



# ENHANCING THE RURAL HEALTH ECOSYSTEM

**49<sup>th</sup> Annual Arizona Rural Health Conference**

**June 6 & 7, 2023**

**High Country Conference Center, Flagstaff, AZ**



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**Center for Rural Health**

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# Welcome



Dear Friends:

Welcome to the 49th Annual Arizona Rural Health Conference: “Enhancing the Rural Health Ecosystem” in Flagstaff, Arizona at the NAU High Country Conference Center!

Thanks to our planning committee, staff and faculty we have an outstanding program this year. Our speakers, sponsors and participants are eager to share successful strategies, best practices, and ideas on a variety of rural health topics.

This year’s conference provides opportunities for networking, partnering, and sharing information, research and data.

Our speakers and participants are committed to invigorating rural health, improving coverage, affordability and access to high quality health care, and implementing innovations that improve rural health outcomes and reduce health disparities.

Our Day 1 and 2 keynotes:

- The incredible Jack Dillenberg MD, Dean Emeritus, Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health, A.T. Still University will share his thoughts on rural dentistry and oral health.
- We are also honored to have Tom Morris, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Associate Administrator for Rural Health Policy for HRSA discuss federal support for the nation’s rural health ecosystem to help catalyze our rural health innovation.

We look forward to an inspiring, engaging and energizing time together in Flagstaff!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Derksen M.D.".

Daniel Derksen, M.D.

Associate Vice President for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities  
Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences, The University of Arizona  
Senior Advisor and PI, Arizona Area Health Education Center Program  
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The University of Arizona  
Health Sciences

# Day 1: Tuesday, June 6

7:15–2:00 **Check-in and On-site Registration**

7:00–9:00 **Continental Breakfast**

7:45–8:15 **Welcome, Blessing, Opening Remarks**

Daniel Derksen, MD, Director, Arizona Center for Rural Health & Associate Vice President for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities, University of Arizona Health Sciences

**Humphreys** **General Session: Gun Violence in Arizona: Data to Inform Prevention Policies**

8:15–9:15 Will Humble, Executive Director, Arizona Public Health Association (AzPHA)

**Humphreys** **General Session**

9:20–10:20 **An Update on the State of Arizona Public University Investments in the Physician Assistant Workforce: Building Bidirectional Paths for the Future**

Kevin Lohenry, Clinical Professor of Medicine and Vice-President, Interprofessional Education; Founding Program Director, PA Program, University of Arizona

Bettie Coplan, PhD, PA-C, Associate Clinical Professor, Department of Physician Assistant Studies, Northern Arizona University

10:20–11:10 *Break and Networking*

11:15–12:30 **Concurrent Sessions**

**Abineau** **Social Determinants of Health Track**

**How to Design the Arizona Social Vulnerability Index Data Dashboard**

Holly Starr, Data Equity Coordinator, Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)

Matthew Roach, Vital Statistics Manager, ADHS

**CommunityCares: Arizona's SDOH Solution for Whole Person Care**

Diana Kramer, Manager, Social Determinants of Health, Contexture

Kelly McGann, Interim Director, Social Determinants of Health, Contexture

**Fremont** **Workforce Development Track**

**Promotores, Peers, and Family Support Specialists: Opportunities for Rural Arizona**

Bianca SantaMaria, Health Education and Promotion Professional, Arizona Center for Rural Health, University of Arizona

Kevin Phillips, Workforce Development Trainer, University of Arizona

**An Ecological Approach to Increase Workforce Capacity for Addiction Prevention, Harm Reduction, and Treatment**

Bridget Murphy, Assistant Research Professor, Arizona Center for Rural Health, Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona

Joyce Hospodar, MBA, MPA, Senior Advisor Rural Programs, Arizona Center for Rural Health, Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona

Sean P. Cronin, Program Manager AzCANN Program, Comprehensive Pain and Addiction Center, University of Arizona

**Doyle** **Addressing Health Disparities Track**

**Implementation of Peer Support Specialists in a Rural Hospital and Healthcare System**

Susy Salvo-Wendt, Project Director - Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Implementation Grant, Summit Healthcare Association

Sean Hopley, RN, BSN, Director of Emergency Services, Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center

**Modern Medication Assisted Treatment Methods in Today's Rural America**

Ergi Gumusaneli, CEO of Fitz Ilias Health and Technology, Clinical Instructor, University of Arizona

Humphreys	<b>Building Equitable Infrastructure</b>
	<b>Building Capacity of Rural Health Providers to Promote Maternal Mental Health: Launch of a Statewide Program</b> Saira Kalia, Director, Arizona - Perinatal Access Line, University Of Arizona, College of Medicine Ruben Soliz, Federal Relations and Health Policy Advisor, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) Kathryn Emerick, MD, Co-Director, Arizona Perinatal Psychiatry Access Line (A-PAL) <b>Improving Maternal Outcomes by Expanding the Midwifery Workforce in Arizona Communities</b> Erin McMahon, Director, Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Nurse-Midwife Program, University of Arizona
Humphreys	<b>Lunch Session - And You Thought Rural Dentistry Was Just About Teeth!</b>
12:30–2:00	Jack Dillenberg, MD, Dean Emeritus, Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health, A.T. Still University
2:10–3:25	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b>
Abineau	<b>Social Determinants of Health Track</b>
	<b>Intellectual and Developmental Disability Access to Equitable Services &amp; Resources</b> Melanie Soto, State Director, The Arc of Arizona <b>Engaging Arizonans to Make a Meaningful Impact</b> Susan Voirol, Collaboration Synergist, Diverse Ability Incorporated
Fremont	<b>Workforce Development Track</b>
	<b>The University of Arizona Genetic Counseling Graduate Program: Addressing the Gap in Clinical Genetic Services in Arizona</b> Valerie Schaibley, Associate Director, UA Genetic Counseling Graduate Program, University of Arizona Health Sciences <b>Understanding Support Needs of the Advanced Practice Providers Workforce</b> Amy Wing, PA-C, Assistant Professor / Clinical Coordinator, Arizona School of Health Sciences, A.T. Still University
Doyle	<b>Addressing Health Disparities Track</b>
	<b>Swing Bed Quality</b> Kristen Ogden, RN, Director of Quality Improvement, The Compliance Team Jonathon Pantenburg, Principal, Wintergreen <b>Advance Care Planning: Tying A Community Ecosystem to the Success of an Advance Directive Registry</b> Carla Sutter, Sr. Health Directives Registry Operations Manager, Contexture - Arizona Healthcare Directives Registry
Humphreys	<b>Building Equitable Infrastructure Track</b>
	<b>Powering Community Health Workers (CHWs) in Rural: The Rural Arizona CHW Workforce Development Network in Action</b> Floribella Redondo Martinez, CEO, Arizona Community Health Worker Association (AzCHOW) Junelhia Solorzano, Promotora/Supervisor, Winchester Heights Health Organization (WHHO), Susan Kunz, Susan Kunz Consulting
3:30–5:00	<b>Reception</b>
3:45–4:30	<b>Research and Community Engagement Poster Session</b>

## Day 2: Wednesday, June 7

7:30–2:00 **Check-in and On-site Registration**

7:00–9:00 **Continental Breakfast**

### **Humphreys** **General Session**

8:00–8:30 **Federal Support for the Rural Health Ecosystem: Challenges and Opportunities**

