

THE CONNECTION

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Featured Community Advisory Committee Program: Diné College - Uranium Education Program

Perry Charley & Linda Torres

There are so many adverse factors that have an impact on Navajo communities and people. Among these are the mistakes and adverse impact from past uranium mining and milling activities on Navajo land. To address the negative impact of these activities and educate the communities, the Diné College Uranium Education Program (UEP) was designed and established in August 1996 through a grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). This program is considered unique because it incorporates culturally appropriate models into educational forums. That is, it requires a complex and thorough knowledge of Navajo culture, tradition,

practices and usage of the various dialects used throughout the Navajo Nation.

The UEP educates the Navajo communities through community education forums. The program also encourages Navajo students to further careers in environmental sciences, and assists schools, community and health care providers with environmental science literacy and public awareness. Through environmental and radiation education, the program conducts teacher seminars throughout the Navajo Nation to inform K-12 teachers about uranium and its environmental impact. In addition, the program provides community research conferences to give feedback



K-12 Educators on a field tour to an abandoned mine site during the UEP 2001 Teacher's Workshop; Gallup, New Mexico.

to affected communities on past, present and future research activities. Through community involvement and development, UEP provides technical assistance to local grassroots communities on the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) and other related issues.



Linda Torres, Health Educator, UEP, Diné College - Shiprock Campus has been instrumental in developing and implementing Teachers' Workshops and Community Conferences.



Radiological detection monitors are given to all participants at the Teachers' Workshops. Teachers learn how to use their equipment.



Greetings From the Director

Dear Friends of the Center:



Welcome to the first issue of *The Connection* designed to strengthen the connection between the Center and Communities. We are pleased that the Community Advisory Council (CAC) recommended that the Center publish a newsletter as a way to broaden communication among the Center, the council and communities.

Each issue will highlight some health promotion and disease prevention activities of the Center's Community partners, and those of the Center. We will bring you the latest happenings at the Center, including current events, updates and announcements, and news. *The Connection* will be posted on the Center website <http://hsc.unm.edu/chpdp>, and a limited number of paper copies will also be distributed. The web posting will thereby make it accessible to other members of the CAC and their communities.

It is with great pleasure that I share with you the fact that Sheri Lesansee has accepted the assignment to be the Editor for this newsletter. Sheri is an extremely talented young woman and we are fortunate that she is a staff member at the Center. See the "Message from the Editor" section of *The Connection* for more information about Sheri. In response to the invitation in her message, we hope readers will communicate and share information about newsworthy events for future issues of this publication by contacting Sheri. We also invite your comments and suggestions about the newsletter and articles that we feature in each issue.

Best wishes for creating and sharing more good news.

Sally M. Davis, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention

A Prevention Research Center

Message from the Editor:

Dear Friends of the Center:



It is with great pleasure that I introduce the first issue of *The Connection*, a newsletter for the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (UNM PRC) and the Community Advisory Council (CAC). This quarterly newsletter will feature programs, provide updates and announce upcoming events of program activities for the CAC and the UNM PRC. *The Connection* will be made available via email, website and regular United States Postal mail to the CAC and their communities.

The Connection was selected as the title for this newsletter to emphasize the importance of its function, which is communication and a way of sharing information between the UNM PRC and its advisory council.

We hope you enjoy this issue and future issues of *The Connection*. Any questions, comments or suggestions can be directed to me by phone at (505) 272-3941 or by email at slesansee@salud.unm.edu.

Thank you.
Sheri Lesansee

Sheri Lesansee joined the Center as a Community Education Coordinator in March 2002. Before joining the Center, she worked at the College of Education's Technology & Education Center at the University of New Mexico. She has eight years of experience working at UNM. Sheri is currently in school to complete her Bachelors degree specializing in Organizational Learning & Instructional Technologies and Organizational Communication. She is a member of the Zuni Tribe.

PRC Supports Nutrition and Physical Activity Act (IMPACT)

The UNM PRC supports the nutrition and physical activity act (IMPACT). On May 21, 2002, Dr. Sally Davis, Director of the UNM Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (CHPDP), told the U.S. Senate Health Committee in Washington, D.C. about the long-term efforts of the Center to help New Mexico children avoid soaring obesity rates through scientifically-based programs that promote healthful eating and exercise. Senator Jeff Bingaman (NM-D), concerned about childhood obesity rates that he says have reached "epidemic proportions," had called for these hearings. He invited Dr. Davis to testify before the committee and share her prevention experience.

Dr. Davis told the Senate committee that interventions to promote a healthy lifestyle and prevent obesity should be addressed across

the lifespan. She described the Center's long-term work with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and under-represented rural communities to design and teach the importance of healthful eating and exercise. She noted that the programs have focused on traditionally healthful habits to promote cultural inspiration and pride in adopting these behaviors.

