12TH ANNUAL
RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM:
The Importance of a Diverse Health Workforce
to Improve Health Access and Quality Care for Hispanics
12th Annual Research Symposium: The Importance of a Diverse Health Workforce to Improve Health Access and Quality Care for Hispanics
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A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR ASSISTING THE HSHPS STAFF WITH THE 2013 GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM:

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Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health

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There is a significant strain on the health workforce and the number of minorities, specifically Hispanic health professionals, is disproportionately low when compared to the Hispanic population living in the United States (U.S.). The 2010 Census counted 50.5 million Hispanics in the U.S., making up 16.3 percent of the total population. Additionally African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and American Indians, as a group, constitute nearly 25 percent of the U.S. population. Yet, these three groups account for less than 9 percent of nurses, 6 percent of physicians, and only 5 percent of dentists. Minority representation within the health professions directly relates to access to health care services in underserved communities and is viewed as “an integral part of the solution to improving access to care.” Despite, the Hispanic population being the largest ethnic group in the U.S., it is also the most disparate in both health workforce size and health care access and quality.

Furthermore, many of the needed approaches to equitable healthcare for Hispanics will also require an understanding of the cultural and social determinants of health, which are based in the native heritages of many Hispanic immigrant populations. There is a clear need now for new approaches to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the health professions, and to enhance overall cultural competency training about the needs of minority populations.

The National Association of Hispanic-Serving Health Professions School (HSHPS) was established in 1996 to increase the number of Hispanics in the health professions and to improve the knowledge of and health care for U.S. Hispanics in response to President William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton’s Executive Order 12900: “Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans,” and as part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services “Hispanic Agenda for Action Initiative.”

HSHPS is a unique non-profit organization whose membership consists of both medical and public health schools geographically distributed across the U.S. that consist of at least 5% Hispanic student enrollment at the individual schools. The 29 member institutions have extensive histories of working to improve the health of Hispanics through training, education, and research. Additionally, HSHPS has collaborated with the numerous non-profits, academic institutions, government agencies, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community organizations that address health workforce development. It has affected the training of individuals from pre-health to faculty, and assisted in research development on Hispanic health across the U.S.

The HSHPS Graduate Fellowship Training Program provides paid training opportunities for graduate and doctoral students, and recent graduates interested in working on Hispanic health research. Fellows are placed across the U.S. and Latin America in government agencies and academic institutions. Fellows are paired with a mentor, experienced research or senior health professional, to work on projects as they relate to Hispanic health issues and professional development. The training programs are designed to: enhance the fellow’s research and professional development skills; increase the fellow’s knowledge about Hispanic and other minority health issues; and provide opportunities to network with other health professionals.

Now, in its 17th year, HSHPS has trained over 300 fellows. Most still work with Hispanic and other minority groups in government or academia, pursued higher degrees, published research, received NIH grants, and stay connected with HSHPS!

Dear HSHPS Fellows,

On behalf of Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools (HSHPS), we would like to congratulate you on your successful completion of the 2013 HSHPS Graduate Fellowship Training Program. We hope that during the fellowship you acquired skills that will enhance your future academic and career goals, in addition to being inspired to help eliminate Hispanic health disparities.

The mission of the HSHPS is to improve the health of Hispanics through academic development, research initiatives, and training. We strive to strengthen the nation's capacity to educate and expand the availability of high-quality Hispanic health professionals, and to improve the health status of Hispanics and other underserved populations.

With your hard work and the invaluable support of your mentors, you have expanded your research and professional development skills, increased your knowledge about Hispanic and other minority health issues, and now join a wide network of diverse health professionals.

Moving forward, we wish you luck in all your endeavors and encourage you to remain in contact with us by keeping us updated about your service within the Hispanic community as well as your educational and professional career developments.

Sincerely,

Valerie Romero-Leggott, MD
President, Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools
Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement
Professor of Family and Community Medicine
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
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Graduate School of Public Health

Deanna Wathington, MD, MPH  
University of South Florida, School of Public Health
MICHELLE QUINTEROS DE CZIFRA, MS
**Executive Director**

Michelle Quinteros de Czifra holds an M.S. in Systems Engineering and Engineering Management from The George Washington University (GWU); graduate certificate in Emergency Management and Public Health from GWU; and a B.A. in Latin American Studies/Spanish Language and International Relations from American University. As Executive Director of Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools (HSHPS), she works to improve the health of Hispanics through academic development, research initiatives, and training. Additionally, she serves as the Principal Investigator on several HHS, OMH, and VA grants and coordinates several activities including: The National Mentorship Program, Graduate Fellowship Training Program, Faculty Development Workshop, and How to use Data to Improve Hispanic Health Workshop. Most recently, she has been participating in the initiative titled Building the Next Generation of Academic Physicians of Einstein’s Hispanic Center of Excellence.

ODALYS CRESPO, MA
**Program Manager**

Odalys Crespo, a native of Puerto Rico, rejoined HSHPS as Program Manager after participating in HSHPS Graduate Fellowship Training Program. Ms. Crespo completed the fellowship program during the summer of 2011 where she was placed at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Tampa, Florida. Later she joined the HSHPS office as the Programs and Communications trainee, and then moved to New York City to work as the Center Administrator for Hair Club. There she interpreted for Spanish speaking clients and gained greater insight to health issues affecting the Hispanic community. Odalys received her M.A. from Texas A&M International University in 2012, where she studied abroad in Spain and conducted a survey about urgent care models. She also holds a B.A. degree from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus.

ROBERTO VALDEZ, JR
**Marketing and Communications Intern**

Roberto Valdez Jr. is the Communications and Marketing Intern for Hispanic-Serving Professions Schools (HSHPS) where he assists and collaborates on all organizational communication efforts. Recently, Roberto was Marketing Assistant at The Phoenix Symphony where he took part in Marketing and Box Office initiatives towards reaching both sales and community relation goals. Mr. Valdez holds a B.A. in Communications with a minor in Media Analysis from Arizona State University, graduating from the Hugh Downs School of Communication. In addition, Roberto was Public Relations Co-Chair for the Association of Human Communication where he led all student relation efforts correlating students majoring in Communications and their career options after graduating. Roberto Plans on pursuing his post-graduate education in the near future.
June 22, 2013

Dear HSHPS Fellows:

On behalf of the University of Texas Medical Branch, I want to congratulate you for completing the graduate fellowship training program this past summer 2013. As an organization that leads in the pursuit to recruit, train, and retain bright and competitive health practitioners, we look forward to your continued interest in the preparation to address and eliminate health disparities.

As a future clinician and/or health practitioner, your success will be measured by the dissemination of your research and/or contribution to academic medicine. This year, you were one of the few to have been placed in an extraordinary opportunity to grow in your field of interest. Your continued participation, interest, and future contribution to science will be noteworthy for underserved populations to come.

Keep in mind that you can make a difference and will make a difference through your persistence and dedication to the medical field.

Sincerely,

Norma A. Pérez, MD, DrPH
Director, UTMB Hispanic Center of Excellence
Interim Vice President and Board Member, Hispanic — Serving Health Professions Schools
University of Texas Medical Branch
July 2013

Dear HSHPS Fellows:

On behalf of the board of HSHPS, I would like to add my congratulations on completing the HSHPS fellowship. We know that this experience will be very important in your future career as a health professional.

Personally, I hope you understand the urgency of increasing the number of health professionals who are able to provide culturally competent care to the Hispanic community. Therefore, I trust that your experience this summer will encourage you to pursue or continue a career in medicine, public health, dental health, or other health professions.

Further, please consider a career as a faculty member in your field of choice, so as to increase our knowledge base on Hispanic health, to help eliminate health disparities among Hispanics, and train the next generation of Hispanic health professionals. We wish you the best in your future educational and professional endeavors.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jorge A. Girotti, PhD, MA
Associate Dean and Director, Admissions and Special Curricular Programs
Director, Hispanic Center of Excellence
UIC, College of Medicine
Treasurer, Hispanic Serving Health Professions Schools, Inc.
July 16, 2013

Dear Fellows:

I take this opportunity to congratulate you on completing the HSHPS program. I am confident that your experiences with HSHPS further impressed upon you the importance of your work as health researchers and professionals. I encourage you to pursue your aspirations as you complete your degrees. As you continue to plan your future careers, I hope that you will consider all the exciting possibilities of research careers in academia or government, and that you will seize opportunities to become leaders in your communities. As you know, the Latino population in the United States continues to grow and experience disparities in various indicators of health. The skills and leadership of dedicated people like you are critical to closing the gaps in health experienced by Latinos and other communities.