Tom Morris, Associate Administrator for Rural Health Policy, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

8:40–9:20 **Concurrent Sessions**

### **Abineau** **Social Determinants of Health Track**

**Health Justice Gaps in Rural Communities: Two Case Studies in the Southwest**

Gabriela Elizondo-Craig, Post-Graduate Fellow and Current M.S. in Environmental Health Sciences student, University of Arizona and Innovation for Justice Lab

Cayley Balser, Community-Engaged Research Operations Lead, Innovation for Justice Lab, University of Arizona

### **Freemont** **Workforce Development Track**

**Arizona Primary Care Office: Role and Current Workforce Programs**

Edith Di Santo, Primary Care Office Chief, Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)

### **Doyle** **Addressing Health Disparities Track**

**CONECTATE: Connecting Communities Through Community Health Worker (CHW) Workforce Development**

Laura Aviles, Program coordinator, Yuma County Public Health Services District

Georgia Weiss-Elliott, Participatory Evaluation Specialist, Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC)

### **Humphreys** **Building Equitable Infrastructure Track**

**Cooperative Extension's Role in the Rural Health Ecosystem**

Michele Walsh, Associate Director, Family, Consumer, and Health Sciences, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

### **Humphreys** **General Session**

9:30–10:20 **Arizona Community Health Worker Voluntary Certification, Representative Billing, and Reimbursement**

Carin Watts, Health Disparities Program Manager, Arizona Department of Health Services

Alex Demyan, Interim Assistant Director, AHCCCS

Leslie Short, Integrated Services Administrator- AHCCCS

Ruben Soliz, Federal Relations and Health Policy Advisor- AHCCCS-

10:40–11:10 **Concurrent Sessions**

### **Abineau** **Social Determinants of Health Track**

**Arizona Librarians Fostering Resilient Rural Communities**

Mona Arora, PhD, MSPH, Assistant Research Professor, Arizona Center for Rural Health, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona

Lisa Lewis, President, Arizona Library Association

<b>Freemont Workforce Development Track</b>	
<b>Developing a Diverse Rural Healthcare Workforce: Recruitment, Retention and Clinical Training</b> Lillian Smith, Dean, College of Health and Human Services, Northern Arizona University Gina Buban, Assistant Clinical Professor in Department of Occupational Therapy, Northern Arizona University Louisa Marielle O'Meara, Research Coordinator, Senior, Center for Health Equity Research, Northern Arizona University	
<b>Doyle Addressing Health Disparities Track</b>	
<b>End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Patients Staying Local in Rural America</b> Ron Kubit, CEO, TeleNeph Rhonda Mason, COO / CNO, TeleNeph	
<b>Humphreys Building Equitable Infrastructure Track</b>	
<b>Workforce Development: Growing Our Own through Pipeline Programs to Job Placement and Beyond</b> Joena Ezroj, Director, Western Arizona Area Health Education Center (WAHEC)/Regional Center for Border Health	
11:20–11:50	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b>
<b>Abineau Social Determinants of Health Track</b>	
<b>Proyecto Juntos A CHW Lead Initiative to Address Vaccine Hesitancy in Rural, Underserved Southeast Arizona</b> Amy Pacheco Mata, Program Coordinator for Vacunas Para Todos and Community Health Worker, Southeast Arizona Health Education Center Taylor Fisher, Community Health Worker, Southeast Arizona Health Education Center	
<b>Feemont Workforce Development Track</b>	
<b>Using Data to Inform Health Workforce Development</b> Bryna Koch, Assistant Research Professor, Arizona Center for Rural Health, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona	
<b>Doyle Addressing Health Disparities Track</b>	
<b>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Community Health Workers for COVID Response and Resilient Communities (CDC-CCR) Grant: Contribution to the Sustainability of Tribal Community Health Representative Programs in Arizona</b> Ashley Lazaro, Training Officer 1, Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care Kiani Becerra, Grant Coordinator, Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care	
<b>Humphreys Building Equitable Infrastructure</b>	
<b>Enhancing Access to Urological Care For Rural Populations</b> Michal Tavrovsky, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer, MenHealth	
<b>Humphreys General Session</b>	
12:00–12:30	<b>Arizona Rural Health Policy Update and Ideas for 2024 - Panel</b> Daniel Derksen, MD, Director, Arizona Center for Rural Health & Associate Vice President for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities, University of Arizona Health Sciences Will Humble, Executive Director, Arizona Public Health Association Carmen Heredia, Director, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)
12:30–1:30	<b>Lunch, Arizona Rural Health Association Updates and closing remarks</b>



**Gun Violence in Arizona: Data to Inform Prevention**

**Policies** | Will Humble, Executive Director, Arizona Public Health Association

Firearm violence is one of the leading causes of death among both adults (11th) and children aged 1-19 (2nd) in Arizona. These deaths are preventable. They are the result of inequality, inadequate and dangerous policies, and a culture deeply concerned with personal rights and individualism.

Contrary to popular belief, aggravated gun violence (i.e., gun homicide/murder) is not the primary driver of firearm mortality in Arizona; in fact, from 1999-2020, 65% of firearm deaths were due to suicide. Homicides made up about 31% of deaths, and police shootings, unintentional, and undetermined deaths made up the remaining 4% of deaths.

These deaths don't come out of nowhere. The U.S. leads the world in gun ownership per capita and household gun ownership is consistently associated with rates of firearm suicides, homicides, and accidental shootings.

Presentation of the major findings of AZPHA's landmark report *Gun Violence in Arizona: Data to Inform Prevention Policies*.

**An Update on the State of Arizona Public University Investments in the Physician Assistant Workforce:****Building Bidirectional Paths for the Future** | Kevin

Lohenry, Clinical Professor of Medicine and Vice-President, Interprofessional Education; Founding Program Director, PA Program, University of Arizona | Bettie Coplan, PhD, PA-C, Associate Clinical Professor, Northern Arizona University, Department of Physical Assistant Studies

The state of Arizona is experiencing significant healthcare access challenges in primary care and behavioral health. The two state funded PA programs, Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona PA programs, were created in part to address these challenges. In this presentation, PA program faculty from both universities will provide an overview of the vision for the UA PA program that was recently approved and an update on the success of NAU's PA program over the past 10 years, with a focus on the PA Rural Health Professions and



Arizona Area Health Education Centers Scholars Programs. They will also provide updates on legislative efforts involving PA practice as well as workforce data on the profession in Arizona. Attendees will be asked to engage in discussion of current barriers to a bidirectional pathway from their communities to the universities and back as a solution to future health workforce needs. The main goal is to generate a list of actions that health professions programs and/or communities can take to help facilitate health professions education that promotes a healthcare workforce in Arizona that improves access to health care, particularly in rural and other underserved communities.

**And You Thought Rural Dentistry was Just About Teeth!**

Jack Dillenberg, Dean Emeritus, Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health, A.T. Still University

Discussion of innovative technologies and their importance when addressing social determinants of health and disparities in access to care for underserved populations. Important qualities that healthcare leaders must have to support positive change and develop teams that reflect the emerging value-based healthcare system will also be discussed.

**Federal Support for the Rural Health Ecosystem: Challenges and Opportunities**

Tom Morris, Associate Administrator for Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration, Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

This session will highlight how the various programs and resources at the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy can support local efforts to build a rural health ecosystem. It will also examine how current policy issues create both challenges and opportunities toward that goal.

