

NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023



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What's Blooming?



Building the SHIP

Amy Sandoval

"The purpose of the County and Tribal Health Councils Act is to improve the health of New Mexicans by encouraging the development of comprehensive, community-based health planning councils to identify and address local health needs and priorities." (NM Legislature, House Bill 137)

The citation above is from House Bill 137 relating to County and Tribal Health Councils who play an instrumental role in our New Mexico Public Health system. Unlike some other states, New Mexico has a centralized Department of Health overseen by the State of New Mexico. With the absence of local county health departments to create comprehensive community health plans to prioritize health issues at the local level, this task has been embedded in the work of all NM health councils who have been recognized as an official health council within their jurisdiction (both county and tribal). Currently NM has a total of 42 recognized community health councils (33 county and 9 tribal).

Most recently, NM received funding to support community health councils with updating their local health priorities. Those health councils who chose to accept the funding have been working with their health council members and partners to review and analyze data by creating a community health assessment (CHA). A CHA in simple terms is a local assessment of a community's identified health needs (e.g. diabetes, food access, substance misuse, housing, etc.) and issues through systemic data collection and analysis. After the assessment phase has been completed, they will then prioritize what health issues/indicators they will select to then begin creating their community health improvement plans (CHIP). A CHIP is a long-term, organized plan to address specific public health issues communities are facing based on the results of the CHA utilizing a community health improvement process (assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation). These CHIPs are typically updated every three to five years. As local priorities are selected, health councils are not prioritizing health indicators based solely on data, but also factoring in capacity and resources to support them with implementing feasible strategies to have successful outcomes.

After these CHIPs have been created and priorities have been selected, they will then be shared with the New Mexico Department of Health to inform the State with what is being considered at the local level. While health councils are creating their CHAs and CHIPs at the local level, the New Mexico Department of Health has been working on their own State Health Assessment. Similar to a local CHA, the department is reviewing and analyzing data based on statewide health needs. This State Health Assessment and local health assessments/priorities will then go through further analysis to align with Executive priorities to create our State Health Improvement Plan (aka SHIP). The SHIP will set priorities and coordinate resources to effectively develop policies and programs that promote health and measure progress across chosen health indicators impacting New Mexicans. The SHIP is built on a multi-sector collaboration with partners like health councils, as well as other State agencies, the healthcare delivery system, non-profits, and diverse community populations. The updated SHIP is set to be completed and 'set sail' in 2024.

100% New Mexico

Valentina White

The 100% New Mexico initiative is the first in the nation to have a statewide strategy identifying barriers to ten vital services in communities and counties. This initiative was created to address and prevent adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), family trauma and social adversity led by local community and county stakeholders. By providing the ten vital services for surviving and thriving, communities and counties engaged in the 100% initiative help their residents and families increase access to care and services to endure public health crises and health disparities.

The ten vital services include five surviving and five thriving services. The following five services for surviving include medical and dental care, behavioral health care, housing security programs, food security programs, and transportation to vital services. The five services for thriving include parent support, early childhood education, community schools, youth mentor programs, and job training. By providing and having access to these 10 vital services, they promote, and empower children and families to have a healthier life in New Mexico by preventing ACEs, social adversity, and health disparities.

Currently, there are 18 counties in New Mexico that have adopted the 100% NM initiative. Specially in the Northeast Region, there are 6 100% Counties: Rio Arriba, Taos, Santa Fe, Mora, San Miguel, and Guadalupe. As the latest county in the Northeast Region to join 100% NM, Guadalupe is working on their 100% community survey and building their core action teams for the initiative.

The vision of 100% NM is to have every student empowered to succeed in school and every family to live in communities with resources to care for one another and where every NM resident is protected. Their goal is to create trauma-free childhoods that lead to school achievement, community engagement, job readiness, and a self-sufficient healthy life in NM.

For more information, please visit the 100% New Mexico website for more information at [New Mexico, USA - 100% New Mexico \(100nm.org\)](https://www.100nm.org).





Spring 2023 What's Blooming?

Data As Seeds Jeremy Espinoza

When attempting to successfully tackle public health concerns, quantitative data like health indicators are important. If we use a plant metaphor, this data can be considered the “seeds” of public health action. Through analysis, these “seeds” grow into the public health projects being implemented by NE Region health councils and “bloom” into positive results like flowers. Keeping track of the data from seed to bloom is a good way to obtain a quantitative measurement of the effects that public health projects have in the Northeast Region.

