



Editor's Note

The *AHDConnection* is published quarterly on January 31, April 30, July 31 and October 31. We are always looking for stories and information related to efforts to reduce health disparities in Arizona.

Due to space limitations, each article submitted should not be more than 500 words. Notifications of relevant upcoming events, funding opportunities and ideas for community stories are always welcome. The deadline for submission is the 15th of the month prior to the publication date (Dec 15, May 15, June 15 and Sept 15). Please email articles or ideas to hong.chartrand@azdhs.gov.

Upcoming Events

- **Desert Foot Conference 2015**

Dates: November 18 – 20, 2015

Location: Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel, 340 N. 3rd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004

- **29th Rural Health Leadership Conference**

Dates: February 7 – 10, 2016

Location: Arizona Grand Resort & Spa, Phoenix, AZ

- **Implementing Systems-Level Change for Health Equity: A Partnership Summit**

Hosted by: Health Equity Initiative

Dates: February 25 – 26, 2016

Location: CAI Meeting and Event Center, 505 Eighth Avenue, 20th Floor, New York, NY

- **2016 Art & Science of Health Promotion Conference**

Dates: April 25 – 29, 2016

Location: Orlando, FL

ARIZONA'S
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DISPARITIES
RESOURCE

AHDConnection



Preventing Childhood Caries in Primary Care

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that oral health risk assessment begin before the first tooth erupts, i.e., prior to 6 months of age. A primary preventive intervention for children is fluoride to protect the teeth. In 2014, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommended that primary care clinicians prescribe fluoride supplementation for children aged 6 months to five years whose water supply is deficient in fluoride, and provide fluoride varnish for all children from the time their first tooth erupts through age 5. Primary care teams can help patients understand the importance of oral health in the context of their overall health and reinforce messages patients hear in the dental office.

(The information is adopted from the White Paper— *Oral Health: An Essential Component of Primary Care.*)



Partnering with the Somali Community through Research

By Farhia Omar

Mayo Clinic's Health Equity and Community Engaged Research Program, the Arizona branch of the Office of Health Disparities Research (OHDR), is dedicated to supporting meaningful research programs to identify, develop and deploy strategies to eliminate health disparities. The Health Equity and Community Engaged Research Program also works to ensure that their research subjects (and patients) reflect the diverse communities that form the mosaic of our nation. The program does this in collaboration with many community partners. One of their most esteemed partnerships is with the Somali American United Council of Arizona (SAUC) led by Dr. Mohamed Ali Abukar. The process of creating relationships with them and understanding the Somali community has been rich and rewarding.

Engaging the community involved first understanding who was serving the community. This entailed meetings with leaders of the Somali community, the Refugee Health Program and faith leaders. Every group with whom the

program met recommended Dr. Abukar and SAUC as the gateway to the community.

I remember the first time last fall when I met with Dr. Mohamed Ali Abukar, President of the Somali American United Council. A very humble, kind-hearted soul whom my entire team admires and deeply respects. A well respected and active figure in the Somali community, Dr. Abukar wears many hats when it comes to community engagement and serves on numerous boards. This is apparent in the community event picture frames on SAUC's office walls. I was in awe of the passion Dr. Abukar has for helping his community.

SAUC's vision is to become the premier institution offering high quality services to the Somali-American community and preparing individuals of the highest moral fiber. Among services provided by SAUC are women's empowerment, literacy and tutoring classes, job readiness, housing assistance, senior assistance, new arrival orientation, public transportation safety training and consumer education for refugees. (Continued on page 5)

this issue

- Preventing Childhood Caries **P.1**
- Partnering with the Somali Community through Research **P.1**
- Care and Compassion **P.2**
- New Infectious Diseases Report **P.3**
- WIC Campaign Helps Participation **P.3**
- Free Flu Shots **P.4**
- Corps Community Month **P.4**



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Funding Opportunities

National Gardening Association: Youth Garden Grant

– Deadline: December 1, 2015

Purpose: to support school and youth educational garden projects that enhance the quality of life for students and their communities.