Sincerely yours,

Ana Abraido-Lanza, PhD
Program Director, IMSD at Columbia’s Mailman School
Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences
HSHPS Interim Secretary and Board Member
July 12, 2013

Congratulations HSHPS fellows,

On behalf of our board members, I would like to congratulate you upon completing our HSHPS training program. We believe that the experience you had with us will serve you well in your future career as a health professional. As you have learned, it is vital that we increase the number of health professionals who are able to provide culturally competent care to the Hispanic community. Therefore, we hope that your experience this summer will encourage you to pursue a career in medicine, public health, dental health, or other health professions. Moreover, we hope that you will also consider a career as a faculty member in those fields, so as to increase our knowledge on Hispanic health, help eliminate health disparities among Hispanics, and train the next generation of Hispanic health professionals.

We wish you the best of luck in your future.

Sincerely,

[Fernando S. Mendoza, M.D., M.P.H.
Professor and Chief, Division of General Pediatrics
Associate Dean of Minority Advising and Programs
Stanford University, School of Medicine
At Large Board Member, HSHPS]
July 1, 2013

Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools (HSHPS)
2639 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 203
Washington, D.C. 20008

Attn: Odalys Michelle Crespo, MA
Program Manager

Congratulations VA HSHPS Interns!

On behalf of the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), it is my sincere pleasure to congratulate you on the successful completion of your student internship program with VA. We hope your experience with VA in service to our Nation's Veterans provided you with invaluable insights and career information that inspires you to continue in the path of public service, and especially with VA. Your diverse talents and perspectives are essential for VA which is committed to providing culturally competent health care to all segments of our Veteran population, including the Hispanic community.

I strongly encourage you to continue your academic pursuits in health care so together we can eliminate health care disparities for Hispanics and all diverse groups. We hope you will consider VA as a public sector employer of choice in the near future.

Best wishes to all of you!

Sincerely,

Georgia Coffey
July 10, 2013

Dear 2013 HSHPS Summer Fellows:

On behalf of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Minority Health and Health Equity, I would like to congratulate you all upon your completion of the 2013 HSHPS summer fellowship. Programs such as the one you have just participated in are a critical component of a national strategy for building a more diverse, well-trained and better prepared public health workforce in the United States. As small as it may seem right now, the contribution your participation made at your respective placement sites has been invaluable.

We hope these experiences will deepen your long-term interest in public health wherever your career may lead you. We have high hopes that emerging leaders like you will either serve as: an academic – leading important advances in scientific research and education; as a policy-maker – ensuring clear application of related public health considerations at a structural level; or as a practitioner – ensuring innovations in the quality of public health service delivery.

We wish you all the best in your current and future endeavors. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Leandris C. Liburd

Leandris C. Liburd, PhD, MPH
Director for Minority Health and Health Equity
Office of the Director, CDC

CC: Julio Dicent Taillepierre
July 10, 2013

Dear HSHPS Fellow,

Kudos, Kudos, Kudos, and congratulations on the successful completion of our HSHPS training program! As a long-standing member of our board, great satisfaction is attained in seeing you advance in your career to provide culturally competent care to the Hispanic community. The needs are great, and with your help, we will continue to address the need for more of the underserved to get on board with us in removing the disparities in health care.

I encourage you to continue to the peak of your field and not only serve, but teach and lead others to follow your sterling example. Don’t hesitate to contact me for assistance along the way.

Sincerely,

James L. Phillips, M.D.
Senior Associate Dean
Professor of Pediatrics
Office of Diversity & Community Outreach
Baylor College of Medicine
Board Member Hispanic Serving Health Professions Schools, Inc.
July 10, 2013

Dear HSHPS Fellows:

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you on successful completion of HSHPS fellowship. The work that you have done this summer is extremely important to the health of Hispanic communities and addressing health disparities. I encourage you to pursue your dreams with persistence and passion. Quite frankly, the world needs you to help solve the complex health problems that we face! As you continue on your life journey, I hope that you will consider advance study in a MPH, PhD and/or M.D. program. Our founding Dean of the Drexel University School of Public Health, Dr. Jonathan Mann’s legacy was that he championed health being as a human right. Your work as a HSHPS trainee carries that legacy forward and is an inspiration to us all. We, at the Drexel University School of Public Health, look forward to crossing paths with you as we seek to improve the health and well being of communities around the world. We wish you the best in your future endeavors!

Sincerely,

Shannon P. Marquez, PhD, MEng
HSHPS Board Member
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Director of Global Public Health
Co-Director, Opening Doors Health Disparities Research Training Program
8/1/2013

Dear HSHPS Fellow,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of HSHPS I am greatly pleased and extremely proud to congratulate you on having successfully completed your training program. I hope that your experiences during your placement have enhanced your research and professional development skills, increased your knowledge about the nuances of Hispanic and other minority health issues, and most importantly provided you the opportunity to network with other health professionals and to create lasting relationships and opportunities to forge ahead in your career.

Your future leadership will determine how we, as a nation, meet the challenges and unique needs of the underserved, many of those who are Hispanic and lack access in quality and culturally-competent health care. Your personal as well as institutional role in reversing those health disparities which are amenable to change are indispensable. I am counting on you to be an agent of change for the future of health care for Hispanics!

The Hispanics Serving Health Professions Schools organization has invested in your future and trained you to excel. We hope that the quality of your program this past year, as well as the experiences you have obtained will motivate you to “pass the torch” to those around you and promote not only our training programs, but the mission of our organization. We also expect that as you become a leader in future academic centers you will also “pay it forward” by promoting the importance of striving for high quality education, research and mentorship. We encourage you to further your education by pursuing advanced degrees and lifelong training, which is the stronghold of sustainability in the achievement of excellence.

Congratulations! (Felicidades!)

Sincerely,

Ricardo Jose Gonzalez-Rothi, MD, FCCP
HSHPS Board Member
Professor and Chairman
Department of Clinical Sciences
Florida State University College of Medicine
Tallahassee, Florida
June 20, 2013,

Congratulations HSHPS Fellow!

On behalf of The University of Kansas School of Medicine, I would like to congratulate you for your successful completion of the HSHPS summer fellows program. I am hopeful you agree that your experience in the program has increased your knowledge about critical health issues among Hispanics, as well as your awareness of the health disparities suffered among minorities and the underserved in general. Working side by side with your mentor should have enhanced your professional development and opportunities for professional networking; and, as a whole, the HSHPS board is hopeful that you feel the program will serve you well in your future careers.

As you have learned, if we are to achieve health equity or the highest quality of care for the Hispanic community, it is imperative that the workforce is representative of that community. The United States healthcare should ideally reflect the populations it serves, so we must therefore increase the number of health professionals who are able to provide culturally proficient care to the Hispanic community and other minorities, as well as provide patients with a choice.

Your summer fellowship program may be over, but your work is all but finished. I would like to challenge you to challenge yourselves to become leaders in the health professions. Embrace the power of life-long learning and use your growing social and professional networks to achieve at the highest scholarly levels possible in your areas of interest.

Aspire to careers in medicine, nursing, doctorates in public health, biomedical research, dentistry, health policy or other health professions; and aim for a leading role, to champion our local and national efforts to prevent disease, promote and improve health, and provide access to high quality, culturally sensitive healthcare to those in need in Hispanic communities and in any communities that are at-risk, underserved or undertreated.

We hope that you will also consider academia or becoming a faculty member in those fields, so as to increase our knowledge on Hispanic health and contribute to the literature, help eliminate health disparities among Hispanics by training all students to become culturally sensitive and proficient providers, and serve as mentors, “beacons” even for the next generation of Hispanic health professionals.

On closing, please again, accept our congratulations and we wish you the very best in the future. Always keep Kansas in mind as you realize your dreams.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Thomas, MD, MA, FCAP, FASCP
HSHPS Board Member
Professor
Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Executive Director
Office of Vice Chancellor for Research
Office of Cultural Enhancement and Diversity
Tel: 913-945-6882
Email: pthomas@kumc.edu

3901 Rainbow Blvd., Kansas City, Kansas 66160-7303 ☎ (913) 588-5259
July 10, 2013

Dear HSHPS Fellows:

On behalf of HSHPS and the University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine it is a pleasure to write this congratulatory letter, on the successful completion of the training program.