**Arizona Community Health Worker Voluntary Certification, Representative Billing, and Reimbursement**

Carin Watts, Health Disparities Program Manager, Arizona Department of Health Services | Alex Demyan, Interim Assistant Director,

AHCCCS | Leslie Short, Integrated Services Administrator, AHCCCS | Ruben Soliz, Federal Relations and Health Policy Advisor, AHCCCS  
This session is intended for those wanting to learn more about the status and process of CHW Voluntary Certification in Arizona. An update will be provided on the number of CHWs that have been certified to date and the types and location of resources available for applicants to assist with the application process. Attendees will learn more about the eligibility requirement of certification, as well as the most common barriers experienced by applicants in applying for certification. Information surrounding current application and certification fee waivers will be provided, with insight on ADHS' plans to continue to support these fees and promote certification. Finally, a description of the benefits of certification will be shared with attendees, from the standpoint of ADHS and from testimonies received from applicants that have had their application for certification approved.

Overview of CHW/CHR billing and reimbursement under Arizona's Medicaid program (AHCCCS), effective April 1, 2023.

**Arizona Rural Health Policy Update and Ideas for 2024 – Panel**

Daniel Derksen, MD, Director, Arizona Center for Rural Health & Associate Vice President for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities, University of Arizona Health Sciences | Will Humble, Executive Director, Arizona Public Health Association | Carmen Heredia, Director, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)

Recognizing the key role public policy plays in health, our final session shares dynamic updates from the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), Arizona Public Health Association, and Arizona Center for Rural Health.

**Arizona Area Health Education Centers Undergraduate Scholars Program: Investing in Workforce Development**

Dr. Denise Muesch Helm Professor of Dental Hygiene NAU  
Patty Goldsmith, Clinical Professor, UA College of Nursing

**Collaborative Community Engagement in Rural Communities to Address the Opioid Crisis**

Bianca SantaMaria, Health Education and Promotion Professional II UA CRH

Loren Halili, Program Management Assistant I UA CRH

Rocio Torres, Program Management Assistant I UA CRH

**Ensuring Age-Friendly Public Health in Rural Communities: Success and Opportunities**

Aaron Guest Assistant Professor of Aging Center for Innovation in Healthy and Resilient Aging

**Leveraging Tax Policy Pilot Program to Address Drivers of Childhood Obesity: A Framework for Enhancing Rural Health Ecosystems in Arizona**

C. Lauren Erdelyi DrPH, Candidate, Public Health Policy & Management MEZCOPH, UA

**NAU Dreamcatchers: Fostering a Growth Mindset to Encourage Native American Students to Pursue Careers in Healthcare**

Dr. Laura Umphrey, Associate Dean of College of Health and Human Services, NAU

Regina Eddie, Assistant Professor, NAU

**Practice-Based Research & QI for Workforce Development and Improving Health Outcomes**

Christy Pacheco Family Nurse Practitioner; Faculty and Rural Health Professions Program Director, UA College of Nursing

**Qöyangnuptu Project: Using Mobile Technology and Social Systems of Support to Develop Resilience in Hopi Youth**

Morgan, Vigil-Hayes, Assistant Professor NAU

**How to Design the AZ Social Vulnerability Index Data**

**Dashboard** | Holly Starr, Data Equity Coordinator, Arizona Department of Health Services | Matthew Roach, Vital Statistics Manager, Arizona Department of Health Services

In partnership with a diverse set of stakeholders, ADHS is creating a new data dashboard that will bring together social determinants of health data and make it publicly available in an interactive format. The data will be available at the census tract level which is valuable for program planning in rural communities. We will discuss the AZ Social Vulnerability Index and its data components, participants will learn data visualization best practices from an equity perspective, and how to bring together a community data advisory group. The ADHS team developing the dashboard will solicit feedback from session participants on what to prioritize in the dashboard design and participants of this session will have the opportunity to provide their feedback from a rural and/or Tribal perspective on how to design the dashboard.

**CommunityCares: Arizona's SDOH Solution for Whole**

**Person Care** | Diana Kramer, Manager of Social Determinants of Health, Contexture | Kelly McGann, Social Determinants of Health, Contexture

Research suggests that Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) — social and economic factors are the primary drivers of health outcomes, with zip code being a stronger predictor of a person's health than their genetics (Kaiser Family Foundation). Health disparities and inequities are rooted in social and economic factors and are exacerbated in rural and underserved communities. With so much of a person's health being determined outside of healthcare, effectively addressing SDOH requires a multi-stakeholder, multi-sector approach. Contexture in partnership with AHCCCS launched CommunityCares to support the Whole Person Care Initiative and address the SDOH of Arizonans by engaging healthcare and community service providers to connect on a single statewide technology platform to seamlessly improve and track the referral process between healthcare providers and social services. CommunityCares, streamlines and closes the loop on referrals, improving access to life-saving services. Come learn how your organization can support the CommunityCares strategic initiatives which include: Improving network outcomes through technical assistance and data-driven engagement, incorporating community voice through stakeholder and client engagement, and identifying upstream opportunities to combat gaps in community resources.







### **Intellectual, Developmental Disability Access to Equitable Services & Resources** | Melanie Soto, State Director, The Arc of Arizona

The Arc of Arizona has been working with other stakeholders and advocates to take a hard look and assessment of inequities individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) face in Arizona. Our presentation will highlight what we have learned through our research and collaboration as well as some best practices for those in our community who need to prepare themselves to provide accommodations for the IDD community not only in urban areas, but rural as well.

### **Engaging Arizonans to Make a Meaningful Impact** | Susan Voirol, Collaboration Synergist, Diverse Ability Incorporated

Arizona is a state with much diversity, and our multiculturalism is maximized when people who have diverse lived expertise contribute their valuable insights and perspectives to impact the communities they identify with, both as self and systems advocates. Being engaged in work throughout the state has helped Diverse Ability Incorporated to gain insight into the disparities and challenges within rural Arizona, and to create opportunities for leadership and engagement of youth and families where it matters most to them. Come learn about how Diverse Ability Incorporated is addressing health equity through education and training, how the Engaging Families and Young Adults Program we manage facilitates connections to ensure that diverse communities are represented where choices and decisions are made, and how Arizona Youth Leaders are making their mark at the local, state, regional, and national level.

### **Health Justice Gaps in Rural Communities: Two Case Studies in the Southwest** | Elizondo-Craig, Gabriela, Post-Graduate Fellow and Current M.S. in Environmental Health Sciences student, Innovation for Justice Lab, University of Arizona Cayley Balser, Community-Engaged Research Operations Lead, Innovation for Justice Lab, University of Arizona

*Health effects of arsenic exposure from groundwater source in rural Arizona communities*

The first half of the presentation will explore the adverse health effects of groundwater contamination in rural, underserved communities. Unlike public water systems protected under the Safe Drinking Water Act, domestic wells remain unregulated. An estimated 13 million Americans rely on private wells for their primary source of drinking water, and most are in rural regions and are not routinely monitored. Considering current pollution and water quality trends, we will focus on the implications of current aquifer water quality standards, public health risk, and prospective mitigation measures for private well owners in Utah and Arizona.

