

NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM NEWSLETTER

Winter 2019





Professional & Personal Development

This issue's theme covers the professional and personal development our team participates in throughout the year to better serve our communities.

America Walks Walking College by Nichole Romero

Health Promotion Specialist, Nichole Romero, was accepted into the 2018 America Walks Walking College, of which only 30 people from around the country and Canada were accepted.

In September, Nichole attended the Bike/Walk/Places Conference in New Orleans, where she met the other walking fellows and mentors who are just as passionate as she is about creating more safe and walkable communities. She attended many breakout sessions and learned how to engage professionals in multiple fields, including:

- **How to navigate the structure of local and state government and engage elected officials in conversations about walkability**
- **How to navigate the structure design and implement effective policy campaigns, such as reducing speed limits and requiring complete streets**
- **How to effectively research, understand, and communicate data to support campaigns,**
- **How to efficiently recruit and inspire local advocates as to the benefits of physical activity.**



**Nichole Romero
with her group!**

As part of her fellowship, Nichole was in the "Rural Group" along with other walking fellows who live and work in rural areas. Together they learned a lot about walkability, how to engage communities, and how to obtain funding via weekly conference calls with their mentors and online training. Each walking fellow was mandated to create a "Walking Action Plan" that was then included in a report published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control at the end of October.

Nichole will utilize this new information with the group that she is co-founder/co-facilitator of called "Ramblin' Round Raton", which is based in Raton, NM. Ramblin' Round Raton will also be eligible for grants and opportunities that are only offered to walking fellows and their organizations. Nichole will remain engaged in continuous networking opportunities with her walking fellows and mentors.



Health Promotion Staff Represent New Mexico at Southern Obesity Summit by Amy Sandoval and Christa Hernandez

Amy and Christa were invited to represent New Mexico among a team of four at the 12th Annual Southern Obesity Summit hosted in Charleston, West Virginia. The Southern Obesity Summit (SOS) is the largest regional obesity prevention event in the United States, drawing hundreds of participants from 16 Southern States consisting of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. This year's conference emphasized obesity prevention efforts particularly in rural communities, which hits home to the demographics of New Mexico as a state. According to CDC, obesity prevalence has been shown to be significantly higher among adults living in rural counties (34.2 percent) than among those living in metropolitan counties (28.7 percent).

On the last day of the summit, Amy represented New Mexico during a "Spark Tank" Panel Discussion. This new session gave state teams an opportunity to present their best obesity prevention strategy and proposal, incorporating health equity into their prevention work. A panel of funders listened and responded to each presentation, and the state team with the strongest strategy received a 2-4-hour consultation with one or more of the funders to help shape a proposal.

Amy shared an innovative proposal where mobile grocery stores are utilized to go out into rural and frontier communities and provide fresh, healthy, and affordable food. This idea would benefit areas where there aren't grocery stores or where produce is only delivered once a week. The idea is similar to the concept of an ice cream truck, which goes neighborhood by neighborhood at a specific time during certain days of the week. The premise utilizes mobile grocery stores to address obesity, transportation, and access to care within many of the rural communities across the state. Although New Mexico was not selected for the consultation, Amy did receive a lot of positive feedback for her presentation and description around the barriers and challenges rural and frontier communities face in New Mexico.

Christa and Amy are very grateful to have been given the opportunity to attend the Southern Obesity Summit where they were able to gain insight about the various successes and challenges faced by other rural communities in the country. Attending this conference allowed them to learn about innovative physical activity, education, nutrition and community collaboration initiatives which they plan on sharing with partners within the Northeast Region and across New Mexico.

Christa Hernandez, left, and Amy Sandoval, right.



Amy Sandoval presenting her idea at the summit.





Data Conferences & a Panel by Gwendolyn Gallagher

Gwendolyn Gallagher, Northeast Region Community Health Epidemiologist, had the privilege of attending three professional development conferences in 2018.

