

**The Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health
Rural Health Professions Program
A partnership with The Arizona Area Health Education Centers**

University of Arizona

**ANNUAL REPORT
January 1, 2012 – September 30, 2012**

Submitted by:

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The College of Public Health has just completed another productive and exciting year of our Rural Health Professions Program. We continue to grow and expand in each of our five service learning programs as well as with our policy practicums and our internships. Our partnership with the Arizona Area Health Education Centers Program continues to strengthen all of our public health programs at the undergraduate, MPH and DrPH levels. It provides diverse opportunities for our students, faculty and community partners to develop new and innovative partnerships.

The overall goal of our program focuses on increasing the numbers of public health students who practice in rural and underserved communities in the state of Arizona. Our specific objectives include:

Objectives:

- To create opportunities for MPH and DrPH students at the College of Public Health to participate in *service learning field experiences* that provide them with direct exposure to and participation in public health programs that are implemented in rural and underserved communities in the state of Arizona
- To create opportunities for MPH and DrPH students at the College to participate in *service learning courses for academic credit* that increase their knowledge and understanding of public health issues in rural and underserved communities in Arizona.
- To create opportunities for MPH and DrPH students *to have positive internship experiences and fellowship experiences* in rural and underserved communities that will impact their career choices upon completion of their degrees.
- To create opportunities for faculty and academic professionals to *partner with community based organizations to meet the public health needs* of their communities.
- To support *fellowship opportunities* for MPH and/or DrPH students that will provide for participating in public health programs that are implemented in rural and underserved areas in the state of Arizona and will impact their career choices upon completion of their degrees.

Specific Activities:

CPH 597B Maternal and Child Health in Rural Settings of Northern Arizona: This course provides an opportunity for MPH students to understand the complex interaction of the social determinants of family and child health through working in Native American communities in northern Arizona. Through presentations and conversations with staff working for federal, tribal and state health care agencies, Native healers and reservation residents, students learn about the array of local health care services, and the challenges and strategies of health care systems working to serve rural, culturally distinct populations.

This course uses an *Exchange of Skills* teaching approach. At two different times during the week long course, students are paired with tribal community health workers or community health representatives (CHRs) on both the Hopi and Navajo reservations. CHRs take students on a home visit to observe and assist with services provided by CHRs. This year, students provided nutrition education, reduced risk of injury by rearranging electrical cords and throw rugs, and hauled water. In return, students built CHRs' skills in looking for credible health information from the internet and in developing simple power point

presentations for community presentations and educational handouts. This year, the students had an opportunity to gain insight into spiritual and social health and healing by visiting the garden and hearing the philosophy and songs of a traditional Navajo healer, learning about Native American Church ceremonies and songs, experiencing the camaraderie generated by sheep shearing and bread making, visiting the Hopi Cultural History Museum and Terrace Gardens, and joining Navajo families in the Kaibeto Chapter in a *Just Move It* walk/run. In their final representations and papers, students report an understanding of the unique skill set of CHRs, the challenges created by unmaintained/muddy road and long distance to health care clinics, the need for better coordination between health care systems, and the importance of social and spiritual health in overall well-being.



CPH 597A Maternal and Child Health in Urban Settings in Tucson, Arizona: This year our course focused on immigrant, resettled refugee and urban Native American families of Pima County. We expanded our service-learning partnerships with new agencies as well as found opportunities for enhanced service opportunities with existing partners. New partnerships included the House of Neighborly Service (HSN), Mexican Consulate of Tucson, Pascua Yaqui Health Department and Intermountain Centers for Human Development. Historical partners of this course include International Rescue Commission (IRC), El Rio Community Health Center and The Haven.

Our partners provided a variety of opportunities for meaningful service learning throughout the week. HSN kicked off the week with a neighborhood canvas event to invite neighborhood moms to an interactive day of movement and dialogue about types of physical activity mothers envision in their life and community. Community Health Workers, or *Promotoras de Salud*, providing health outreach services to the Mexican Consulate through the Ventanilla de Salud Program invited students to develop and implement a family-based physical activity station at the Consulate. Pascua Yaqui Health Department invited students to their “Back to School Wellness” community event. This event provides Pascua Yaqui tribal members a resource for donating and exchanging work/school clothes, household, and other lightly used items. El Rio invited student to help them explore the usability and acceptability of free health text messaging services and healthy apps for smart phones among El Rio clients. Our partnership with the IRC also transitioned into a more concerted effort to increase the capacity of IRC health promoters to use the internet to search for trusted health information and provide health education for refugee clients. Lastly, students engaged in a daylong activity that focused on the various ways recent immigration legislation and broader national immigration discourse has impacted the health and wellbeing of Mexican immigrant families of Pima County. It was a very full and productive week.

CPH 597C The Border Health Service Learning Institute: This year the Border Health Service Learning Institute was conducted in the communities of Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora with twelve students. We were hosted by SEAHEC for the entire week and Gail Emrick, the executive director, also served as faculty for the course. We had an extremely full week with service activities in partnership with Mariposa Community Health Center, Holy Cross Hospital, ARSOBO, CECATI, and the

Nogales, Sonora Health Department. The students had the opportunity to partner with community health workers in Nogales, Arizona to conduct a community survey and contributed 50 household interviews to the survey of 300 households. Working with the Nogales Sonora Public Health Department the students were front and center in several different colonias assisting in public health outreach to identify pertussis cases, providing immunizations and working directly with the animal sanitation department.