### *Access to Justice as a social determinant of health: A case study in West Valley, Utah*

The second half of the panel presentation will focus on community-engaged research methods conducted by the Innovation for Justice lab that explores new pathways for low-income and marginalized populations to access legal services. The lab's recent work in West Valley, Utah leveraged justice needs surveys to identify the community's most pressing unmet legal needs, the intersection of these legal needs with the SDOH, and the potential for embedding new kinds of legal service providers in healthcare settings.

### **Arizona Librarians Fostering Resilient Rural Communities** | Mona Arora, PhD, MSPH, Assistant Research Professor, AzCRH; UA College of Public Health | Lisa Lewis, President Arizona Library Association

Rural libraries found themselves at the forefront of community health during the COVID pandemic. This session highlights the role of libraries in building community resilience and presents findings and lessons learned from a program co-developed by UArizona Center for Rural Health and the Arizona Library Association (AzLA). The program awarded mini-grants to 16 rural libraries to reduce health disparities in rural communities through a diverse range of programs focused on promoting health & well-being, improving access to healthcare & related services, and addressing social protective and risk factors.

In addition to developing a community of practice, the program strives to build library capacity





to understand and address community health concerns and health inequities through focused training sessions. The session will present the community-centered projects implemented by grantees and share findings from in-depth conversation with grantees regarding their experiences of and challenges and successes in providing services to their communities during the pandemic.

**Proyecto Juntos A CHW Lead Initiative to Address Vaccine Hesitancy in Rural, Underserved Southeast Arizona** | Amy Pacheco Mata, Program Coordinator for Vacunas Para Todos and Community Health Worker, Southeast Arizona Health Education Center | Taylor Fisher, Community Health Worker, Southeast Arizona Health Education Center

Over the past two years, Southeast Arizona Health Education Center with partners (AzCHOW, Canyonlands Healthcare, Mariposa Community Health Center and Pinal Hispanic Center) developed and implemented “Proyecto Juntos.” A HRSA-funded initiative to address vaccine hesitancy in rural underserved communities in Southeast Arizona that includes Pinal, Gila, Pima, Santa Cruz, Graham, and Greenlee counties, Proyecto Juntos focused on special populations to reach those who are most socially and economically vulnerable, lacking access to health care and having the lowest vaccination rates. Our project used the Community Health Worker model to deliver needed information and resources. As trusted members of the community, CHWs learn local needs by engaging members in one-on-one discussions making them well-equipped to bridge the community with available resources through their partnerships. To date, CHWs under Proyecto Juntos interacted with over 62,000 community members by attending various community events including food banks, the Mexican Consulates of Tucson, Nogales, and Douglas, health/resource fairs, senior centers, schools, vaccination, and other community events. CHWs had the opportunity to learn from each other and how to adapt to the never-ending changes that have come during the COVID-19 pandemic; from approved vaccines, boosters, CDC and federal guidelines, and individual county protocols.



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Access the scale, technology, and expertise you need to succeed in value-based programs.



**\$7B\*** Spend under management



**29K** Providers aligned to ACO collaboratives in 2022



**700K+\*\*** Medicare ACO beneficiaries



**11K+** Credentialed providers



**9K+** Medicare ACO PCP partners



**2.3M+** Unique patient homes visited in 2022

\*Projected in 2023 to manage more than \$7B of spend, based on projection of 700K+ attributed lives. \*\*Projected for 2023



# INVESTING IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



## **Promotores, Peers, and Family Support Specialists:**

**Opportunities for Rural Arizona** | Bianca SantaMaria, Health Education and Promotion Professional, Arizona Center for Rural Health, University of Arizona | Kevin Phillips, Workforce Development Trainer, University of Arizona

Improving healthcare availability and accommodation is a priority for health care including substance use disorder services. Integrated care teams that include professional staff who share clients' social, cultural, and life experiences is an evidence-based approach to support successful health promotion and recovery. Promotores and behavioral health paraprofessionals (BHPs) serve as cultural insiders to connect with clients in their homes, community centers, and healthcare clinics. This is especially true in rural and healthcare shortage areas. Promotores and BHPs' lived experiences can complement accredited training for professional credentialing.

In this presentation, we will describe and share evidence about this workforce through interactive vignettes to highlight the powerful impact that promotores and BHPs can offer clients with chronic conditions like pain, mental illness, and substance use disorders. Using active learning techniques, we will invite the audience to reflect on their own and their organization's experiences working with promotores and BHPs. We will present specific programs and resources in Arizona to train promotores and BHPs. We will guide the audience to explore capacity-building opportunities by partnering with these programs.

## **An Ecological Approach to Increase Workforce Capacity for Addiction Prevention, Harm Reduction, and Treatment.**

Bridget Murphy, Assistant Research Professor, Arizona Center for Rural Health, Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona | Joyce Hospodar, MBA, MPA, Senior Advisor Rural Programs, Arizona Center for Rural Health, Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona | Sean P. Cronin, Program Manager AzCANN Program, Comprehensive Pain and Addiction Center, University of Arizona

Addiction is a preventable and treatable condition with effective harm reduction practices. Addiction education crosses numerous healthcare disciplines. Healthcare students and professionals are interested in learning about and understanding the contextual issues associated with addiction. Even brief exposure to substance use curriculum has lasting impacts. Engage in this interactive session to discuss solutions. We will discuss three programs funded by the Arizona Department of Health Services that focus on at least one of the social ecological spheres including: (1) Arizona Medication Assisted Treatment Mentors (individual/organizational sphere), (2) Arizona Cannabis Education (community sphere), and (3) Naloxone Leave Behind Program (policy/environment sphere).



### **The University of Arizona Genetic Counseling Graduate Program: Addressing the Gap in Clinical Genetic Services in Arizona**

| Valerie, Schaibley, Associate Director, University of Arizona Genetic Counseling Graduate Program, University of Arizona Health Sciences

Clinical genetic testing has been expanding since the integration of high-throughput sequencing into clinical testing. Despite this growth, there is a lack of appropriately trained healthcare providers to interpret and explain results to patients and coordinate follow-up care for patients with inherited conditions. The southwestern United States is particularly underserved for clinical genetics services, especially in rural communities. According to projections from the National Society of Genetic Counselors and an Arizona workforce assessment from the University of Arizona Genetic Counseling Graduate Program (UAGCGP), Arizona needs to increase the number of clinical genetic counselors by approximately 300% to meet the current demand. The UAGCGP opened in 2019 with the goal of addressing both the local genetic counseling workforce shortage in Arizona and training genetic counselors who reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Arizona population. To date, 40% of UAGCGP graduates are practicing in Arizona, contributing to the clinical genetics workforce. This presentation will discuss current and future initiatives from the UArizona Health Sciences and the UAGCGP to address the shortage of clinical genetics professionals in Arizona, including a new scholarship program and a new graduate certificate program in clinical genetics to provide clinical genetics training to healthcare providers.

