

Arizona Refugee Health

ISSUE 3

FEBRUARY 2014

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- New data is available on refugee health in Arizona! See page 3.
- If you would like to subscribe to the newsletter, please email Zachary.Holden@azdhs.gov.

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Community Spotlight: Optimal Health Program

What does 'health' mean to you? For Jenelle Walker, PhD, health encompasses every aspect of life, including spiritual, mental, and physical wellness. This notion is central to the Optimal Health Program that Dr. Walker is carrying out in the refugee community in Phoenix. Dr. Walker is currently a Health Disparities Science postdoctoral fellow in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation, working with Drs. Colleen Keller and Barbara Ainsworth at ASU. She is also an adjunct faculty member in the Health Sciences program. Her research focuses on healthy lifestyle behaviors and her expertise is in physical activity. She developed the Optimal Health Program along with researchers from ASU and the Refugee Women's Health Clinic (RWHC). The program aims to engage refugee women of African descent in a conversation about health and

promote positive health behaviors.

Motivation

Dr. Walker is passionate about reducing health disparities. She



Dr. Jenelle Walker (standing) speaks with participants.

first became interested in the refugee community after hearing Dr. Crista Johnson-Agbakwu of the RWHC speak at a seminar. The RWHC is part of Maricopa Integrated Health System and is the first clinic of its kind nationally. Seeing the challenges and stresses this vulnerable population faces, as well as the lack of research and

health promotion programs to address these issues, inspired Dr. Walker to take action. She became involved with the Refugee Women's Health Community Advisory Coalition (RWHCAC), led by the Clinic's Program Manager, Jeanne Nizigiyimana, and currently serves as co-chair of the Research Subcommittee. The RWHCAC Research Subcommittee forms partnerships with the community in order to carry out research that directly benefits the community.

Community-based model

Community conversations and needs assessments informed Dr. Walker as she created the Optimal Health Program pilot study. The program recruited 36 refugee women of African descent from the community. All of the women speak English or Swahili, but are of all ages and come from many

(Continued on page 2)

New year, new strategic plan

This year, the community will begin implementing the 2014-2015 Arizona Refugee Resettlement Statewide Strategic Plan. The strategic plan is the result of multiple planning sessions in 2013 involving community members and stakeholders from Phoenix and Tucson. It outlines measurable, achievable goals and provides focus to the community's collective efforts to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency.

The strategic plan centers around five Local Priorities: Orientation,

Language/Literacy, Employment, Integrated Health, and Pre-K/K-12 Education. Goals for Integrated Health focus on five key topics: cultural competency, behavioral health services, health literacy & health care navigation, the Affordable Care Act, and health care interpretation.

In order to implement the strategic plan, a Refugee Services Consortium is currently being established. The Consortium will consist of five Local Priority Teams responsible for implementing the

objectives set forth in the strategic plan. Each Local Priority Team will be led by Co-Chairs nominated by the community, and composed of community members from both Phoenix and Tucson.

The Strategic Plan can be found at <http://webplaceone.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Final-2014-2015-Arizona-Refugee-Resettlement-Statewide-Strategic-Plan.pdf>. We are all looking forward to a collaborative and productive next two years.

Optimal Health Program

(Continued from page 1)

different countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, and Liberia. Initial surveys and meetings with the women and community leaders provided information on spiritual, mental, and physical health, which helped Dr. Walker tailor the program to be culturally appropriate.

Participants attend weekly sessions over a six-week period, with information collected at the beginning and end of the program on demographics, religion, perceived stress, religious coping strategies, weight, and blood pressure. Participants engage in discussions on spiritual, mental, and physical health with critical help from two of the Clinic's Cultural Health Navigators, Liliane Ferdinand and Massa Fahnbulleh, and ASU student worker Shirley Iraganje. The sessions include healthy snacks and exercise involving stretches, aerobics, and dance. Dr. Walker is using quantitative measures of physical activity as well as qualitative surveys to evaluate the program.

