



COLLEGE OF
POPULATION HEALTH

2023

Impact Report

Our Vision For Change

2023 Impact Report



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The UNM College of Population Health Impact Report is available digitally at <https://cutt.ly/coph-impact-report-2023>. Your comments and ideas are welcome. Please contact marketing and communications at: coph-marketing@salud.unm.edu.

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From The Dean

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2022-23 Impact Report! This past fiscal year has been a remarkable journey of growth for our College, as we more than tripled our faculty and staff. This expansion signifies our commitment to strengthening the foundation of our institution as we prepare for transformative changes.

Throughout this past year, the College's impact has reverberated across our strategic collaborations and interventions to address population health challenges. Our efforts have paid off in the creation of interventions unique to New Mexico. As we continue to evolve, we will be concentrating efforts in vital areas such as biostatistics, nutrition, and environmental health with the goal of increasing equity and social justice.

One of our goals is to create job opportunities for our graduates. We take pride in the work we do, which not only benefits our students' futures but also has a lasting impact on the well-being of communities. Our vision is to make this work visible and recognized, celebrating the contributions of our students and faculty.

As we enter the coming year, we are enthusiastic about the opportunities that lie ahead. Among our priorities is a focused effort to increase research with support from funders such as the National



Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are also thrilled to announce our partnership with New Mexico State University, enabling us to offer a dual campus degree with a PhD in Health Equity Sciences. Our next exciting endeavor is to integrate social work into the College, thereby further supporting the health and well-being of all New Mexico's residents.

In conclusion, this report is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the entire COPH community. Together, we have achieved significant milestones, and with your continued support and collaboration, we are poised to achieve even greater success in the years to come.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey.

Tracie C. Collins, MD, MPH, MHCDS
Dean, College of Population Health

Public Health In Action

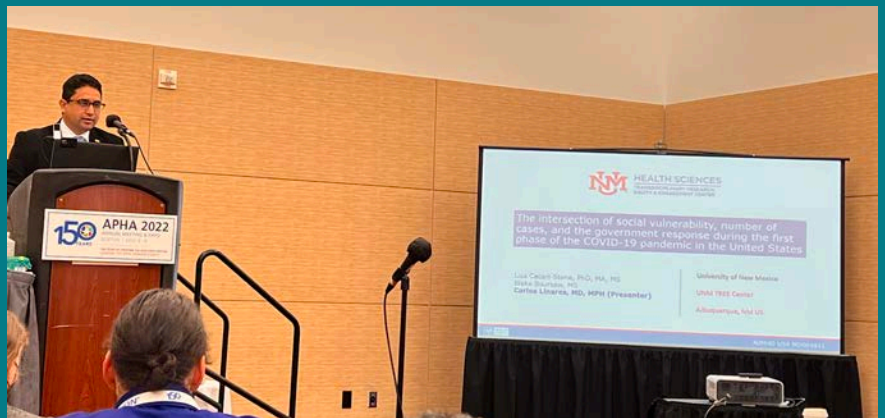
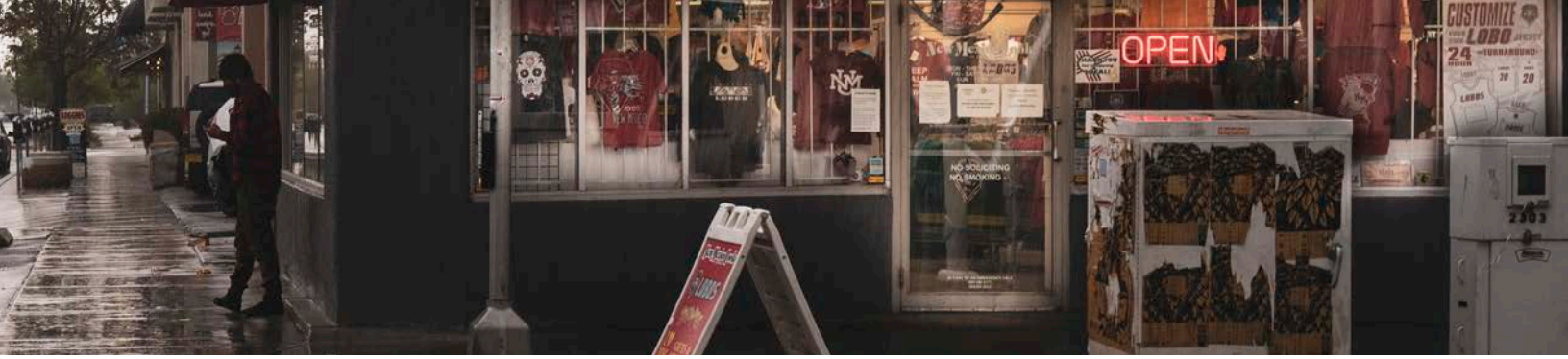




Photo Credit: Scientific American





Tracking New Mexico's Health Challenges

By Sofia Olay, MPH Student

The rural landscape of New Mexico, as well as limited necessary resources in the state can make addressing the health of residents a complex issue. Evidence has shown that our health is not only determined by our individual behaviors but also from social and economic factors labeled as social determinants of health. These factors, such as where we live, play and work, influence our health.

In New Mexico, the poverty rate is 17.5%, which is 51% higher than the national average (New Mexico's Indicator Based Information System - NM-IBIS, 2020). Poverty is correlated with a higher risk of opioid addiction, negative outcomes after COVID-19 infection and many other adverse health outcomes. Additionally, New Mexico suffers from a high rate of medical and behavioral health provider shortages across the entire state in urban and rural areas alike.

These are issues that public health professionals try to address daily. Solutions require deep analysis of the barriers and effective interventions that can help people not only manage chronic or severe health issues but prevent them from happening in the first place. At the College of Population Health, these public health issues are analyzed and studied recognizing that our health is influenced by a variety of structural, social, biological and psychological factors.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2023) defines the social determinants as:

1. Economic Stability is having the financial means to consistently cover expenses such as food, utilities, shelter, and health services. Poverty is closely linked to low birth weight higher rates of asthma, heart conditions, hearing problems and digestive disorders. (Braveman, 2011)

- a. Homelessness and housing stability are pervasive systems-level issues in the state. 17.2 % of New Mexicans have severe housing problems (State of New Mexico Human Services Department, 2022) and 23.1% of children in New Mexico live in poverty. (Deloitte, 2022)

New Mexicans with Severe Housing Issues

17.2%

23.1%

New Mexican Children Live in Poverty

2. Education Access and Quality

determines whether people have the necessary training to enter the workforce and increase economic stability.

- a. In 2020, 31.27% of New Mexicans have less than a high school diploma or GED. (Deloitte, 2022)

New Mexicans with Less Than A High School Diploma or GED

31.27%

3. Health Care Access and Quality refer to our ability to get to a primary care, specialist care, urgent care, emergency care, dental, and/or mental health provider in a timely manner.

- a. Provider shortages are high in New Mexico, making access to care even more challenging. In 2020, the patient to primary care provider ratio in New Mexico was 1,330 : 1, compared to 1,310 : 1 in the US. (County Health Reports, 2023)

Patient to Primary Care Provider Ratio

1,316 : 1

4. Neighborhood and Built Environments are man-made places and spaces where we live and call home. Our health can be impacted by this, for example, if our neighborhoods do not have appropriate lighting and we cannot go spend time outside and get the recommended amount of physical activity to maintain a healthy heart.

- a. In 2020, 26% of New Mexican children experienced food insecurity, with food insecurity in one county as high as 38% (New Mexico Voices, 2021).

New Mexican Children experiencing food insecurity

26%

*4 Year Average

5. Social and Community Context

are the relationships we have with the people around us - our families, friends, colleagues and other members in our small and larger communities. When we face hardship, feel unsafe or become ill, we rely deeply on our social supports. When these are not present, they can deeply impact our health.

