

Arizona Health Improvement Plan (AzHIP)

July - Sept 2024



This Quarterly Newsletter provides highlights from each of the five AzHIP Priority Action Plans from the past quarter (July - Sept 2024).

Health Equity

[Health Equity Plan](#)

Strengthening Data Infrastructure: Informing, Integrating, and Sharing

The Data Advisory Committee (DAC) continues to meet and work toward two focus areas, Advancing Data Equity Best Practices, and Strengthening Data Sharing and Transparency.

- At the DAC September meeting, the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care (AACIHC) presented highlights from their 2024 State-Tribal Epidemiology Summit, including key factors of tribal data sovereignty and tribal data sharing best practices. Key takeaways and opportunities for action include:
 - enhance data transparency and access,
 - foster collaborative relationships,
 - improve data collection and quality,
 - support Tribal epidemiology efforts,
 - address data gaps and challenges,
 - enhance communication and engagement, and,
 - develop and utilize best practices.

AACIHC is developing a toolkit to serve as a comprehensive guide to help state agencies to engage with Tribes in a manner that respects their sovereignty, builds trust, and promotes effective data governance

- The DAC is developing a catalog of online resources that support the use of data equity best practices. This catalog as well as local case studies/success stories will be shared on the Office of Health Equity webpage.
- An update to the Arizona Social Vulnerability Index will be published by the end of this year to incorporate the most recent American Community Survey 5-year estimates which make up several of the factors within the AZSVI.
- The DAC reviewed and provided feedback on the Public Health Data Portal (PHDP), a new platform that will be published soon that streamlines access to all ADHS publicly available data. The PHDP will help the public to easily find and access the data they're looking for.
- New Resource! [Data Profiles](#) contain basic information about each ADHS data source. These short summary documents can help the public learn more about public health data sources and what kind of data may be available for programs and planning.
- Pima County brought in a subject matter expert to train staff on SOGI data collection. They also worked with Contexture to identify barriers that can be removed to obtain better and more usable results from HIE queries for a set of common health conditions. Pima County is working with ADHS to identify a project that uses the latest Health IT standards for exchanging eCR data with support from the PHIG Implementation Center Program. Over the summer, a technology fellow automated a process used to identify tribal data, increasing their capacity to sustainably meet some of the data needs of their tribal partner. The work that the summer fellow did will be applied to other tribal data sets that Pima County regularly sends to their tribal partner.

Community Partnership and Engagement and Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change

- Pinnacle Prevention presented to the AzHIP Health Equity Implementation Team the completion of their efforts to strategically engage stakeholders, including diverse and nontraditional stakeholders, in meaningful ways which build trust in relationships and engagement - A core message from the Arizona Smart Growth Initiative webinars and guidebook is the need to put

people first. This was shown in the People First Streets webinar and in the People First Design and development webinar. In the Smart Growth Guidebook, there is a section highlighting how the Smart Growth element of community engagement should be central to all smart growth work. Each of our case studies touches on aspects of partnership and community engagement, whether it be how a community garden was implemented and sustained, how an organization engages its network in local policy making, how a city and university worked with community members on a new building in downtown, or how an urban trail system was developed.

Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change

- Policy Change: Empower communities to drive policy change · Systems Change: Remove barriers to assist individuals/communities in navigating systems - · Environmental Change: Promote Smart Growth development and foster engagement of non-traditional stakeholders - The work of the Smart Growth Arizona Initiative is a direct response to the highlighted tactic in the PSE Strategy. Our initiative promotes Smart Growth Development by speaking to Arizona specific issues and by telling Arizona specific stories of initiatives that have embraced smart growth principles.