Challenges

Overall, the program has been well-

received by the community and the women have enjoyed the interactive sessions. Implementing the program has not been without its challenges. One of the biggest challenges is transportation. As is the case with many refugees, most of the participants do not have access to



Dr. Jenelle Walker (center) leads a group dance session.

reliable forms of transportation. This impacts their ability to consistently attend the weekly sessions. Low levels of formal education and literacy also present a challenge in how to effectively deliver health information to this diverse population.

Insights

Dr. Walker encourages other researchers to lead health promotion programs within the refugee community. She advises others to use a community-based approach. Before beginning a project, it is essential to understand the needs, priorities, attitudes, and strengths of

the community, as well as to build trust. Researchers should be prepared to do a lot of groundwork in order to carry out a project of this nature. It is important to be open and able to adapt the program, while still upholding a certain level of integrity as a researcher. Carrying out an engaging and effective program depends greatly on cultural humility, competence, tailoring, and sensitivity at every step.

Future initiatives

There is a great need for continued educational outreach, given the prevalence of metabolic diseases and behavioral health issues, as well as the limited awareness of preventive health in this population. Dr. Walker hopes this research model will be adapted to conduct outreach with other refugee populations. She envisions a community in which sustainable physical activity and health promotion programs are accessible for all refugee women, as well as men. The RWHCAC Research Subcommittee will help coordinate future initiatives to achieve this goal. The community would greatly benefit from more programs like Dr. Walker's!

For more information on this program, please contact Dr. Jenelle Walker at jrwalker8@asu.edu.

It's flu season: stay informed!

Did you know?

The flu season often peaks during February of each year.

Information is the key to ensuring everyone is healthy during this flu season. It is important for everyone to know the symptoms of the flu, how to prevent the spread of the disease, and what to do if a family member has the flu.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed four pamphlets specifically for informing refugee communities about seasonal flu. The pamphlets are written in the native languages of refugee groups. The information is tailored for low literacy populations, containing many images and simple text.

The Seasonal Flu Materials for

Refugees are available in the following languages: Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Dzongkha, English, Farsi, Karen, Kirundi, Nepali, Oromo, Somali, and Spanish.

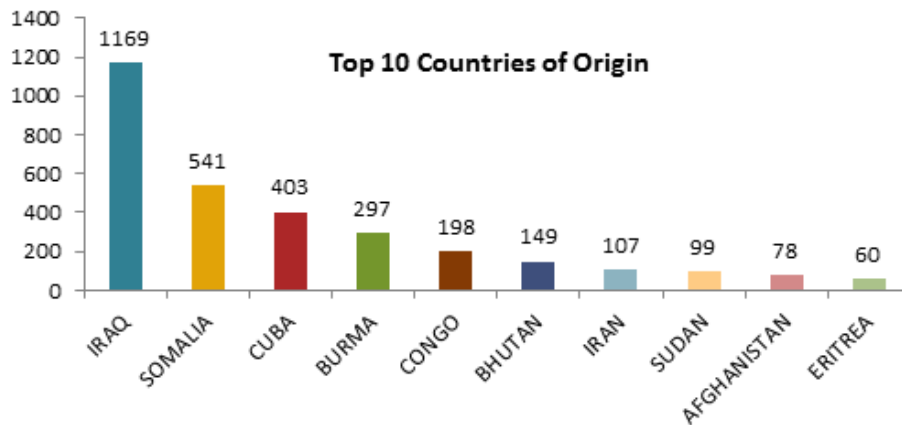
Please access these resources at <http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/resources/index.html>.



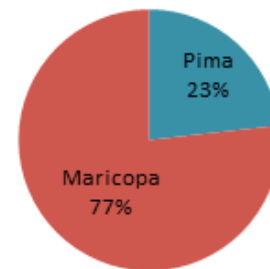
Refugee Health 2013: A Year in Review

REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN 2013

In 2013, Arizona resettled a total of 3,336 refugees!

