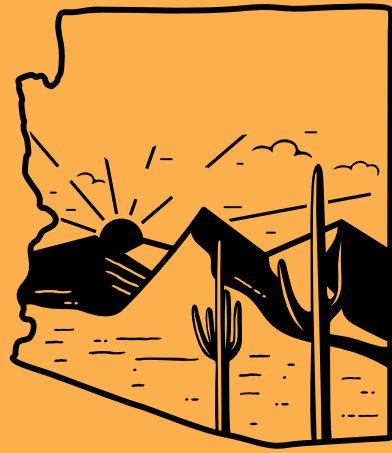


Community Conversation: Primary Care Research Priorities of Rural Arizona

OVERVIEW

On April 12th, 2025 the University of New Mexico's Clinical and Translational Science Center supported a virtual community conversation on primary care research priorities of rural Arizona. What we learned helped shape a research proposal that, if funded, would look at whether community health workers in primary care clinics could reduce complicated births and improve perinatal quality of life for communities with obstetrics/gynecological service shortages.



WHO TOOK PART IN THE CONVERSATION

Two representatives from rural AZ primary care clinics attended virtually.

Age	Ethnicity	Gender	County	Profession
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% 30-39• 50% 50-59	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% Hispanic or Latino(a)(x)• 50% White	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% Gila• 50% Santa Cruz	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% Director of health promotion• 50% Primary care provider

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE EXPERTS

PRIORITY AREAS IN HEALTH CARE FOR...

Providers and Patients

- Access to care:
 - No public transportation, gas affordability, and Wi-Fi and cell service access.
- Mental health:
 - Access to appointments, insurance issues, and stigma.



Providers

- Maternal and child health:
 - Access to providers.

Providers and patients think access to care is the biggest priority and related to all other topics mentioned.

Patients

- Chronic disease management
 - Reliance on medication covered by insurance as diet and lifestyle changes are not supported.

RESEARCH PROJECT IDEAS

- Social and nutritional prescriptions
- Isolation in older adults (e.g., participate in social activity or eat 2 cups of fruit per day).
- Community Health Workers engaging with the community.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Use new language guidelines for NIH grant proposals.
- There is already a project going on with community health workers and a mental health app.



HOW TO MAKE A RESEARCH PROJECT HAPPEN

Promotion

- Create promotional infographic for clinic and researchers.



Collaboration

- Work with clinic for planning and to create scope of work beforehand.
- Community and resident involvement is important, but don't add a time burden.
 - Share research experience and familiarity with patients.

Knowledge

- Knowing expectations, timeline, time commitment, resources available, and commitment of project to benefit community.
- Ask questions about project alignment with clinic's mission, how they support partners and staff, and how they facilitate collaborative decision-making.

MOTIVATING PROVIDERS AND PATIENTS

Providers

- Providers who are interested in participating can ask questions in passing to those that are less involved to bring to the team.

Patients

- Compensation: it needs to be worth their time.
- Use community engagement to get their input.

WHAT HAS WORKED

- Creating partnerships within the community or with universities and schools has helped create successful programs.
- Using team building so people can get to know each other.
- Paying people for their work, especially students, makes them feel a sense of responsibility.



WHAT WE'VE DONE WITH THIS INFORMATION

We submitted a grant application with what we heard in this conversation, while considering time constraints of the application process and what projects are already happening (so we don't do the same thing).

What we included from the conversation

- Access to care (narrowed down to access of obstetric care).
- Engagement of community to identify gaps in care that lead to barriers.
- Training community health workers and supporting a certification to help the program and partnership last long-term.
- Reducing provider and clinic burden with a team-based care model.
- Using steps and resources already in place at each site that will not be influenced or determined by study staff.
- Sharing findings across rural health settings.

Question the study would try to answer:

Can community health workers in primary care clinics reduce complicated births and improve perinatal quality of life in primary care clinics in communities with obstetrics/gynecological service shortages?

