

ARIZONA PRC

Championing Community Health Worker Effectiveness in Arizona and Beyond

Core Research Project TAG

Bridging Generations:
The power of
Intergenerational
connections



MINDSET:

Special Interest Project
in Epilepsy Care

Measuring the
cost-effectiveness
of self-
management

ARISe:
Special
Interest Project
community-driven
solutions for public
health

2024-2029
funding cycle:
1st newsletter!



Image generated using Midjourney AI (Prompt- Intergenerational connections in Arizona, people of all ages)



MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Arizona Prevention
Research Center



Editor's Letter

Momentum & Milestones: Kicking Off the 2024-2029 Cycle



As we step into 2025, we are excited to welcome the 2024-2029 PRC Network funding cycle, ushering in a new era of growth, collaboration, and research impact for our center. This renewed support strengthens our ability to advance public health initiatives and deepen our partnerships within communities.

This funding cycle, we are proud to launch TAG (Together Across Generations), our new core research project designed to foster intergenerational connections as a means to combat social isolation and loneliness. Over the next five years, TAG will work to bridge generations, strengthen community ties, and improve well-being across all age groups. Read ahead in this edition to learn more about this exciting initiative and its goals for lasting change.

In addition to TAG, the Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) is honored to be the recipient of two Special Interest Projects (SIPs) as part of this new funding cycle. MINDSET will explore the cost-effectiveness of epilepsy self-management programs, while ARISe focuses on vaccine confidence and uptake. These SIPs expand our research impact and reinforce our commitment to addressing pressing public health challenges.

As we embark on these new initiatives, we are also celebrating the growth of our partnerships, strengthening our ability to translate research into action. Our kickoff meeting in Atlanta this January set the stage for collaboration across the PRC Network, bringing together researchers, practitioners, and community leaders to shape the next phase of our work.

In this edition, you'll find highlights from TAG, the SIPs, and our expanding partnerships, along with well-earned recognitions of our team's dedication and impact. We look forward to continuing this journey together and making meaningful strides in community health.

Wishing you an insightful and inspiring read!

Ramses Sepulveda
Arizona Prevention Research Center
Deputy Director 

The New AzPRC Core Research Project

U of A project addresses loneliness in older adults living in border and rural communities



The Together Across Generations (TAG) project is an initiative led by the Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) that addresses the pressing issue of loneliness and social isolation among older adults living in rural, border, and tribal communities across Arizona. TAG is the new core research project being funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over the next five years. TAG seeks to implement, translate, and disseminate evidence-based strategies that promote intergenerational connections and enhance the overall well-being of these underserved populations.

TAG focuses on three rural Arizona counties—Yuma, Santa Cruz, and Cochise—as well as the Hualapai Tribe, collaborating with local organizations to amplify existing programs aimed at combating loneliness. These initiatives often involve intergenerational activities where local youth teach technology skills to older adults, enabling them to maintain virtual connections with family and friends. In return, the elders share their cultural and traditional knowledge, fostering a reciprocal relationship that strengthens community bonds. By enhancing and expanding these programs, TAG aims to reduce social isolation and create a more connected community fabric.

At the heart of TAG's approach is community-based participatory research, which emphasizes collaboration with community members to tailor interventions to their specific needs. This process ensures that the solutions developed are not only effective but also culturally relevant and sustainable. The project will engage community health workers, known as promotoras, who are integral to the implementation of TAG. These individuals serve as trusted links between health care providers and community members, bringing invaluable local knowledge and insights to the project.

A community action board, comprising about ten community health workers, will play a critical role in guiding the TAG initiative. This board will provide advice on community needs, helping to steer the project in a direction that aligns with the goals and aspirations of the local populations.

In addition to fostering intergenerational connections, TAG will launch a statewide awareness campaign to highlight the importance of addressing loneliness and social isolation. Through data collection and partnerships with local agencies, the project aims to develop a comprehensive plan that not only raises awareness but also encourages the adoption of effective interventions tailored to the unique challenges faced by rural, border, and tribal communities. Overall, TAG represents a significant step toward building healthier, more resilient communities across Arizona.

The latest updates and full details on the Together Across Generations (TAG) project can be found on the Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) website. Visit [<https://azprc.arizona.edu/together-across-generations-tag>] to learn more about TAG's mission, upcoming initiatives, and how you can stay engaged with this important work.

MINDSET: Advancing Epilepsy Self-Management through Economic Evaluation



The Managing Epilepsy Well (MEW) Network, a thematic network within the CDC’s Prevention Research Center (PRC) program, is committed to enhancing the lives of people with epilepsy through innovative, evidence-based interventions. As part of this effort, the MINDSET program—a key research initiative led by the University of Arizona and the University of Texas, Houston—seeks to evaluate the economic feasibility of epilepsy self-management programs in both community and healthcare settings.

With \$900,000 in funding over three years, MINDSET will conduct cost-effectiveness analyses (CEA) to determine the value and sustainability of epilepsy self-management interventions. This study will provide decision-makers with critical insights into the economic impact of integrating self-management into routine epilepsy care, addressing factors such as treatment adherence, quality of life improvements, and healthcare cost reductions.