These “seeds” are maintained by various state data stewards, and there is a tool providing access to this data for public health analysis. New Mexico’s Health Indicator Indicator Based Information System (NM-IBIS) is a website, maintained by the New Mexico Department of Health, where the public can find various New Mexico public health indicators. NM IBIS has a large trove of health indicator data available. These data sources include Birth and Death Certificate information from New Mexico Vital Records, Morbidity Data from Hospital inpatient discharge and emergency department data, Survey data from BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System), PRAMS (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System), and YRRS (Youth Resiliency and Risk Survey), American Community Survey, and Population Estimate data.

To find some “seeds,” we can locate a Health Region Community Report and examine community health indicators in the Northeast Health region. The first step is to go to NM IBIS Community Reports at [NM-IBIS - Northeast New Mexico Health Region Community Report](#). From the drop down options, change Community Type to “**New Mexico Health Region**”, New Mexico Health Region to “**Northeast**”, and Set of Health Indicators to “**Community Health Status Indicators-Health Status**”. After these settings are selected, the website should generate the table below:

Northeast New Mexico Health Region Community Report

Community Health Profile Report Options

Community Type:

New Mexico Health Region:

Set of Health Indicators:

Indicator	Northeast New Mexico Health Region	New Mexico	Compared to New Mexico	United States	Compared to United States
Teen Birth Rate <i>(Births per 1,000 Girls in the Population, 2020)</i>	14.4 <i>(11.9 - 17.0)</i>	21.8	Better	15.4	Similar
Influenza and Pneumonia Deaths <i>(Deaths per 100,000 Population, Age-adjusted, 2020)</i>	11.4 <i>(8.0 - 14.8)</i>	13.8	Similar	13.0	Similar
Syphilis Rates <i>(Cases per 100,000 Population, 2020)</i>	11.3 <i>(7.8 - 15.0)</i>	33.1	Better	13.1	Similar
Pertussis <i>(Cases per 100,000 Population, 2018-2020)</i>	8.1 <i>(6.2 - 10.0)</i>		No comparison value	4.8	Worse

This is the table generated in NM-IBIS highlighting health indicators for the Northeast Region with comparisons to New Mexico and US averages with color-coded comparisons.

When examining the health indicators in the IBIS Community Health Profile report, the values have a corresponding color-coded cell that indicates if the value is statistically significantly better, similar or worse compared to NM or the US.

The “Teen Birth Rate” for the Northeast Region is listed as 14.4 (births per 1000 girls in the population, 2020), which is better compared to the rest of NM, and similar compared to the US. When looking at Pertussis infections, the rate for the Northeast Region is 8.1 (Cases per 100,000, 2018-2020), a worse comparable value to the US; identifying that rates of Pertussis cases is a health indicator to potentially keep track of as an emerging or current issue or a “seed,” if you will. Hypothetically, if this “seed” is planted and a community starts a project to address Pertussis case rates, the data can then be tracked to monitor the “growth” and “blooms” and determine if Pertussis rates are affected.



Spring 2023

What's Blooming?

NMDOH Is Actively Searching for Growers

Nichole Romero



Many communities in New Mexico suffer from the lack of having quality fresh fruit and vegetables available to their residents. A lot of available produce is poor quality and/or comes from other countries. The New Mexico Department of Health recognizes this issue and is dedicated to bringing fresh produce into communities and assisting seniors and WIC recipients with funds to purchase it.

Veronica Griego, New Mexico Farmers Market Programs Manager, and Nichole Romero, Health Promotion Specialist, have been actively searching for growers to provide fresh produce in Colfax, Harding, and Union Counties due to the lack of outlets in these three counties. Recently, Veronica discovered a grower in Harding to possibly participate in the program. Also most recently, Veronica and Nichole collaborated on identifying a new location for the Legend Brand (farm stand) to be stationed in Raton since their previous location is now unavailable. When the Legend Brand signed up to sell produce in Raton last year, Nichole worked closely with Veronica to ensure all the paperwork was completed.

Health Promotion staff across the state have partnered with the Senior Farmer's Market Program over the years to bring this needed resource to their assigned communities. Qualifying Seniors must be 60 years and older (Non-Native) or 55 years and older if you are Native-American and qualify financially to receive a benefit card that is loaded with \$50.00 that must be used with growers who sign up to sell with the program. With this card, seniors can purchase fresh fruit, vegetables, and honey that all come from local growers.

