

Arizona Health Improvement Plan (AzHIP)

Update for
July thru Sept 2023

This Quarterly Newsletter provides highlights from each of the five AzHIP Priority Action Plans from the past quarter (July - Sept 2023).

Health Equity

[Health Equity Plan](#)

Strengthening Data Infrastructure: Informing, Integrating, and Sharing

- ADHS presented about the development of the Arizona Social Vulnerability Index (AzSVI) at the Arizona Health Equity Conference in September to raise awareness about the progress and release date of the data tool. To incorporate preliminary user feedback and provide time to gather feedback from Tribal communities, we anticipate the AzSVI will be published in January, 2024. The talented analysis team at Arizona State University is completing a quality analysis review on their work and will then deliver the data to the ADHS GIS team.
- Our Summer Data Equity Intern has conducted interviews with several community members across the state. These interviews help to incorporate elements of community strength and resilience into the presentation of the AzSVI data, and will help present a clearer picture of what people experience as they face unique barriers to good health in Arizona. These stories are also being translated into Spanish.
- ASU Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC) hosted a pilot of their Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) video training at the end of September, where they gathered feedback about improvements that could be made. In the next quarter, they will finalize the training and share it with community based organizations. They are also providing a few sessions of free technical assistance to organizations who have watched the training and want additional support to do CBPR at their organization. Information about this resource will be shared in the new year.

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

- After fourteen listening sessions with community members across the state to learn about how people would like to be engaged in the work that ADHS does in their communities, we are happy to report that The Community Engagement Toolkit is complete. ADHS Office of Health Equity is reviewing the toolkit and will use this as a tool for Inclusive Community Engagement across the agency. Huge thank you to Tracy Lenartz with Lenartz Consulting and her team for the development of this toolkit and a huge THANK YOU to each community member who provided invaluable feedback.

Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change

- We are excited to announce that the “Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change (PSE) Playbook” created by Arizona State University’s College Research and Evaluation Services Team and Knowledge Enterprise has been finalized. The PSE playbook for Arizona is designed to be a resource for community members and leaders, organizations and public health partners who are interested in promoting sustainable, equitable, long-term, healthy changes in their communities. The AzHIP Health Equity Implementation Team is working to create a dissemination plan.
- Pinnacle Prevention has completed the two webinars in the Smart Growth series - Missing Middle Housing and People First Streets. The series will continue into the Spring of 2024. The conversations will highlight success stories, share best practices, and help advance equitable development practices that help create better cities throughout the state.

Health in All Policies/Social Determinants of Health Plan

Coordinate state housing and supportive service funding to develop consistency and support integration

- **The Arizona Housing Coalition** in partnership with the Arizona Department Housing released three new funding opportunities to support organizations working on housing and homelessness across the state. Two of the three opportunities focus on building organizational capacity to address housing issues. The third is focused on increasing affordable housing and homeless services in rural Arizona. Applications are currently under review with awards projected for December 2023. The Coalition anticipates publishing the revisions to the Affordable Housing Best Practices in November 2023. The updated kit already needed updates following the passage of accessory dwelling units (ADU) changes in Phoenix and Tempe. The Coalition hosted the Housing Forum in August which hopefully brought new partners together to talk about affordable housing.
- The Medicaid crosswalk is complete, **AHCCCS** is updating the behavioral health covered service guide in order to clearly articulate process and expectations when providing covered services. AHCCCS will schedule trainings once complete.

Increase financing and funding tools available to develop and preserve housing affordability, while also incentivizing health impacts into these tools

- The **Arizona Housing Coalition** is gearing up for the 2024 legislative session which will focus in part of preserving the funding award to the Arizona Department of Housing in 2023 which supports programs across the state focused on rental assistance, prevention strategies, weatherization, capital for new housing projects like hotel conversions and operations for shelter/bridge housing. The Coalition is also participating in the Governor's Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness including the financing workgroup. This group is tasked with identifying new public/private partnership.
- **AHCCCS** continues to partner with the statewide housing administrator, ABC and HOM, Inc. for landlord engagement, upholding rent reasonableness for landlords who work with the AHCCCS program, providing landlord incentives, and eviction prevention. AHCCCS is working on the Implementation Plan for the new Housing and Health Opportunities (H2O) services, which will be available October 1, 2024.

