



## MetaSalud Ventanilla: Binational Collaboration for Chronic Disease Prevention

The Mexican population living in border communities faces challenges in adopting a healthy lifestyle due to a lack of programs that recognize their unique cultural identity. *MetaSalud* (*The Goal is Health*) is a story of how the Arizona Prevention Center collaborated with the Colegio de Sonora (A social science research institution in Mexico) to adapt a community based intervention for Latinos in the U.S for the Mexican population in Sonora Mexico.

To address the growing threat of diabetes in Sonora Mexico, the two institutions adapted the AzPRC's evidence-based based prevention curriculum *Pasos Adelante/Steps Forward* (<http://azprc.arizona.edu/resources/curricula/steps-forward-curriculum>) for this Mexican population. Called *MetaSalud*, this curriculum took advantage of healthy Mexican foods and community values to help participants improve their diets and be more physically active (<http://sitios.colson.edu.mx/metasalud/>).

This past year, Lorena Verdugo, a community health worker (CHW) from El Rio Community



Health Center decided to use the curriculum with the Mexican population living in Tucson, Arizona. A CHW for the past 10 years and an AzPRC Community Action Board member, Lorena is committed to ensuring that evidence-based programs reach the most marginalized communities. Lorena sought to reach this community by implementing the *MetaSalud* curriculum through the *Ventanilla de Salud*, a community program offered by Mexican Consulates in the U.S.

The *Ventanilla* recruited recent immigrants at Consulate events and in the Arizona Bilingual Spanish Magazine. The *MetaSalud* participants completed the eight 2-hour classes, which included 30 minutes of physical activity. They also joined community events such as the Caremore Walkathon and were provided with a trial membership at the local YMCA. Pre/post health screenings documented decreases in



cholesterol, glucose and weight. One participant describes her experience this way:

*“Programs such as MetaSalud are very much needed in our community. I was able to learn a lot about nutrition to teach my family. I also learned how to read labels which allows me to shop more carefully. I hope MetaSalud will continue for a long time.” - Laura Montiel*

The AzPRC research will lead to guidelines for CHWs in clinical settings based on practices in three health centers. We will establish a CHW program model that others may use to strengthen links between community health centers and community health prevention services.



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### Contact Information:

Mary Contreras  
AzPRC Program Coordinator Sr.  
1295 N. Martin Ave. • Tucson, AZ 85724  
(520) 626-5682 • [contrerm@email.arizona.edu](mailto:contrerm@email.arizona.edu)

