

# NORTHEAST REGION HEALTH PROMOTION NEWSLETTER

Summer 2017

## CONNECTING THE DOTS BY AMY SANDOVAL HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM MANAGER

“Before you can ever inspire, motivate, or influence, you must connect first” -G. Smith

In 2014, the Northeast Region Health Promotion Team adopted the slogan “We Connect the Dots”, to express the work of the Health Promotion Program. For the Health Promotion Team, connecting the dots is done through relationship building with internal and external public health partners. Although it sounds straightforward, relationship building involves a lot of time, energy, trust, and patience.

When the Northeast Region Health Promotion Team was resurrected in 2012 from a dormant state, our starting place was getting to know and meet our communities, recognizing that in defining our primary role we must meet the needs of the community first. At the same time, it was also about building a trusting relationship with our local public health offices, to become better ambassadors of public health to the community.



## Northeast Region Health Promotion Team

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Finding associations and commonalities with new partners in the community, and in our own offices, allows Health Promotion staff to see the larger picture of existing community resources. This knowledge is invaluable in mobilizing community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.

Connecting the dots is very like building bridges, and in those two analogies, it's also evident that when the job is done, the facilitator must give their trust to the process for it to take its course. The same holds true in some cases, to the work of Health Promotion. By connecting the dots, we are becoming facilitators of change, and relying on the commitment from within the community to carry the initiative forward. That's what we call building assurance in the world of Public Health.

RHANE: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABILITY  
BY RACHEL WEXLER AND CHRISTA TRUJILLO,  
HEALTH PROMOTION COORDINATORS



Building relationships is the foundation for the work that the health promotion team does in the Northeast Region. “The strength of community lies in the strength of the connections that we have with each other. With strong connections, people have the power to make real

change. Building these connections takes time; but it is worth it.” ( <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/leadership-functions/build-sustain-relationships/main>) In order to make the changes that are needed we need lots of people to contribute ideas and get the work done.

The Health Promotion team is always working to strengthen our relationships with community partners, but we also work on strengthening relationships between community partners. An excellent example of this occurred with 4 very diverse counties in the region: Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and Taos. Over the past year members of the Health Promotion Team worked closely with representatives from these 4 counties to support collaborative efforts that stemmed from a joint grant that had been written. These counties identified that they are each addressing similar health related issues associated with socioeconomic disparities in health, including low levels of income, education and occupation, as well as limited access to health programs and services in rural locations. Each county exists in an environment of limited resources, an ever-growing demand to provide services, and in a system where each county is providing multiple services to the same individuals. Therefore, it made sense for these counties to try and combine efforts to address shared problems, especially since people seeking services are not bound by county boundaries.

To promote the cross-county collaboration throughout the 2017 fiscal year, the four county health councils were allowed to complete and get paid for 4 shared deliverables, one of which is completion and passing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by local county commissioners. RHANE members were able to meet regularly to identify barriers, to share resources, and to identify potential projects where collaboration would be feasible and would have the most impact.

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## EMOTIONAL WELLNESS ACTIVITY: MOTIVATIONAL MONDAY MESSAGES BY DESIREE VALDEZ

Emotional wellness is not always the easiest to maintain. I rely on a couple of different tools to help me along when I feel emotionally unwell, one of those being the practice of sending out an emotional wellness message to my coworkers and community partners every Monday. This is a friendly way for me to connect with all the people in the communities I work in and provide something of they can use to fuel their wellness practice. My hope is these messages are a welcome boost to the start of the work week. The messages usually contain the following items that help me gain perspective on my feeling so I can feel balanced again:

**Positive Doodles:** Artist [Emm Roy](#) creates fun and inspirational art in the form of Positive Doodles. Her work covers all different types of topics from self-esteem and hobbies to pursuing your passions and creating art. Her work is cute, colorful, and always brings a smile to my face.

**Articles on How to Manage Emotions:** After I pick the doodle that speaks to me, I find articles connecting to the doodle's theme. Finding different ways of looking at a topic helps to us to learn more about our emotional lives. I like to find articles with workable strategies we can use in our daily lives.



This simple formula helps me connect with the amazing people I get to work with in my communities and reminds me to take my own advice, too!

*RHANE continued from page 2*

The health promotion team has been convening the group and working with the counties to create an official MOU between the counties, and identify a project which the counties might work on jointly. The main role of the HP team has been to convene and facilitate meetings in an effort to “hold space” so that these counties can begin to create non-adversarial relationships with each other and develop positive relationships so that they may begin to address their shared concerns, together.

As of May 2017, a final version of the MOU was agreed upon by all 4 counties and has been presented to local county commissioners for approval. The NE Region Health Promotion team looks forward to continuing to build these relationships in the year to come.

## HEALTH COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT: MORA COUNTY BY VALENTINA WHITE, HEALTH PROMOTION SPECIALIST



The beautiful Mora Valley located in Northern New Mexico is surrounded by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, rivers, lakes, prairies, and pastures.

From its inception, Mora was known for its diverse population of early settlers and travelers. During the 1800's, Mora had a relationship with the military at Fort Union. That was the beginning of the biggest agricultural

boom of farming and supplying wheat flour to the southwest from several flour mills, making Mora Valley the bread basket of the southwest.

Today Mora county has a population of 4714 residents. Like many smaller rural communities the population of Mora has decreased due to economics and life style changes.

For the past few years Mora County has shown high rates of drug overdose death, alcohol misuse, diabetes death and behavioral health problems. Mora Valley Community Health Services, New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) Community Behavioral Services, NMDOH Public Health, local Fire Departments and EMS, have stepped up to help with these issues.

In 2005 collaborating with different organizations and programs a health council was created to address the health of Mora County. "Nos deseamos una vida Buena y Sana" which can be translated to "Wishing our community a happy and healthy life", has been the health council's vision since the health council was established. Since the vision was created the health council has been actively addressing the county health priorities. The health council has regular monthly meetings, helps organize the yearly health fair and participates in community activities.

The passion and commitment of this health council has shown through their latest effort with Operation S.T.O.P. - an educational awareness campaign to bring awareness of substance misuse, alcohol misuse and underage drinking to Mora residents. Brochures, posters, and billboards were created to educate the community on substance and alcohol misuse and underage drinking. With the support of Mora County Commission, the Health Council was also able to get the NMDOH Harm Reduction Program started in Mora's Public Health Office.

The health council, through the efforts of passionate committed committee members, is helping build a healthier Mora County. The health council will continue to educate and empower Mora residents to understand and make healthier choices for a healthier life.

For more information about Mora County Health Council please email [moracountyhealth-council@hotmail.com](mailto:moracountyhealth-council@hotmail.com).

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