[Health in All Policies/Social Determinants of Health Plan](#)

Reduce the proportion of Arizonans spending more than 30% of their income on housing

- Arizona Department of Housing (ADOH) solicited feedback from stakeholders regarding the QAP and will make adjustments to the plan to enhance affordable housing development throughout the state. ADOH also issued a Request for Information to tribes and organizations who work with tribes to assist in programming funding available for housing and housing services on tribal land.
- Home Matters to Arizona and Valley Leadership continue to use the Home is where it all starts (HIWIAS) campaign in pro-housing outreach to cities in Maricopa County: Phoenix, Chandler, Surprise, Buckeye, Mesa and Tempe. Action alerts sent to advocates include HIWIAS language promoting the need for more housing across the housing continuum. In particular, using language about the connection between life expectancy and where you live and the need for holistic communities that address the range of SDOH.

- Contexture onboarded 18 organizations onto the CommunityCares system - a combination of healthcare entities and community-based organizations.
- LISC Phoenix continues to advance equitable access to housing, healthy food, childcare, and safe transportation for underserved communities across Arizona. Specifically, over the past quarter, our achievements and ongoing projects included Housing Affordability and Coordination and Supporting Child Care and Economic Stability

Create neighborhoods and environments that promote health and safety

- The AZ Health Zone team collaborated to pilot a Walkability Audit in local communities around Arizona. This new assessment tool assesses the walkability of a route to everyday destinations and neighborhoods. The AZ Health Zone team also partnered with ASU to apply for a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to address accessibility to physical activity resources. The Emerging Nutrition Initiatives team met with representatives from Colorado and California State Health Departments to learn more about their work in active living within the CDC SPAN grant strategies to glean insights and approaches that may be applicable to Arizona.
- Arizona State Parks & Trails collected both public and land manager's surveys for the 2025 Trails Plan. Land managers and Arizona residents over 18 were asked to provide input that will help to guide the distribution of future federal and state grant funds that support the acquisition, development and maintenance of trails in communities. The Grants and Trails team also provided another virtual grant and post-award workshop and the team presented at 3 conferences, 1 meeting, and regional collaboratives (e.g., Eastern Arizona Trails, Rim Country and Chino Valley Collaborative Groups) to help communities understand available resources to improve their built environment. Additionally, 3 grants were awarded from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to develop additional parks and facilities in Show Low, Page and Pinal County.
- LISC Phoenix is committed to fostering healthier, safer communities by engaging directly with residents and stakeholders to create sustainable and resilient neighborhoods.

Promote safe and active transportation

- Members of the Arizona Department of Health Services' Office of Community Innovations met with representatives from ADOT monthly to discuss opportunities for partnership on projects. Team members participated in the development of the Active Transportation Safety Action Plan

(ATSAP) and the Strategic Highway Safety Plan developed by ADOT. The AZ Health Zone team worked with researchers at ASU and other partners to complete a walk audit for Osborn School District.

- Arizona State Parks and Trails has been awarded grant monies to develop a statewide trails app that will include trails for electric device, non-motorized, and motorized activities. Making trail information easily accessible in one place will help individuals identify available trail routes that provide active transportation alternatives to vehicle travel between destinations.
- The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) published the 2024 Active Transportation Safety Action Plan (ATSAP).
- LISC Phoenix is advancing safe, equitable transportation options to support the health and well-being of Arizonans.

Improve health by making nutritious foods available

- AZ Health Zone supported the distribution of 139,602 mailers to SNAP recipients in collaboration with the Arizona Department of Economic Security to promote the use of Double Up Food Bucks in specific zip codes. Several team members from the Office of Community Innovations participated in the Arizona Food System Network Quarterly meeting to participate in the decision making process for the FY25-30 Arizona Food Action Plan priorities with SNAP-Eligible communities in mind. HonorHealth Desert Mission Food Bank earned Gold Certification through the Nutrition Pantry Program, showcasing their dedication to nutrition, trauma-informed practices, and innovative adaptability in addressing community needs. This will be submitted as a SNAP-Ed Success Story to USDA. University of Arizona Garden Kitchen's PLAZA Mobile Market continues to increase food access, affordable food retail opportunities to locally-grown, culturally-relevant foods for primarily SNAP-eligible community members in South Tucson and accepts SNAP, DUFEB, WIC FMNP and Senior FMNP.
- Over the past month, LISC Phoenix has prioritized food access and nutrition support for underserved communities by advancing initiatives that directly address food security and improve access to healthy foods.