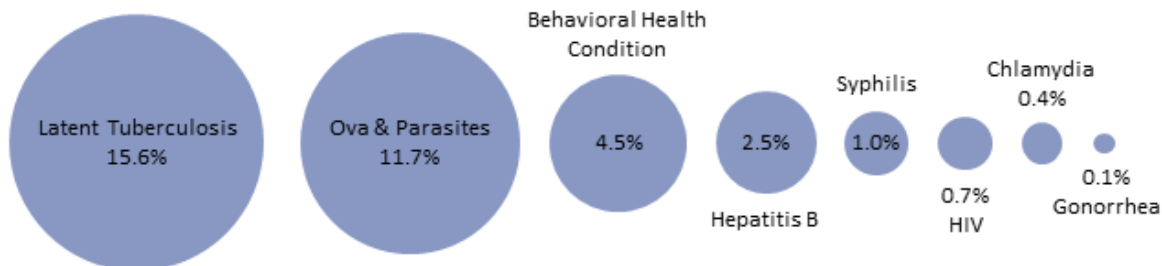


Arrivals by County



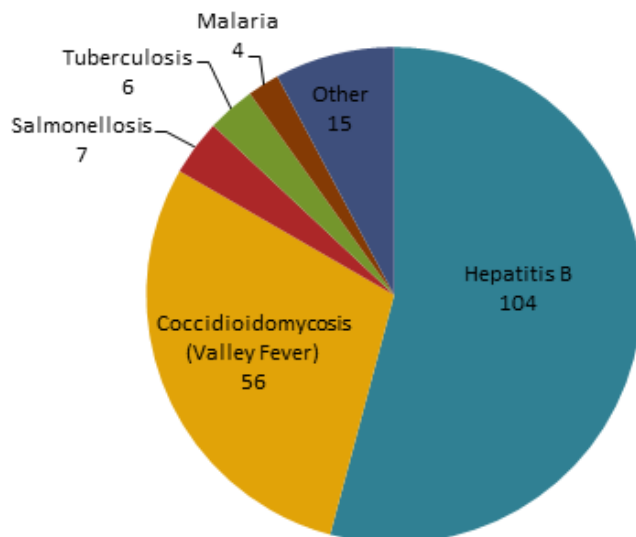
SCREENING CLINIC RESULTS IN 2013

All refugees are screened within 90 days of arrival to Arizona.

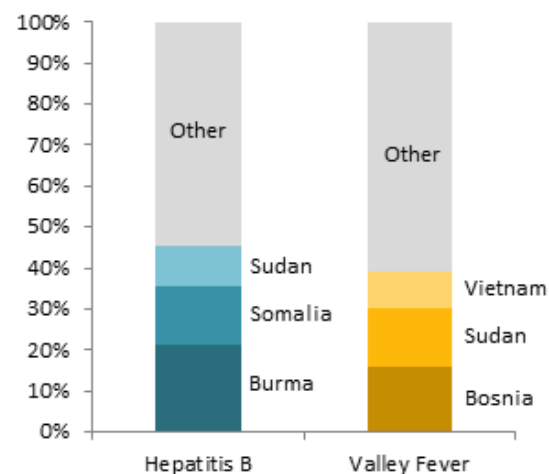


COMMUNICABLE DISEASES REPORTED IN 2013

Data from Medical Electronic Disease Surveillance Intelligence System (MEDSIS) for 2013.



Top 3 Countries of Origin





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>> Call for Submissions <<

If you have any events, stories or photos you would like to share on the Arizona Refugee Health Newsletter, please submit them to Zachary.Holden@azdhs.gov !