The Farmers' Market program not only offers a great benefit to the recipient, but also to the growers who sell their produce. Many times, the grower sells most, if not all, of their produce. This program ensures that seniors and WIC recipients alike get healthy food that assists them with living a healthy life.

If you know of any growers in the NE Region who would be willing to join this beneficial program, please reach out to the NE Region Health Promotion Specialists or Veronica Griego at 505-469-0548.

Stress Less- A Calm Space in Schools

Candice Wilhite-Quiroga

Mental health is important to address at all ages, but when you focus on mental health over the lifespan, the need starts young. Healthy-minded students are more likely to go to school ready to learn, actively engage in school activities, have supportive and caring connections with adults and other students, have nonaggressive behaviors, use appropriate problem-solving skills, and add to positive school culture. To foster this idea, many schools across the state and country are implementing special rooms when students need a mental break, called calming or escape rooms. These rooms have multiple resources available for students to take a mental health break including telemental health resources, self-led yoga, breathing exercises, and quiet music. The rooms are softly lit and comfortable. They would be available to students any time during the school day when they feel overwhelmed and stop making good choices. The benefits to having these escape rooms have shown to positively impact a child's day, which in turn reduces the chances of violence, self-harm, and unhealthy habits. Working with her assigned community, NE Region Health Promotion Specialist Candice Wilhite-Quiroga learned Taos has shown successes in their grade school settings with a program they call an "intentional calming corner initiative". These rooms allow students to quietly decompress, reflect, and begin developing strategies for addressing and managing their emotions. Through initial participant evaluations released in February, a total of 145 students visited the calming rooms, with 110 respondents responding favorably to the rooms.

Respecting the readiness of her assigned communities, this is an idea Candice would like to introduce to her partners to consider implementing in middle schools. The 2021 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey in Rio Arriba County, for example, show a very high need for student mental health services, with the highest population being middle school students. A staggering 24.7% of middle schoolers that replied to the survey reported frequent mental distress, while an alarming 28.8% of respondents seriously considered suicide.

With the hopes of seeing this idea move forward, Candice has met with the NMDOH NE Region School Health Advocate and the Office of School and Adolescent Health to gather ideas, perspectives, and next steps in the process, as well as taking into consideration evidence-based research from additional programs nationwide. Candice has contacted her community's student wellness director and will work to bridge resources from the Office of School and Adolescent Health and the NE Region School Health Advocate to explore this initiative further, including a tour of her community's School Based Health Centers and further discussions with community partners. Helping students recognize and regulate their emotions and feelings in a positive way now will lay the foundation for a healthier, more resilient and fulfilled world in the future.



Example of a student calming rooms; a place to self-regulate their mental health



Spring 2023

What's Blooming?

Communities Bloom With Opportunities To Get Outside And Get Moving

Heather Burnham

The days are longer, the weather is warmer, and communities are encouraging us to get outside. Much like the plants around us, community groups around the state are gearing up to bloom with events designed to get us moving. In Santa Fe, "Vámonos—Santa Fe Walks" is a free city-wide program of guided weekly walks to encourage folks to get outside and walk. Vámonos is organized by the Santa Fe Walking Collaborative and under the Santa Fe Conservation Trust with broad membership from community partners like the City of Santa Fe, City of Santa Fe Senior Services, Brookdale Senior Living Solutions, Big Brothers Big Sisters, La Familia Medical Center, AARP, and NMDOH.

The NE Region Health Promotion Coordinator, Heather Burnham, has been representing NMDOH with Vámonos to create a free walk for almost every week from May through October. Most walks are after work, last a little more than an hour, and are a great way to explore Santa Fe's trails, get some fresh air and meet people. Vámonos also offers free Saturday hikes to introduce Santa Fe's dirt trails to the community; where dogs on a leash are welcome to join.

Being physically active, like walking, is one of the important actions that people of all ages can take to improve their health. Physical activity fosters normal growth and development and can make people feel better, function better, sleep better, and reduce the risk of many chronic diseases. Health benefits start immediately after exercising, and even short episodes of physical activity are beneficial. For substantial health benefits, Federal recommendations for adults are to be active at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week at moderate intensity.

MOVE YOUR WAY. Adults need a mix of physical activity to stay healthy.

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity*
Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts.

at least **150** minutes a week

Muscle-strengthening activity
Do activities that make your muscles work harder than usual.

at least **2** days a week

AND

If you prefer vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (like running), aim for at least 75 minutes a week.
If that's more than you can do right now, **do what you can.** Even 5 minutes of physical activity has real health benefits.