Our school of medicine recognizes that training the health professional leaders of tomorrow begins by training the health professional leaders of today. HSHPS addresses this by supporting programs aimed at improving health inequities within the Hispanic community, by educating Spanish speaking and non-Spanish speaking medical and public health students on the social, cultural, and linguistic barriers health professionals face when communicating with Hispanic patients and vice versa. We believe that your “in the field” training in underserved areas of Latin America will help you gain a well-rounded knowledge of international public health, medicine, research, and practice, as well as professional skills.

HSHPs has a successful record of enhancing the training and education of medical and public health faculty and students through its faculty development seminars and unique international programs. Both of these activities have been vital in creating innovative ways of encouraging students to pursue the health professions and to remain committed and even more passionate to the cause.

We want to congratulate you on successful completion of this program – for having the initiative to make a difference as a future leader and advocate in public health. We want to challenge you to consider a career in academics, so you can mentor others and make a difference to many. And of course our charge to you is to maintain your passion and commitment towards eliminating Hispanic and other minority health disparities.

If you have further questions regarding this conversion, please do not hesitate to contact one of our representatives.

Sincerely,

Olveen Carrasquillo, M.D., M.P.H.
Chief, Division of General Internal Medicine
Department of Medicine
PI, Community Engagement Component, CTSI
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
HSHPs Board Member
July 10, 2013

Dear HSHPS Trainee,

On behalf of the University of South Florida (USF) College of Public Health, we would like to congratulate you on your successful completion of the 2013 HSHPS training program. The USF College of Public Health is a proud member of HSHPS, and the host institution for the HSHPS Tropical Disease and Global Health Training Program in Quito, Ecuador. Whether you served as a trainee in our international program, a HSHPS disease-specific program, a HSHPS border health program or a HSHPS government program, we applaud your initiative and salute you for your accomplishments and your hard work during your trainee experience this year.

Your experience has given you first-hand knowledge about Hispanic health issues and we encourage you to share your story and experience with others at your university. We hope that you have gained relevant skills, broadened perspectives and academic enhancement to support you in future leadership, academic and career endeavors. Know that you are vital, you are the foundation of American health in this century. Your impact on policy, direct care and community based participation will sow the seeds that ameliorate the negative impact of current social, structural and environmental determinants of health. We hope that your HSHPS training program inspired you to continue the struggle and honor the legacy of ensuring the health of all populations within the United States.

We salute you and encourage you to remain steadfast health advocates, researchers and practitioners.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Ricardo Izurieta, MD, DrPH, MPH, DTM&H
Associate Professor
Director Donald Price Center
Latin American Liaison Gorgas Memorial Institute
University of South Florida College of Public Health
Member, Executive Committee and Board, Hispanic Health Serving Professions Schools, Inc.

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(813) 974-1122 • (813) 974-8506 • http://publichealth.usf.edu/gh
July 15, 2013

To: Hispanic Service Health Professions Schools Fellows:

On behalf of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, I congratulate you on the successful completion of the program. As you continue along your chosen career path, I encourage you to strive to meet the unique needs of those populations who have less access to high quality, culturally sensitive health care. If we put our minds to it, the health disparities experienced by people who are underserved can be remediated, and I hope that you will play a part in doing so. I strongly encourage you to further your education, pursue a higher degree, and continue on your life-long journey of study and reflection. Moreover, I hope that you strive for a research career in academia or government, and that you become a leader in the community. Set a goal of providing compassionate care for your patients to go along with the scientific proficiency that is expected in the practice of medicine.

Again, I offer my warmest congratulations on your achievement.

Best regards,

[Signature]

Francisco González-Scarano, MD
HSHPS Board Member
Dean, UT School of Medicine at San Antonio
Vice President for Medical Affairs
Professor of Neurology
July 16, 2013

Dear Former Trainees,

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you all for completing the training program and I am confident that you will make an impact on your special area of interest. At the same time I would like to encourage you to continue seeking higher degrees in health, not only because you are talented and this is where your interest lies, but because the nation really needs your talents for the future. You are the ones who will make a significant impact on reducing health disparities among Hispanics and other groups. It is your research that will make a significant difference in the future and, as a result, a difference in the lives of those who need relief from the disparities that we see today.

I wish you all the very best for future success.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Joseph F. Murray, M.D.
Associate Dean for Student Affairs
And Equal Opportunity Programs
Associate Professor for Clinical Psychiatry
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS),
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)
IN ATLANTA, GA

Part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a Federal agency that collaborates to create the expertise, information, and tools that people and communities need to protect their health through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats. CDC seeks to accomplish its mission by working with partners throughout the nation and the world to: monitor health, detect and investigate health problems, conduct research to enhance prevention, develop and advocate sound public health policies, implement prevention strategies, promote healthy behaviors, foster safe and healthful environments, and provide leadership and training. Past projects include: Disaster Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Surveillance and Analysis of the Socioeconomic Characteristics and Environmental Vulnerabilities of Communities and HIV Prevention Capacity Building for National HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs in Support of Hispanic/Latino Activities

PROGRAM MENTORS:
Julio Dicent Taillepierre, MS
Leandris C. Liburd, PhD, MPH, MA
DoméNicA Niño
MPH
Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health
2013 HSHPS/CDC Fellow

DoméNicA Niño is a recent Master of Public Health (MPH) graduate with a Behavioral Science and Health Education (BSHE) concentration from the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Tufts University in 2010. For the past five years, Ms. Niño has actively participated in a variety of public health research projects centered on the Latino population. In 2010-2011 she served as a research assistant for the South Texas Border Health Disparities Center (STBHDC) at the University of Texas Pan American (UTPA) where she conducted research on workers in the manufacturing industry in South Texas and presented original research at the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Conference in Atlanta, GA in 2011. During her academic career at Emory University she received the Public Health Training Internship Award from the Emory Public Health Training Center (EPHTC) which allowed her to collaborate with the SafeKids division of the Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services, the District Attorney’s Office and the Child Fatality Review Board (CFRB) in order to create a 2005-2010 child mortality report for Gwinnett County. In order to learn and to help reduce the incidence of SIDS in Gwinnett County she conducted surveys with mothers attending free or reduced women’s health clinics and provided them with health education about safe sleep practices for their babies.

At Emory, DoméNicA was an active member of the Health Organization for Latina America and the Emory Reproductive Health Association. In addition, DoméNicA focused her final MPH project on the public health implications of Latina suicide prevention and hopes to continue to dedicate her public health career to decreasing health disparities within the Latino population. DoméNicA’s hobbies include salsa dancing, running and creating tasty dishes for her family and friends.

Addressing Cervical Cancer Disparities in the Latino Population Through Culturally Appropriate Prevention Strategies
Mentor: LeAndRis C. Liburd, PhD, MPH, MA

Cervical cancer rates within the Hispanic population are disproportionately high (13.2 per 100,000 cases) when compared to non-Hispanic Whites (7.1 per 100,000 cases). In addition, Latinos have a higher risk of dying from cervical cancer (0.35%) when compared to non-Hispanic Whites (Kaiser, 2010). Given the exponential growth of the Latino population, it is important to focus on prevention methods within this population. The disparity can be attributed to a variety of factors including cultural and economic barriers that prevent the Latino community from seeking the appropriate preventive care services. Through literature surveys, this research will provide an overview of cervical cancer prevention challenges faced by the Latino community such as, their awareness of the link between the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination and cervical cancer, the impact of acculturation and low SES on their continuity of care, and other factors which contribute to the cervical cancer disparity within this population (Kobetz, et. al., 2010). Finally, an overview of culturally appropriate cervical cancer prevention strategies such as HPV vaccinations and screening within the Latino population will be provided along with recommendations for their implementation.
Jacqueline Ramirez is a second generation Mexican-American, first generation college graduate, and driven public health professional. She completed a Master’s of Science (MS) degree in Infectious Diseases and Bio-hazardous Threat Agents from Georgetown University in Washington, DC. She currently works in the Emergency Department at Bon Secours’ Mary Immaculate Hospital in Hampton, VA and volunteers at a free clinic in Yorktown, VA. Building on this background she will be participating in the summer with a tropical medicine and community-based care program in Puerto Escondido, Mexico through Child Family Health International 501(c)(3). There she will be assisting healthcare providers with a diabetes health intervention as well as researching vector borne disease control programs for chagas, dengue, and malaria.