She also said that the Center has researched and used other strategies besides school-based methods to prevent obesity in under-represented communities. These include parent education seminars, teaching food service workers in schools how to reduce fat in the menus, promoting exercise among elders, and providing pre-service and continuing education for health professionals. She did note

that the Center does much work in schools because in rural communities they are an important gathering site and a focal point for reaching children and their families.

Dr. Davis called for the Senate to support prevention programming. She stated that all the projects she described were made possible with federal funding. She emphasized that "the science of what we know about increasing physical activity and improving nutrition and particularly preventing obesity is very new and therefore limited. If we are to identify solutions to the growing problems associated with obesity, it is important that programs like these and others that are innovative, meet local needs, and are rigorously evaluated, be supported through funding and legislation."

We will be following this important legislation and keep you informed.

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Highlights of May 9, 2002 PRC-CAC Meeting

The members of the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (PRC) and the Community Advisory Council met on May 9, 2002, in the Vice President's Conference Room of the Health Sciences Center at the University of New Mexico Campus in Albuquerque, NM. The purpose of the meeting was to request information and guidance from the CAC members about the CDC's Special Interest Project grant applications that the PRC

was intending to submit. Other items on the agenda included four presentations: an update on The PRC Chronic Disease Conference by Hank Haskie; presentation of the PRC Steering Committee meeting by Alberta Becenti; and updates on the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Grant, *Cooking with Kids*, by Leslie Cunningham-Sabo; and the USDA Grant: *The Validity and Reliability of a Dietary Behaviors Survey and of the Food-Security Core*

Module in Two Southwest Native American Communities, by Shirley Pareo. The New Mexico Clinical Prevention Initiative, a future internal newsletter, dissemination of Pathways results, and collaborations with Diné College were also discussed. Community members were invited to present on their program at future meetings. Results of the SIPs applications that were submitted will be included on the next meeting agenda. Members of the CAC will be informed of the next meeting date.



UNM PRC staff and CAC members, May 9, 2002



Cooking with Kids

Leslie Cunningham-Sabo, Ph.D., R.D.



It is common knowledge that children today eat too many foods high in calories from fat and sugar, and eat too few fruits and vegetables. School nutrition education programs that include hands-on activities, such as cooking, are becoming recognized as important contributors to improving children's dietary behaviors.

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One such program is *Cooking with Kids (CWKs)*. In operation since 1996 in the Santa Fe (New Mexico) school district, this multi-cultural food education program works to increase children's exposure to a variety of foods and to increase their cooking experiences. The *CWKs* food education staff have worked closely with school personnel to build an integrated and sustainable program that includes class-

room cooking and tasting classes, special school lunch menus, and family activities. Evaluation efforts have centered on the children's and adults' participation level, and exposure to and satisfaction with the program. However, *Cooking with Kids* has not been evaluated to determine if it contributes to kids making healthier food choices as is assumed.

The PRC has received funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop and pilot test a comprehensive evaluation plan for the *CWKs* program that will test this assumption. *CWKs* program staff, school teachers, administrators, students, and parents will all participate in this plan and the pilot test. At the end of two years, recommenda-

tions for enhancing the *CWKs* program and evaluation will be developed and shared.

Project Period: 10/01/02 - 09/30/04

Funding Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program

Contact Information: Leslie Cunningham-Sabo, Ph.D., University of New Mexico, Department of Pediatrics, Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, Albuquerque, NM 87131; (505) 272-4462, <http://hsc.unm.edu/chpdp>

Does Limited Availability of Nutritious Food Lead to Obesity?

Shirley Pareo, M.S.

Currently the link between food insecurity and obesity has not been looked at in American Indian populations.

Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate or safe foods, or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods is called "Food Insecurity." Currently the link between food insecurity and obesity has not been looked at in American Indian populations. The purpose of this study is to test how well surveys that were developed for non-Indians actually measure food insecurity and dietary patterns in American Indian settings.

The United States Department of Agriculture's

(USDA) Food-Security/Hunger Core Module survey will be tested in the Pueblos of Laguna and Acoma.

This proposed study provides the background that is needed to further study food insecurity and food patterns among American Indians, and the relationship of food insecurity of families and the dietary patterns of children. Thirty students from each of the following grades— 7th, 9th, and 11th—will test the validity of the surveys at two points in time.

Project Period: 09/01/02 - 08/31/04

Funding Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program

Contact Information: Shirley Pareo, M.S., University of New Mexico, Department of Pediatrics, Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, Albuquerque, NM 87131; (505) 272-4462, <http://hsc.unm.edu/chpdp>

PRC Staff Updates

New Faces-Welcome Aboard!