- a. Social isolation can lead to mental and physical issues, including a 29% increased risk of heart disease, a 32% increased risk of stroke or mental diseases, anxiety and depression. It has even been linked to an elevated chance of premature death. (ABQ Journal / Meals on Wheels)

Increased risk of stroke or mental diseases due to social isolation

32%



*Original diagram by health.gov

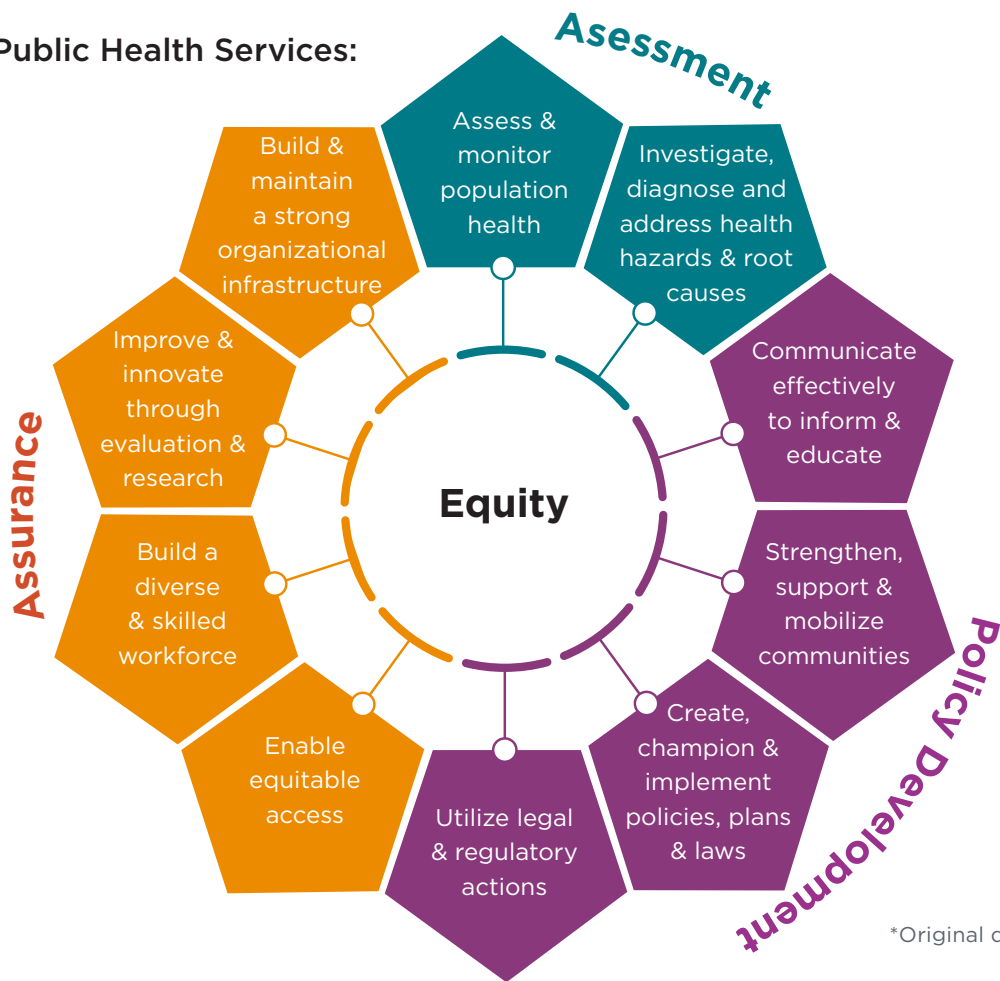
10 Essential Public Health Services

The 10 essential services is a framework that guides public health activities. Public health workers seek to ensure access to health for all people and to understand barriers that are caused by systemic inequality. The 10 essential health services are divided into three functions. The Core Functions of Public Health are (American Public Health Association, 2020):

1. **Assessment:** This phase includes data collection, analysis, and evaluation that reveals innovative ways to understand inequities and how they relate to health.
2. **Policy Development:** These are the different system, organizational and community solutions to public health issues. Policy is always informed by evidence provided by assessment activities and is informed by changes reflected in the data.
3. **Assurance:** These activities secure, improve, and expand the public health systems to create equitable access for all.

On the following pages, you can read about how the College of Population Health and its affiliates are working to address these complex challenges. ■

10 Essential Public Health Services:



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From Cultural Resilience to Policy Solutions

A Glimpse into TREE Center's Efforts

By Sofia Olay, MPH Student

The 10 Essential Services of Public Health tell us that health equity efforts should not stop at the assessment or community intervention phases. Rather, public health workers need to evaluate policy solutions that are attuned to the unique needs, histories and cultures of communities experiencing health disparities. The Transdisciplinary Research Equity and Engagement Center (TREE Center, NIH/NIMHD Grant # U54MD004811) focuses on public health solutions that center the needs and disparities experienced by BIPOC communities. Public health professionals understand that the complex health needs of marginalized groups are interwoven with intergenerational and historical trauma, adverse childhood experiences and the social determinants of health. Addressing issues of depression, anxiety and PTSD at a population level requires a systematic analysis of barriers

and creating strong policies protecting the public health centered in equity. The TREE Center, led by Principal investigator, Lisa Cacari Stone, PhD, Professor within the College of Population Health and co-PI's Dr. Steve Verney (Psychology) and Dr. Theresa Cruz (Pediatrics) and a co-leadership team across the health and social sciences, aims to address health inequities through a community-centered and participatory framework.

New Mexico faces many challenges in behavioral health:

- Our state faces a 50% higher rate of suicide compared to nationally (NM IBIS, 2020)
- On average New Mexicans reported experiencing 4.3 days with poor mental health in one month (County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2023)

- The biggest provider shortage in the country, with the patient to mental health provider ratio of 281 to 1 (Deloitte, 2022).

The TREE Center approaches these issues recognizing the power that communities already possess to heal and repair the gaps in the behavioral health system and how they can inform it to reach all. The work is centered in the theoretical frameworks of health disparities, transdisciplinary, multi-level, intersectional and community-based participatory research. The research touches on multiple levels of health that ultimately seek to heal historical trauma and unresolved community grief.

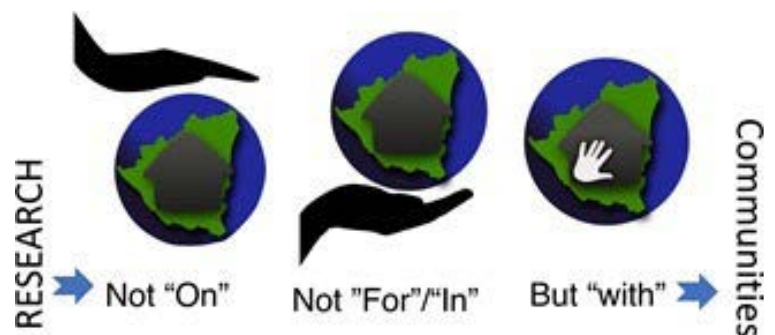
The center emphasizes research “with” (not on or in) communities as the cornerstone of the academic work. The TREE Center does this through three cores- Administrative, Investigator Development and Community Engagement and Dissemination (CECD). Dr. Lorenda Belone, Professor in the College of Population Health leads the CECD. The TREE Center relies on a Community, Scientific and Policy Advisory Committee which guides the center and assures a focus on New Mexico’s diverse communities, their needs, benefits to them and assures collaborative translation of co-knowledge production into practice and policy. The TREE Center is a National Center of Excellence funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. It is grounded in academic and scholarly excellence while also centering the needs of those who are left at the margins.



The following are projects of the TREE Center:

Immigrant Well-Being Project

The project is led by Dr. Jessica Goodkind (PI, Sociology) and aims to capture longitudinal data about the mental health and wellbeing of immigrants and refugees residing in New Mexico. The project implements multi-level public health interventions involving community learning spaces, policy interventions and referral to behavioral health services specializing in the mental health of immigrants and refugees.