[Mental Well-being Plan](#)

Improve Awareness of, and Address, the Impact of Social Isolation and Loneliness on Health

- The Equity-Centered Place-Based Community of Practice in Mental Well-Being and Resilience playbook is [available on-line](#).
- The Mental Well-Being and Resilience Community of Practice was held October 28th, 2024.
- This virtual event titled "Trauma Informed Gone Wild" will discuss what trauma informed care is and is not. Attendees will learn how to implement trauma sensitive practices in schools.

Reduce Opioid Use and Overdose Fatalities

- Meetings and momentum continue for the Statewide Clinical Opioid Work Group, which brings clinical stakeholders together for strategic action (i.e., increasing naloxone distribution in EDs). The group is currently focused on identifying a metric to measure statewide levels of medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) treatment.
- The Overdose Data to Action grant is in year 2 and is now fully staffed with a Program Manager, who will initiate strengthening linkages to care by adding peer support to the OAR Line.
- Naloxone continues to be distributed across the state to priority agencies and to emergency departments in alignment with the AHCCCS DAP. It is now also being distributed to Labor & Delivery hospital departments.
- ADHS is participating in the School Training Overdose Preparedness and Intelligence Taskforce (STOP-IT). Additionally, naloxone has been provided to the AZ Department of Education to distribute to public schools that opt in to receive it. Distribution will start in mid-November.
- ADHS hosted the Public Health and Public Safety Summit with leaders from law enforcement, fire, EMS and county health departments, focused on overdose prevention and response, on October 29, 2024.

Reducing Suicide-Related Events

- Garrett Lee Smith Tribal and Campus (GLS) grant was awarded to Arizona. The intent of this GLS award is to increase school staff's ability to identify and work with youth suicidality, increase the number of schools trained to provide student programming on the signs of peers at risk, embed

train-the-trainers and increase the usage of a universal response system. Arizona Project Bright Futures is the funded partnership between the AZ Department of Education, ADHS, the University of Arizona, The Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, and the Cochise County Education Service Agency. The goals include:

- Increasing Cochise County education service agency staff trained to identify and work with youth suicidality by 75%.
- Increasing the number of schools trained to provide evidence-based student programming to recognize the signs of peers at risk of suicide to 75%.
- At completion, the project will be self-sustaining with Train-the-Trainers embedded at LEA.
- Developing, implementing and increasing usage of universal response systems by 50%.
- The AgriStress Helpline is a free and confidential crisis and support line that those in agricultural communities can call or text 24/7. AgriStress is currently funded as a pilot in AZ; looking to continue annual funding through CDC Suicide Prevention grant in 2025. It was brought to Arizona through a collaboration of UofA - Cooperative Extension, AZ Farm Bureau, AZ Department of Agriculture, AHCCCS and ADHS.
 - Phone calls have interpretation available in 160 languages, and text message services are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
 - VIA LINK, the crisis call center that answers the line, is accredited by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) and Inform US.
- Both the AgriStress Helpline and 988 offer the same quality of suicide crisis services – but AgriStress crisis specialists have extra training to know the culture, values, stressors, and lived experiences of agriculture, forestry, and fishing workers. In addition, crisis specialists have access to a state specific curated database of agricultural and health resources.
- Arizona was awarded the first-ever SAMHSA Suicide Mortality Review (SMR) grant. Arizona was also one of only two states to be awarded in Focus Area Two: Implementation and Expansion of SMR activities. The Arizona SMR is an example SAMHSA is using to have other states replicate.
- The new SAMHSA SMR Cooperative Agreement is a partnership between the Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family, ADHS, AZ Department of Veterans’ Services, and the AZ Coalition for Military Families. It will fund the Veteran Suicide Mortality Review and its related activities, which include culturally relevant outreach, training, and engagement, utilizing the “Secure your Weapon”

framework, and support the development of “Firearm Hygiene Kits” (lethal means safety kits) that will be disseminated.