Eligible Applicants: Local Government, Non Profits, and Schools/School Districts

Number of awards: 20
Amount of award: gift certificates, tools, seed, and other program resources valued at over \$500

Contact: (800) 538-7476 or grants@garden.org

Annie's Homegrown: Grants for Gardens

– Deadline: December 4, 2015

Purpose: to support school gardens that connect children directly to real food and teach them sustainable gardening practices and healthy eating habits.

Eligible Applicants: Schools/ School Districts

Amount: 30 awards of up to \$2,500; three awards of up to \$5,000 for applicants that won awards in the previous five years

Contact: (800) 288-1089 or (510) 558-7500

American Dental Association (ADA) Foundation: Semi-Annual Grant Program: Education

– Deadline: January 29, 2016

Purpose: to support educational activities that improve the oral health of community members.

Eligible Applicants: Non Profits

Amount of award: up to \$5,000

Contact: Tracey Schilligo at (312) 440-2763 or schilligot@ada.org

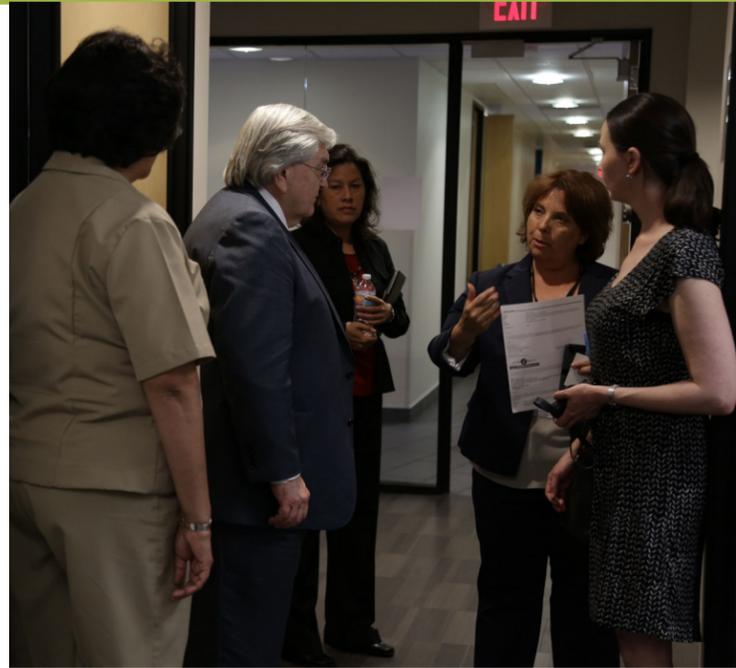


Care and Compassion

By Hong Chartrand

Over the past two years, I have worked with Susan Levy, NATIVE HEALTH Communication Director, to host a pilot program to promote public health interest to youths. I was amazed by her gentleness, kindness, energy and, of course, professionalism. She tried her best to recruit youths into the program via her connection. When they participated in the program, she made sure that every youth felt comfortable, had an opportunity to express his or her interest and opinion and had food to eat. She was just like a mother bear taking care of her cubs. Actually, wherever she is, there is a stuffed bear named Wellbearto with her. Wellbearto means Well Bear, and is a symbol for well health.

Wellbearto's travelling scheduling reflects part of Susan's working schedule. Susan devotes herself to her work more than one hundred percent. Besides being the communication director, she is in charge of volunteers, interns and events. She is also a flexible member at her organization. When there is a need, she is always there with her ever-smiling face to help out. Many times, she is the first person arriving at the office and the last person to leave. From time to time, she appears at the office on weekends. On average, she works 11-12 hours per day. "My office is just like my home," says Susan. Her office is very cozy with lots of decorations. On one wall, there are some family photos: her husband Andy and three sons.