Integrating Intergenerational Cultural Knowledge Exchange with Zero Suicide

This project is led by Dr. Deborah Altschul (Psychiatry, Community Behavioral Health) in collaboration with San Felipe Pueblo partners. Culturally responsive care is a necessity for healing and the TREE Center is working on evidencing the power of language and culture in suicide prevention. With tribal nations having some of the highest rates of suicide in the country, the Zero Suicide study evaluates the effectiveness of integrating traditional cultural components to suicide prevention.



Equity in Policy Training Institute

The TREE Center goes a step further and shows that policy implementation is key to the formation of sustainable social change by centering community resilience and cultural knowledge. The Equity in Policy Institute was founded by Dr. Cacari Stone and is comprised of state of the art innovations in data democracy and anti-racist research with a community engagement focus. It is comprised of 9 modules to work on state-level policies focused on decreasing inequities of marginalized communities in New Mexico. In 2022, 14 place-based teams produced policy briefs and participated in policy dialogues aimed at generating knowledge that supports local policy change to improve the conditions of the community and support racial healing and social justice in policy. The institute is centered in the needs of members who are marginalized and often do not have a voice at the policy table. The ultimate goal is for the equitable distribution of power to improve living conditions, health equity outcomes and systems change.



Community Scientific and Policy Advisory Committee

The Community Scientific Advisory Committee is one of the many ways the TREE Center works with communities to ensure their self-identified needs are met and guided by external stakeholders. Once a year, the committee (policy, academic, health providers and community professionals) meets to review the Center's research portfolio, its progress and to provide recommendations to the future direction of research priorities for the TREE Center. Additionally, the CSPAC identifies community members who can help bridge the knowledge generated into policy and practice.



WEAVE

Data from across the nation pointed to existing health disparities that deepened as the COVID-19 pandemic spread. To better understand how the pandemic impacted BIPOC New Mexicans, Wide Engagement for Accessing COVID-19 Vaccine Equity (WEAVE NM) collected digital stories to bring community voices together. The project, funded by the National Institutes of Health's Community Engagement Alliance, addresses:

- the mistrust and complex trauma BIPOC communities experience due to abuses by the medical system,
- the need for data transparency, and
- the increased risk of hospitalization after a COVID-19 infection.

The TREE Center (Dr. Cacari Stone) is collaborating with the Center for Native American Health (Dr. Tassy Parker) and Center for Participatory Research (CNAH) as one of 21 states in the National Community Engagement Alliance Project. ■



Working with Communities

The Center for Participatory Research (CPR)

By Sofia Olay, MPH Student

Social justice is at the core of the CPR.

Centering collaboration, the center is a holding space in academic research to bring in existing knowledge, co-create new knowledge and create health equity in New Mexico.

The CPR has three units: Community-Based Participatory Research, Indigenous Health and Wellness, and Co-Learning. In 2009, Director, Dr. Nina Wallerstein consolidated many years of participatory research, evaluation, and co-learning with communities in this Center, grounded in values that communities produce their own knowledge and strengths. The website showcases diverse academic and community partners.

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Unit

(led by Associate Director Dr. Shannon Sanchez-Youngman)

The CBPR unit works collaboratively with local, national and international partners

to strengthen the science and practice of Community-Based Participatory Research and Community Engaged Research (CEnR). One of our major contributions has been the creation of the CBPR Conceptual Model to provide a framework of how partnering practices contribute to capacity, health, and health equity outcomes. The Model has been translated into Portuguese, Spanish, German, Swedish and Thai, and applied worldwide.

Engage for Equity (E2) & Engage for Equity PLUS

Engage for Equity is a long-term project of the CBPR unit, funded in three stages by the National Institutes of Health since 2006. With guidance from a national think tank of community and academic CBPR and CEnR experts, the Engage for Equity (E2) UNM CPR team created the CBPR Model, conducted literature reviews of metrics and measures of partnering practices and outcomes, conducted



Internet surveys of over 400 federally-funded CBPR, CEnR and patient-engaged research project teams, validated the measures, and identified best and promising practices that contribute to health and health equity outcomes. Case studies have confirmed the importance of trust, cultural-centeredness, participatory decision-making, community power and influence, and collective empowerment as key partnering practices that make a difference for research and health outcomes.

“We seek to cross-pollinate our support for community research leadership in order to have an impact across and with diverse racial/ethnic communities.”

-Shannon Sanchez-Youngman, PhD

Engage for Equity PLUS recently received a engagement grant (2021-2023) from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute. The funding was used to promote sustainable, equity-based patient and community-engaged

research practices and policies within COPH’s Academic Health Department (For more see: hsc.unm.edu/population-health/research-centers/academic-health/). Institutional collaborations include Stanford and Morehouse Schools of Medicine, Fred Hutch/University of Washington Cancer Consortium, and the Mayo Clinic.

Indigenous Health and Wellness Unit

(led by Associate Director Professor Rebecca Rae)

New Mexican tribal communities – 19 Pueblos, 3 Apache tribes and Navajo Nation – are sovereign nations characterized by language, culture, rigor and understanding of health that date farther back than any of today’s public health strategies. Tribal communities are sustaining and revitalizing culture, language, and strengthening community to address health disparities. The Indigenous Health and Wellness Unit uplifts what is happening within Indigenous communities to promote wellbeing rooted in tradition and resilience.

Family Listening Program (FLP)

The FLP, one of the Indigenous Health and Wellness Unit’s programs, was funded by the National Institutes of Health. The FLP aims to promote cultural values and to strengthen identity and resilience for better health outcomes. The FLP helps families build social support and engages youth in cultural teachings as positive factors to deter the use of substances. Evidence shows that an earlier usage of drugs increases the risk

of developing a substance use disorder in the future, making early systematic interventions key to prevention. Families learn anger management, communication and teach youth how to reach out to trusted community members. Ultimately, the desired outcomes are to reduce levels of anxiety and depression through teachings of language and culture within the community.

Santa Clara Pueblo RezRIDERS Program

RezRIDERS, is also one of the Indigenous Health and Wellness Unit's programs. RezRIDERS is a year-long leadership program utilizes an extreme sports (snowboarding, whitewater rafting, rock-climbing, etc.) curriculum to build youth leadership. The curriculum is centered in cultural values and follows the water cycle to link the relationship to the land using experiential education to strengthen core values of self-confidence, social connections, and community reciprocity. Youth participants then have the opportunity to be mentors for the next cohort, promoting peer learning, leadership and community building.

“We talk about indigenous data sovereignty. We need to think about the historical mistrust that exists within communities that is rooted in the historical, colonial mindset of ‘this belongs to us.’ True partnership is really honoring the voice of the community.”

-Rebecca Rae, MPH

Tribal Data Champions Fellowship

TDCF is a year-long training centered in



Indigenous methodologies and frameworks that enhance Indigenous peoples' skills and confidence in evaluation, data, and research by strengthening processes to define how to develop, govern, protect, and control the collection, ownership, and application of data by and for tribal communities. What makes this evaluation team unique though, is challenging the institutional process of rigor and building data in a way that accurately represents Indigenous communities, contrary to what has occurred historically. The team has trained over 40 Indigenous men and women to become confident in evaluation where they can apply their skills learned to any health issue.

