



New Mexico Culture of Health

The **New Mexico Culture of Health** is an initiative to support county and tribal health councils to build and enhance the existing statewide network and become a durable, inclusive, engaged and effective community infrastructure for health equity. The NM Culture of Health Initiative will allow us to strengthen community engagement at local and state levels to address social, economic, racial, ethnic, and health inequities.

The New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils will coordinate the New Mexico Culture of Health over the next two and a half years, along with partners, Presbyterian Healthcare Services, the UNM Health Science's Center for Participatory Research, the Center for Health Innovation (New Mexico Public Health Institute), New Ventures Consulting, and key contributors.

The initial focus of this project will be to work collaboratively with six health councils to increase community engagement, improve assessment, and develop policy recommendations on important public health issues, with an emphasis on under resourced communities. The grant includes money for staffing for the six selected health councils. This work will eventually be made available to all health councils who are interested in building awareness around health equity and engagement.

From reducing food insecurity to addressing behavioral health needs, improving the health of New Mexicans means engaging local communities to find solutions that work. The New Mexico Culture of Health initiative will support six county and tribal health councils to increase community engagement using a community-based research approach, and to develop policy recommendations on important public health issues.

Objectives: The focus of this project is to increase community engagement to create health equity in New Mexico. Participants will build on and learn new skills and ways to engage a broader and more diverse network of people in their community through a process that will be developed collectively. This will support health councils' capacity (1) to increase community engagement, (2) use a community-based research approach, (3) inform policy level decision-making at local and state levels, (4) have additional tools and resources to decrease community health disparities and inequities, and (5) to advocate for sustainable change and increased health equity. There will be an emphasis on engaging under resourced communities.

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