Susan Levy (second from right) introduced NATIVE HEALTH to Robert McSwain (second from left), Acting Director of Indian Health Services.

On her face, you never see tiredness. I ask how she keeps her high energy level. "I go to the gym every day, and I sleep well," says Susan. "Plus, you don't do it if you don't love it." She also credits her husband's support for her work. Andy helps haul the heavy boxes at her events and also attends the annual Native American Diabetes Youth Camp as a counselor.

"Susan truly embodies NATIVE HEALTH's mission of care, compassion, healing, integrity and respect in her work and her many interactions with our partners and patients," says Patricia Patron, Chief Operating Officer of NATIVE HEALTH. "She is one of the most positive people I know and the person who gets our team to deliver the best service possible to our community. Susan has opened many doors for us. Her motivation is to make sure we take care of the relationships we have been

entrusted with and to improve access to high quality services for our patients."

Susan has been with NATIVE HEALTH for ten years. She was recruited by NATIVE HEALTH to run their planned adult day care center. For different reasons, the center didn't open, but Susan stayed and moved around and moved up.

"It is a great organization to work for. The leadership thinks outside of the box and always likes to bring in the new programs," says Susan. "I am lucky that I am able to do many different things here and work with great people."

Prior to her coming to NATIVE HEALTH, Susan worked in the school districts and also ran an adult day care center for many years. She received training on gerontology.

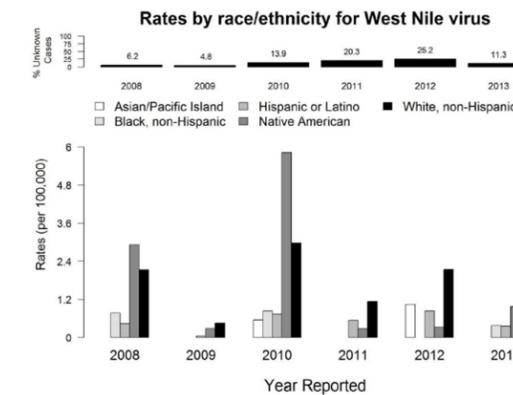
(Continued on page 5)

Arizona's New Infectious Diseases Report Released

A newly released report: the *Infectious Disease Epidemiology 2008-2013 Report*, examines the epidemiology of selected infectious diseases in recent years in Arizona. The report describes Arizona's infectious disease surveillance system and trends in disease incidence and distribution for cases reported to the Arizona public health system from 2008 to 2013. Among many other topics, the report contains sections showing an increase in Shiga toxin-producing E. coli and pertussis cases over this six-year period, a description of expanded Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever distribution and activities in Arizona and details about changes to the surveillance system itself. Reported

cases and rates of selected notifiable diseases by race/ethnicity are also included in the report. Below are two graphs related to rates for West Nile virus and chronic Hepatitis B by race/ethnicity. The graph below shows that

Native American and White non-Hispanic populations were most affected by West Nile virus from 2008–2013. The rates of disease among Native Americans were particularly high during the outbreak in 2010, although rates were also elevated among other races/ethnicities.



The above information is adopted from the *Infectious Disease Epidemiology 2008-2013 Report*.

New Publications of Interest

- [Free Clinics in the Rural Safety Net, 2014](#)
- [New Brief: State Strategies for Defining Medical Necessity for Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs](#)
- [Online food literacy toolkit](#)



Arizona WIC Program Campaign "You Do a Lot" Helps Increase Participation

Between April and September, the [Arizona WIC Program's](#) outreach efforts included a new project to increase awareness about the WIC Program and increase participation among eligible women, infants, and children. The project has been a success with an increase of more than 10,000 participants a month. In September, more than 153,000 individuals received WIC services provided by 21 local agencies throughout the state.

The project included a new mobile-friendly [website](#); an updated "Find a Clinic" app; messages placed in grocery



stores, laundromats, [on radio](#), and in online ads, along with a new Food List, Identification Folder, Outreach Flyers, and Social Media. All the information is in English and Spanish. Local agencies also enhanced outreach efforts including special activities to retain children in the WIC Program.