Improve government and private sector systems to connect individuals to health and support services

- The **Arizona Housing Coalition** continues to offer training and workshop opportunities. The most recent focused on ways social determinants of health can be better incorporated into the QAP. Support for DWEL, the data warehouse initiative continues which will provide data connections between HMIS and AHCCCS on persons experiencing homelessness.
- **AHCCCS** has been supporting enrollment in the Statewide Closed-Loop Referral System, CommunityCares which helps health care providers quickly and efficiently screen and refer patients for Health-Related Social Needs, which includes housing. AHCCCS is working to enhance the existing policies and establish new policies for the newly approved Housing and Health Opportunities (H2O) services. The contracts with the seven health plans across the state were updated and went into effect on October 1, 2023. The updates include new language that helps ensure health plans have processes for identifying populations most in need and targeting available supportive services towards these populations. AHCCCS is providing MHBG funds to AHCCCS health plans to support start-up expenses and help providers get supportive housing services in place.

For the past three years AHCCCS has been an active participant in the Data Warehouse for Enterprise Linkage Arizona (DWEL-AZ) project, which is focused on establishing an integrated data warehouse for HMIS and Medicaid data to improve care coordination for individuals experiencing homelessness. AHCCCS has recently begun drafting the technical specifications for the data transfer. Two of the three CoCs have submitted test HMIS data to the data warehouse and the third is planning to include their data by the end of 2023. We look forward to seeing the system go live in 2024.

Implement strategies in a manner that ensures cultural humility, racial equity, and health equity are a priority

- **AHCCCS** continues to hold regular Tribal Consultation Meetings with Arizona's tribal leaders. AHCCCS' Housing Department will continue 1:1 meetings with tribal leaders to ensure their needs are assessed and included in the Housing and Health Opportunities (H2O) policies and services, where possible. AHCCCS is updating the SABG MHBG application and is working to create Recovery Housing as an available intervention. AHCCCS regularly provides public information forums on our services and they often include information about the impact of stable and affordable housing on an individual's physical and mental health. AHCCCS also is working with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to get Traditional Healing added as a covered benefit.

- **Arizona Housing Inc.** completed a second milestone of the project. After identifying major themes from the Health Needs Assessments (HNAs) conducted last quarter, listening sessions were conducted at all five of AHI's properties (at least two per property) to more deeply dig into and understand the needs of residents. Analysis of these sessions will be conducted next quarter.

While a more in-depth analysis will be presented in next quarter's report, some initial findings from the HNAs showed several need areas: programming targeting mental health, especially for women in addressing their unique challenges in poverty and homelessness; programming around GED and educational attainment; programming targeting relieving the financial burden of medication and accessing medication and health services, including education on how to live a healthier lifestyle.

Another major milestone this quarter was the long-awaited opening of AHI's Collins Court II expansion. This 36-unit project has a preference for adults aged 55 and older and/or veterans and is currently 90% full while AHI awaits a permanent certificate of occupancy. After numerous unforeseen construction delays, AHI welcomed a new cohort of vulnerable residents home.



Mental Well-being

Mental Well-being Plan

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

- The ASU Center for Mindfulness, Compassion and Resilience - Loneliness & Social Isolation Project curriculum to address the loneliness epidemic with expertise around mindfulness, compassion and resilience has been completed and will be housed on the ADHS' website for public use. The curriculum will also be shared with Community Health Workers and other service providers.
- The Arizona Department of Veterans Services (ADVS) continues to collaborate with Televeda in providing technology/digital access to veterans who live on tribal lands. ADVS is working with cell phone providers to determine which providers have the best cell service in specific areas. Tribal points of contact have also been solidified to ensure outreach and engagement of veteran participation.
- Through a high-tech and high-touch community mental well-being program Televeda has impacted over 4,700 lives by connecting participants with critical resources to acquire a sense of community and belonging. This includes working with 3 tribal nations and veterans and presenting their program to various service providers. One of their most recent successful events was launching bingo season with 27 senior centers in Arizona and Nevada. Over 1,000 seniors participated in-person and virtually. By providing hybrid events, such as this, Televeda hopes to sustain their overall user engagement.
- Duet has provided 43 series of "Finding Meaning and Hope," a virtual community of support that transcends the barriers faced by caregivers of aging family or friends; 32 of which were held within Arizona. Post-surveys revealed 91% of respondents felt the "program helped reduce their overall level of stress." Duet has also trained 13 additional facilitators to lead the curriculum and outreach for new partners continues. The hope is to reach more Spanish speaking family caregivers in the next quarter. Additionally, Duet has implemented friendly calling for homebound adults. Through friendly calling, 23 unduplicated volunteers provided 314 hours of connection and conversation that supported 26 unduplicated homebound adults. A peer mentor program for family caregivers has also been implemented, which pairs new or struggling family caregivers with a more seasoned family caregiver for peer support. The peer mentors receive training from Duet staff, along with guidance and ongoing learning opportunities to support them as mentors.
- ADHS continues to update the Social Connectedness and Chronic Pain Management webpages with information and resources on social isolation and loneliness.