Research Spotlight

Reducing Refugee Mental Health Disparities: A Community-Based Intervention to Address Postmigration Stressors With African Adults. 2013 Dec 23. Goodkind JR, Hess JM, Isakson B, Lanoue M, Githinji A, Roche N, Vadnais K, Parker DP. *Psychol Serv*. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24364594>

The Cultural Basis for Oral Health Practices among Somali Refugees Pre-and Post-Resettlement in Massachusetts. 2013 Nov. Adams JH, Young S, Laird LD, Geltman PL, Cochran JJ, Hassan A, Egal F, Paasche-Orlow MK, Barnes LL. *J Health Care Poor Underserved*. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24185145>

Providing health information for culturally and linguistically diverse women: priorities and preferences of new migrants and refugees. 2013 Aug. Lee SK, Sulaiman-Hill CM, Thompson SC. *Health Promot J Austr*. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24168735>

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, February 19, 2014—Eat Well and Stay Healthy Workshop, Pima County Health Department

5:30 PM—7:30 PM at Eckstrom-Columbus Branch Library, 4350 E. 22nd St, Tucson, AZ

Part 1 of a two-part program. All community members are welcome to learn about finding healthy food for your family. Find out how to enroll in WIC and SNAP, use vouchers, discover nutritious food, and make healthy choices. Information will be presented in English and Swahili.

Wednesday, February 26, 2014—Webinar: Substance Abuse and the Torture Survivor Experience, National Partnership for Community Training

11:00 AM—12:15 PM Register at goo.gl/FZti9S

In order to cope, forget, or ignore the impact of trauma some refugees and torture survivors may turn to substance use. This webinar will introduce substance abuse issues, address apprehension and stigma that may exist in the community, and offer guidance and best practices for community members.

Saturday, March 8, 2014—Free Health Clinic, Muslim Community Center of Tucson

10:00 AM—1:00 PM at 4727 E. 5th St, Tucson, AZ

Free Health Clinic open to all on the 2nd Saturday of every month. No insurance necessary, Professional Practicing Doctors, Walk-ins welcome. Services include: Physical Exams, Screenings, Referral Services, Chronic Disease Management, Patient Health Education, Pediatric Services, and more.

Monday, March 10, 2014—Preventive Health Collaborative Training: Pediatric Health in Ethnic Communities

9:00 AM—11:00 AM at Roosevelt Wellness Center, 1030 E. Baseline Rd, Phoenix, AZ

Learn from physicians working in ethnic communities about the impact family traditions and perspectives have on pediatric health. Featuring Maricopa Integrated Health Systems Pediatric Medical Home Care Coordinators.

For additional events and contact information, please visit the [News & Events page at AZrefugeehealth.org](http://AZrefugeehealth.org).

Funding Opportunities

Champions for Healthy Kids—The General Mills Foundation

Amount: 20,000

Eligibility: Sustainable, effective programs working to improve nutrition and physical fitness behaviors for youth. Programs must be focused on youth ages 2-18, incorporate physical education and nutrition education, and involve the oversight of a registered dietician or registered dietetic technician.

Deadline: March 14, 2014

http://content.generalmills.com/en/Responsibility/community_engagement/Grants/Champions_for_healthy_kids.aspx

Grant—Safeway Foundation

Amount: 10,000-25,000

Eligibility: Nonprofit organizations whose mission focuses on hunger relief, education, health and human services, and/or assisting people with disabilities.

Deadline: April 2014 (quarterly)

<http://www.safewayfoundation.org/get-funded/index.html>

State Giving Program (AZ) - The Wal-Mart Foundation

Amount: 25,000-250,000

Eligibility: Programs focused on Hunger Relief & Healthy Eating or Career Opportunity. (Examples: efforts that aim to enroll people in SNAP, healthy eating/ cooking skills training, nutrition education programs, and career skills or job training efforts that lead to placement.)

Deadline: April 26, 2014

<http://foundation.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/state-giving>

Charitable Donations—Albertsons LLC

Amount: as needed

Eligibility: Events that address hunger relief, health, nutrition, or youth and education.

Deadline: at least 6 weeks prior to the event

<http://www.albertsons.com/our-company/community-partners/charitable-donations/>

For additional funding opportunities, please visit the [News & Events page at AZrefugeehealth.org](http://AZrefugeehealth.org).