### **Understanding Support Needs of the Advanced Practice Providers Workforce**

Amy Wing, PA-C, Assistant Professor / Clinical Coordinator, Arizona School of Health Sciences, A.T. Still University

The contributions of physician assistants (PAs) and nurse practitioners (NPs), collectively known as Advanced Practice Providers (APPs), are widely recognized for quality of care and productivity. Despite similar roles within the healthcare team, NPs and PAs are not interchangeable. PA

and NP educational preparation differ in delivery, underlying values and assumptions, professional philosophy and history, curricular standards, and readiness for practice upon graduation. The professions arguably have more in common than difference, yet professional identity, healthcare experiences, focus, scope, and support needs may be impactfully distinct. With an informed perspective, healthcare teams and stakeholders can effectively recruit, retain, support, and mentor APPs to maximize their contributions to patients, the community, and their teams. Organizational policies are essential in facilitating the appropriate and efficient utilization of APPs. Leaders must clearly understand APP education, credentials, and regulation to ensure organizational policies reflect best practices. This presentation aims to advance understanding that will help organizations and healthcare teams avoid APP under- or overutilization and facilitate appropriate support and opportunities for APPs based on their individual qualifications and profession-specific considerations.

### **Arizona Primary Care Office: Role & Current Workforce Programs**

| Edith Di Santo, Primary Care Office Chief, Arizona Department of Health Services

This presentation reviews the traditional workforce activities of the Primary Care Office, Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and also cover the four new workforce programs that came to the Primary Care Office last year; Behavioral Health Provider Loan Repayment Program, Accelerated Nursing Program, Nursing Education Investment Pilot, and the Preceptor Grant.

### **Developing a Diverse Rural Healthcare Workforce: Recruitment, Retention and Clinical Training**

| Lillian Smith, Dean, College of Health and Human Services, Northern Arizona University | Gina Buban, Assistant Clinical Professor in Department of Occupational Therapy | Louisa Marielle O'Meara, Research Coordinator, Senior at the Center for Health Equity Research, Northern Arizona University  
Northern Arizona University's Center for Health Equity Research (CHER) partnered with the Arizona Biomedical Research Centre to host a





workshop—free of charge—to aid health care professionals in rural, border and tribal areas. Experts covered how to recruit, retain and graduate a diverse healthcare workforce.

The daylong, in-person and virtual event also covered clinical training that would ensure health care staff had both the medical knowledge and cultural understanding necessary to provide the best care. With 62 participants, they created a model for others to follow.

Physicians, nurses, professors and directors of rural health care programs, including Indigenous programs and border health, discussed the unique psychology of rural healthcare education and the importance of introducing students to health care fields through engaging, culturally appropriate programs that begin as early as middle school.

### Using Data to Inform Health Workforce Development

Bryna Koch, Assistant Research Professor, Arizona Center for Rural Health, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona

This presentation will introduce the health workforce data resources available from the Arizona Center for Rural Health. The presentation will focus on the Arizona Health Workforce Profile Report. This profile report uses health workforce licensure data from the Arizona licensing boards to present a snapshot of the health workforce in 2019 and 2021. This presentation will also summarize other important data resources regarding the health workforce, for example, the Primary Care Area (PCA) profile data from the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). Attendees will learn from examples of how health workforce data from the AzCRH and other sources have informed assessment, planning, grant application efforts in rural Arizona. Attendees will also engage in a collaborative discussion, sharing resources they have used, and identifying what next steps should be implemented in Arizona to ensure high quality data informs workforce planning and development efforts.



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# ADDRESSING HEALTH DISPARITIES



**Implementation of Peer Support Specialists in a Rural Hospital and Healthcare System** | Susy Salvo-Wendt, Project Director, Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Implementation Grant, Summit Healthcare Association | Sean Hopler, RN, BSN, Director of Emergency Services, Summit Healthcare Regional Medical Center

Summit Healthcare along with Navajo County and 29 other community medical and non-medical entities in the White Mountains formed a consortium that is funded by a HRSA RCORP OUD/SUD Grant to implement Peer Support Specialists within a Rural Hospital, Healthcare Systems and Community to improve outcomes of our patients suffering from opioid or substance use disorders. The impact of the implementation has already been significant in terms of catching people in the ED and offering recovery services by providing a care management plan of local resources that include Medical Assisted Treatment Plans, Counseling and basic living necessities. At the end of three years of the grant we will have proved the concept of incorporating Peer Support Specialists and developing reimbursement to make their services sustainable with value based outcomes.

**Modern Medication Assisted Treatment Methods in Today's Rural America** | Ergi Gumusaneli, CEO of Fitz Ilias. Clinical Instructor University of Arizona, Fitz Ilias Health and Technology

Fentanyl is killing Americans. Medication Assisted Treatment has been modified even over the past 5 years, with several different protocols to keep up to date with how drugs are infiltrating our communities. This is a talk to better understand today's climate, reconsidering how to administer MAT as it relates to Fentanyl & other additives in the drug supply, & how mental health ties into addiction. Rural settings are especially vulnerable, and this talk speaks to one aspect about supporting our communities.

**Swing Bed Quality** | Kristen Ogden, Director of Quality Improvement, The Compliance Team  
Jonathon Pantenburg, Principal at Wintergreen

This presentation will focus on the value of swing bed market differentiation by driving increases to patient access and utilization, while ensuring long-term financial solvency. Specifically we will discuss a quality certification initiative proven to drive results and increase reliance on the swing bed program.



**Advance Care Planning: Tying A Community Ecosystem to the Success of an Advance Directive Registry** | Carla Sutter, Sr. Health Directives Registry Operations Manager, Contexture - Arizona Healthcare Directives Registry

A gap exists between what patients say they want, and the care received. When people are empowered to have conversations about their wishes, the likelihood of them completing an advance directive and receiving goal-concordant care substantially increases. Research shows 30-35% of the public have an advance directive, and the care received often does not fulfill their wishes. Barriers to completing directives are lack of knowledge, cultural & ethnic taboos, and a foundational reluctance to engage in the topic.

To improve goal-concordant care and increase the completion of directives, these barriers must be addressed. Messaging must be non-threatening and relevant to all. Educational outreach, particularly to underserved communities reluctant to engage with traditional entities, must be culturally sensitive and linguistically relevant.

This presentation will introduce how the Arizona Healthcare Directives Registry (AzHDR) is working to increase the number of registered advance directives and engage providers in using the registry to view directives. Details on how Contexture is using the power of community engagement will be shared including the build out of the “Choose Your Person” campaign and a Community Assistor training.

**CONECTATE: Connecting Communities Through Community Health Worker (CHW) Workforce Development** | Laura Aviles, Program coordinator, Yuma County Public Health Services District | Georgia Weiss-Elliott, Participatory Evaluation Specialist, Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC)

We will describe how a rural county health department adapted a Community Health Worker (CHW) Community Clinical Linkage research study and supported CHW professional development to improve capacity for referral and resource linkage in Yuma, Arizona. In 2021, the Yuma County Public Health Services District

(YCPHSD), a key partner in LINKS/UNIDOS study, moved to build internal capacity to adapt and sustain the linkages program now known as CONNECT (CONECTATE in Spanish). County staff, including CHWs, and evaluators worked closely to build and enhance data collection instruments and referral databases and to tailor outreach to target communities most effected by Covid-19. In collaboration with community partners, Yuma County’s first CHW Coalition was established. This coalition provides CHWs with a space to mentor, learn, and share information as well as to refer community members from across the county to the CONECTATE program. CONECTATE provides an example of how to adapt and translate successful research programs in rural counties despite, and amidst, funding challenges and health crises. We also discuss how the CONNECT program addresses community resilience in the wake of COVID-19, and CHW workforce development within the Health District and throughout the County.