MINDSET builds upon the success of prior MEW programs by utilizing a community-driven, patient-centered approach to self-management. By leveraging retrospective and prospective data, researchers will assess the program’s cost-benefit, cost-utility, and cost-effectiveness—essential measures in determining whether such interventions can be scaled and sustained across diverse settings.

The study is led by Co-Principal Investigators Drs. Refugio Sepulveda and David Labiner, in collaboration with Drs. Ross Shegog and Rajan Suja from the University of Texas, Houston. Together, the team will explore how self-management strategies can be integrated into clinical workflows and community-based health initiatives, ensuring that individuals with epilepsy have access to the tools and support they need to live well and manage their condition effectively.

For more information on MINDSET and the MEW Network’s ongoing research, visit [\[https://azprc.arizona.edu/mindset-managing-epilepsy-well-mew-network\]](https://azprc.arizona.edu/mindset-managing-epilepsy-well-mew-network) to stay updated on study findings, implementation strategies, and opportunities for collaboration.

ARISe: Strengthening Vaccine Confidence in Rural and Border Communities



The Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) is proud to launch ARISe (Advancing Research and Innovation for Strengthening Engagement), a five-year initiative focused on enhancing vaccine confidence and uptake in Arizona's rural and border communities. Supported by a \$1.75 million CDC grant, ARISe is designed to develop, implement, and evaluate strategies that address barriers to vaccination, ensuring that underserved populations have access to reliable, community-driven immunization programs.

Vaccination remains one of the most effective public health interventions, yet declining rates—particularly among hard-to-reach populations—pose a growing challenge. ARISe aims to restore trust in vaccines by working with community-based health organizations, developing culturally responsive interventions, and identifying innovative points of access to make vaccinations more accessible for families, adolescents, and adults.

One of ARISe's key strategies is expanding successful models of vaccine delivery. The project builds on a pioneering initiative by Chiricahua Community Health Centers Inc. (CCHCI), which introduced an immunization specialist into dental clinics to provide vaccines during routine dental visits. This approach has already shown promise in increasing vaccine uptake, and ARISe will expand this model to Mariposa Community Health Center in Santa Cruz County, further scaling effective interventions in rural and border areas.

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At the heart of ARISe is a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach, ensuring that solutions are developed in collaboration with local partners. The project is led by Dr. Tomas Nuño and Dr. Kate Ellingson, alongside Dr. Sheila Soto, Dr. Scott Carvajal, and community health leaders from Chiricahua Community Health Centers Inc. and Mariposa Community Health Center. Together, the team will assess socioeconomic factors, trust in healthcare, and vaccine perceptions, while piloting a multilevel intervention strategy tailored to the unique challenges of rural and border populations.

As vaccination rates continue to fluctuate, ARISe represents a critical step toward rebuilding confidence in immunization and ensuring equitable access to lifesaving vaccines. To learn more about ARISe and its latest developments, visit [<https://azprc.arizona.edu/az-vivir>] for updates, research findings, and opportunities to get involved.

Strengthening Binational Collaboration for Border Health



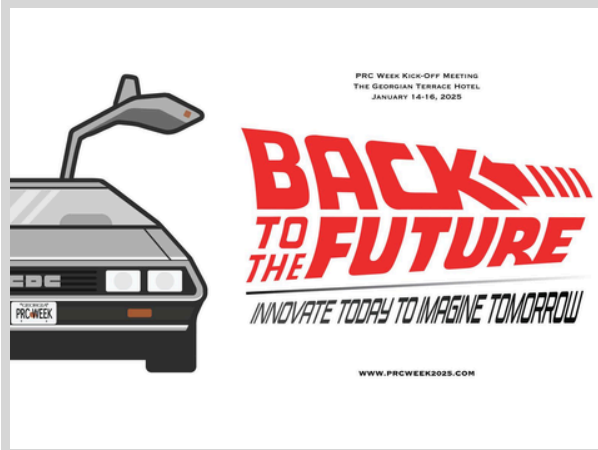
The Arizona-Sonora Binational Network for Healthy Communities is a collaborative initiative dedicated to enhancing cross-border cooperation in research, education, and outreach to improve the quality of life in the border region. This partnership brings together leading academic institutions, health organizations, and government representatives to build lasting relationships and advance community well-being in Arizona and Sonora.

In a formal signing ceremony, representatives from Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Universidad de Sonora, Centro de Investigaciones en Alimentación y Desarrollo, Universidad Autónoma de México (Tucson Campus), the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, Colegio de Sonora, and Southeast Arizona Health Education Center, alongside the Consuls of Mexico and the United States, solidified their commitment to a shared vision for border health.

Following the ceremony, network members engaged in strategic discussions on defining core principles and goals. Emphasis was placed on ensuring community-based organizations play an active role, establishing a binational research and education agenda, and developing an inventory of institutional resources that could be leveraged to strengthen collaboration. Participants also outlined priority research, education, and outreach themes, and explored opportunities for identifying funding sources to sustain the network's long-term impact.

