



NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022



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Springing Into Wellness

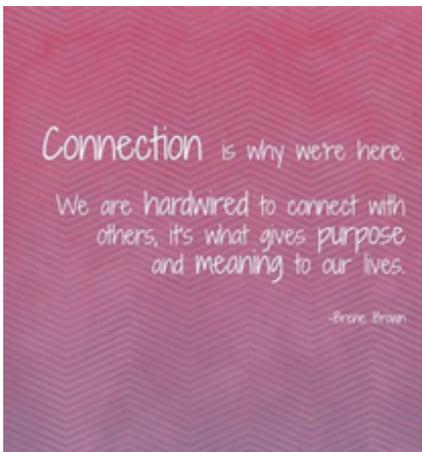
Hardwired To Connect by Amy Sandoval

The month of March marks the two-year anniversary when our world, nation, and communities experienced the declaration of the pandemic. Moving into the beginning of its third year, there is so much to reflect on in comparison to who we were then and now. Looking back, I never considered how much social wellness plays a huge part of who we are as human beings and our society as a whole. Social wellness can be simply defined as the relationships we have and how we interact with others.

Our relationships can offer us support during difficult times, and over the past two years we've had to become creative in how to maintain this aspect of our lives. This was challenging for some as restrictions were put in place when we were asked to stay home and social distance. Over those two years who knew that masks would be one of the vessels to unite us to some degree. Fast forward to today, things are starting to look different as we begin to move into the "next normal".

So, what can we learn from the past two years in relation to social wellness? Personally, I've seen how much social wellness plays a role in our mental and physical health by building and maintaining relationships with others. Having those social networks as outlets to get through hard times is so critical in helping one another heal physically, mentally, and emotionally. Social wellness also allows us to share our life experiences and stories with one another. To do so, we were almost forced into utilizing technology to provide a platform to do so, outside of our immediate families. I'm grateful to have resources like Zoom, FaceTime, social media, and the good ol' telephone, but having the ability to communicate face-to-face is even more powerful to allow those genuine and deep connections with one another to flourish. With time, we will get back to that place.

We have all experienced our unique challenges during this timeframe, but I want to take a moment to commend how our NE Region Community Health Councils remained connected and ensured initiatives were still underway to continue working towards community health improvement. Technology does not always come easy, especially in our rural communities, but they persevered by meeting virtually and when that did not work they relied on their phones to keep them going. Your determination is admirable and speaks soundly to the passion and desire you all possess to making a difference in the communities you serve.



Walking With Friends by Steve Martinez



As springtime nears, and the days turn from short to long, I am reminded of the rejuvenation that comes with the turning of the seasons. The cold, dark days of winter are far gone, and the warm sunshine encourages us to get outside, and get moving. Wellness can be described as a modern word with ancient roots and on a similar theme, wellness can be defined as the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health (Global Wellness Institute). Wellness is not a passive but rather an active pursuit that is associated with intentions, choices, and actions. If you are a newcomer to engaging in wellness activities, there may be no better or simpler way to do so then going for a walk!

Not only is walking fun and can be done almost anywhere, there are various known health benefits which include maintaining a healthy weight, prevention or management of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and strengthening of the skeletal system. Equally important are the benefits of being in nature, which is shown to help reduce stress, boost your mood, and support an overall feeling of well-being. Walking can also be done in social setting with friends, relatives, and work colleagues. A great example can be found in Santa Fe through Vamonos!

The Santa Fe Walking Collaborative, convened by the Santa Fe Conservation Trust, Vamonos Walks is a free urban walking program on public trails in the Santa Fe Community. Convened in 2017, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust established a group of community partners to help support the knowledge of and expand the use of city parks, open spaces, and public trails in the Santa Fe area. Vamonos Walks are welcoming to people of all age groups and encourages folks to engage in regular outdoor exercise. The program has grown each year and in 2019, 542 walkers participated, and the walks altogether totaled 97.2 miles. As a Vamonos Work Group member, we help to plan walks in and around the City of Santa Fe and promote the walks through internal and external networks. All walks are free and open to the public. If you're looking for a fun and rewarding experience, then I recommend checking out a walking event in your area! For more information and to see a schedule of events please visit [Vamonos Santa Fe Walks](#).



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Meet Our New Health Promotion Coordinator



Audie Nadler moved to New Mexico at the ripe old age of three and loved growing up in the mountains of Northern New Mexico. When Audie was 19 years old, they accidentally ended up going to college at University of New Mexico (feel free to ask them about that sometime!). After a few years of not really being sure if college was for them, Audie took a class in developmental psychology and suddenly couldn't get enough of learning about human brains and human interaction. They went on to get an M.A. in psychology from San Diego State University, focusing on child development, and an Ed.D. in leadership for behavioral health from Grand Canyon University. Audie taught psychology classes at various community colleges in San Diego, and then moved back home to New Mexico in 2012, where they taught psychology, statistics, and research methods with the University of New Mexico at Los Alamos, Northern New Mexico College, and the National College of Midwifery.