Walk. Run. Dance. Play. **What's your move?**

This graphic comes from the Move Your Way campaign and summarizes the Federal recommendations for adult physical activity.

If you are in the Santa Fe area and/or interested in joining a Vámonos walk, please go to www.sfct.org/Vamonos to see the complete schedule and some suggested walking routes or text SFWALKS to 833-243-6033 for walk reminders. If you are outside of the Santa Fe area, explore what walking groups or events might be happening near you. If you would rather start a walking group of your own, the American Heart Association recommends four steps. First, identify target members. Do you want to invite the general public, only close friends, or people in your neighborhood? Second, choose a time. Based on who you plan to invite, pick a regular time slot and schedule about 60-75 minutes. Third, plan a route (and a backup). A good walking route is free, safe, well-maintained, and near your home or work. Also, explore if your area has an indoor location that could function as a backup for when the weather is poor. Lastly, spread the word. Reach out to your target members with flyers, social media, phone calls, or emails. Aim for between 5 and 15 members.

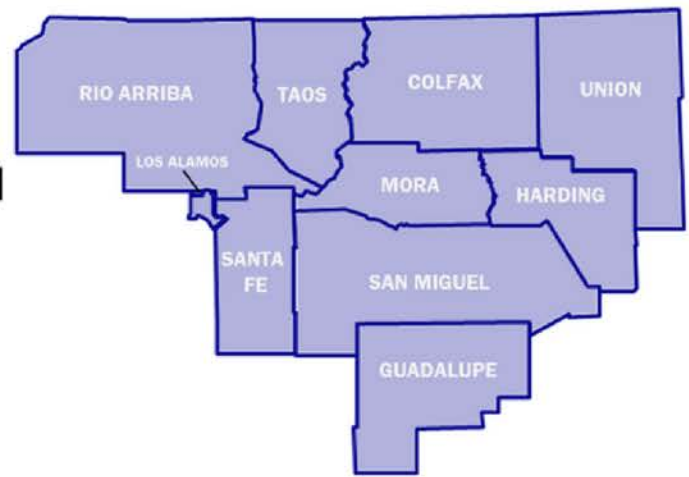
Whatever method fits you, Spring is a great time to get outdoors, get moving to improve your health, and enjoy the events blooming around you!

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Move Your Way campaign. <https://health.gov/moveyourway>
2. American Heart Association. Start a Walking Group. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/walking/start-or-join-a-walking-club>

PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

We serve our diverse communities by harnessing their power to create positive and lasting solutions to the public health issues they face, as well as locate resources and assist with health initiative development. We envision creating systems with engaged communities striving for a happy and healthy lifespan for all in New Mexico.



HOW WE SERVE COMMUNITIES

- Facilitate connection between community partners and NMDOH programs and resources
- Conduct community-based health promotion with community and tribal health councils, coalitions, and other partners
- Access resources and funding
- Link community partners to data, evidence-based interventions, and NMDOH programs.
- Provide technical assistance with community health assessment, health profiles, communications, and strategic planning
- Maintain open communication between community partners and NMDOH
- Engage in advocacy and policy development around local and state-wide health issues

WE CONNECT THE DOTS



“Health Promotion Teams strengthen collaborative efforts at the local level...to provide health councils and community partners with data, technical assistance and other resources at the request of local communities.”

- 2014 New Mexico State Health Improvement Plan



NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM TEAM



Amy Sandoval
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WHAT THE PROGRAM MANAGER DOES:

Leads the team to facilitate the Public Health Division mission and initiatives, coordinates and implements strategies to address health priorities and indicators, and supports community preventive and population-based services

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WHAT THE EPIDEMIOLOGIST DOES:

Provides leadership for assessment, evaluation, and public health planning, develops and builds capacity within the team to increase assessment skills in data interpretation, analysis, program evaluation, and other related skills

WHAT THE COORDINATORS DO:

Assure coordination of community health improvement activities with DOH by assessing community readiness, assist with provision and interpretation of data, identify local partners and include them in the planning and implementation of regional and state initiatives

WHAT THE SPECIALISTS DO:

Work within and support their local Public Health Offices, engage with their local communities to address health priorities through the development of policy, supporting health councils, and implementing special projects and grants

HEALTH PROMOTION SPECIALISTS

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