**End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Patients Staying Local in Rural America** | Ron Kubit, CEO, TeleNeph | Rhonda Mason, COO / CNO, TeleNeph

Learn how CAH in Arizona is serving their community for ESRD patients that live in their community. CAH hospitals today have the capabilities to admit ESRD patients, that before were being transferred out or not even entering their hospital system. You will learn about the tools that CEOs and CFOs are using to analyze the market for the number of ESRD patients in the community, the number of anticipated hospitalizations and why are they being hospitalized. How the clinical team became the champions of a new service line within the CAH and the development of proven clinical processes, procedures and the competencies required to deliver quality care locally.

The solution is a clinical end-to-end Nephrology solution that is currently utilized in rural America. We will present a solution that is operational at a CAH in Arizona that saw over 100 patients being admitted in their hospital in the first year. The mission ... keeping care locally in Rural America.





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**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Community Health Workers for COVID  
Response and Resilient Communities (CDC-  
CCR) Grant: Contribution to the Sustainability  
of Tribal Community Health Representative  
Programs in Arizona** | Ashley Lazaro, Training  
Officer 1, Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health  
Care | Kiani Becerra, Grant Coordinator, Arizona  
Advisory Council on Indian Health Care

This presentation will introduce the health workforce data resources available from the Arizona Center for Rural Health. The presentation will focus on the Arizona Health Workforce Profile Report. This profile report uses health workforce licensure data from the Arizona licensing boards to present a snapshot of the health workforce in 2019 and 2021. This presentation will also summarize other important data resources regarding the health workforce, for example, the Primary Care Area (PCA) profile data from the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). Attendees will learn from examples of how health workforce data from the AzCRH and other sources have informed assessment, planning, grant application efforts in rural Arizona. Attendees will also engage in a collaborative discussion, sharing resources they have used, and identifying what next steps should be implemented in Arizona to ensure high quality data informs workforce planning and development efforts.

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# BUILDING EQUITABLE INFRASTRUCTURE



**Building Capacity of Rural Health Providers to Promote Maternal Mental Health: Launch of a Statewide Program** | Saira Kalia, Director, Arizona - Perinatal Access Line, University Of Arizona, COM-T | Ruben Soliz- Federal Relations and Health Policy Advisor-AHCCCS | Kathryn Emerick, MD, Co-Director, Arizona Perinatal Psychiatry Access Line (A-PAL)

The aim of this presentation is to introduce a new statewide program (A-PAL Arizona Perinatal Access Program) that promotes maternal mental health by building the capacity of providers serving pregnant and postpartum persons to effectively prevent, identify, and manage mental health and substance use concerns. Maternal mental health is a critical public health issue that affects approximately 1 in 5 persons during pregnancy or in the first year postpartum. Per AZDHS 2016-2018 data almost half of all pregnancy-associated deaths in Arizona were related to mental health conditions or substance use disorders. Access to mental health services can be particularly challenging for persons living in rural areas due to a shortage of providers and limited resources. A-PAL aims to address this issue by providing direct timely consultation, education and support to rural health providers. By building the capacity of rural health providers to effectively prevent, identify, and manage maternal mental health and substance use concerns, APAL aims to improve access to care and reduce the burden of maternal mental health issues in Arizona.

**Improving Maternal Outcomes by Expanding the Midwifery Workforce in Arizona Communities** | Erin McMahon, Director, Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Nurse-Midwife Program, University of Arizona

Maternal deaths continue to rise at alarming rates in Arizona and the nation. During 2021, the Center for Disease Control reported a 40% increase in maternal deaths partially influenced by the COVID pandemic. Birthing persons of color are disproportionately represented in these statistics. Access to care in maternity care deserts can be increased by expanding the midwifery workforce in Arizona. Midwifery care integrated within the health care team has been documented to improve maternal and infant outcomes. According to World Health Organization estimates, the state of Arizona needs to double the midwifery workforce to adequately support the number of births within the state. A new midwifery educational program at the University of Arizona aims to expand the midwifery workforce, improve maternal health outcomes, grow the diversity with the profession, and promote health equity.

**Powering CHWs in Rural: The Rural Arizona CHW Workforce Development Network in Action** | Floribella Redondo Martinez, CEO, Arizona Community Health Worker Association (AzCHOW) | Junelhia Solorzano, Promotora/Supervisor, Winchester Heights Health Organization (WHHO) | Susan Kunz, Susan Kunz Consulting,

The Rural Arizona CHW Workforce Development Network (RAZCHOW) is moving the needle on the capacity and utilization of CHWs in rural areas of Arizona, including Promotores de Salud that serve





Hispanic/Latino communities and Community Health Representatives (CHRs) that serve tribal communities. Original partners created RAZCHOW in 2018, which has blossomed with the support of HRSA's Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) through rural health care planning and network development grants. RAZCHOW members include 14 clinical and community-based health organizations that serve six of eight of Arizona's fully-rural counties and rural census tracts in four non-rural counties. RAZCHOW's goals are to increase CHW capacity, help organizations effectively engage CHWs and promote financial models to sustain the rural CHW workforce. RAZCHOW is committed to help rural health care providers maximize the potential benefit of two recent policy improvements in Arizona that support CHW voluntary certification (licensing) and Medicaid reimbursement for services provided by certified CHWs. RAZCHOW is on the move to build the CHW workforce in parts of rural Arizona where the workforce is underrepresented.

**Cooperative Extension's Role in the Rural Health Ecosystem** | Michele Walsh, Associate Director Family, Consumer, and Health Sciences, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension (UACE) serves as a statewide network of faculty and staff that provides lifelong educational programs and other public health approaches to improve the health and wellness of all Arizonans. UACE has offices in every county and on five tribal nations, working across the program areas of Family, Consumer, and Health Sciences; Agriculture and Natural Resources; 4-H Youth Development; and Tribal Extension. It is part of a nationwide network of scientists and educators who engage with communities to solve problems using scientific and local knowledge.

In the fall of 2022, UACE conducted a statewide needs assessment survey to better understand the priority issues of the communities it serves, reaching over 3,200 residents, with more than half identifying as rural residents. This presentation will describe how the results from this survey can help inform local stakeholders about health-related needs and priorities in rural Arizona communities, framing them in the context of Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-being.

Presenters will provide examples of current UACE health-related work happening in rural counties to address these priorities, discussing the place of UACE in the rural Arizona health ecosystem and highlighting opportunities for collaboration.

**Workforce Development: Growing Our Own through Pipeline Programs to Job Placement and Beyond**

Joena Ezroj, Director, Western Arizona Area Health Education Center (WAHEC)/Regional Center for Border Health

The presentation will provide a center model for "Growing Your Own" rural workforce of trained healthcare professionals through pipeline programming. This model will depict how to support learners from pipeline to practice in preparing our next generation of healthcare professionals to serve in rural and underserved communities in the state. Recruitment and retainment strategies will be shared.

**Enhancing Access to Urological Care For Rural Populations** | Michal Tavorovsky, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer, MenHealth

Only 2.4% of US urologists practice in rural areas. 75% of rural counties in the US don't have a single urologist. For that reason, urologic disease including urinary incontinence, urinary tract infections, BPH, sexual dysfunction, and urologic malignancies such as kidney, bladder, and prostate cancer, tend to be diagnosed much later and in more advanced stages in rural areas compared to their urban counterparts. As most urologic diseases are not life-threatening, they are easily neglected by health care providers. Patients also regard these symptoms as part of the normal process of aging, although they should not be considered so. The shortage of urologists and decreasing reimbursement rates make access to urological care even more inaccessible. Increased awareness of urologic health and better monitoring tools can help clinicians to provide better targeted care for rural patient populations. MenHealth has developed software based remote patient monitoring tools to address this gap in urological care.



