion located within the Mel & Enid Zuckerman College Public Health, and on behalf of the Arizona Department of Health Services Diabetes Program, announce the availability of two community grants to fund the implementation and evaluation of programs that address type 2 diabetes education with communities across the state of Arizona.

Obtain Applications From:  
Griselda Martinez  
Program Coordinator, Health Disparities Training  
1295 N. Martin  
Campus POB: 245163  
Tucson, AZ 85724  
(520) 626-9672  
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## Upcoming Health Events

Southern Arizona Forum  
Planning Committee

Jennifer Peters  
[petersjs@u.arizona.edu](mailto:petersjs@u.arizona.edu)

It is time to begin planning for the Southern Arizona Forum. This year's forum is scheduled for March in Cochise County and will focus on domestic violence, substance abuse and the impact of immigration on health care.

or Katie Gillespie  
[kag@u.arizona.edu](mailto:kag@u.arizona.edu)

This issue will be archived at:  
[http://rho.arizona.edu/programs/azrwhi/azrwhi\\_newsletter.aspx](http://rho.arizona.edu/programs/azrwhi/azrwhi_newsletter.aspx)

If you would like to join the Arizona Rural Women's Health Initiative or get more information, please visit our website:

[http://www.rho.arizona.edu/Programs/azrwhi/AzRWHI\\_Council.aspx](http://www.rho.arizona.edu/Programs/azrwhi/AzRWHI_Council.aspx)

For more information about participating on the planning committee, contact Amy Ham, Director of Women's Health Programs, AACHC, at [amyh@aachc.org](mailto:amyh@aachc.org)

If you have any suggestions or comments, or if you would like to contribute an article about a program or event related to rural women's health, please contact:

Health Matters for Rural Women:

The newsletter of the Arizona Rural Women's Health Initiative

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