The Future is Indigenous Women (TFIIW)

TFIIW is an innovative ground-breaking entrepreneurial initiative developed by Native Women Lead, New Mexico Community Capital, and Roanhorse Consulting, LLC. to elevate opportunities, funding, and investments to Indigenous women entrepreneurs. The TFIIW focuses on economically empowering Indigenous Women business owners through business/marketing trainings, social networking, capital investments, and elevating

Indigenous women entrepreneurs in the venture capital space. Indigenous women entrepreneurs are significantly underfunded and least invested in, necessitating deep system work to bring in a more diverse workforce. (thefutureisindigenouswomen.com)

Co-Learning

The co-learning unit provides educational opportunities that span community capacity-building, technical assistance and graduate education in CBPR and empowerment. Our philosophy is based on Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's approach, as well as on decolonizing, and indigenous and critical methodologies. We seek to inspire knowledge production through collective reflection and action drawn from cultural strengths, community knowledges, and evidence-based practice.

Summer Institute on Community Based Participatory Research for Health

Started in 2010, the week-long Summer Institute takes place at the end of May. A program of the Co-Learning unit, it weaves participatory research theory and practice with indigenous and critical methodologies through articles, presentations by community-academic partners, discussion, and self-reflection on our own research and practice. The institute is for graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, faculty, community partners, health professionals, scholar-activists, and others, with up to 70 participants from

New Mexico, nationally and internationally. This intensive co-learning institute provides graduate credits as needed.

New Mexico Community Based Participatory Action and Research (CBPAR)

The newest educational initiative of the Co-Learning unit is the seven-module CBPAR Training. It is a hybrid curriculum designed to disseminate knowledge on how to best engage communities as partners in research, programs, and actions. It builds on work from 1999 by Dr. Wallerstein with the Pan American Health Organization, to develop a participatory health promotion and empowerment curriculum in Spanish, Portuguese and English, with workshops across the Americas. The New Mexico CBPAR version was adapted by the UNM Academic Health Department team from CPR and College of Population Health with a state-wide design team. From Dec 2022 - April 2023, the CBPAR modules were piloted by a UNM and statewide team from the Department of Health, health councils, tribal and community members, with 70 participants, working in projects on their own health issues. Planned to start in November 2023 is a second collaboration with New Mexico State University, hosted in the southwest/border region. Content specific to Latinx/Chicano populations will be added throughout the modules, as well as module presentations and activities in Spanish for promotores and other interested participants. ■



Partnership for Community Support and Capacity Building

Assessment, Planning and Evaluation Lab (APEL)

By Sofia Olay, MPH Student

Led since 2016 by professor and investigator Francisco Soto Mas, MD, PhD, MPH, APEL provides technical assistance and builds capacity within New Mexico through collaborative partnerships with state agencies and community organizations. APEL also contributes to education and training.

For the past few years, APEL has focused on agriculture and local food systems.

This could sound like an unusual public health endeavor. However, public health is no longer a monolithic, static science but rather a complex mix that incorporates many other sciences and fields. There is increasing evidence that pressing public health issues must be addressed through a more social and environmental lens. An example is agriculture and food production. While modern agricultural practices allow for the production

of more food at a lower price; they come at a significant cost. Mechanization and chemicals used in agricultural cause topsoil depletion, groundwater contamination, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Global food chains have also facilitated the decline of small, local farmers and family farms; compromised living and working conditions of farmers; and destabilized rural communities. So, there is an environmental and social cost, with significant population health implications.

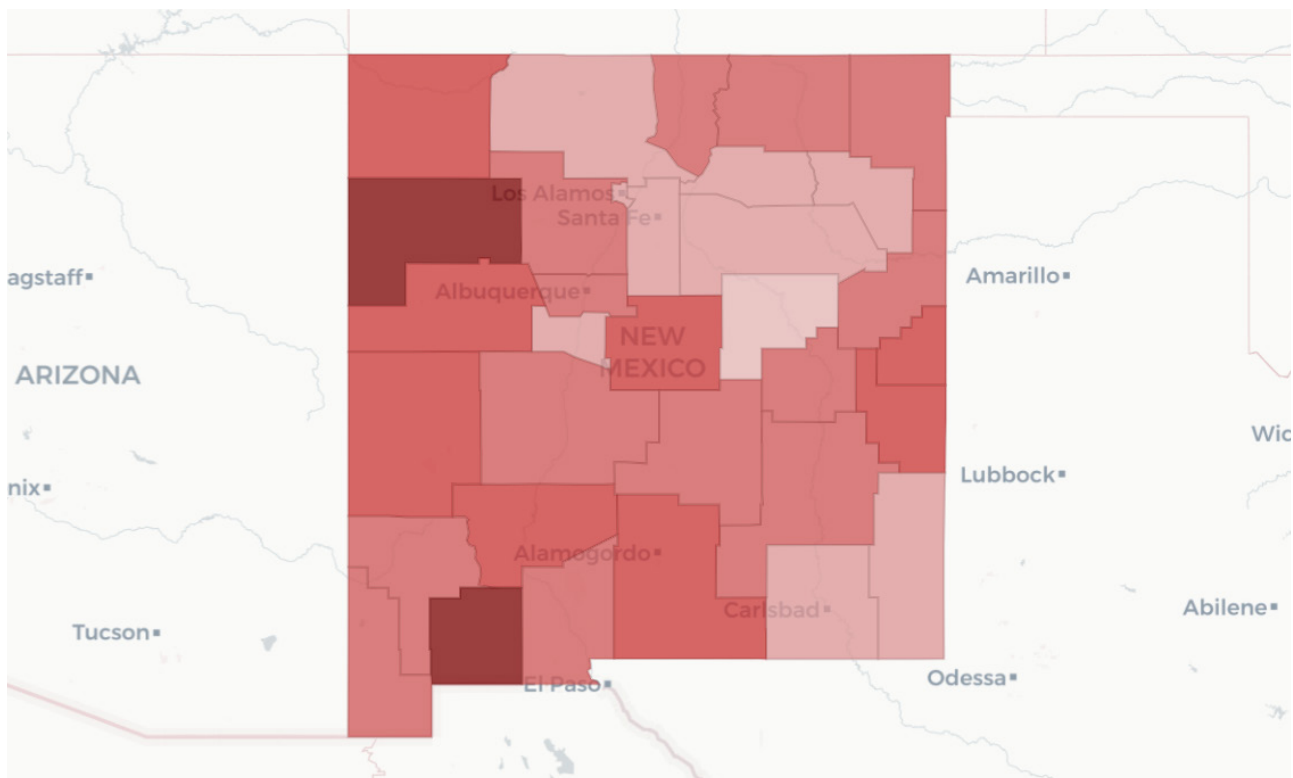
The response is local food systems with a return to traditional agricultural practices that promote conservation and sustain natural resources. There is evidence of the multilevel benefits of well-developed local food systems, including promoting land preservation and environmental conservation, contributing to food availability and access, creating economic

opportunities for community members, strengthening social networks, and even increasing community resilience.

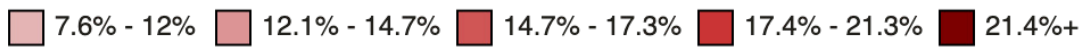
Local food systems have also been related to food sovereignty and social justice, they promote cultural traditions, and address the needs of many community residents. Some modalities, such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), generally accommodate low-income residents by developing connections with emergency food provider and accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC), and other coupons and

vouchers that allow low-income consumers to increase their purchasing power.

Considering the key role of farming and food production in the social and physical health of the population, it is not surprising that APEL is working collaboratively with state agencies and local organizations to figure out how to promote farming and develop food systems that positively impact consumers and communities. An example is the Bernalillo County's Grow the Growers, a farmer training and business incubator program that APEL has been contributing to for more than four years. Researchers and students support the program by contributing to strategic planning



Food Insecurity



2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022

and monitoring and evaluating the program. They go beyond looking at the immediate outcomes of the program, such as whether the training is working as expected or supplying a much needed new generation of farmers in New Mexico. The evaluation also assesses whether the program contributes to the physical environment or addresses nutrition and food security in the South Valley. For this,

APEL developed a conceptual framework that reflects the potential multi-level benefits of such a program. These include environmental, economic, social, and health outcomes.