- ADHS has released a new Request for Grant Application (RFGA) for non-profit organizations for counseling and community services in Southern Arizona (includes Yuma, Pima, Cochise, Graham, Greenlee and Santa Cruz counties). The RFGA is accessible at [AZ Grant Funding Opportunities](#)
- ADHS hosted a roundtable focused on Construction Industry suicide prevention on October 18, 2024.
- The Arizona Suicide Prevention Coalition hosted the annual suicide prevention Hope Conference, at Creighton University, October 28th and 29th.
- Mohave County hosted the [“Resilience” Mental Health symposium](#) on October 30th.



[Rural & Urban Underserved Health Plan](#)

Address Health Professional Shortage by building a diverse healthcare workforce

- AHCCCS has been working on the ARP-CET Health Care Workforce Scholarship Program, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, which supports students in over 40 healthcare fields, with 13 colleges and 2,000+ students participating. The HB 2691 Behavioral Health Scholarship Program, funded by the Arizona legislature, offers scholarships for unlicensed behavioral health jobs, mainly in Navajo and Maricopa counties. Interest grew with the launch of a Behavioral Health bachelor's degree at South Mountain Community College, awarding around 1,500 scholarships. Students outside these counties can access the ARP-CET program for behavioral health careers. Target audiences were identified and partnered with organizations to deliver specialized trainings, including sexual assault nurse examiner training in rural and tribal areas. The Arizona Perinatal Psychiatry Access Line (APAL) offers mental health and psychiatry consultation for providers, funded by AHCCCS.

- AHCCCS also funded National Center for START Services (NCSS) training to enhance care for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and mental health needs. These trainings target Direct Support Coordinators, crisis systems, providers, and prescribers. A statewide

evaluation highlighted the need for a comprehensive training curriculum and implementation plan for professionals serving this population.

Maximize utilization of CHWs/CHRs in clinical settings

- AHCCCS has added CHW/CHR coverage and provider type. They are also working on the coverage of traditional healing which recently received CMS approval through 1115 waiver demonstration. AHCCCS received approval in February 2024 to make the parents as paid caregivers initiative permanent
- More than 500 CHWs have been certified by ADHS.

Improve Maternal Health Outcomes

- AHCCCS policy requires that providers and health plans educate members on warning signs during pregnancy and postpartum. AHCCCS covers reproductive health services, increased LARC reimbursement on 1/1/23, and carved out inpatient postpartum LARC from DRG payments on 10/1/16. AHCCCS covers Certified Nurse Midwife and Licensed Midwife services and is currently working toward removing barriers to provider enrollment for LMs AHCCCS has added doulas as a provider type and will cover doula services beginning 10/1/24. AHCCCS providers screen for postpartum depression at the 1, 2, 4, and 6-month infant well-visits as part of the EPSDT benefit. Depression and anxiety screening of new caregivers is also incentivized through the Targeted Investments (TI 2.0) program.

Improve Indian (IHS/Tribal/Urban) Health by increasing access to care, reducing systems barriers, and strengthening infrastructure

- AHCCCS is expanding the American Indian Medical Home (AIMH) Program to increase primary care management for members in the American Indian Health Program (AIHP), with 9 IHS/Tribal 638 facilities designated as AIMHs and 31% of AIHP members enrolled. Under the Mitch Warnock Act, AHCCCS provides annual suicide prevention training materials for public school staff. In 2024, they introduced "Mind 4 Health," a culturally relevant curriculum based on indigenous traditions.
- The Differential Adjusted Payment (DAP) program incentivizes providers to use systems like the Health Information Exchange (HIE), Closed Loop Referral System (CLRS), and the Arizona Health Directive Registry.



**Pandemic
Resiliency
&
Recovery**

[Pandemic Resiliency and Recovery Plan](#)

Mental Health & Trauma Action Team: AZ ACE's Consortium held the first Mental Health and Wellbeing Community of Practice on August 20th. The theme was Addressing Compassion Fatigue for Organizational Resilience. They also did a presentation on the Community of Practice playbook at the IHA Health Literacy Conference on September 19th.