Linda Ogilvie Beltran joined the Center as a Science Research Administrator on April 29, 2002. She has a Master's Degree in Preventive Medicine and Environmental Health from the University of Iowa. Linda worked for 6 years as a Senior Researcher for the Institute of Rural & Environmental Health at the University of Iowa specializing in occupational exposures to pesticides. She also worked as a Program Development Coordinator for Scott County Health Department in Davenport, Iowa. She will be working with the Tobacco Use and Prevention Control Project (TUPAC) and as Coordinator of the Tobacco Evaluation Resource Team (TERT) project.

Nancy Hood joined the Center as a Research Scientist III on July 1, 2002. She has an MPH from the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Nancy will be working on the PRC Core and the SIP 17-99: State & Community Partnerships programs. Before joining the Center staff, Nancy worked at a city health department in Columbus, Ohio as a health educator in the immunization program. Other experience include an internship at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Physical Activity and Health branch, where she developed a database of state programs to promote physical activity, co-authored the Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook, conducted training evaluations for the American Cancer Society National Home Office, conducted interviews and coding for the California Health Cities and Communities evaluation project, and served as a student representative on the executive board for the Atlanta-area Evaluation Association.



Lydia Montoya joined the Center as a full-time employee on January 7, 2002, as a Research Scientist. Before coming on board full-time, Lydia worked at the center as a student employee while she was completing her Master of Science degree in Nutrition at UNM. She earned her degree in December, 2001. Lydia has experience in program evaluation such as data collection and analysis, and database development. She will work with the Teen Centers as the data manager of both clinical and prevention generated data.

Kari Powles joined the Center as an Accountant for the Teen Centers, the Southwest Diabetes Prevention Center, SIP 15-99, SIP 17-99, ALF and the New Mexico Department of Health Tobacco Use Prevention & Control Programs on July 29, 2002. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a dual major in Managerial Finance and Economics in December, 1990, from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Before joining the Center she worked as a Business Manager for the Administrative Services Division of the NM Corrections Department and prior to that she was a Budget Analyst for the NM Department of Labor.



Judith Rinehart joined the Center on May 6, 2002, as an Administrative Assistant. She is working with the Tobacco Evaluation Resource Team (TERT) and the ACL Teen Centers. Before joining the Center, Judith worked with the Timkin Company, a Fortune 500 global manufacturing company, as an Executive Administrative Assistant in Canton, Ohio. She also has experience in research, development and operation of non-profit organizations, grant writing and mentorship.



PRC Staff Updates-Cont'd

New Faces-Welcome Aboard!

Andrew Rubey joined the Center on July 1, 2002, as a Graphic Designer. He will be doing graphic design and photography for the Center in addition to creating a graphics and artwork archive and searchable database. He has experience designing educational materials such as textbooks, brochures, and CD-ROMs. Andy has just moved to Albuquerque from Atlanta, GA, where he designed materials for the news and entertainment industry (CNN, TBS, TNT). He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Dayton in Visual Communication Design with a concentration in Computer Imaging.



Dr. Elizabeth (Elly) Van Mil joined the staff at the Center on June 10, 2002, in the official capacity as "Editor." She had been trained as and served as a free-lance editor prior to entering graduate school, and then obtained a doctorate in philosophy of language following a year of research in Germany on a Fulbright Fellowship. During the past 12 years she was employed by the University of Missouri-Columbia Graduate School as the Director of Extramural Funding and Fellowships. In this capacity, she succeeded in obtaining several multi-million dollar training grants to assist underrepresented students with obtaining graduate degrees, assisted graduate students with preparing their own funding proposals and administered the university's graduate fellowship programs. In addition, she taught college courses in health care ethics, business ethics and medical ethics at three local colleges, Lincoln University, William Woods University and Stephens College. Here at the Center, she will facilitate our efforts to disseminate the results of research, and to develop and deliver training programs to expand our community service health promotion efforts.



PRC Student Updates:

Congratulations on Your Accomplishments!



Lisa Begay was accepted into the University of New Mexico Dental Hygiene program and began her coursework in Spring 2002. Lisa has been with the Center since 1999. Lisa works with the Southwest Diabetes Prevention Center project as a Research Assistant. She assists with coordinating training programs and developing training materials. Lisa is from Gallup, New Mexico, and is a member of the Navajo (Diné) nation.

Shirleen Phillips-Benally is from the Navajo (Diné) nation. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition in the Spring 2002 from the University of New Mexico. Shirleen came to work at the Prevention Research Center in the Fall of 1999 after completing her Associate's of Life Sciences from Diné College in Shiprock, NM. She worked with the Southwest Diabetes Prevention Center while attending UNM. After completing her bachelor's degree, Shirleen returned to Diné College to work with Dr. Mark Bauer. She is currently working on the MBRS Diabetes Research Project as a Researcher. Good luck to Shirleen in her future endeavors.