APEL is also assisting the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association (NMFMA) in the evaluation of the 2023 Grow Meat Pilot Program. The program is sponsored by



New Mexico Grown, the state's local food procurement program that provides resources to agencies and food banks to purchase locally produced food from New Mexican farmers and ranchers, food hubs, and distributors. The program benefits key community systems such as senior centers, schools and food pantries. It can also potentially enhance the diets of senior citizens and children, promote healthier lifestyles, increase academic achievement, strengthen the agricultural sector in New Mexico, provide economic opportunities that support family farming, and contribute to the unique farming traditions of New Mexico.



“The main objective is for them to become independent farmers and follow the traditional farming practices from New Mexico.”

-Francisco Soto Mas, MD, PhD MPH

While developing partnerships and working with state agencies and community organization is part of the COPH mission, APEL also has a strong education component. “We are not only evaluators and researchers, we are also educators,” says Francisco Soto Mas. “We contribute to the COPH curriculum with courses in public health program evaluation and sustainability and local food systems. APEL is instrumental in training students, who have the opportunity to get involved in real projects and connect with local agencies and organizations that may offer future job opportunities.”

The vision is that APEL will expand to train students and junior researchers in addressing environmental health justice, conservation, and sustainable agriculture from a public health lens. There is a need for a new generation of public health students and researchers who understand the importance of conservation, and the role that sustainable agriculture and local food systems play in individual and community well-being. This can best be achieved through collaborative partnerships that strengthen community initiatives and build capacity for planning, implementation, and evaluation at the local level. ■

For more information on APEL projects and scholarly work, please visit:

hsc.unm.edu/population-health/research-centers/assessment-planning



Center for Health Policy

How The Center for Health Policy Impacts Health Care

By Amber Dukes, Senior Program Manager

New Mexico has been known for having a large population that uses Medicaid, with nearly 50% of its residents in need of assistance for health insurance coverage. These services make health care attainable to those who would otherwise not have access to care.

However, like many state agencies, the Medicaid Assistance Division has very lean staffing and little time for policy analysis and programmatic planning to best serve our unique population.

In 2020, the Center for Health Policy – housed within The University of New Mexico’s College of Population Health – was formed to fill that gap. The Center’s design follows a tested template that has been deployed by 27 other universities in the U.S. to provide health policy recommendations to Medicaid agencies.

Right from the beginning, the Center for Health Policy was tasked with these projects:

Health Care Access Survey

A survey was needed to look at the demographic differences between people who received Medicaid, had private insurance coverage, or had no coverage in the state of New Mexico. Professor Gabe Sanchez, who holds the Robert Wood Johnson Endowed Chair in the Department of Political Science, agreed to work on the project with the Center for Health Policy.

A one-month randomized, stratified survey in May 2023 concluded that the majority of residents support using Medicaid dollars is used to address some of the biggest social issues facing the state, including: early childhood services, homelessness, domestic

violence, and economic development through job training opportunities.

Preferred Drug List

With only one pharmacist on staff, Medicaid needed help creating a preferred drug list to assure the best drug benefit at the best prices. The Center tapped into resources at the College of Pharmacy, asking Associate Dean Melanie Dodd and Professor Melissa Roberts, who have extensive experience in the drug industry, to work on the project.

Social Determinants of Health

Working with Shannon Sanchez-Youngman, PhD, the Center looks at how social determinants may influence medical service utilization and outcomes. Social determinants of health include external factors that impact health. For example, they could impact access to grocery stores, public transportation or quality housing. This can help to identify key factors that may be addressed to prevent reoccurring problems.



More projects have already been identified for a phase II plan of the Center for Health Policy's work. These projects were identified while working closely with new Medicaid Medical Director, Alanna Dancis, DNP, who came on board in late 2022.

Dancis, a nurse practitioner who holds a doctorate in nursing administration, brings unique vision to her role, which has usually been filled by an MD. "She is able to identify problems and needs from a very hands-on point of view," said Robert Frank PhD, the Center's director. The new projects she's identified will look at workforce shortages, workforce compensation and lowering barriers to career entrance (such as potentially hiring technicians to supplement the workforce).

"Dr. Dancis is passionate, and very high-energy," said Robert Frank, "She opened the floodgates for our work."



“I take great pride in contributing to the Center’s goal of supporting goal of supporting the Center for Health Policy in improving health outcomes for New Mexicans,” Dukes said. “I am committed to making a positive impact in the field of health policy.”

- Amber Dukes, PhD, MPH

The Center then hired Amber Dukes, PhD, MPH, as senior program manager for the Center for Health Policy. Dukes was hired just in time to work with the new medical director, on the issues that poured in, Frank said.

Other phase II projects for the Center include examining maternal health care deserts in New Mexico, which are areas that lack effective access to prenatal or post-natal care, bolstering primary care access and expanding the primary care workforce, and direct care workforce (mostly nursing), and the development of quality of life centered metrics for nursing facilities.

Another new plan is the Behavioral Health Core project. Carli Bonham, MD, a psychiatrist and professor in the UNM Department of Psychiatry, has been working with the UNM School of Medicine Division of Community Behavioral Health on Medicaid issues. Bonham has assembled a talented team of data analysts and statisticians that can really

get into the complicated Medicaid data and analyze what’s going on with people who are in contact with the behavioral health system.

The short-term goal is to create a series of policy briefs, examining aspects of behavioral health in New Mexico, including its intersection with the criminal justice system.

As an analyst of policy and data, and a recommendation provider, the Center is paid for by Medicaid. But health care compensation is tricky at best.

Frank said he’s been working alongside the Center’s consulting partners, Sellers Dorsey, a national policy firm specializing in issues related to Medicaid to plan for the long term financial stability of the Center.

With a focus on the future, the Center for Health Policy is beginning to impact the health care of almost half the New Mexicans in the state. Many significant challenges remain to be addressed. ■

Becoming A School of Public Health

By Cindi Meche, Marketing Manger

In 1994, The University of New Mexico began offering a Master of Public Health degree, housed in the School of Medicine. This marked the initial step in UNM's journey toward establishing a presence in public health education. As the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited Master's program flourished and a Bachelor of Science in Population Health was added to the programming, UNM took the decisive step of establishing the College of Population Health (COPH) in 2016.

For a decade, faculty and staff shared a portion of the UNM Family Practice Clinic building, while classes were conducted in the nearby Domenici Center. In 2019, Tracie Collins, MD, MPH, MHCDS, entered as the College's Dean and accelerated plans for the next phase - becoming a fully-fledged School of Public Health.

To achieve this transformation, UNM needed to create a new PhD program with at least three concentrations. This was a significant undertaking, as the program had to be designed to meet the stringent CEPH

"public health program" criteria. However, we are aiming higher and are applying for CEPH "school of public health" accreditation.

Why transition from the College of Population Health to an accredited school of public health? We are taking it to the next level by becoming an accredited school and increasing resources to scale up our programs. In the eyes of the public, we continue to offer assurance that our graduating students are competent in health, safety, and the welfare of society as public health professionals. For students, they can rest in the knowledge that their chosen school has met accepted standards set by and with the public health profession. And last, employers will continue to be confident that the graduates they hire from UNM will have the essential skills and knowledge that are required for today's public health field.

The process of obtaining CEPH school-level accreditation is rigorous and multi-faceted, taking approximately two years and involving extensive collaboration and communication with CEPH officials. Additionally, we need this to line up with graduating PhD students



to provide an accredited diploma to our graduating students.

In 2022, COPH acquired a legislative grant to aid in these efforts. In 2022 COPH acquired a legislative grant to aid in these efforts among other goals. We were able to hire 21 new faculty members, including three assistant deans and one associate dean, as well as nine administrators in the course of the following year. This enabled new programming and concentrations, expanded to offer online courses and new certifications.