Based on [extensive research](#) with WIC moms, the campaign theme of "You do a lot. We help a little"

encourages moms to visit [AZWIC.gov](#) to find out if they are eligible for WIC services. The outcomes for the project have been impressive with more than nine million media impressions and an increase in web visitors to more than 84,000 between the launch of the project in April and the end of September. Nearly all of these visitors (85%) were women and most (56%) were young women ages 18-34.

The WIC outreach project will continue in Federal Fiscal Year 2016.





Resource Corner

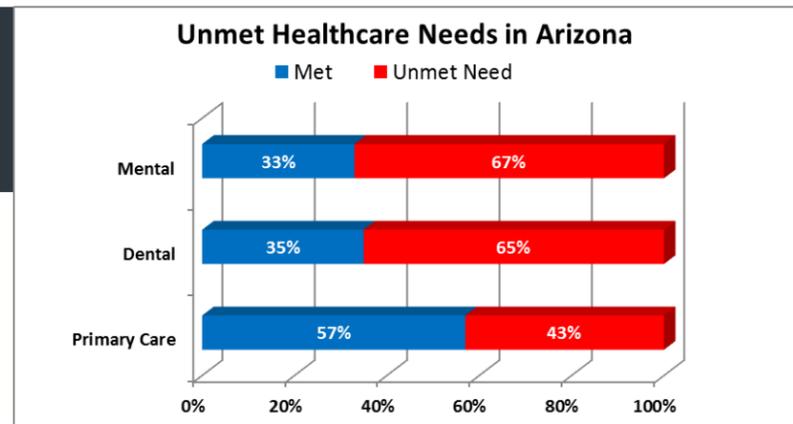
HHS, Walgreens Partnership Provides Up to \$15 Million in Free Flu Shots

Walgreens is providing up to \$15 million worth of free flu shot vouchers this flu season through its collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which aims to improve immunization rates among uninsured Americans. Now in its sixth year, the voucher initiative has been instrumental in helping to protect more people from the flu each season, with Walgreens providing more than \$40 million worth of vouchers since the program's inception. Eligible individuals can call 1-800-925-4733 to find the nearest Walgreens location with flu shot vouchers available.

<http://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/Content.aspx?ID=10274&lvl=2&lvlid=8>

Corps Community Month

National Health Service Corps (NHSC) programs bring more health care providers in underserved communities with limited access



Source: HRSA Data Warehouse, Retrieved from: https://ersrs.hrsa.gov/ReportServer/?/HGDW_Reports/BCD_HPSA/

October is Corps Community Month, now in its fifth year to bring awareness on the importance of the primary care workforce in improving health. This month highlights the benefits and impact of the [National Health Service Corps \(NHSC\)](#) programs in bringing more health care providers in underserved communities with limited access. The NHSC increases access to care by supporting primary care physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, certified nurse-midwives, dentists, dental hygienists, and mental health professionals working in federally designated [Health Professional Shortage Areas \(HPSA\)](#) of the state through [loan repayment assistance](#). More than 9,200 NHSC primary care providers are serving at nearly 5,000 sites in the nation. In Arizona, a total of 379 primary care providers are currently participating in the NHSC Loan Repayment Program and over 900 sites in the State are eligible to participate.

Additionally, NHSC provides some funding support to the [Arizona Loan Repayment Program](#), which like the NHSC Loan Repayment Program provides loan repayment incentives to primary care physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, certified nurse-midwives, dentists, psychiatrists, geriatrics, pharmacists, and other mental health providers in exchange for their service commitment in Arizona's federally designated [HPSA](#) or [Arizona Medically Underserved Areas \(AzMUA\)](#).