First, Gwendolyn earned a travel scholarship to attend the annual conference for the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) in West Palm Beach, FL, including an in-person workshop "Community Health Assessment" for epidemiologists to learn more about geographic information systems (e.g., creating maps) and new, community-level data. The purpose of the Annual Conference is to learn up-to-date surveillance and epidemiology projects as well as to have the opportunity to engage with epidemiologists across the U.S. The CSTE provides education and support to practicing epidemiologists in a variety of public health areas as well as expertise for program and surveillance efforts.



**Gwendolyn Gallagher
with fellows!**

Second, she was the recipient of a travel scholarship awarded to her by All In: Data for Community Health. The meeting was held in Denver, CO. All In: Data for Community Health is a learning network of communities, testing exciting new ways to systematically improve community health outcomes through multi-sector partnerships working to share data. All In partner networks are building the evidence base to advance practice, identify gaps, highlight investment needs, and inform policy. Collectively, All In reflects the efforts and insights from over 100 community collaborations across the country.

Lastly, Gwendolyn was an invited panelist for the AcademyHealth's Public Health Systems Research Interest Group annual meeting in Seattle, WA. The purpose of this in-person meeting was to present on "hospital-health department collaboration for improved community health." Specifically, she spoke about the Community Health Needs Assessments and collaborative work with Christus St. Vincent and Taos Holy Cross hospitals.



Are you Prepared? by Valentina White

San Miguel Public Health Office has been an active member of the San Miguel Local Emergency Preparedness Committee (LEPC) for several years. The LEPC is a committee under the San Miguel Office of Emergency Management (OEM). This past year OEM has coordinated a few Emergency Management classes that were hosted in Las Vegas, NM. Each Emergency Management class stressed the importance of developing an emergency plan before a disaster take place. San Miguel's LEPC and OEM office participates in various events and shares the following information with individuals.

Natural disasters like wildfires, severe winter weather and tornadoes, including human disasters like toxic spills, power blackouts and active shooters can happen at any time and in any part of the country. No one can stop natural disasters from happening. Developing an emergency plan and assembling a Go Bag and Emergency Kits is one way to help you and your family during an emergency.

Include every member in your family when planning, preparing and practicing your emergency plan. The most important factor is communication and knowing your emergency plans. Know where to go, what to do, and how to reconnect during an emergency.

Knowing the types of disasters that can occur in your area can help you better plan for an emergency. Go Bags and Emergency Kits can be tailored for a specific individual and items in a Go Bag or Emergency Kit can vary depending on you and your family size and specific needs. Preparing and planning today, is the best way to help you and your family during an emergency.



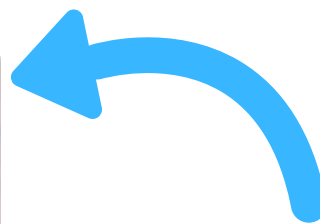
What's in your Go Kit?



Making the Personal Professional by Desiree Valdez

Desiree Valdez, Health Promotion Specialist, was able to participate in many professional development opportunities in 2018 which allowed her to grow and develop personally. These opportunities ranged from learning more about our food systems to exploring health equity in the context of public health with a national cohort; There were chances to learn how to build health literacy into our state through coalition work, as well as to interrogate race and implicit biases in everyday interactions. This wide array of training and workshop opportunities speaks to the variety of tasks the Health Promotion Program demands every day.

Desiree brought one of her passions, facilitating self-care, to her work through facilitating mindfulness sessions for staff at the local health office where she is stationed. She started these sessions during the Week of Health event DOH held in August and due to staff interest, decided to facilitate sessions weekly. Even though Desiree facilitates the sessions, she strongly feels the benefits of including a mindfulness practice into her work week. With a calm and open mindset, Desiree can better serve the communities she works with as they strive to create healthy and thriving communities.



Desiree Valdez, left, and Valentina White, right, at the NM Health Equity Partnership Statewide Health Equity Gathering in October.



NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM

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Rio Arriba, Los Alamos, and Taos Counties are currently covered by Christa Hernandez