**Tom Morris, MPA**, Associate Administrator for Rural Health Policy Health Resources and Services Administration U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Tom Morris serves as the Associate Administrator for Rural Health Policy in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In that role, Tom oversees the work of the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, which is charged with

advising the HHS Secretary on rural health issues.

The Office, which has an annual budget of \$317 million, administers a range of research and capacity-building grant programs that serve rural communities. In 2012, Tom was the recipient of the HHS Distinguished Service Award and in 2015 he was awarded a Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service.

Over the course of his Federal career, Tom has testified on rural health issues before the House and Senate. He has past work experience in the U.S. Senate as well as various policy and program positions within HRSA and HHS. A 1996 Presidential Management Intern, Tom came to government after a career as a newspaper reporter and editor.

He has an undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master's in Public Administration with a concentration in Community Health from East Carolina University. He also earned a Certificate in Public Leadership from the Brookings Institution in 2008.

**8:00 am, Wednesday, June 7**

**Federal Support for the Rural Health Ecosystem: Challenges and Opportunities**

For full biographical profiles of all conference presenters please visit our website [crh.arizona.edu/presenters](http://crh.arizona.edu/presenters)





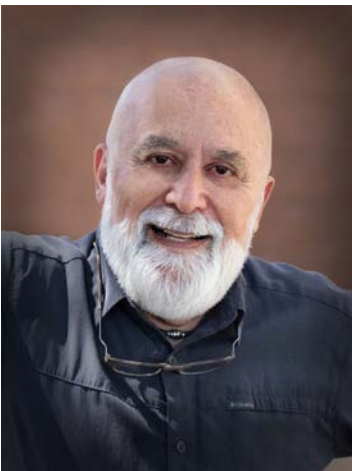
**Carmen Heredia** serves as the director of Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), Arizona's Medicaid and CHIP Program, overseeing the provision of acute, behavioral health, and long-term care services and supports to more than 2.5 million Arizona residents at an annual cost of \$22 billion. She was appointed by Governor Katie Hobbs on December 23, 2022.

Throughout her career, Ms. Heredia has passionately advocated for access to quality healthcare and education for underserved populations. Directly prior to joining AHCCCS, Ms. Heredia was the CEO of Valle del Sol, a provider organization delivering integrated behavioral health and primary care health as a federally qualified health center and a federally certified community behavioral health center.

Ms. Heredia has served on a variety of government task forces and boards, including St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, the Arizona Council of Human Service Providers, the Center for the Future of Arizona, the Arizona Alliance of Community Health Centers, National Council of Behavioral Health, the Phoenix Community Development and Investment Corporation, Contexture Health Information Exchange, and the ASU College of Health Solutions. She is a 2021 Virginia G. Piper Fellow and an alum of the Hispanic Leadership Institute. Ms. Heredia holds a master's degree in social work from Arizona State University with a concentration in planning and administration.

**12:00 pm, Wednesday, June 7 - Arizona Rural Health Policy Update and Ideas for 2024 - Panel**

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**Dr. Jack Dillenberg** is Dean Emeritus of A.T. Still University's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ASDOH) after serving fifteen years as the Inaugural Dean. He received his Master's Degree in Public Health from the Harvard School of Public Health and completed his dental education at New York University, College of Dentistry.

Prior to joining ASDOH, Dr. Dillenberg was Associate Director for public health programs in the California Department of Health Services and prior to that served as an Area Health Officer serving the west area of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services.

During most of the 1990s, Dr. Dillenberg served in several capacities in the Arizona Department of Health Services, including Director (for four years) and Assistant Director for the Division of Family Health Services.

Dr. Dillenberg is the recipient of a great number of honors and awards, including the Arizona Medical Association Humanitarian of the Year, the Fresh Start Foundation Man of the Year, the Harvard School of Public Health Alumni Award of Merit and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry.

Dr. Dillenberg is recognized at the local, state, national and global levels as an expert in the area of public health leadership, health program development, social marketing, oral health issues, health center design, training of community health workers, community organizing and lecture presentations. He is also a member of the American Dental Association, the American Association of Public Health Dentistry, the American Dental Education Association as well as many other organizations.

Dr. Dillenberg serves as a Board Member of the American Association of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry and is their Global Ambassador, and a Board member of the Brighterway Institute serving Arizona's Homeless. He was recently appointed to the Arizona State Supreme Court Attorney Discipline and Probable Cause Committee.

**12:30 pm, Tuesday, June 6 - And You Thought Rural Dentistry Was Just About Teeth!**





**Bettie Coplan** is Associate Professor at the Northern Arizona University PA Program where she also serves as director of the program's Rural Health Professions Program. Her clinical background is in gastroenterology and primary care, and she practices clinically at a community health center.



**Alex Demyan** serves AHCCCS as Assistant Director of the Division of Community Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations. Alex oversees the agency's two advocacy departments as well as the agency's federal relations unit. Alex brings

experience in non-profits, federal grants, behavioral health, and public policy. He is a leader in Medicaid health policy for a variety of populations. He led the agency through attaining multiple federal authorities in response to the pandemic, helped shape and negotiate AHCCCS' 1115 renewal and amendment, led stakeholder engagement for major agency initiatives, and assisted in health policy development. Alex is a graduate of both NAU and ASU.



**Daniel Derksen, MD**, is the University of Arizona Health Sciences Associate Vice President for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities. He is a tenured Professor of Public Health in the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health with

joint appointments in the College of Medicine and the College of Nursing. His current service, education and research activities include informing legislative, regulatory and program policy to improve access to health care and health insurance coverage; narrowing health disparities; developing, implementing and evaluating interprofessional service-learning sites; and working to assure a well-trained and distributed health workforce to meet the health needs of all Arizonans.



**Will Humble** is a long-time public health enthusiast, and is currently the Executive Director for the Arizona Public Health Association (AzPHA). His 30 years in public health include more than 2 decades at the Arizona Department of Health Services, where he

served in various roles including as the Director from 2009 to 2015. Prior to being appointed Director, he worked in various capacities in the public health preparedness service line. Most recently, he was a health policy director at the University of Arizona from 2015-2017. He continues to be involved in health policy in his role with AzPHA and as Adjunct Faculty with the UA Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health. He has a BS in Marketing from NAU, a BS in Microbiology from ASU, and a Masters in Public Health from the University of California at Berkeley. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Science from the University of Arizona in 2015 for engaging partnerships between academic and executive public health.



**Kevin Lohenry, PhD, PA-C**, Clinical Professor of Medicine and Vice-President, Interprofessional Education; Founding Program Director, PA Program University of Arizona. Dr. Lohenry joined the University of Arizona in 2022 after serving as the associate dean for graduate student

affairs at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California. He also served as program director for the Primary Care Physician Assistant Program at USC from 2011-2022. He is the co-founder of the Keck Street Medicine program at USC, which provides care for unsheltered individuals living on the streets of Los Angeles. He is a veteran of the United States Navy and has served as a Physician Assistant since 1996. Lohenry is a past-president of the Physician Assistant Education Association and former director-at-large for the board of directors for the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). In 2012, Lohenry served as a member of the Joining Forces Initiative with the First Lady's Office. He practiced family and internal medicine.