Despite these efforts, there continues to be significant healthcare needs that are necessary to be met due to the ongoing workforce shortages in Arizona (see the graph above). Currently, 412 primary care physicians, 425 dentists and 176 psychiatrists are needed to fill the gaps in Arizona health professional shortage areas.

To celebrate Corps Community Month and to emphasize the importance of the primary care workforce, the Arizona Department of Health Services, Bureau of Health Systems Development in collaboration with the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers and the University of Arizona Center for Rural Health hosted three webinars. The webinars shared information about the Arizona Rural Recruitment & Retention Network, recruitment & retention resources and materials, and how to improve access to care through provider incentives.

Care and Compassion, cont.



In the NATIVE HEALTH (NH) Community Garden, Susan Levy (left) with NH CEO, Walter Murillo at the Clinton Global Initiative Day of Action on March 23, 2014. President Clinton, Chelsea Clinton and Gabby Giffords also attended this event. On the same day, more than 50 students from various national and international Universities and Colleges volunteered to work on the Garden.

"I have always been interested in health care because of my father," says Susan. Her father was a pediatrician and was one of the pioneers of the wellness idea in the United States. He was the first person to test kids' cholesterol in the community in the United States. Susan still has a fun memory of assisting her father to make health education tools in their home kitchen.

Speaking of the future, Susan hopes to work on more programs, work with more communities and serve more people.

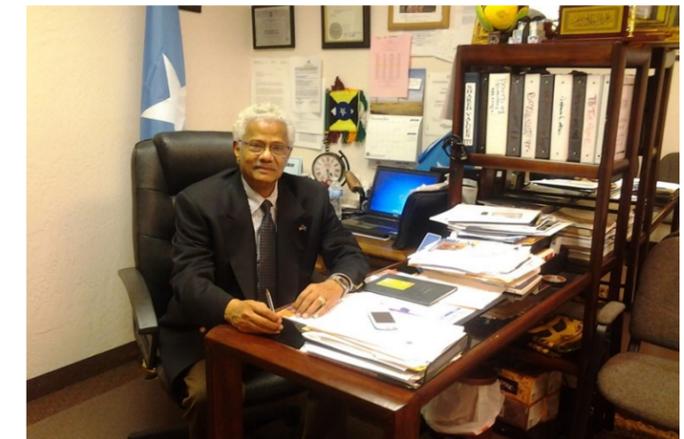
Partnering with the Somali Community through Research, cont.

As the Health Equity and Community Engaged Research Program sought true community engagement, defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as "the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people," they learned more about their community, their work and opportunities to partner. The result is a solid partnership built on trust and collaboration between Mayo Clinic and SAUC. The partnership gave rise to the Somali Tobacco Outreach and Research Initiative: Community Health Needs Assessment Project in January 2015, funded by Mayo Clinic's OHDR.

The aim of this project is to

implement a community-driven process of developing culturally and linguistically appropriate needs assessment components for the Phoenix-area Somali refugee community. This project assesses the healthcare access and the clinical service utilization of the Somali refugee community in order to inform future clinical studies, examine and identify the tobacco use behaviors of the community, and assess the social networks among the Phoenix Somali Refugee community and identify key opinion leaders.

As the project culminates, 200 surveys have been conducted and currently the project is in the focus group interview phase. SAUC research staff has been very instrumental in the recruitment and data collection process and have done a wonderful job implementing the project under Dr. Abukar (in photo), co-investigator, along with Mayo Clinic's Research



team leadership: Dr. Scott Leischow, principal investigator and Dr Janet Okamoto, co-investigator. SAUC research staff successfully recruited 200 participants and completed 200 surveys in less than two months.

"This project has been a great collaborative effort with our community partners," says Dr. Okamoto. "The community has been so welcoming and added so much to the research process that we are highly motivated to

continue this work and expand on this pilot project in the near future in order to better address health disparities among the Somali refugee population."

A big thank you to the Somali community and the SAUC team. The research team is looking forward to sharing the results with the community and partnering in new innovative ways in the future.