With rapid growth came the need for additional space. Faculty and staff are now spread out in four different office locations, making collaborating more and

more cumbersome. To accommodate, UNM broke ground for the new College of Nursing and Public Health Excellence (CON-PHE) building on August 8, 2022.

The construction of this 93,740-gross-square-foot building on Tucker Avenue, just west of the Domenici Center for Health Sciences Education, will house classrooms, offices, and community hubs.

Upon its completion, which is expected during the summer of 2024, the CON-PHE building will provide ample space for the College of Population Health to further develop as a School of Public Health, solidifying UNM's position as a reputable institution for public health education and research.



PhD

In the spring of 2023, the UNM College of Population Health successfully launched the first PhD program in Health Equity Sciences in the nation in partnership with New Mexico State University. With 3 enrolled students, COPH now has a targeted graduation date of 2026 to help prepare the start the process of CEPH (Council on Education for Public Health) school level accreditation in 2024.

This PhD program integrates the rich history of public health with the newer discipline of population health and human and social sciences to provide graduates with a rigorous competency-based doctoral degree. The advanced comprehensive training prepares scholars for positions in various settings - such as local, state, federal, and

global governmental and non-governmental agencies, public health and social justice organizations, health care provider organizations, and higher learning institutions.

The PhD in Health Equity Sciences consists of 66 total credit hours: 23 credit hours of core coursework, 13 credit hours of PH credits, 12 credit hours of concentration-specific coursework and 18 credit hours of dissertation coursework. The program offers concentrations in Epidemiology, Global Health Equity and Policy, Community Based Participatory Research, Community Health, and Biostatistics, offering a wide array of career education to focus on. ■



Bachelor of Population Health

Undergraduate Program

The UNM College of Population Health offers a Bachelor of Science in Population Health (BSPH) degree. This program gives students the skills to understand population health dynamics and promote community wellness, prevention, and health care policy change.

The UNM Bachelor of Science in Population Health degree prepares students to become a professional in population health with coursework in:

- Epidemiology,
- Program planning,
- Research methods,
- Health care finance,
- Social theory,
- And more.

Our students enjoy access to nationally recognized faculty with multiple opportunities for interdisciplinary

education through collaborations with UNM and the New Mexico Department of Health, Academic Health Department, UNM College of Population Health Centers for Participatory Research and Transdisciplinary Research, Equity and Engagement, and other local and national agencies.

Applying for the capstone fieldwork experience provides real-world training while in the BSPH program. Fieldwork is a valuable opportunity for students to gain experience in a professional population health setting, develop networking skills, and prepare for employment upon graduation.

With an undergraduate degree in population health from The University of New Mexico, students are ready to step onto the front lines, improving health outcomes and access for diverse and under-served populations.



Master of Public Health

Graduate Program

UNM is a leader in graduate and community-based public health education. Our students and alumni are social justice champions. We are dedicated to diversity and inclusion, with an unwavering commitment to improving the health of New Mexicans and people around the world.

The UNM Master of Public Health (MPH) contains 42 credit hours and helps to build critical thinking skills that draw from social science, biomedical science and clinical disciplines. Focus on issues are in one of three concentrations:

- Community Health - Promote social justice and health equality in your community and globally.
- Epidemiology - Solve public health crises by expanding your skills in statistics and disease prevention.
- Health Systems, Services and Policy - Lead and advocate in health organizations, government agencies and policy arenas.

The Master of Public Health Program is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), an independent agency recognized by the US Department of Education.

Additionally, options are offered for dual degree programs. Students are able to combine multiple interests with options of earning:

- MPH and Master of Arts in Latin American Studies
- MPH and Doctor of Medicine
- MPH and an individual degree program requested by student

Students learn how to become public health leaders and to focus new skills to aid in policy planning and lead large-scale initiatives.



PhD in Health Equity Sciences

Graduate Program

Now more than ever, the world needs experts who are prepared to take the lead in the exciting and constantly evolving fields of public health and healthcare. The UNM College of Population Health offers a PhD program in Health Equity Sciences which offers a foundation in leadership, analysis, and policy. Through electives of their choice, students can tailor their degree.

To promote systemic transformation, the curriculum combines conventional academic instruction with experience learning and competency development. For candidates with an MPH from a CEPH accredited university, the PhD program is a full-time campus-based program of study that may be finished in three to four years.

This program integrates the rich history of public health, with the newer discipline

of population health, and human and social sciences to provide graduates with a rigorous competency-based doctoral degree. The advanced comprehensive training prepares scholars for leadership positions in various settings - such as local, state, federal, and global governmental and non-governmental agencies, public health and social justice organizations, health care provider organizations, and higher learning institutions.

Students enroll with a concentration that helps them specialize in an area that fits their professional goals. This helps to gain subject-specific education to complement their degree. COPH offers the following concentrations:

- Epidemiology
- Biostatistics
- Global Health Equity and Policy
- Community Health Education
- Community Based Participatory Research

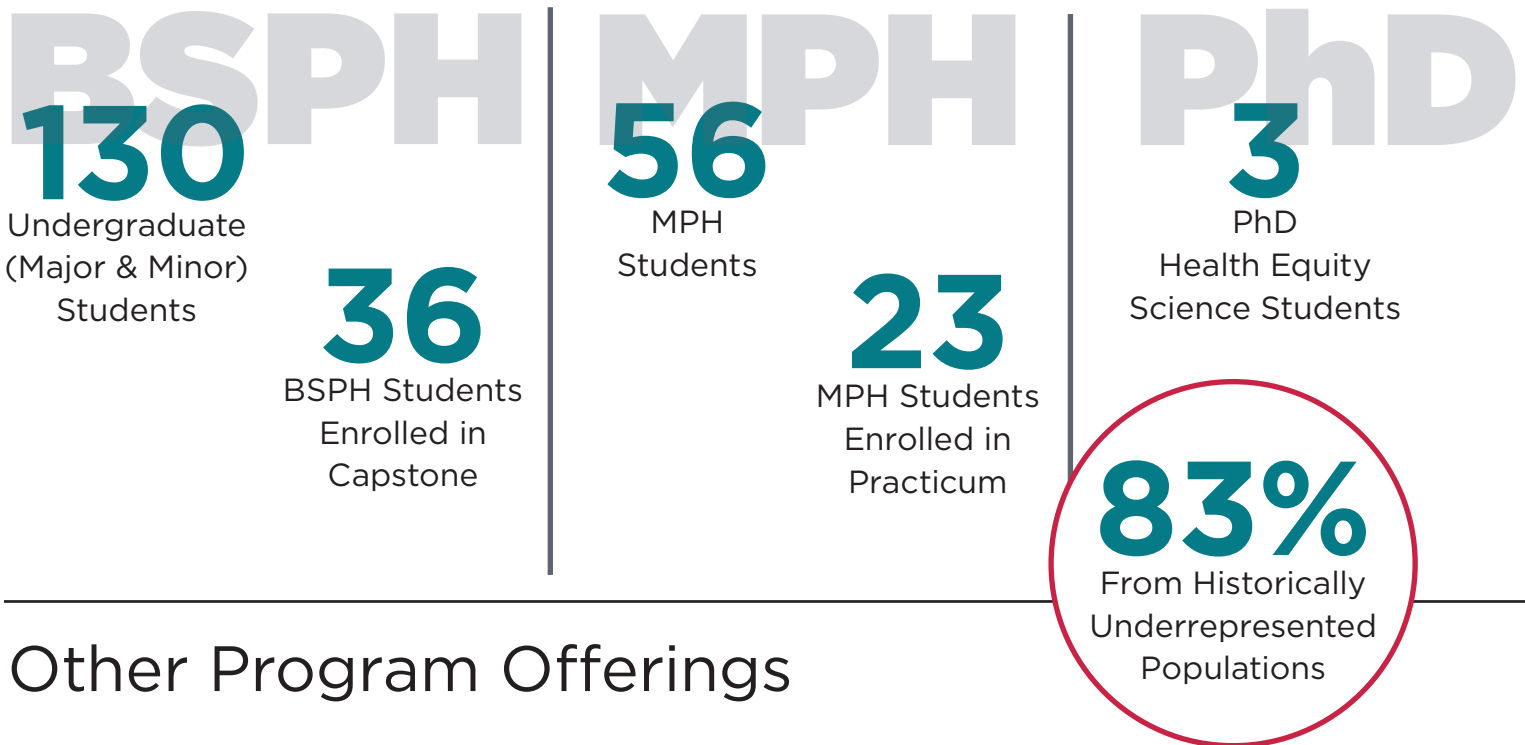
CAPSTONE & PRACTICUM

Fieldwork FY23



STUDENT ENROLLMENT

By The Numbers



Other Program Offerings

- Professional Certificates
- Undergraduate Minors
- Graduate Minors
- Dual Degree Programs