Audie has engaged in program development, writing, and teaching about preventing power-based interpersonal violence since 2004. As a previous professor at UNM-LA they wrote, obtained, and managed a federal grant from the Office on Violence Against Women for sexual violence prevention. This created a perspective shift for them. Instead of implementing prevention on an individual level, Audie began to think about how whole communities, systems, and organizations can be involved in creating a safer, healthier world. Audie is thrilled to bring this perspective to their new role as Health Promotion Coordinator and is really looking forward to collaborating with and supporting community health councils throughout the Northeast region of New Mexico.

When Audie is not working, they love riding their bike, dancing, rock climbing, backpacking, and trying to keep up with their three children who also love doing all those things. And of course, napping as much as possible... which is honestly never enough!

Audie's favorite method of springing into wellness is adding things to their life instead of taking things away. When they feel like they have been eating in a way that doesn't make them feel great, they focus on adding a serving of fruit and veggies every day instead of taking away junk food. When they feel stressed, they schedule a nap, tea with a friend, or a nice quiet morning reading a book outside on their calendar instead of telling themselves that they need to take a break from work or responsibilities. Audie really hates feeling deprived or not allowed to do things, so the perspective of adding healthier practices instead of taking unhealthy things away is a perfect way for them to feel excited about improving personal health!



Meet Our New Health Promotion Specialist



We're happy to welcome our newest Health Promotion Specialist in the Northeast Region, Candice Wilhite-Quiroga. Candice is based out of the Española Public Health Office. Her position serves the areas of Rio Arriba, Los Alamos, Taos, and Santa Clara Pueblo.

In college, Candice chose to pursue a teaching career over college volleyball. She has a BA in Music Teaching, with graduate school emphasis in geriatric music therapy. Her skills and knowledge stem from working in different school districts in Kansas teaching, coaching, and developing a passion to promote healthy lifestyles for at-risk children.

Living in Española the past 10 years, she brings experience in collaborating with community partners like MoGro, ECHO, and the HELP NM Foster Grandparent Program in Rio Arriba County to address health and food insecurity issues impacting the local community.

Most recently, Candice was working as an Administrator with the Española Valley Chamber of Commerce where she took the lead on several projects to promote community efforts. Her seven years as a member of the Española Valley Eagles, a community-based volunteer fraternal organization, has been profound in guiding her to her love of volunteerism and helping others.

Candice's husband Boo is an executive chef, and the two of them spend many meals competing with each other to see who can make the healthiest dishes. Even though her specialty isn't seafood or salad, she wins 'almost' half of the time. Candice is also in the middle of a journey to lighten up her mother's famous potato salad recipe, which used to be a county fair favorite when she was a little girl. The newlyweds enjoy hiking and rockhounding whenever they can, along with some occasional geocaching.

She is a proud mom to three grown sons, four grandchildren, two dogs, and four cats. Candice is a huge NFL fan, supporting the Kansas City Chiefs since 1976. When she's not volunteering in the community, she also likes to line-dance, speed walk, and sing karaoke.

Meet Our New Health Equity Specialist



Jessica Sandoval was born and raised in Las Vegas, NM where she graduated from West Las Vegas High School in 2006. She attended Luna Community College where she received her Associates Degree. She went on to become a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant through PIMA Medical Institute. Following her completion at PIMA Medical Institute she obtained a position as a Medical Assistant in the rural community of Pecos, at the Pecos Valley Medical Center. There she was able to work along side some great medical staff who taught her a lot and encouraged her to continue her education. She is passionate about the medical field as well as the Mental and Behavior Health fields. Working in medical and behavioral health field has encouraged her to continue her education and career and complete her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology, through Western New Mexico University.

She enjoys being outdoors with her two children as well as family camping, fishing boating and rides in the mountains on side by sides. She also enjoys supporting her kids and being out there cheering them on in their sports and extracurricular activities.

Jessica feels physical and mental wellness is important in her everyday life. Jessica has dealt for many years with Fibromyalgia. Being a person who suffers from chronic pain, finding relief from not just the physical pain she suffers from every day but also the emotional tole it plays. Jessica has found many ways to help alleviate the effects of suffering from Fibromyalgia. These include going on walks her with kids and their two small dogs. She also enjoys various relaxation techniques such as meditations, affirmations, massage and stretching.



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Gearing Up into Spring By Valentina White

As the spring season is here, we can anticipate sunnier days and warmer temperatures to be able to do more outdoor activities and projects. Walking, hiking, nature watching, gardening, and biking are some activities to get outside and enjoy and explore the outdoors.

With bicycling no matter if you are an adult or kid, bike basics are the same, which is bike safety. Of course, having a bicycle and familiarizing yourself with your bike and learning how to ride should be the first objective followed by bike safety checks, riding in a safe place, wearing comfortable and proper clothing, wearing safety gear, and wearing a bicycle helmet for every ride.