- In the past quarter, the AzHIP Pandemic Recovery & Resiliency Implementation Teams of Mental Health and Trauma and Community Connectedness were merged with the Mental Well-Being Priority Area to reduce partners' administrative load, while allowing for more collaboration. Members of both implementation teams have been integrated into the Mental Well-Being Priority Area. The Mental Health and Trauma and Community Connectedness implementation teams continue to advance ongoing work via regular action team meetings.
- The Mental Health & Trauma Implementation Team, led by AzACE's and ASU, continues to meet with mental and behavioral health organizations to learn more about how they serve their populations. Reports on any data collected through listening sessions or survey responses have been requested. Data from youth mental health providers and professionals at the Prevent Child Abuse conference have also been collected by the team. The secondary data from the mental and behavioral health organizations and the information gained from the listening sessions is shaping the development of the Place-Based Playbook for Creating Equity-Centered COP on Mental Well-Being and Resilience. During their last few meetings the Action Team has contributed suggestions and resources to the outline.
- The Community Connectedness Implementation Team, led by ASU, continues to focus on project-based work relating to the Kumu Systems Map. The two workgroups, Survey and Outreach continue to meet and collaborate on tasks with the guidance of the team's co-leads. The Survey workgroup has met to develop the questionnaire that will be utilized to gather information from key players to inform the map. The Outreach workgroup has begun to compile names and contact information of key players who will complete the survey and be listed on the KUMU map. The group has also listed over 300 people to be contacted. The Kumu mapping project is ongoing.

Reducing Suicide-Related Events

-  **Announcement: Grant Opportunity for Suicide Prevention Training and Capacity Building in Arizona**

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) is excited to announce the Suicide Prevention Training and Capacity Building (SPTCB) grant. With a commitment to enhancing suicide prevention efforts across Arizona, this grant aims to empower local, county, and statewide advocates, organizations, and stakeholders. ADHS is dedicated to boosting the capacity of professionals by providing funds specifically tailored for evidence-based training, train-the-trainer certifications and support for focused interventions.

- This groundbreaking initiative allocates a total of \$450,000 – The grant offers three distinct tiers of awards, ensuring a comprehensive approach to address the diverse needs of communities. The SPTCB will award 25 - 45 grants, in 3 tiers:
 - Training Awards, with a total allocation of up to \$100,000, will be granted in amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each. The goal of this tier is to update outdated certifications, provide for professional development training and host small-scale training events.
 - Training Events Awards, with a substantial allocation of up to \$250,000, will offer awards ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000 each. The goal of this tier is to provide funding for suicide prevention events (e.g. facility rental, speaker fees) and large scale training events (e.g. QPR every day for a week, MHFA every month for a year).
 - Lastly, Logistics and Capacity Building Awards, with an allocation of up to \$100,000, will provide grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each. The goal of this tier is to update outdated websites, purchase new automation equipment and upgrade capacity. The eligible projects for this tier were a direct result of soliciting more than 100 stakeholders for their wishlist.
- This grant opportunity serves as a pivotal step in implementing the 2024 - 2026 Arizona Suicide Prevention Action Plan. By focusing on disproportionately affected populations, including urban and tribal nation American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities, people who identify as LGBTQIA2S+ and rural areas with populations under 250,000, the SPTCB program aims to significantly reduce the number of suicides and suicide-related events in the state. Eligible stakeholders are encouraged to apply and join ADHS in the collective effort to build a resilient and well-equipped network of suicide prevention professionals throughout Arizona.
- Suicide Prevention Capacity Building Grants Request For Grant Application (RFGA) Information can be found here: https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/c4flg7c42ick