She earned a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Neuroscience and International Public Health at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA. During this time, she worked in endocrinology and immunology laboratories through the Howard Hughes Medical Institute 501(c)(3). Beyond cellular research, as a four-year member of Medical Aid Nicaragua Outreach Scholarship 701(c)(1), she helped run an annual free clinic in a rural village in addition to collecting and performing year-round analysis of ethnographic data. On her last trip to the region, she received funding from her institution’s Reves Center for International Studies to research a women’s reproductive health education program as a co-principle investigator with David Aday, Ph.D.

INTEGRATING HEALTH LITERACY, PLAIN WRITING, CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE HEALTH COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES INTO LANGUAGE ACCESS PLANS FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
MENTOR: JULIO DICENT-TAILLEPIERE, MS

The purpose of this document is to serve as a resource for public health organizations that need to comply with E.O. 13166, which led to the origin of the Department of Health and Human Services’ (DHHS) Language Access Strategic Plan (LAP) for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). A brief background on health literacy, plain writing, cultural competence, and linguistically appropriate communication strategies will be provided to understand the importance of integrating these components in the adoption of the DHHS LAP. In chronological order of publication, a list of national public health equity frameworks will be referenced to highlight the evolution of health disparity reduction efforts and to provide policy resources that can be used when implementing the DHHS LAP. Suggestions on how to apply the ten elements of the DHHS LAP will be discussed in detail with support from the DHHS LAP Template and the DHHS Resource Guide. Finally, best practices will be provided on ways to assess the quality of translated health communication written products for LEP populations and special focus will be on Latino/Hispanics demographics.
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA), NATIONWIDE

The Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) is a federal agency that was created to fulfill President Lincoln’s promise “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan” by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s veterans. HSHPS works directly with the VA’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) to match fellows with senior VA program staff and health professionals. ODI’s mission is to build a diverse workforce and cultivate an inclusive workplace to deliver the best services to our Nation’s Veterans, their families, and beneficiaries. Their vision is for the VA to be a leader in creating and sustaining a high-performing workforce by leveraging diversity and empowering employees to achieve superior results in service to our Nation and its Veterans. Past projects include: Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing in the Department of Veterans Affairs and Goalpost: A System for Managing the Follow-Up Process for Patient Safety Issues.

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Alicia Alvarado, a native of Los Angeles, is a 2014 Master in Public Health (MPH) candidate at the School of Community and Global Health at Claremont Graduate University (CGU) with an emphasis on Leadership and Management. She earned her Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Sociology with an emphasis in Chicano Studies from Pitzer College in 2003. Her current research focuses on the multidimensional factors leading to health disparities and access to healthcare for Latino/as in Los Angeles County specifically looking at race and ethnicity, access to education, socioeconomic status, and gender. She is particularly interested in the health status of Latina/o’s as it pertains to their sexual health and the rise in obesity and diabetes among Latina/o’s in her community. Currently, at the School of Community and Global Health she is a data collector for a research project, led by Dr. Kim Reynolds, focusing on the habitual and neurocognitive processes in adolescent obesity prevention, paying particular attention to Latino adolescents. In her first year as an MPH graduate student, she served as the Fundraising Chair for the School of Community and Global Health Student Association and will continue her service as the Public Relations Chair for the 2013-2014 academic school year. She has served as an active volunteer with the Planned Parenthood of San Bernardino by participating in their Annual Young Women’s Health Conference and served as an active organizer for the Latino Graduate Student Association in their first year of development at CGU. In the summer of 2013, she will begin her work as a volunteer in establishing the first National Association for Latino students pursuing a degree in Public Health with HSHPS. As the daughter of a teenager mother from an impoverished community, she is motivated by a deep personal connection to her subject area and has inspired her lifelong commitment to the field of Public Health. Her goal as a professional in the Public Health field is to become a director of advocacy in a hospital or health care facility in Los Angeles, CA and specifically work with programs geared towards improving the health behaviors and outcomes of Latina/o’s.

VA OUTREACH INITIATIVES TO REACH OUT TO VETERAN MINORITY POPULATIONS IN HAWAII
MENTOR: CHRISTOPHER MCNAIR, MA

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Outreach Services Program was developed to reach out to Veterans through educational programs and grant them easier access to available benefits and services. The overarching goal of providing benefits to veterans is to create a smoother transition, economically and socially, into civilian life. The VA has recognized the importance of conducting outreach specifically to “target” underprivileged Veteran populations (minorities, homeless, and elderly) in order to successfully deliver their programs particularly to such Veteran populations who may be less aware and less likely to utilize their services. The literature supports this argument and further purports that creating collaborations within VA agencies, specifically between the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), while simultaneously collaborating with outside agencies such as the Social Security Administration, improves the dissemination of VA information and delivery of services. Through the use of participatory action research methods, data was collected while on site at the Honolulu Regional Office Veterans Benefits Administration and conducting outreach on the island of Oahu with the VBA Outreach Coordinator and Women’s Coordinator. Findings will present strengths and challenges of the current VA Outreach Services Program by utilizing the Honolulu Regional Offices VBA site as an example. The findings will attest to the importance and necessity of conducting outreach specifically tailored to “target” Veteran populations and offer recommendations and suggestions for the development of the Outreach Services Program administered by the VA.
Benjamin J. Becerra is a Doctorate in Public Health (DrPH) student in Epidemiology at the School of Public Health at Loma Linda University (LLU). Additionally, he is pursuing a certificate in Health Geoinformatics to create collaborative projects between traditional public health efforts with geospatial technologies. Mr. Becerra earned his Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Botany from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and Master of Science (MS) in Plant Science from University of California, Riverside; the latter leading to a first-author manuscript publication. He earned his Masters of Public Health (MPH) degree in Biostatistics from LLU, where his research project focused on methods estimating missing values for meta-regression analyses. His research interests include epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental and occupational health, clinical trials, data analysis, and geographic information systems (GIS). In particular, his focus is in multidisciplinary approaches in tackling public health issues through epidemiologic and clinical research with GIS, molecular biology, genetics, business and administration, and other non-traditional areas. For example, a recent project involved identifying themes through a qualitative data analysis of community concerns, which was then converted into quantitative data for use in statistical model building. Moreover, data was also subjected to GIS interpolation techniques in order to visualize and predict relevant themes by geography, allowing potential intervention and policy efforts to be focused on these areas.

Mr. Becerra has worked as a statistical consultant and Graduate Teaching Assistant. Additionally, he has worked as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) on several National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other federal agency-funded research projects. In addition, he received an NSF-REU fellowship and honorable mention for an NSF-Graduate Research Fellowship. Recently, Mr. Becerra has worked as a GRA in translational research serving a predominantly Hispanic population living within close proximity to a railyard in the Inland Empire region of Southern California. He is also currently working on an epidemiologic study assessing the effect of air pollution on various health outcomes.