**Leslie Short** currently serves as the Integrated Services Administrator in the Division of Fee-for-Service Management at AHCCCS, providing regulatory oversight to the Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authorities and working to create and

support care coordination opportunities within the Indian Health Services and tribally operated health care delivery system for the American Indian population in Arizona. Leslie holds a Master's degree in Public Health from New York University and has spent close to fifteen years working in the public health sector implementing health care initiatives for diverse and underserved populations in NYC to rural and border communities in south-west Arizona.



**Ruben Soliz, MPH**, is the Federal Relations and Health Policy Advisor for Arizona's State Medicaid Program, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). With 15 years of experience in health and

human services, he has tirelessly advanced the policy objectives of improving access to care, ending homelessness, and youth development.



**Carin Watts** Health Disparities Program Manager Arizona Department of Health Services Carin Watts is the Health Disparities Program Manager for the Arizona Department of Health Services. As part of her role she serves as a subject matter expert and program

manager for Arizona's Community Health Worker initiatives, working to develop a statewide infrastructure to promote the advancement and sustainability of the Arizona CHW workforce. Carin began her public health career as a CHW volunteering in rural and underserved communities and has since worked in nonprofit and local and state government. She earned her Bachelor and Master's degrees in Public Health, focused on public health policy and community health and capacity building.



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**Lupe Campos**, Health Choice- BlueCross BlueShield Arizona

**Jonathan Cartsonis, MD**, University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix

**Edith Di Santo, MPH**, Bureau of Women's & Children's Health Arizona Department of Health Services

**Kris Erps Stewart**, Arizona Telemedicine Program

**Holly Figueroa**, Arizona Rural Health Association

**Timian Godfrey, DNP, FNP-BC, FAAN**, University of Arizona College of Nursing

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**Will Humble, MPH**, Arizona Public Health Association

**Marcus Johnson**, Vitalyst Health Foundation

**Nancy Johnson, RN, PhD**, University of Arizona Health Sciences Global MD Program

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**Janet Major**, Arizona Telemedicine Program & Southwest Telehealth Resource Center

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**Benjamin Mesnik**, Arizona Department of Health Services Office of Health Equity

**Felipe Perez, MD**, El Rio Health

**Floribella Redondo-Martinez**, Arizona Community Health Workers Association

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**Jennifer Zuñiga**, Arizona Area Health Education Centers

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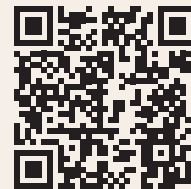
Dan Derksen, MD; Mona Arora PhD, MSPH; Agnes Attakai; Pam Barnes; Leila Barraza, JD, MPH; Jill Bullock; Mariah Erhart; Ann Garn; Rod Gorrell; Joyce Hospodar, MBA, MPA; Bryna Koch, DrPH; Jennifer Peters; Melissa Quezada



On behalf of the Center for Rural Health at The University of Arizona,  
Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health,  
we wish to thank you for attending  
the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Arizona Rural Health Conference

### **Participant Survey**

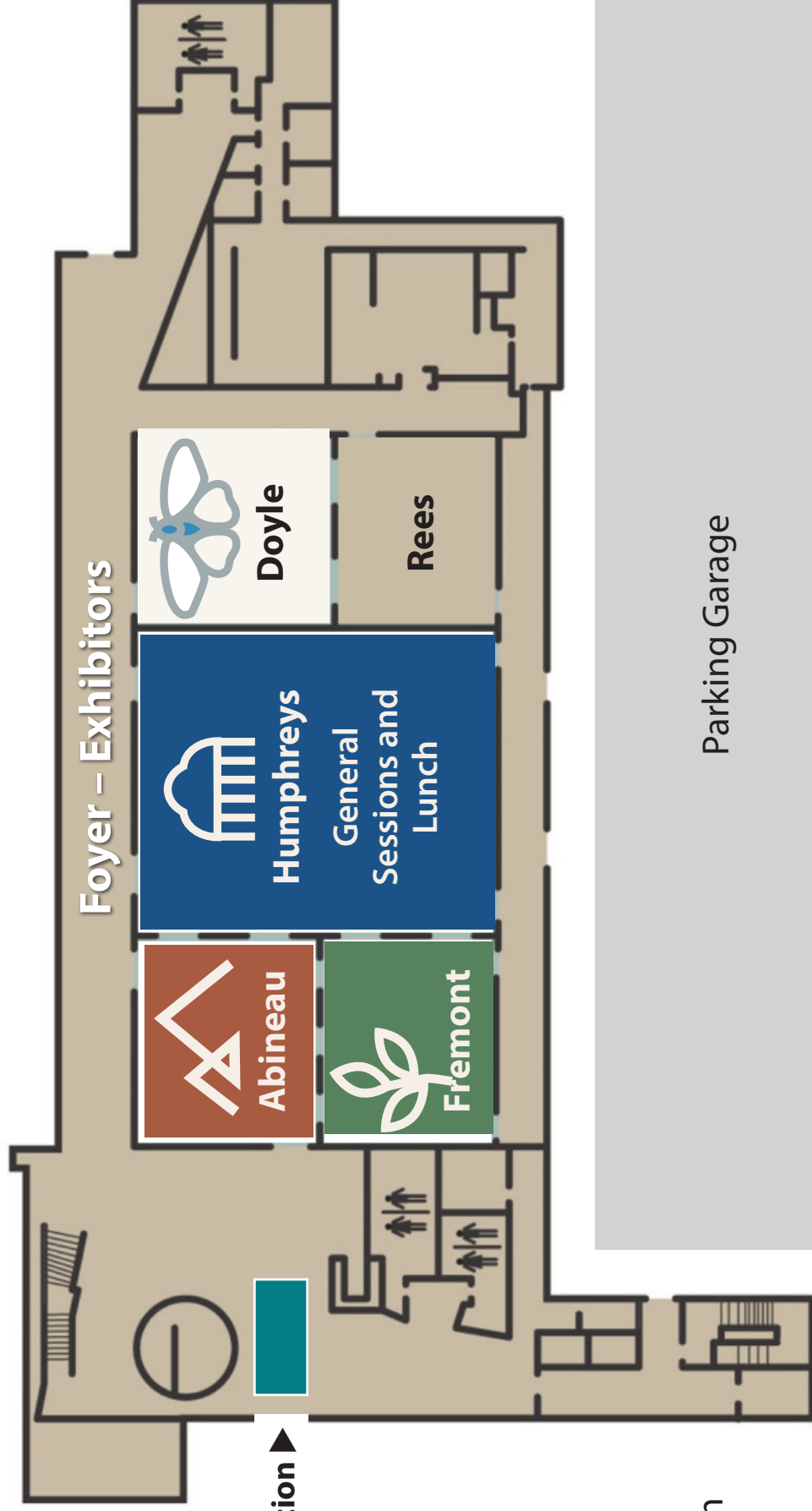
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A wide-angle photograph of a river flowing through a deep canyon. The river's surface is calm, reflecting the surrounding steep, layered rock walls and the clear blue sky. The lighting suggests it's either early morning or late afternoon, with warm tones on the canyon walls.

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