Rural & Urban Underserved Health Plan

Address Health Professional Shortage by building a diverse healthcare workforce

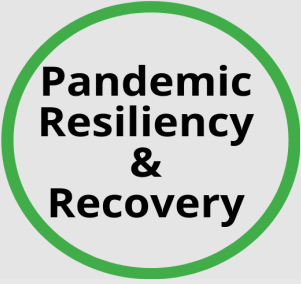
- The Arizona Center for Rural Health (AzCRH) team, including two MPH graduate students, scheduled, completed, and transcribed 15 stakeholder interviews. Interviews asked about financial and other barriers experienced by underserved students in pathway and health professions programs. The team continues to participate in statewide workforce coalition and related meetings.
- On September 28 & 29, ADHS in partnership with the Arizona Alliance of Community Health Centers and the Central Arizona Area Health Education Center held the Annual AZ Workforce Recruitment & Retention Conference which focused on successful workforce practices for retention and recruitment in the healthcare workforce. This conference provided crucial insights, resources, and strategies for Health Centers and National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Site staff. It covered diverse topics such as loan repayment programs, healthcare policy updates, effective marketing, and best practices for recruitment and retention. Tailored for Human Resources, Recruitment, and Healthcare Program Partnerships, the event facilitated networking among NHSC Sites. There were 94 participants from various healthcare sectors, including Health Centers, NHSC Organizations, Tribal Healthcare, and Academic Programs.

Maximize utilization of CHWs/CHRs in clinical settings

- As of October 3, 2023, 316 CHWs have been certified in Arizona. Of these, 92 applicants were able to qualify for the \$0 A.R.S. § 41-1080.01 fee waiver, with 213 applicants qualifying for the \$1 reduced fee which expired on June 30, 2023.
- AHCCCS-registered providers can bill for services delivered by certified CHWs, such as patient self-management education and training. AHCCCS is currently creating a new provider category for CHW organizations, enabling different organizations to enroll via the AHCCCS provider enrollment process and bill for authorized services offered by certified CHWs. Further details will be forthcoming.

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

- The Arizona Telemedicine Program (ATP) co-sponsored and hosted a webinar “Peers and Family Support Specialists: Opportunities for Rural Arizona” as part of the 2023 Arizona Center for Rural Health Fall Webinar Series. This webinar featured discussions of PeerWORKS and Project FUTRE support specialist programs and opportunities to include and promote people with lived experience in organizations and/or community health efforts. ATP collaborated with the Arizona State Library, community libraries and other partners in Arivaca and Tuba City to provide education about telehealth technology and assist in the development of public library telehealth access point capabilities that can provide people with access to private space and telehealth technology to conduct a telehealth visit with their healthcare provider that offers telehealth services.

The logo consists of a green circle with a white border. Inside the circle, the words "Pandemic Resiliency & Recovery" are written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, stacked vertically.

Pandemic Resiliency & Recovery

Implementation Teams Approach

- AzHIP Pandemic Recovery & Resiliency Priority Area adopted an implementation team approach to address action steps of the [Pandemic Recovery & Resiliency Plan](#). The [Arizona Health Improvement Plan Implementation Team Fact Sheets](#) include information for the fifteen AzHIP Pandemic Recovery & Resiliency

Implementation Teams. ADHS is working with [Arizona State University Knowledge Enterprise](#), the [Arizona ACEs Consortium](#), the [Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association](#) and the [NARBHA Institute](#) to continue supporting the Implementation Teams.

- **Assessment Implementation Team** - The implementation team declared success last quarter addressing all goals assigned to the team. Group members were invited to join the Data Advisory Council (DAC) in their future meetings and to participate in Arizona Social Vulnerability Index (AZ SVI) project related conversations. The Assessment IPT has merged with the Health Equity DAC and is no longer meeting as a separate group.
- **Innovation and Technology Implementation Team** - ASU continued to support connections between academic and research organizations who are advancing technologies and innovations that were used in the COVID-19 response and identifying ways to improve preparedness for future outbreaks, pandemics, and public health events. ASU gathered information on workshops and conferences, disseminated information through the listserv and monthly newsletters, and supported attendance of workshops, meetings, and conferences. Members of the ASU AzHIP Innovation & Technology Implementation Team attended and advertised ASU's Health, Technology & Equity Virtual Summit, Arizona's Annual Health Literacy Conference 2023, and ASU SIRC Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Pilot Training. The ASU team held monthly meetings to formulate a "research preparedness" agenda. *The Innovation and Technology IPT does not have regular meetings planned at this time.*
- **Youth Implementation Team** - ASU facilitated listening sessions with representatives from youth councils, providers and professionals who work with youth, and youth-serving organizations. In addition to the two previous listening sessions conducted last quarter, the ASU team conducted two additional listening sessions with the [Maricopa County Youth Advisory Council](#) and [Rosie's House](#). An executive summary of the findings will be shared with the team, community stakeholders, and potential funders. The dissemination of the executive summary will help link youth representatives with key ASU experts and funders in youth mental health after these listening sessions, in order to address small- and large-scale problems affecting youth in the community. The team will continue with a meeting cadence of every other month.