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY OFFICE, VA ANN ARBOR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM: A MIXED METHODS APPROACH TO QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

**MENTOR: DIANA L. CASS**

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is a public organization comprised of three administrations. In particular, one such administration is the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), a nationwide health care system that serves over 8.3 million veterans every year through the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs). As stated in the VA Strategic Plan, a critical aspect in providing the best care for veterans involves transforming human capital management and creating an environment for employees to reach their true potential, in that health, wellness, and professional development needs are enhanced through educational programs and other services. Another objective involves the creation and maintenance of a diverse workforce that provides avenues for all personnel to participate as active and valued members of the organization, according to the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. As these responsibilities require a coordinated view of the knowledge and processes involved, the VA often delegates these issues under the supervision and guidance of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office. In particular, the EEO Office under the Office of the Director at the VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAHS) within VISN 11 serves approximately 2,800 employees and is comprised of a single EEO manager. Given the assortment and number of services needed in concert with the expected changes in employee dynamics under the VA 2011-2015 and Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plans, an improvement in the efficiency of the EEO Office is vital for current and long-term success of the VAAHS as a whole. To assess the current state of the VAAHS EEO Office, a needs assessment of the EEO Office and its stakeholders will be performed utilizing a mixed-methods approach with a combination of key informant interviews, semi-structured feedback instruments, and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Utilizing NVivo 10 software, a qualitative analysis of interviews will be conducted to identify recurring themes. Word tag clouds, univariate analyses, and other quantitative statistics will be generated for reporting results. Preliminary results from the qualitative analysis portion have elucidated opportunities for improving employee participation at diversity events, providing relevant EEO training modules, etc. Recommendations will be formulated based on a combination of such findings, stakeholders’ needs, current resources of the EEO Office, and performance measures.
Cecilia Sara Alcala is a Master of Public Health (MPH) and Global Health Certificate Candidate at Drexel University School of Public Health, concentrating in Epidemiology and Environmental Health from Brooklyn, NY. She earned her Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Psychology/Pre-Med from Agnes Scott College in 2012. For the past few months, Ms. Alcala has been interning as a Community Diagnostic Analyst for Project Restauración in the Dominican Republic for the Foundation for International Medical Relief for Children. Her work entails developing a needs assessment report that will aid in the formation of community interventions and programs that will increase the overall health of families, especially children in the area. Furthermore, Ms. Alcala serves as a Graduate Assistant for the Center for Public Health Readiness and Communication, which works to enhance community resilience and the ability of health professionals, emergency managers, and public safety officials to meet the needs of all communities in times of disaster and public health emergency. At Drexel University, Ms. Alcala is the Vice President of the Drexel Black Graduate Student Union.

Ms. Alcala's short-term goals are to travel to Senegal and The Gambia in August 2013, to work closely with preceptors from partnering non-governmental organizations (NGOS), international agencies, Ministries of Health and foreign institutions in a global health practice setting and to apply theory and principles to increase international development in maternal and child health. She looks forward to graduating in June 2014 with an MPH degree from Drexel University School of Public Health and a Certificate in Global Health. Her long-term goals are to receive a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree and to work in a global health organization, to develop both research and prevention programs to address environmental exposures that affect maternal and child health using data analysis and monitoring, needs assessment and program evaluation in underserved populations specifically the Haitian and Hispanic population. Ms. Alcala is interested in osteopathic medicine, maternal and child health, global health, epidemiology, and environmental health.

**DOES AN EXPOSURE TO BURN PITS CAUSE CHRONIC RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES IN MILITARY PERSONNEL POST DEPLOYMENT?**
**MENTOR: TERRA D. IRONS, PHD**

Thousands of soldiers who served in Operations Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, and Enduring Freedom have returned to the United States complaining of respiratory issues. Burn pit exposure is suspected to be a cause of various respiratory illnesses among military personnel who have been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other military bases all over the world. As a result, interest in investigating the association between burn pit exposure and chronic respiratory illnesses has increased over the past decade. Various studies have reported results that suggest that burn pit exposure may present possible health risks for individuals, specifically associated with their respiratory system, both on the military bases and in the surrounding communities.

This project aimed to assess the association between chronic respiratory illnesses and burn pit exposure in military personnel who served in Operation New Dawn, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. For the purposes of this project, a literature review was conducted to assess the association between burn pit exposure and chronic respiratory illnesses amongst military personnel. The results indicate that burn pit exposure may be a common factor in the development of chronic respiratory illness in military personnel who served in the recent conflicts. These results will aid in providing background information for clinicians as they treat Veterans who have been exposed to burn pits in the field. The outcomes may also inform researchers of the association between burn pit exposure and chronic respiratory illnesses among military personnel post deployment for future research studies.
Esteban Romero is a Master in Public Health (MPH) candidate at the School of Public Health of the University of Puerto Rico, Medical Science Campus (UPR-MSC) concentrating in Health Service Administration. Mr. Romero earned his Bachelor’s Degree in General Science from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. His research interests include environmental science, mechanical engineering, laboratory investigations, health policy, human resource management and data analysis, with a primary focus on evaluating the effects of chemicals in the environment on health using clinical trials. Mr. Romero is currently working on a research study that measures Phthalate exposure, using molecular epidemiologic markers on pregnant women to identify causes of preterm birth. In the past, he worked at the Human Resources department at the Ponce Autism Center (CEPA), creating health policies, which later on were implemented in the work management area.

Mr. Romero has performed two years of research as a hardware technical leader for National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the Colorado Space Grant Consortium (COSGC). During his first year in the RockSat-C program, his team investigated aerosol and dust particles in the atmosphere by launching a payload in a rocket using Nano filtering for sampling. In his second year, he was part of the first class to begin the RockSat-X program and built a mechanical sampling device to investigate the densities of particles in orbital space using mass spectroscopy. Additionally, Mr. Romero received a Leadership Award from the University of Puerto Rico, Medical Science Campus for his research on the relationship of depression and thyroid conditions. This research was chosen for poster presentation by the Junior Technical Meeting and Puerto Rico Interdisciplinary Scientific Meeting (JTM/PRISM). Mr. Romero plans on pursuing a Doctoral Degree in Health Administration and become a Chief Operating Officer (COO) of a hospital setting.

**MENTOR: JOSE A. MARTINEZ**

The Veteran Service Center is an organization that is part of the Veteran’s Affairs. This office works with the benefits of the veterans, they review the claims of veterans to approve or deny if a veteran is eligible for an award. The workload of this office is substantial and is important to have the best structural design of efficiency to have the best outcomes of work at a daily basis. For this reason, our research is focused on the work done by the interns and work study personnel in this facility. This study will assess the impact of this personnel’s work on reaching the goals of the organization. This investigation will study the different departments of the facility creating a flowchart of the work done by this staff. The sample will be the interns and work study staff and the handling of the Brokered Cases, which the interns and work studies have contributed the most. The Brokered Cases include nearly 2,100 files from Roanoke and Columbia that were brought to this facility to review and make a decision. The supervisors, employees, interns and/or work studies of each area will be interviewed to understand the work done by each department and the contributions done by the interns and work studies.

The method of study will be comparing data of productivity of the employees when the interns and work study staff are present and not present. Furthermore, a questionnaire will be given to each supervisor to have a broader understanding of the contributions of the interns and work study staff in their point of view. This data will give a more qualitative perspective to tie up with the end results of this research.

The contribution of the interns and work studies in the work place is significant. Some of the work is routine, but this task has to be done on a regular basis. In doing so, this gives the employees more time to focus on other assignments that have higher priority. There is a considerable amount of responsibility given to the interns and work studies as well. If there were no interns and work studies in this organization, the productivity level will be much lower than what it is today. Pursuing this research may find better pathways to maximize the office output of review claims and give a better quality service to our veterans.
Joycelyn Finley-Forsythe is a recent Master of Public Health (MPH) graduate from the University of South Florida, concentrating in Socio-Behavioral Sciences and Policy Management. She was born in Mobile, AL and primarily raised in Ann Arbor, MI. She earned her Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Business Administration from Florida A&M University and she was recently admitted into the One Year MBA Program at University of Florida, where she plans to concentrate in Organizational Development. Joycelyn’s research focus is social determinants of health disparities; she received two fellowships via the University of South Florida Graduate Program and the Health Resources & Services Administration for her work in this area and her dedication to community service. Joycelyn has worked in both private and public sectors to enhance organizational effectiveness and serve marginalized populations. She has been employed as a Health Education Intern and Healthcare Administration Trainee at the Florida Department of Health - Office of Minority Health Equity and the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, respectively. Joycelyn also worked at Accenture as a consultant to healthcare organizations and other Fortune 500 companies. Prior to pursuing a career in consulting and research, she worked at Regions Financial and completed an internship on Wall Street at JP Morgan Chase.