In the past the Northeast Region Health Promotion Program has collaborated with the New Mexico Governors Commission on Disability's, Brain Injury Advisory Council to provide Brain Injury and Bike Safety (BI&BS) presentations to youth programs around the region to learn about brain health along with bike and helmet safety. With these educational presentations we teach and provide youth and adults about basic brain health and functions, bike safety, reviewing the NM Helmet Law and the importance of helmets and how helmets prevent major brain injuries caused by bicycle accidents. In addition, we teach and provide youth and guardians how to properly fit and wear a bicycle helmet.

For the spring of 2022 the NE Region Health Promotion Program is gearing up and looking forward to serving our communities by providing these BI&BS events in NM.



Rural Living And Community Champions By Nichole Romero

Many of New Mexico's seniors often live in rural or frontier areas in New Mexico. Rural areas often suffer from a lack of medical services, transportation, and even grocery stores. Many times, residents have to travel to a different town to receive services or supplies they need.

Harding County Residents have a strong sense of community and supporting one another. Several times a month, certain community members will travel to get supplies for themselves and other community members. This includes supplies such as food, medication, and other everyday needed items.

Mary Laumbach, The Harding Health Council Coordinator and health council members strive to bring services to Roy and Mosquero. This is done twice a year at the health fair they plan. Vital services that are available include blood work, mammograms, blood pressure readings, eye tests, and other needed health services. When the COVID 19 Pandemic started they were not able to host in-person health fairs.

Over the years, Mary and her council have been working to bring other services into Harding County. They are currently working with the Veterans Administration (VA) to bring telehealth to all veterans who need it. This project was started several years ago but was affected by COVID 19 and changes within the VA. Mary is now working with the new VA coordinator to bring other services to Harding County. The VA will supply an I-pad to veterans and the health council purchased a desktop computer that will be housed at the senior center in Mosquero. These I-Pads and computer will be used to connect Harding County veterans to important medical appointments that they would normally have to travel to. This is a major resource to veterans since many do not have access to transportation. Staff from the senior center will assist veterans with navigating the internet to get proper care. This project may be the start of other services and programs being offered virtually in the community.

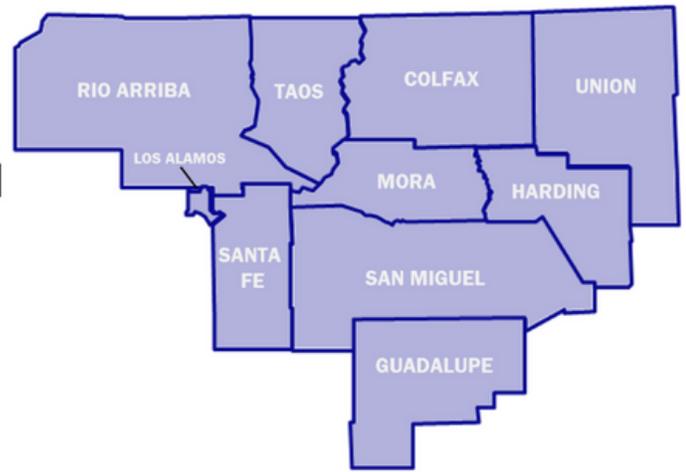


VA Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in Mosquero, NM. From Left to Right: Paul Haidle, Field Representative to Senator Henrich, Senator Martin Heinrich, Nichole Romero, NE Region Health Promotion Specialist, Mary Laumbach, Harding County Health Council Coordinator. (Photo was taken prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic)

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

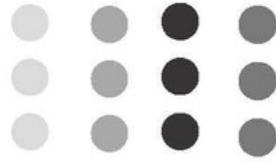


NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM TEAM

REGIONAL STAFF

Amy Sandoval
Program Manager

505-476-2675
amy.sandoval
@state.nm.us



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

Audie Nadler
Coordinator
Community Health Councils

505-476-2650
Audie.Nadler
@state.nm.us

Steve Martinez
Coordinator
Community Health Partnerships

505-476-2652
steven.martinez
@state.nm.us

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

Vacant
Community Health Epidemiologist Contact
Amy Sandoval

Jessica Sandoval
Health Equity Specialist

505-476-2626
JessicaS.Sandoval
@state.nm.us

WHAT THE HEALTH EQUITY SPECIALIST DOES:

Partners, plans and implements health equity activities within communities. Leads outreach to high-risk and marginalized communities to better understand needs, facilitate information sharing, and improve health outcomes

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 HEALTH PROMOTION 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



Nichole Romero

COLFAX, UNION, & HARDING COUNTIES

575-445-3601 ext. 103
nichole.romero
@state.nm.us



Valentina White

SAN MIGUEL, MORA, & GUADALUPE COUNTIES

505-425-9368 ext. 118
valentina.white
@state.nm.us



Candice Wilhite-Quiroga

RIO ARRIBA, LOS ALAMOS, TAOS COUNTIES, & SANTA CLARA PUEBLO

505-753-7991
Candice.WilhiteQuiro
@state.nm.us



Vacant

SANTA FE COUNTY, SAN ILDEFONSO, & TESUQUE PUEBLOS

Contact
Amy Sandoval