The College of Population Health offers tailored degrees to propel your success in the field of public health. To learn more, visit our website at: coph.unm.edu

College of Population Health Faculty



Tracie Collins, MD, MHCDS, MPH
COPH Dean



Lauri Andress, PhD, JD, MPH
Associate Dean



Elizabeth Yakes Jimenez, PhD, RDN, MPH
Assistant Dean of Research



Julie Reagan, PhD, JD, MPH
Assistant Dean of Education



Ronald Aldrich, MBA
Adjunct Faculty



Karen Armitage MD, FAAP
Director of Health Policy



Lorenda Belone, PhD, MPH
Professor



Lisa Cacari Stone PhD, MA, MS
Executive Director, TREE Center, Professor



Nick Edwardson, PhD
Adjunct Faculty, Associate Professor



Jonathan Eldredge, PhD
Tenured Professor



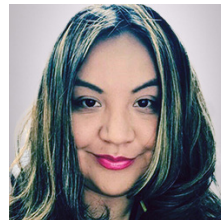
Anthony Fleg, MD, MPH
Adjunct Faculty, Associate Professor



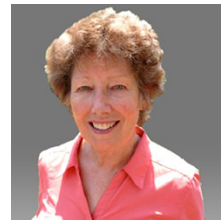
Robert Frank, PhD
Center for Health Policy Director, Professor



Carmella Kahn, DrPH, MPH
Assistant Professor



Crystal Lee, PhD, MPH
Assistant Professor



Michele Minnis, PhD
Adjunct Faculty, UNM Adjunct Professor Emeritus



Laura Nervi, PhD, MPH, MSSc
Associate Professor



Lexi O'Donnell, PhD
Assistant Professor



Frankie Perry, RN, MA, LFACHE
Adjunct Faculty



Veronica Plaza, MD, MPH
Adjunct Faculty



Claudia Pratesi, PhD
Assistant Professor



Rebecca Rae, MPH
Research Lecturer III



Andrew Rowland, PhD
Professor



Shannon Sanchez-Youngman, PhD
Assistant Professor



Randy Schwartz, MSPH
Adjunct Faculty



Pamela Sedillo, MPA
Director of Academic Success,
Lecturer II



Sarah Shrum Davis, MPH
Adjunct Faculty



Francisco Soto Mas, MD, PhD, MPH
Professor



Sue Noell Stone, MPH
Capstone and Practicum Director,
Lecturer III



Sam Swift, PhD, MPH
Assistant Professor



Tammy Thomas, PhD, MSW, MPH
Assistant Professor,
Director of Undergraduate Programs



Kristine Tollestrup, PhD, MPH
Professor Emerita
Director of Special Projects



Laura Tomedi, PhD, MPH
Assistant Professor



Nina Wallerstein, DrPH
Distinguished Professor,
Center for Participatory Research Director



Debra Waters
Research Professor

College of Population Health Staff



Christina Alaniz
Program
Coordinator



Doreen Bird
Senior Training
& Development
Consultant



Blake Boursaw
Senior Research
Scientist 2



**Nancy Cabrera
Duran**
Academic
Advisor



**Edgar Corona
Castaneda**
Academic
Advisor



Amber Dukes
Senior Program
Manager



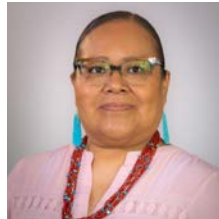
Anissa Duwaik
Program
Specialist



Katarina Evans
Academic
Advisor



Melissa Garcia
Unit
Administrator/
Dean's
Assistant



**Beverly
Gorman**
Program
Specialist



**Gwendolyn
(Wendy)
Griego**
Sr. Fiscal Tech



Nikki Guerrero
Administrative
Coordinator



Shania Krawic
Sr. Contracts
& Grants
Administrator



Sheri Lesensee
Sr. Program
Manager



**Carlos Linares
Koloffon**
Research
Scientist 2



**Rebekah
Lucero**
Financial
Analyst



Bernice Madrid
Instructional
Media Specialist



**Cynthia (Cindi)
Meche**
Marketing
Manager



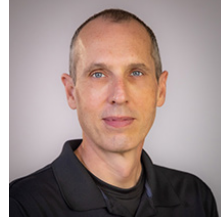
Michael Miranda
Program Coordinator,
PhD/Online



Daniel (Danny) Noriega-Lucero
Manager,
Academic Advisement



Amanda Ortiz
Academic Operations Officer



Marcus Panozzo
Sr. Contracts & Grants Administrator



Daisy Rosero
Research Scientist 2



Sandy Rotruck
Administrative Coordinator



Alex Sanchez
IT Support Tech



Domineque Tenorio
Program Coordinator,
BSPH/MPH



Benjamin (Ben) Vickers
Biostatistician / Faculty



Dedrea Vigil
Administrative Coordinator



Garrett Vigil
Student Recruitment Specialist



Melody Wells
Director,
Development (UNM Foundation)



Griffin Rinehimer Woolery
Administrative Coordinator



Kimberly Wu
Program Training & Development Consultant

Awards, Honors & Recognitions

Faculty Focus

Distinguished Professor Special Series

Tracie Collins, MD, MHCDS, MPH

Dr. Collins presented at the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) annual meeting along with a prestigious lineup of medical professionals from across the country. SGIM 2022 Presentation April 6-9, 2022

Nominated as UNM's Most Celebrated Women & Femmes Making History on UNM Campus

Tammy Thomas, PhD, MSW, MPH

Dr. Thomas was celebrated among the nominees at the Women's History Month Reception (March 27, 2023) by the UNM Division for Equity & Inclusion, and the UNM Women's Resource Center.

Serving on the NIMHD Council

Lisa Cacari-Stone, PhD, MS, MA

Dr. Cacari-Stone will serve (May 2023 - February 2026) on the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) Council.

Serving on the NIH, All of Us, American Indian and Alaska Native Working Group

Lorenda Belone, PhD, MPH

The National Institutes of Health, All of Us Research Program, Division of Engagement and Outreach, Tribal Engagement team, welcomes Dr. Belone as a member of the American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) subject matter ad-hoc working group.

Serving on the Society for Prevention Research (SPR)

Lorenda Belone, PhD, MPH

The SPR Board of Directors has elected Dr. Belone to the SPR Board of Directors as member-at-large for the term of June 3, 2023 - May 29, 2026.

Awarded UNM HSC Signature Program Grant

Lexi O'Donnell, PhD

Dr. O'Donnell was awarded a research grant from the UNM HSC Signature Program in Child Health Research. This project will be funded for 1 year. And we have received a generous gift from two donors who are creating our college's very first endowed professorship!

Intro to R for Epidemiologists

Sam Swift, PhD

Dr. Swift collaborated with the New Mexico Public Health Association to deliver a training on the use of R (a free software environment for statistical computing and graphics) for 100 local attendees.