As a future healthcare leader, Joycelyn aims to be active in coalitions that embrace health equity and social justice initiatives for Latinos and ethnic minority groups. Her career objectives are to participate in program planning, development and community-based participatory research that tackles healthcare issues within various social ecological contexts in efforts to facilitate the design and implementation of evidence-based interventions. She also wishes to utilize her healthcare/business acumen to foster global sustainability and progressive, socially responsible enterprises. Additionally, Joycelyn’s career ambition is to create equitable guidelines that direct policy-making within the healthcare structure. She intends to promote equal access to healthcare so underserved, impoverished neighborhoods can become viable. Overall, she has a strong desire to make a positive difference by developing sustainable programs/policies that enable our nation’s healthcare system and organizations to evolve, thus empowering diverse individuals and communities.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT, CORE COMPETENCIES AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER ACROSS A THREE YEAR PERIOD IN HUMAN RESOURCES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MENTOR: SCOTT NIER, PHD

Federal agencies expend considerable financial and organizational resources to recruit, hire, train, and retain employees. Costs associated with the loss and replacement of employees not only impacts the bottom line, but also dampens employee morale and organizational commitment. Nonetheless, private sector research indicates that employees are more likely to be retained within an organization when their talent and expertise are valued and cultivated. Hence, when employers leverage job training programs in efforts to foster the professional growth of their employees, retention is improved. Limited research has been conducted on this topic among public sector organizations, however.

The purpose of this research paper is to examine the relationship between training and development, core competencies and employee turnover within a 3 year period at a public sector agency, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Levels of training participation, competency gap assessments and turnover rates will be analyzed over time to establish this relationship within the human resources (HR) workforce at the VA. Currently, there is a higher turnover rate for VA HR professionals than any other mission critical occupation in the agency. Therefore, a significant need exists to conduct an analysis of factors related to turnover and its linkages to training development. This data will be used to guide efforts to enhance retention among the VA HR workforce.
Kemi Bolutayo is a Master of Arts (MA) candidate at Lehman College, concentrating in Health Education and Promotion. She is from New York City, residing in the borough of Brooklyn. Kemi is the oldest of five daughters born to immigrant Nigerian parents. She is the first, and only, person in her family to be on track to attain a Master’s degree. She earned her Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Psychology, with a minor in African Studies, from Binghamton University. While at Binghamton University, Kemi joined organizations that provided community service to the residents of Binghamton. Some projects included providing books for needy children, raising money for flood victims and volunteering at the local soup kitchen.

For the past four years, she has been working at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center as a research secretary where she supports two neuropsychologists. After graduating in 2008, she was an AmeriCorps member providing prescription assistance to under-served populations in the Binghamton, NY area. Her interests are in raising cancer awareness among African American women and other minority women populations. During her time at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Kemi and a coworker created an organization, Sisters in Pink, Inc. This organization uses its resources at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center to raise breast cancer awareness to young African American women. Kemi and her colleague used fashion shows, forums and social media outlets as a tool to raise breast cancer awareness to young women. Following her fellowship with the Epilepsy Center of Excellence at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison, WI, Kemi is looking forward to completing her master’s degree and hopes to use her training to create more programs and effective interventions to promote breast cancer awareness.

**CREATING PATIENT EDUCATION FOR VETERANS AT THE MADISON, WI MIDDLETON VA MEDICAL CENTER**

**MENTOR: AMY CHILDERS, MA**

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Epilepsy (PTE) have become a normal staple of war. From World War I to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, veterans have been returning from war with serious brain injuries. Many minority veterans with these injuries, like Latinos, are dying twice as fast as white veterans. There are a number of reasons why TBI and PTE treatment in Latinos are less common than in Caucasians. With Latino veterans becoming the fastest growing veteran population in America, this article will focus on the barriers Latino veterans encounter in TBI and PTE treatment. The first phase of this project will involve interviewing Latino veterans regarding TBI at surrounding community organizations to discover what resources would be useful in the Latino community. The final phase will include patient education workshops explaining the importance of TBI and PTE treatment. The workshops will include information obtained from the survey specific to the needs of Latino veterans. Studies have found that when there is an increase in outreach of TBI and PTE information, more Latino veterans are willing to seek treatment options because they have a better understanding of their injuries. Although this article discusses barriers facing Latino veterans, one suggestion includes involving physicians and other health professionals in the discussions on breaking these barriers.
Maria Teresa Vargas earned her Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) this past spring. During her undergraduate career, Ms. Vargas was actively involved in numerous student organizations where she held many leadership positions. As head community service chair of Gamma Phi Omega International Sorority, she organized volunteer events dealing with immigration rights, health issues, mentorship and poverty. As a head site-coordinator chair of Alternative Spring Break, she organized and managed volunteer trips dealing with different social issues across the United States for her fellow UIC colleagues. As part of the founding executive board of the Pre-Nursing Student Organization she helped lay the groundwork for future pre-nursing students’ success. Along with her involvement with student organizations, Ms. Vargas has devoted over 100 hours of volunteer work at Rush University Medical Center, served at health fairs and promoted physical well-being at annual races in the Chicago land area. Through her active involvement in the Chicago community, Ms. Vargas was recognized with three consecutive Chancellor’s Student Service Awards. Last year, Ms. Vargas was enrolled in the Summer Community Public Health Program in Santiago, Dominican Republic; there she analyzed concepts of public health in the Dominican and American health system while working closely with rural and urban clinics. Ms. Vargas also brought awareness to underprivileged communities in Dominican Republic by creating and delivering presentations about cholera. Additionally, she has gained a special interest in research; in particular in exploring physical and mental factors that contribute to health disparities within the Latino community, and the role these factors have on their health. She aspires to contribute to research, in the hope of improving health outcomes through nursing. Ms. Vargas’s goal is to ultimately become a nurse practitioner with a focus in serving the Latino population. The HSHPS Graduate Fellowship Training Program, will open doors for her future endeavor as a researcher and health professional.

LANGUAGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AMONGST HOME HEALTHCARE AGENCIES IN SOUTHERN ARIZONA
MENTOR: LISA WOOTTON, LCSW

Given the rapid rising population of Hispanics living in the United States, the health care system is facing various language barriers and demanding language accessibility. Effective language policies and procedures in home healthcare is a priority for essential and equal quality healthcare. US-Mexico Border States particularly have a rapid increase of Hispanic immigration and we investigated the association of language policies and procedures amongst home healthcare agencies in Southern Arizona. Home healthcare agencies located in Southern Arizona were emailed an online survey with questions about limited English-proficient (LEP) patients, language policies and procedures, and language services and requirements. Preliminary results indicate that home health agencies have outdated or limited language policies and procedures. Results were analyzed by comparing information about LEP patients, bilingual staff, language policies and procedures, and language services, training and requirements between home healthcare agencies. This study expects to support the improvement of language barriers and language accessibility amongst home healthcare agencies in Southern Arizona.
Mary V. Díaz-Santana was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She is a Doctoral degree candidate of Epidemiology at the University of Massachusetts School of Public Health. She received her Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in General Sciences from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. Additionally, on June 2012, she completed her Master of Science (MS) degree in Epidemiology, from the University of Puerto Rico, Graduate School of Public Health, and Medical Sciences Campus. During her graduate studies, she collaborated as a research assistant in two studies that assessed the epidemiology of breast cancer, and the association between body mass index (BMI) and breast cancer by molecular subtypes in breast cancer patients. She has also worked on a secondary database analysis of a cross-sectional study that used a representative sample of 858 adults residing in San Juan, Puerto Rico to evaluate the association between the hypertriglyceridemia waist phenotype and diabetes. The results of this analysis were presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting in 2011.

Ms. Díaz-Santana has been involved in the data collection process of a population-based survey aimed at assessing the prevalence of diabetes and hypertension in the adult population of San Juan, PR, demonstrating her interest in the epidemiological research of chronic diseases. Furthermore, Ms. Díaz-Santana’s interest in cancer research among Hispanic populations, led her to participate in a training entitled “Éxito! Latino Cancer Research Leadership Training” (UT Health Science Center). The program’s main objective is to increase the ethnic diversity of the researchers in the field of Latino health disparities and cancer control research. Furthermore, during the fall of 2012, she participated in a research internship sponsored by the same institution. Ms. Díaz-Santana’s future plans are to become an independent researcher focused in cancer epidemiology, prevention and control with a special interest in cancer disparities among Hispanic populations.