Melanie Joe completed a nursing mentorship program with Presbyterian Health Services in Albuquerque, NM on August 3, 2002. Melanie is a Research Assistant and works with the Southwest Diabetes Prevention Center. She has been with the Center since 2000. She currently is a nursing student at the University of New Mexico. Melanie is from Shiprock, NM and is a member of the Navajo (Diné) nation.

Gilbert Quintero, Ph.D., Lisa Marr-Lyon, Ph.D., & Eric Chrisp, MA

YTEP, the Youth Tobacco Evaluation Project, is nearing the critical halfway point of its work. YTEP is one of the research and evaluation projects here at the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. Headed by Dr. Gilbert Quintero, it is funded by the American Legacy Foundation for three years. The aim of the project is to find out what makes Youth Tobacco Prevention programs in New Mexico work.

Dr. Quintero says, "Youth are a big part of tobacco prevention. Youth empowerment is considered a promising strategy because it makes youth the prevention specialists. But, there has been very little evaluation done of programs like these."

So far YTEP staff, which also includes Dr. Lisa Marr-Lyon and Eric Chrisp, have been familiarizing themselves with seven

different programs in the state that work toward youth empowerment and tobacco prevention. At the beginning this meant sitting at the table with youth and adults from these programs and others like them to decide what was important to learn.

The questions the evaluation is expected to answer are 1) what is youth empowerment, 2) how do youth in New Mexico practice it, and 3) how is it helping prevention of tobacco use? "We will get to test our evaluation model, designed in collaboration with tobacco programs. The individual programs will hopefully gain insight, not to mention recognition for their hard work and innovations. The State will gain information to help improve these programs in the future" Dr. Quintero added.

In the next couple of months the staff will finish interviews, focus groups and ques-

tionnaires with each of these seven groups. After that it's time to look closely at what they've found so that they can write reports for each of the programs that are participating. Preliminary findings will be presented through papers and posters in Philadelphia and San Francisco. When that's done they'll choose several new programs and start the process again. This will be Phase II, and will expand the evaluation to the majority of youth tobacco prevention programs in New Mexico.

Contact Information: Gilbert Quintero, Ph.D. University of New Mexico, Department of Pediatrics, Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, Albuquerque, NM 87131; (505) 272-4462, <http://hsc.unm.edu/chpdp>

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The University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (UNM PRC) is one of 26 Prevention Research Centers funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop and carry out scientifically-based, innovative chronic disease prevention research to improve the health of Americans. The goal of the UNM PRC is to work in partnership with American Indian communities to improve health and well being through participatory research, evaluation, education, training, and practice. The UNM PRC has a long history of partnering with American Indian communities in New Mexico and the Southwest. The UNM PRC has a Community Advisory Council (CAC), whose members serve in an advisory and advocacy capacity, and represent the public health interests and concerns of American Indians and other New Mexico populations. Through collaboration and communication, the two entities work together to carry out the goals of the Center.

on the web:

THE CONNECTION

<http://hsc.unm.edu/chpdp>



Announcements

- Sept. 25-26, 2002** SIP 14-99 Coordinated School Health Round Table, Albuquerque, NM. Contact: Christine Hollis, (505) 272-4462.
- Sept. 16-18, 2002** The Power of Changing Woman 2002: A Community Health Conference. Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, Arizona. Contact: Effie J. Barney, (505) 722-1464.
- Nov. 7-8, 2002** 5th Annual Navajo Nation Community Research Conference. Diné Education Center, Window Rock, Arizona. Contact: Theresa Clay, (505) 272-3579 or toll free at 1(888) 590-6372.

Are you interested in obtaining a certificate in Diabetes Prevention? The Southwest Diabetes Prevention Center is planning a six-month certification program for Diabetes Prevention Assistant in Gallup, NM. It is anticipated that it will be offered in November 2002, and the date will be announced later. If you are interested or have other questions, contact Theresa Clay (tclay@salud.unm.edu) or Sheri Lesansee(slesansee@salud.unm.edu), (505) 272-3579 or (505) 272-4462

The Southwest Diabetes Prevention Center will host the Rio Grande Institute 2003 to begin in January 2003. This training institute will feature courses that will assist tribal communities in enhancing their efforts in diabetes prevention. For more information, contact Theresa Clay (tclay@salud.unm.edu) or Sheri Lesansee (slesansee@salud.unm.edu), (505) 272-3579 or (505) 272-4462

Don't see your program events? Contact: Sheri Lesansee at (505) 272-3941 or slesansee@salud.unm.edu to post your events in future newsletters.



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