- **Communications Implementation Team** - ASU completed the review and discussion on all tactics assigned to the Communications IPT and began addressing topics designed by the IPT. The group discussed topics they would like to explore in future meetings. In the August meeting the group focused on papers that focused on Public Health Communication Strategies focused on youth that are measurably effective, avoid/correct misinformation, and (re-) establish the public health authority as being 'authoritative'. An ASU Fellow and student worker conducted literature reviews and created annotated bibliographies for 5-10 journal articles per tactic to share with the IPT. Student workers, fellows, co-leads, and IPT members discussed each of the papers during the August meeting. The IPT and co-leads have agreed that if these meetings move forward they will be with a similar schedule and structure to address "scientific reports on public health communication strategies for various populations that are effective, avoid/correct misinformation, and (re-) establish the public health authority as being 'authoritative.'" The August meeting focused on the youth population. Future meetings would look into the other populations such as pregnant moms or new moms, the elderly, refugees, Spanish speaking, and church-goers non-denomination specific.
- **Arizona ACES's Consortium (AzACES's)** continues to support the enhancing resilience of Arizona communities, increasing trauma informed education in schools with a partnership with AZ Town Hall and Vitalyst to host regional in-person town halls on Resilient Schools in Yuma, Cochise, and Mohave Counties. The Community of Practice will have its first gathering in January 2024.
- **Pima County Health Department (PCHD)**

Strengthen Public Health Capacity & Infrastructure

PCHD has actively strengthened public health capacity and infrastructure through the Health Disparities CDC Grant, addressing COVID-19 disparities. They collaborated with community organizations to provide at-home rapid tests and connect residents with crucial health resources. Engaging the community, PCHD developed culturally responsive information. Additionally, PCHD utilizes Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) funds to inform residents about public health alignment. Internally, PCHD is shifting towards a whole-person wellness culture to ensure staff is prepared for future public health challenges. PCHD's commitment to capacity building is evident in their recent development and implementation of a Community Health Worker Training. A local Suicide Mortality Review Committee investigates completed suicides, revealing risk factors and informing prevention recommendations reported to the state health department. This information plays a crucial role in shaping the statewide suicide prevention plan.

Rebuild a Stronger System to Support Health

To strengthen health support systems, the Tohono O'odham Nation, with grant-funded support, provided vaccinations across 51 communities, earning recognition as the Outstanding CHR Tribal Program of the Year for 2022. PCHD hired a Community Engagement Coordinator for a comprehensive approach to community involvement, supporting local health plans. We've partnered with a behavioral health agency for expedited youth mental health referrals through the "Not Alone" campaign. PCHD hosted its first One Health Clinic (OHC) to provide inclusive medical care for both people and their pets, focusing on communities with limited healthcare access. The OHC, delivered through a mobile health clinic, offers wellness exams, mental health aid, naloxone distribution, COVID-19 kits, and connections to additional services. The program aims to enhance public health by serving houseless individuals and their pets, increasing uptake of vital health services.

Advance Health Equity

PCHD established the Office of Policy, Resilience, and Equity (PRE) to expand resources and capacity for equity work. The Health Equity Committee (HEC) meets monthly to discuss health equity issues in a collaborative learning environment. PCHD's equity staff actively works on the Health Equity Resource (HER) plan, focusing on Social Determinants of Health, translation/interpretation, cultural competency, accessibility/ADA compliance, and equity data availability. Other initiatives include continuing and expanding staff equity training, revisiting the JEDI survey, enhancing multilingual pay policies, expanding SOGI data analysis, and addressing health disparities exacerbated by COVID through a dedicated grant. The recent hiring of a community engagement manager in the PRE office further strengthens alignment with community goals, emphasizing the importance of addressing the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), and priorities identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

Enhance Resilience of Arizona Communities

PCHD participates in the substance abuse task force with the Tucson Unified School District. Additionally, they provide free mental health tools through public libraries, taking a holistic approach to community well-being. PCHD hosts the Pima Behavioral Health Coalition, a platform supporting local youth mental health initiatives. They've completed four cohorts of Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructor Training, increasing the availability of this vital curriculum for local youth-serving partners. Collaborating with the Born This Way Foundation, PCHD offers free youth mental health training via the Be There Certificate program, further strengthening community resilience.