**FUNCTIONAL HEALTH AND ILLNESS AMONG UNITED STATES VETERANS OF OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM AND OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM - RESULTS FROM A LARGE-SCALE STUDY**

MENTORS: AARON I. SCHNEIDERMAN, PHD, MPH, RN AND ERIN K. DURSA, PHD, MPH

**Background:** Despite the numerous research studies that have reported the environmental exposure concerns and health status of the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veterans, there is a lack of population based longitudinal studies that track the changes in the veterans’ health status over time. **Objective:** The purpose of this study was to assess the functional health status and general health perceptions of the OEF/OIF deployed and non-deployed veterans, estimate the prevalence of various health conditions, and compare the estimates of the deployed OEF/OIF veterans with those of non-deployed. **Methods:** We conducted a cross-sectional survey of the “National Health Study for a New Generation of U.S. Veterans” which is a population based longitudinal study of 60,000 OEF/OIF veterans. The study sample is representative of each branch of service, unit component and gender. This survey collected self-reported information on 24 common mental and physical diseases experienced by veterans. The health outcomes of the deployed OEF/OIF veterans were compared with those who served in the military at the same time but did not deploy to the OEF/OIF conflicts. The Medical Outcomes Study Short Form 12-item health survey (SF-12) was used to assess functional health by measuring components of mental and physical health of the study participants. Multiple logistic regression was used to compute adjusted odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidence intervals, comparing OEF/OIF deployed veterans with their non-deployed peers. **Results:** From the 60,000 veterans sampled a total of 20,563 OEF/OIF veterans responded to the survey, for a response rate of 34.3%. The final sample included a total of 11,337 deployed veterans (55.1%) and 9,226 non-deployed veterans (44.9%). Males make up the majority of the survey participants (78.8%) and the participants aged 40-59 comprised the largest proportion of the study respondents (41.7%). After computing the SF-12 score for each participant we will report the mean scores of the physical and mental components to assess differences in the scores by deployment status. **Conclusion:** Future longitudinal studies of this cohort will be needed to increase the understanding of the natural history of the physical and psychological disorders experienced by the OEF/OIF veterans.
Mayra D. Flores holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Spanish with a double major in Biology from the University of Mary Washington. For the last couple years, Mayra has been actively involved with Edu-Futuro, since her experience as a student of the Emerging Leaders Program in 2006. She currently works as a permanent substitute teacher for the English as a Second Language and Spanish program for adults. Mayra also volunteers as a mentor for under-resourced immigrant youth in Edu-Futuro’s college preparation and leadership development initiative, the Emerging Leaders Program. In addition, she volunteered as a medical screener and translator/interpreter at Lloyd F. Moss Free Clinic. Her duties as a medical screener were to obtain and record vital signs and complete basic physical assessments. As a medical interpreter she provided translation services between patients and medical professionals. Mayra also took this opportunity to interact with patients to create a more comfortable environment for them.

Growing up in Peru, a country in process of development, and observing the struggles and necessities of under-resourced individuals as it relates to their accessibility to medical care, developed in Mayra an interest to understand the health and social problems/trends that impoverished communities confront. This experience, as well as her life as an immigrant, whom had to undergo sudden changes and adjustments, made her aware of the necessities that immigrants and/or underserved groups face. Such experiences encouraged her to desire to continue her post-graduate education in Global and Community Public Health; interest that grew wider with her fellowship in the Hudson Valley Healthcare Center, Veterans Hospital in New York. After she receives her Master of Public Health (MPH) degree, she plans in attending medical school. Her goal is to exert her profession in developing countries where there continues to exist a lack of professionals willing to develop and create programs for the improvement of healthcare for the less fortunate people.

Radiology Technology in Critical Access Hospitals

Mentor: Michael T. Howard

Rural areas in the United States are characterized by having older and less educated residents that are more likely to be uninsured or covered by public health insurance. Such communities also have higher rates of poverty, chronic disease, suicide, trauma conditions, and death. In addition, rural residents have reduced access to transportation and hospitals and may suffer as a result of having less access to medical care. Most rural areas are affected by workforce shortages, high health care cost, lack of access to capital and high technology as a result of their limited funds. Consequently rural hospitals have fewer clinical capabilities and lower quality healthcare leading to poor quality health outcomes when compared to other hospitals. Various rural hospital designations and provider types exist, but for the purpose of this study we will focus on Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs). In remote regions CAHs offer a broad range of services to meet the needs of the residents. Nevertheless, the medical services offered are limited in various areas, such as radiology. The shortage in high technology funding for equipment, and qualified radiology professionals limit patient’s access to these diagnostic services that help medical specialists treat diseases and trauma conditions. This study will be approached via phone interviews, direct visits to CAHs and documented papers in states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Florida, where the Hispanic community encompasses a large number of the population. The data extracted will be assembled to perform a comparative analysis of the radiology equipment, number of staff and accessibility to the Hispanic community in the different CAH. We expect data to reveal that there exist health facilities that offer little or no access to imaging services despite the fact that there are CAHs that are better equipped and have access to MRI and CT. Additionally, we anticipate an absence of skilled radiology professionals. The advancement of medical technology has made radiology an essential tool for the diagnosis of multiple diseases and trauma conditions; playing an important role in monitoring treatments and predicting results. Furthermore, the dearth of radiology imaging services and skilled radiology professionals in rural communities leads to misdiagnosis and treatment delays, which results in broader health problems as well as death for patients of these areas.
CANCER PREVENTION AND CONTROL
SAN JUAN, PR

The HSHPS/Cancer Prevention and Control Program is a five-week fellowship based at the University of Puerto Rico, Graduate School of Public Health, Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences. This program provides fellows with an increased understanding of cancer prevention and control through practical hands-on experience regarding cancer research, community outreach, preventive clinical practice, seminars and workshops. The fellowship specifically focuses on Hispanics, with a special emphasis on health disparities in Puerto Ricans and other Hispanic populations.

The fellow is matched with a research mentor based on his/her area(s) of interest, and will assist his/her mentor with various aspects of a specific project. Examples of potential research projects include: knowledge and attitudes toward Human Papillomavirus Vaccination (HPV), seroprevalence of HPV, hepatitis C epidemiology, insulin resistance and risk of endometrial cancer, epigenetics of colorectal cancer, and breast and cervical cancer screening.

PROGRAM MENTOR:
Ana Patricia Ortiz, PhD, MPH
Andrea González, a native of Puerto Rico, is a 2016 Doctor of Medicine (MD) candidate at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), School of Medicine. She earned her Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Natural Sciences from the UPR Interdisciplinary Program, Río Piedras Campus on 2011. Her research interests include the epidemiology of gynecologic diseases and practices in racial/ethnic minority groups. Ms. González is also interested in health disparities, especially among Latino populations. Her interest stems from the idea that reducing inequalities is possible by means of documenting and researching said disparities. For the past three and a half years, Ms. González has been involved in gynecologic related research projects with the Comprehensive Cancer Center of Puerto Rico (CCCPR). From August 2010 through May 2013, she was an assistant researcher in the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Prevalence project, aimed at finding prevalence and associated factors of HPV infection among Puerto Rican women. She has also assisted in two gynecologic related CCCPR research projects focusing on Endometrial Cancer Incidence and knowledge of young women of HPV and Hepatitis B vaccines. In the summer of 2011, Ms. González was selected to participate in the Minority Health International Research Training Program instituted by the University of Alabama, Birmingham, where she conducted research in Ghana, Africa verifying the association between Aflatoxin and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

Currently, Ms. González serves in the Association of Students for Community Service (Asociación de Estudiantes para el Servicio a la Comunidad), at the UPR School of Medicine, with the mission to provide health care for underprivileged communities in the metropolitan area of San Juan, Puerto Rico. She is also an active member of various medical student organizations including: the American Medical Association, American Medical Student Association and the Association of Puerto Rican Medical Students (Asociación de Estudiantes de Medicina de Puerto Rico). Her future career goal is to practice medicine as a gynecologist and continue to conduct epidemiologic research, as a consulting physician.