This initiative represents a significant step forward in fostering regional partnerships and creating a sustainable framework for addressing critical health challenges in the border region. Moving forward, the network will continue to focus on shared knowledge, cross-border engagement, and community-driven solutions to enhance health outcomes for the Arizona-Sonora border population.

The Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) serves as a key convener of the Arizona-Sonora Binational Network for Healthy Communities, providing leadership and coordination to advance its mission. With active representation in the network, AzPRC fosters collaborative research, capacity-building, and community-driven solutions that address health disparities in the border region. By leveraging its expertise in community-based participatory research, AzPRC helps ensure that the network's initiatives remain inclusive, impactful, and sustainable, strengthening cross-border partnerships for the well-being of Arizona and Sonora's communities.



AzPRC Coalitions

Arizona-Sonora Binational Network for Healthy Communities Webinar
The Arizona-Sonora Binational Network for Healthy Communities will host a webinar on Friday, April 4, 2025, from 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM (MST) via Zoom, in collaboration with the Prevention Research Center.

This event will feature expert presentations on border health, engaging discussions with guest speakers, and a training on translational research. Following the presentations, a strategic discussion will focus on the future of the network, including its core mission, key thematic areas, planned activities, and potential funding opportunities.

This initiative marks a significant step toward strengthening cross-border collaborations and advancing community health in the Arizona-Sonora region. The event will also include a network signing ceremony, reinforcing collective efforts to address critical public health challenges through shared knowledge and coordinated action. We invite you to join us for an engaging exchange of insights, strategies, and opportunities that will shape the future of this important binational network. Stay tuned for more details on registration and agenda updates.

For more information on the Arizona-Sonora Binational Network for Healthy Communities, please contact dezapien@arizona.edu.



Social Media

AzPRC at PRC Week 2025:

Strengthening Networks and Collaboration

This January, the Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) joined PRC leaders, researchers, and partners at PRC Week 2025 in Atlanta, GA. The event, themed "Back to the Future: Innovate Today to Imagine Tomorrow," provided an opportunity to engage with the CDC PRC Program, exchange best practices, and strategize for the 2024-2029 funding cycle.

Key highlights included sessions on community engagement, program evaluation, and dissemination and implementation science, along with SIP and thematic network meetings to align priorities across the PRC Network.

Attendees also participated in a collective impact poster session, showcasing the breadth of work being done across the centers.

You may have seen our journey on social media!

As an active participant in the CDC PRC Network, AzPRC is committed to leveraging these collaborations to enhance chronic disease prevention, health promotion, and community-driven public health solutions. The conference reinforced the importance of equity-focused interventions and sustainable partnerships, setting the stage for impactful initiatives in the years ahead.

We look forward to applying key insights from PRC Week 2025 as we advance our core research project, Special Interest Projects (SIPs), and broader community engagement efforts. Stay connected with us for updates on how these collaborations shape our work!

2025 AzCHOW Roots Conference



Join AzCHOW for Roots 2025: Together for Change

The Arizona Community Health Workers Association (AzCHOW) invites you to Roots 2025: The Beginning of the CHW/CHR Workforce Movement, taking place on June 26-27, 2025, at the Hilton Phoenix Resort at the Peak in Phoenix, Arizona. This year's theme, "Together for Change: Navigating the Growth & Sustainability of the CHW Workforce," highlights the ongoing evolution and impact of Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Community Health Representatives (CHRs) in shaping health equity.

At Roots 2025, CHWs and CHRs will have the opportunity to network, share perspectives, and engage in discussions that address critical workforce challenges and opportunities. The event will feature specialized trainings, knowledge-sharing sessions, and a platform to raise awareness about pressing public health issues.

Beyond professional development, Roots 2025 is a time to honor and uplift the CHW/CHR community. Join us for a special recognition ceremony celebrating the resilience, dedication, and impact of outstanding CHWs and CHRs across Arizona.

Don't miss this opportunity to be part of a movement dedicated to advancing the CHW workforce, strengthening community-driven solutions, and fostering sustainable change. Mark your calendars and join us in Phoenix for this milestone event! Visit AzCHOW.org to learn more and register today.

CAB Community Action Board

The Community *Action* Board of the AzPRC continued its ongoing efforts, and met quarterly this year. As of 2023 two new Co-Chairs have been welcomed to the leadership circle. Maria Chavoya and Patty Molina are longtime members who are leading the 2025 charge. Below is a list of newsletter contributors.

Issue Contributors:

Campeños Sin Fronteras

Arizona Community Health
Worker Association
(AzCHOW)

South East Area Health
Education Center
(SEAHEC)

Center for Disease Control
and Prevention PRC
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Committee

University of Arizona's
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Land Acknowledgement:

Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. The native communities around Tucson number over 30,000 strong and are descended from many tribes and native communities. We are gathered on the ancestral unoccupied land of the Tohono O'odham, Pascua Yaqui and many more who may call this place home. We pay respects to the elders past and present, please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration and settlement that bring us together here today.