

Understanding Our Vision & Goals for New Mexico



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By [Nora Chavez](#), NM CARES Health Disparities Center

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Dr. Borrego smiled and started his interview by saying, “I love my students. They keep me energized.” His students range from undergraduate students in Undergraduate Pipeline Network (UPN) Summer program, to professional pharmacy doctorate (PharmD) students, to MS and PhD graduate students. He gleams about the privilege of having mentored 22 graduate students, 5 being PhD graduates and teaching over 1,100 professional pharmacy students at UNM College of Pharmacy who have become pharmacists, in his 14 year career at UNM .

He learned the importance of mentoring while he was being mentored as a PhD graduate student at the University of Arizona. He currently mentors six graduate students; three PhD and three Masters level students. “See those black books on my top shelf,” he points with pride, “those are the works (theses and dissertations) of my students.” By the end of their graduate studies, Dr. Borrego has helped develop another colleague. “All of my previous graduate students have gone on to successful careers with pharmaceutical companies, health related government agencies or in academia. My pharmacy student mentees have gone on to successful careers as pharmacists and leaders in pharmacy in New Mexico. They are all special to me. You develop a very close working relationship.”

As a native New Mexican from Espanola with two degrees (BS and MS) from UNM , students from Northern New Mexico towns (Taos, Penasco, Pojoaque, Espanola and elsewhere) track him down on campus. “The small northern NM town ties that bind are strong”, he says. He’s here to show them the ropes. “It’s informal, but important mentorship,” he grins, “somehow they find me – especially when the want advice on how to get into pharmacy school.”

With his participation in the NM Cares Health Disparities Center, Dr.

Borrego says, “the Center gives us (UNM) an opportunity to try to find solutions to the health disparities in our state”. “Chip away at it,” he says, “reducing health disparities will take a lot of time and energy, relationship building and a lot of travel to partner with communities”. “It’s the University’s responsibility to try to address these health disparity issues in the state”, he says. The Health Disparities center is very interdisciplinary in nature with participation from UNMHSC and UNM Main Campus “we all learn a lot from having those different perspectives,” he adds.

Dr. Borrego’s current research interests center around three major areas, pharmacy education, health disparities and applied pharmacoeconomics/ health outcomes research. Dr. Borrego also has a growing interest and is conducting preliminary studies in issues related to cultural competence in providing health care services, health literacy, and pharmaceutical policy, health status and access to care of minority (especially Hispanic) populations.

For more information about the NM CARES Health Disparities Center, our Speaker Series, Research Resources, and/or the Undergraduate Student Pipeline, please contact Miria Kano at mkano@salud.unm.edu, at 505-272-3876, or check out the links below.

Links:

Undergraduate Pipeline Network:

http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/brep/pipeline_overview.shtm

NM CARES Health Disparities Center:

<http://hsc.unm.edu/programs/nmcareshd/index.shtml>