Engage for Equity Plus presentation at the national American Public Health Association Conference

**Elizabeth Dickson, PhD, RN;
Shannon Sanchez-Youngman, PhD;
Nina Wallerstein, DrPH**

Drs. Dickson, Sanchez-Youngman, and Wallerstein presented their Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute study, supporting community based participatory research in academic health centers: Engage for Equity Plus, at the American Public Health Association Conference on November 9, 2022.

Service on Three National Population Health Committees

Nina Wallerstein, DrPH

Dr. Wallerstein was invited to serve on three national committees related to population health, including the Advisory Committee for "Academy Health: Redefining the Field for Innovation and Impact"; the Steering Committee for Vanderbilt University's National Institutes of Health sponsored "Enhancing Community Engagement in Clinical Trials"; and the Organizing Committee for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's "Assessing Meaningful Community Engagement in Health & Health Care Programs & Policies."

Evaluation of Project ECHO Telementoring Efforts related to Educating Health Professionals on Climate Change Impacts

Laura Tomedi, PhD, MPH

Dr. Laura Tomedi was a co-author on a peer-reviewed publication describing an evaluation of Project ECHO's cutting-edge efforts to educate community health professionals about an emerging crisis - the health-related effects of climate change - using a telementoring model. Read more here: <https://doi.org/10.1177/21501319221102033> ■

Fond Farewell & A Welcome Return

Kristine Tollestrup
officially retires from UNM



After 29 years of distinguished service with The University of New Mexico, Kristine Tollestrup, PhD, MPH has decided to retire, however she will continue working with COPH as a working retiree. Over the years, Dr. Tollestrup has shared her wealth of knowledge as a leader in behavioral ecology, epidemiology and maternal child health with the College of Population Health.

During her career at UNM, Dr. Tollestrup served students and colleagues at the COPH as the Director of the Master of Public Health program (2007 - 2016), and the Director for Education Programs (2016 - 2022) within the College of Population Health. Dr. Tollestrup's legacy ripples across the years as the impact of her efforts will be felt for decades to come, and lives most strongly in the alumni she served. Throughout the decades of leadership at UNM, Dr. Tollestrup remained focused on the success of the students and that of the community.

We thank Dr. Tollestrup for her dedication to our students and alumni, to the College of Population Health, the numerous contributions to public health and to education at The University of New Mexico. We look forward to her expertise and advisorship in retirement. ■

Convocation 2023



Graduation Date:



Tuesday, May 9, 2023

36

BSPH
Graduates

23

MPH
Graduates

Academic Honors

BSPH

Academic Achievement Award



Brenna Willison, BS

Outstanding Student Leadership Award



Leah Ahkee, BS



Mercy Jones, BS



Lara Karatas, BS



Jacob Villalobos, BS

MPH

Academic Distinction Award



Kelley Plymesser, MPH, BSN



Nichole McGuire, MPH

Excellence in Public Health Award



Smita Carroll, MD, MBA, MPH



Lucia Vulcan, MPH

Public Health Student Association



Nydia Villezcas



Logan Jeffers

Delta Omega Gamma Epsilon



Zachary Larry



Natalie Rogers

Office of Interprofessional Education



Christina Alaniz



Smita Carrol



Nidhi Kanabar



Laila Lobo



Natalie Rogers



Lucia Vulcan

Better Together

Dr. Kozoll and Dr. Davis solidify their legacy at COPH

Dr. Sally Davis and Dr. Richard Kozoll have devoted their careers to promoting health at the individual and community level. The married couple split their time between Albuquerque and Cuba, NM, where Dr. Kozoll maintains a part-time prevention-oriented primary care practice and is heavily involved in community volunteer activities. Dr. Davis created and leads the Prevention Research Center at the UNM School of Medicine. For more than 50 years, Dr. Davis and Dr. Kozoll have focused their efforts on improving health and healthcare in rural New Mexico communities.

Now, the highly accomplished couple have created The Davis — Kozoll Endowed Professorship for Prevention Research and Practice, which will support a College of Population Health professor who is dedicated to state-of-the-art prevention research and practice. They have also created two endowed fellowships to attract and support talented new prevention scientists. The couple explained in their own words why they've created these endowed positions:

“There is a growing awareness that improved health depends upon application of prevention science at both the clinical and community

level. Although development and use of scientific evidence has resulted in significant advances in disease care, we need to turn our attention to antecedents of health if we are to improve the well-being of families and communities. Newer evidence supports the need for environmental and systems transformation if communities are to enjoy better health. This evidence tells us that desired health outcomes are related far more to improvements in personal health-related behavior and community environment than to medical care advances. We need to make healthy choices the easy choices. These important trends will require academic centers to gain new insight into the best of prevention science, and focus on prevention science application at the community, environmental, policy and practice levels. This transformation will require academic centers to better educate future health professionals in prevention research and practice, while actively disseminating best prevention practices. We feel it is the perfect time for the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center to lead the effort to develop, introduce and reinforce best prevention practices throughout New Mexico, especially in communities with the greatest needs.”



“ Although development and use of scientific evidence has resulted in significant advances in disease care, we need to turn our attention to antecedents of health if we are to improve the well-being of families and communities.

The Davis — Kozoll Endowed Professorship represents a unique, visionary, and significant investment in the College of Population Health. Dr. Kozoll’s and Dr. Davis’ initial gift has already been matched 2:1 by the New Mexico Higher Education Endowment Fund. These and future contributions will support a professor whose work advances prevention research and practice for individuals and communities experiencing health inequities. The Davis — Kozoll endowments specify a strong preference for supporting scholars of Native American heritage who will have unique insight into promoting health equity in New Mexico’s indigenous communities. The Davis — Kozoll Endowed Professorship and Fellowships, when taken together, will support a career path at the College of Population Health in prevention research and practice and create future academic leadership for state-wide prevention initiatives that hold the greatest promise for improving the health of New Mexicans. ■



Your Support Changes Lives

The Future is Brighter with You

As the College of Population Health's first Director of Development, Melody Wells has the honor of connecting passionate individuals with meaningful opportunities to support public health education and provide an environment in which students will thrive. Donors are people just like you who support the College of Population Health because you know New Mexico will be stronger when all our community members experience wellbeing.

Students and faculty of this college dedicate their careers to supporting community resilience and improving our health systems for the betterment of all. When you give to the College of Population Health, you make scholarships available for community-minded students from all across our state who might otherwise not be able to pursue public health careers. They learn and work with award-winning faculty members whose research drives impactful change in partnership with communities that know what will work to improve health in their and their families'

lives. Through collaborations with the New Mexico Department of Health, Human Services Department and numerous healthcare providers and grassroots organizations, your support makes lasting structural changes that will continue to improve health for generations.

There are many ways you can be a part of changing lives and improving the health of New Mexicans. Whether you give to student scholarships, research done by faculty, funds for our building or facilities, you are creating better health and wellness for people in your community.

The activities and accomplishments outlined in this annual report all benefited greatly from donor funding. We are grateful to you for partnering with us in everything we've done and will do together! Thank you! ■



GRANTS & CONTRACTS

Newly Awarded FY23

14

Number of
Projects Aided

\$12M+

Grand Total
Awarded

TOTAL
DONATIONS*

\$570K

GOAL

\$500K

Exceeded Goal By

14%

Total Donors in
Fiscal Year 2023

18

600%

increase from FY22

And we are just getting started!

* We define donations as gifts from individuals. Grants can be from foundations or government entities. Contracts are government issued.



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POPULATION HEALTH

The University of New Mexico
College of Population Health
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Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001



Make Your
Impact Today

The UNM College of Population Health depends on continued financial support from generous individuals to ensure that students receive the highest caliber of education.

To make a donation today, please visit **Alumni & Giving** (hsc.unm.edu/population-health/alumni-giving/) or contact **Melody Wells**, Director of Development, at 505-272-6778 or melody.wells@unmfund.org.