**METHODS IN HPV SURVEILLANCE: EXPERIENCES FROM A POPULATION-BASED STUDY OF HPV INFECTION AMONG WOMEN IN THE SAN JUAN METROPOLITAN AREA OF PUERTO RICO.**

**MENTOR: ANA P. ORTIZ, PHD, MPH**

Human papillomavirus is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the US, with an estimated prevalence of 79 million people infected in 2008. It has been documented that the prevalence of HPV is highest among racial/ethnic minorities, such as Hispanics living in the US, yet no population-based study has described the burden of HPV infection in the Puerto Rican population. This study aims to describe the methodology used in the first population-based study of HPV infection performed in a representative sample of women aged 16-64 years residing in the San Juan Metropolitan Area of Puerto Rico, which was designed to assess the prevalence and determinants of cervical, anal and oral HPV infection. The sample was identified through a sampling design of households in the San Juan Metropolitan Area, composed of seven municipalities: Bayamón, Carolina, Cataño, Guaynabo, San Juan, Toa Baja, and Trujillo Alto. The sampling frame was selected in four stages, using the census tract maps from the Census Bureau, Planning Board Office of Puerto Rico. Participants completed a face-to-face interview and a computer-assisted self-interview for the collection of demographic, clinical and lifestyle variables. Anal and cervical specimens were collected through previously tested self-collection methods. HPV DNA testing was performed at the University of California, San Francisco, using a modified pool of MY09/MY11 consensus HPV L1 primers as well as primers for amplification of the human beta-globin gene. PCR products from positive samples were typed by dot-blot hybridization. Anthropometric measurements were taken using NHANES III methodology. Oral mouthwash samples were collected and stored for future assessment of oral HPV infection, and serum samples were collected for the identification of HPV seroprevalence and for the development of a bio-repository for future HPV related studies. For the study, 50 randomly selected census tract blocks were sampled. A total of 566 women were recruited out of the 679 eligible women contacted, yielding a response rate of 83.2%. Response rates did not vary by age-group (p>0.05) but did vary by socioeconomic (SES) census block strata (p<0.05), with lower response rates in strata with higher SES. Meanwhile, all women agreed to provide all of the three self-collected biological samples (cervical, oral and anal) for HPV determination. Our study results demonstrate the viability of performing population-based studies of HPV infection in Puerto Rico as a method of public health surveillance, which is essential for monitoring HPV burden and vaccination impact in this population.
Daniela Caballero Varona is a Doctor of Medicine (MD) candidate at the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine. She earned her Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Biology from the University of Puerto Rico at the Mayagüez campus, in 2011. As an undergraduate student, Ms. Caballero was involved in projects related to cancer epidemiology and human molecular genetics. Her first research experience was being part of the Puerto Rico Genotyping Project with Dr. Taras Oleksyk whom introduced her to the world of research. She was in charge of collecting the samples from two municipalities in Puerto Rico and extracting their Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) in the laboratory. A year later she began conducting research at the Comprehensive Cancer Center of Puerto Rico (CCCPR) on a project about Hepatitis C, and later worked on a project focusing on breast and cervical cancer research. Most recently, she began working on human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine awareness in Puerto Rico and leukemia survival on the island. She just finished her first year of medical school, in which she became part of “Recinto pa’ la calle”, a student organization that helps homeless people by aiding them in healing their skin lesions, providing them with food and lending them a listening ear. She is also part of “Construyendo Medicina Solidaria”, another student organization that hopes to create equal access to health care regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, among others. Ms. Caballero is part of the student council in her class as the representative for the Introduction to Clinical Skills course and was reelected to be the representative for the continuation of the course next year. She is also the treasurer for a Haiti Relief Trip where she and other medical students will offer medical services to the Blanchard community in Haiti during the last week of July. This summer she will continue doing research in Human Papillomavirus (HPV) at the CCCPR as an HSHPS/CCCPR Graduate Fellow.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED TO HPV VACCINE AWARENESS IN A POPULATION-BASED SAMPLE OF WOMEN IN PUERTO RICO

MENTOR: ANA PATRICIA ORTIZ, PHD, MPH

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is associated to 99.7% of invasive cervical cancer cases; high risk HPV types 16 and 18 cause 70% of all cervical malignancies. Cervical cancer is the 6th most common cancer found in Puerto Rican females, with incidence rates higher in Puerto Rico than among non-Hispanic Whites in the US. Despite the availability of the first HPV vaccine since 2006, vaccination rates in Puerto Rico (PR) continue to be low. The objective of this study is to describe awareness and uptake of the HPV vaccine among a population-based sample of women in PR, and to describe demographic, clinical and lifestyle factors associated to these outcomes. To achieve these aims, we are performing a secondary data analysis of a cross-sectional study of anogenital HPV infection performed among a population-based sample of 566 women aged 16-64 years living in the San Juan Metropolitan Area of PR (2010-2013). The data of the study was collected through an interviewer-administered questionnaire that was used to collect information on demographics, lifestyles and HPV knowledge, among other covariates. As part of our study, logistic regression models will be used to describe various factors associated with HPV awareness and HPV vaccine awareness. Among preliminary results, 82% of women are aware of HPV and 65% are aware of the existence of the vaccine. Furthermore, the uptake of the HPV vaccine among women within vaccination ages (16-26 years) is very low (<5%). The low awareness of HPV and HPV vaccine among the female population aged 16-64 years that resides in the San Juan Metropolitan area of Puerto Rico is consistent with previous studies. Although the media plays an important role in educating the public, active physician participation in HPV vaccine education must be reinforced to improve the vaccination rate in the target population, since most women indicate that they would vaccinate if their physician recommended it.
ALUMNI UPDATES

Sharon Ortiz-Garcia – 2004 HSHPS/CDC Fellow
Ms. Ortiz-Garcia is currently working for the Virginia Department of Health as a district epidemiologist at the West Piedmont Health District. She's in charge of the district’s disease surveillance and investigation program.

Fernando Rengifo-Caicedo, MS, MPH, FAAA, CPS/A – 2008 HSHPS/NIOSH Fellow
Mr. Rengifo-Caicedo is currently pursuing two doctorate degrees: Clinical/Medical Au.D. (Doctor in Audiology) at Salus University (Elkins Park, PA) with an emphasis in Public Health, and a PhD in Psychology with an emphasis in Applied Cognitive Neurosciences at the Universidad Maimonides (Buenos Aires, Argentina). He is also developing courses, and educational/training materials for specific public health problems in Latin American countries; such as preventing hearing impairment with public health planning for underrepresented population.

Melissa Artstein-McNassar, PhD(c), MA – 2009 HSHPS/CDC Fellow
A current PhD candidate in medical anthropology at Washington State University, she has recently finished her dissertation fieldwork on the accessibility and retention to healthcare services among Hispanic and African-American populations living with HIV/AIDS in Las Vegas, NV. She’s a voting member of the President’s Committee on the Status of Women at Washington State University where she seeks to address sex and racial/ethnic inequalities for university students, staff, and faculty.

Jillian Papa, MPH – 2010 HSHPS/Tropical Diseases
Ms. Papa spent the summer doing children’s environmental health research at UNIRIO, in Rio de Janeiro Brazil. She currently serves as the Program Evaluator for the Women’s and Children’s Health state program at the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Gilda Cornejo, MPA – 2010 HSHPS/VA Fellow
Currently working at the Department of Veterans Affairs in the office of Veteran Employment Services Office (VESO), Ms. Cornejo contributes in the mission of finding employment opportunities for Veterans by serving as a liaison between VA and corporate/non-profit affinity groups. She also assists her department by participating as a Contractor Officer Representative (COR), a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officer, and as a correspondence representative.

Jennifer Lugris – 2011 HSHPS/SAMHSA Fellow
Ms. Lugris recently received a job offer at Sutter Health in the San Francisco bay area, thanks to her experience as a Fellow at SAMHSA.

Anthony Lathon – 2011 HSHPS/SAMHSA Fellow
Mr. Lathon is managing a legal staffing firm in Manhattan, NY focusing on e-discovery solutions. Next month, he will be starting Cornell to get his Masters in Healthcare Informatics.

Ileana V. Galván, MPH – 2012 HSHPS/VA Fellow
Ms. Galván is currently working for the Veterans Health Administration, Women’s Health Services, Reproductive Health, in Washington, DC. She developed a toolkit that provides resources for the implementation of a recent VA policy on maternity care and coordination. Among her current projects is the development of a resource guide mainly for emergency medicine providers; this resource guide will accompany an upcoming VA policy on emergency medical services for women Veterans.

Raisa Garcia, PhD(c) – 2012 HSHPS/HRSA Fellow
Ms. Garcia is one of the sixteen recipients of the Go Red™ Multicultural Scholarship Fund, which focuses on increasing diversity in the medical field and culturally sensitive, patient-centered care.