For this course, we developed new partnerships through the University Of Arizona Bureau of Applied Anthropology to work with several organizations that partner with a governmental trade school. Students worked directly with **Desarrollo y Promoción de los Sanitarios Composteros** to build fibrous concrete blocks for housing construction and compost toilets. They also learned about **ARSOBO** (Arizona-Sonora Border Projects) which is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization of volunteers focused on alleviating the physical, psychological, and economical barriers faced by individuals with disabilities by providing high-tech, low-cost medical devices that minimize their disability. Upon completion of their work with these two projects, the students were invited to share lunch with residents of Colinas del Sol at their recently constructed community center. After lunch the students discussed development and migration issues facing the Nogales community with these community partners.



Their final team reflections at the end of the course were attended by all of the community partners including members of the Consulado Mexicano and the mayor of Nogales, Arizona. All of the partners were very moved by the presentations and the mayor congratulated all of the students for their contributions to the community and invited them to present to the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce. He saw them as “new ambassadors” for his community.

CPH 597D The Rural Health Service Learning Institute in the Thatcher/ Safford area: This was the first year we conducted the Rural Health Service Learning Institute in Safford/Thatcher with five students, and it was initially obvious that our community partners were a little unsure about what to expect. However, by the end of the week it was clear at the Community Partners Thanks You Breakfast that everyone now understood what service learning was about. The students presented a wonderful audiovisual presentation on Prezi that used photos, voice over, music to provide information about their experiences and their thoughtful reflections on those experiences. The Community Partners were entranced and excited by the presentation, asked lots of questions, and were very complimentary about the Institute and the students, and told us they were eager to have us return in 2013.

Other highlights of the week included the invitation by the Graham County Health Department to attend a debriefing telephone conference between the County Health Department, the local State Prison, and the Arizona Department of Health Services on a recent outbreak of norovirus at the prison and the coordination of response activities among the three organizations. The students were fascinated by what they heard. After the phone conference, the students learned about many of the programs of the Graham County Health Department, and then got down and dirty by working with the County Emergency Preparedness Manager to take everything out of the county’s Emergency Preparedness Trailer, sort and track the inventory of everything, clean off the dust that had accumulated on everything in the trailer due to it being parked outside, and re-pack everything back into the trailer in a more organized and tidy fashion.

Toward the end of the week, the students planned and conducted a health fun fair for the seniors who



attended the Senior Center lunch on Friday. The Senior Center Director was not sure how many seniors would attend and warned the students that it was often hard to get them involved in activities. But what a party it was, playing physical activity games, like who could walk a short distance balancing a bean bag on their head and Wii bowling, and cognitive memory games, like name that tune and simple card games. The students decorated the Senior Center with balloons and streamers, prizes were given to everyone, and

it was hard to tell who was having more fun – the seniors, the students or the senior center staff.

CPH 597F Phoenix Urban Service Learning: University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health students spent a week in the community, gardening and collaborating with social service groups in an intensive service learning course focusing on underserved populations in Phoenix. Fourteen MPH students participated in the course that was held during Spring Break. The students worked throughout the Phoenix metropolitan area in gardens at Tiger Mountain Foundation, the Community Asset and Resource Enterprise (CARE) Partnership, and at Valley View Elementary Schools. Faculty and students also collaborated with the Wesley Community Center, 1300 S. 10th St.; Nova Safe Heaven Homeless Shelter and Central Arizona Shelter Services, to better understand the public health needs of the individuals they serve. Other activities included Military Immersion Training, a community urban American Indian Panel and a panel on Public Health and the Arts.

The week began Sunday with a Cuban cultural dinner supporting the *Welcome to America Project*, a local non-profit that supports newly arrived refugees in Phoenix. The dinner was sponsored by the



Greater Valley Area Health Education Center. The participants participated in an overnight immersion training provided by the Arizona Coalition for Military Families to give students some of the experience and challenges faced by service members and their families. Throughout the week, panelists engaged participants in discussions to connect with Native American, Latino, and African American populations and determine how to build healthy communities. The week concluded with exploring the relationship between the arts and public health by visiting the Arizona Latin Arts and Cultural Center

in downtown Phoenix and a session with local author Stella Pope Duarte, who wrote *Let Their Spirits Dance* (a story about a central Phoenix Latino family that lost their son to war and their journey to learn the real story behind their loss). On the last day of the service learning week, the community partners were invited to listen to the students' final reflective presentations regarding the week's events.

CPH 594B Rural Health Policy Practicums: Two students participated in our Policy Practicums. "*Water Impact Assessment: Building a Toolkit for Rural Communities*" was implemented by Marlene Dermody in the Spring of 2012. The purpose of conducting this research and developing a tool kit was to create a resource that will empower rural communities to address water quality and quantity issues when faced with potential development concerns. Rural communities will be able to utilize the tool kit to conduct a water impact assessment modeled after similar efforts by other southwestern communities that have developed policies regarding sustainable growth.

A second practicum, *“Examining the Needs and Assets in Healthcare for Women in Rural Arizona”* was conducted in the Spring of 2012 by Juliet Charron. Juliet assisted the Arizona Rural Women’s Health Network (AzRWHN) to identify assets and gaps in the acceptability and access to health information and services regionally. The practicum developed a thorough needs assessment plan to identify the aforementioned aspects of care.

Internships and Fellowships:

Five MPH students completed their internships through the Rural Health Professions Program this year. Two internships were conducted in the SEAHEC region, two in the GAVAHEC region and one in the EAHEC region. Our DrPH doctoral fellow, Samantha Sabo has completed all of her course work and the major analysis for her dissertation. She plans to defend in April of this year.

As was stated at the beginning of this report, it has been a great year for our program. In the coming year we look forward to expanding our Rural Health Service Learning Institute to include students and faculty from other health sciences schools within AHSC. We hope it will provide the opportunity to build stronger inter-professional working teams across the AHSC. Attached is an appendix with the demographic data of our students who have participated in the Rural Health Professions Program in 2012.