

# 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Yuma County: Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity

## Executive Report

Thursday May 19, 2022

Yuma Pivot Point Conference Center

Yuma, Arizona



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

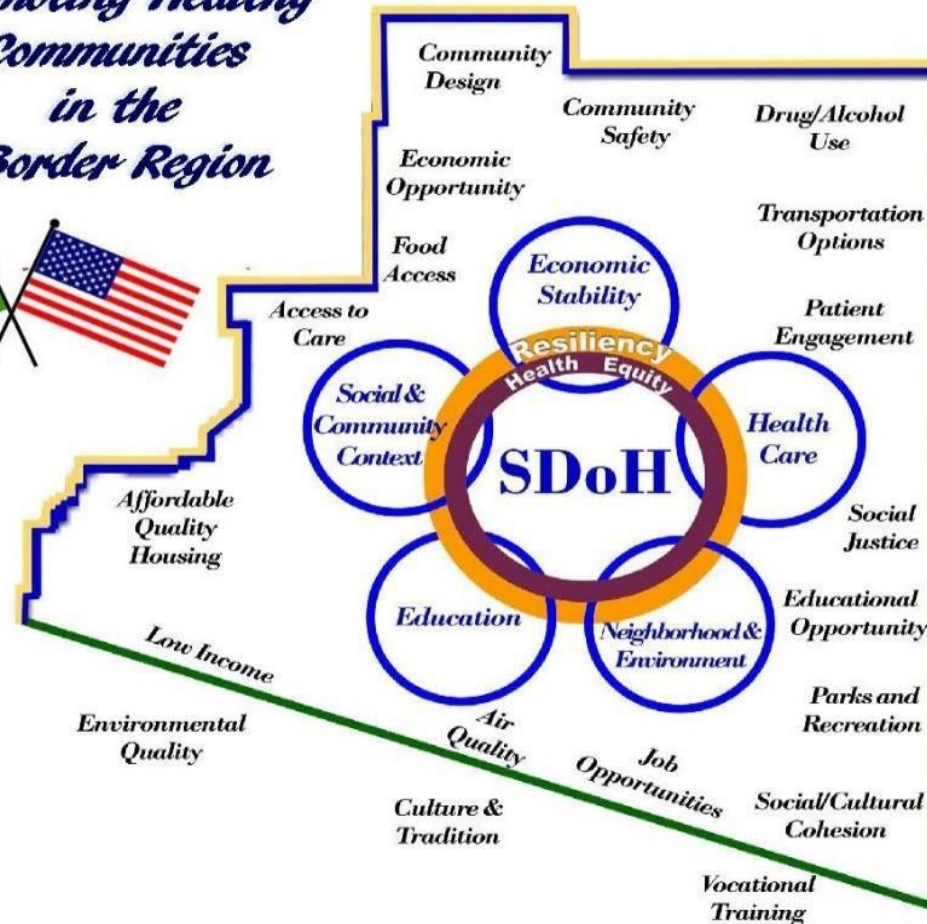
ARIZONA BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CENTRE



Center for Health  
Equity Research



### Promoting Healthy Communities in the Border Region



## Yuma County: Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity

Thursday May 19, 2022

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### **Executive Summary:**

*The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Yuma County ABRC Forum; “Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity” took place on May 19, 2022 in Yuma, Arizona. A key question was prepared to be answered by the forum Working Groups participants; Research Agenda, Workforce Development and Binational Working Group. Participants were tasked to develop a **community plan of action** to address the challenges facing families and their children after the community of Yuma County experienced and responded to the worse pandemic in the century of COVID-19 in 2019.*

*The conference theme of “Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity” and Keynote Speakers and Panel Participants set the tone for the working groups discussion. A special appreciation to for the insightful message from NAU President Dr. Jose Cruz Rivera, John Garcia, MBA, CPM Program Director, Arizona Biomedical Research Center (ABRC), ADHS State Laboratory; Dr. Daniel Dickerson MD., Associate Vice President for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities, University of Arizona, Dr. Julie Baldwin, Ph.D., Regens’ Professor and Director of the Center for Health Equity PI, Southwest Health Equity Research Collaborative and Dr. Mary O’Reilly, Ph.D., Vice-President Bioscience Research Program, Flynn Foundation.*

*The Working groups reported specific plan of actions and comments that depict the impact of COVID-19 in the residents and safety net in Yuma County:*

*“Working together; the healthcare community forming alliances against COVID-19 mitigation, the education community plus COVID-19 impact; keeping an empathetic state of mind, being transparent with our partners, listening to individuals”. Education face opportunities “re-emerging networks”.*

*“Silos were created among agencies’ activities (community action program), resources to be distributed fairly. Challenge, 50% apply by paper forms, emails -print; 20% online rental and energy assistance)”.*

*“More community engagement activities and broader community education would be helpful. This could occur using social media. We learned that people, during times of crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic, obtained much of their information from social media sites. People are becoming more sophisticated users of social media.”*

*“Covid-19 has had a particularly devastating impact on disabled children and adults. They are increasingly becoming segregated and isolated from the broader community. Challenge is: how can we better address the needs of the disabled and the elderly?”*

*“To achieve health equity at the Binational level, there is a need to identify a civic leadership group that will involve local community leaders to continuously collaborate in the SDoH action planning process.”*

*“Mental health is a critical issue, increased during pandemic, Covid-19 has been very difficult in terms of contributing to mental health distress amongst children, youth and adults. Consequently, there is a lack of sufficient behavioral health care providers to render services to patient demand.”*

A great appreciation to the NAU and RCBH Staff in putting together the logistics for making the 5<sup>th</sup> ABRC Yuma County Forum Possible and the Working Groups Co-Facilitators for their invaluable contribution to a meaningful discussion:

Workforce Working Group:

Michael Sabath, Ph.D. Associate Vice-President/CEO Yuma Campus -NAU.

Linda Elliot-Nelson, Ph.D. Strategic/Vinculacion, AWC.

Binational Working Group:

Kevin Driesen, Ph.D., MPH, Regional Center For Border Health, Inc.

Joena Ezroj, M.Ed., Director for Western Arizona Area Health Education Center (WAHEC), RCBH.

Community Engagement & Research Agenda Working Groups:

Robert T. Trotter II, Ph.D. Regents’ Professor of Anthropology and CHER, NAU.

Amanda Aguirre M.A.,R.D., Fmr. Arizona State Senator and President & CEO, RCBH

With Great Appreciation,

**Amanda Aguirre, M.A.,R.D.**

**Robert T. Trotter II, Ph.D.**

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual ABRC Conference Co-Chairs

### Yuma County: Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity

*Thursday May 19, 2022*

Yuma Pivot Point Conference Center

Yuma, Arizona

#### 1.- Research Agenda Working Session

Co-Facilitators: Ms. Amanda Aguirre, President & CEO RCBH

Mr. Robert T. Trotter, II Ph.D., Regents' Professor Emeritus, Dept. Of Anthropology, NAU

<b>1. With the interruption of COVID-19, how your plan of action goals has changed to achieve health equity, and what would you change now?</b>
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1.- Had to adopt to the different challenges; Universities adopted different skills for teaching and problem solving. Returning to “work field”, we found a totally “different field” where new skills were needed; re-evaluate, assess how agencies are facing the problem after COVID-19 quarantine and isolation.
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2.- Psychosocial: problem solution-principals are going to guide us to achieve our goals “cause and effect” , “improve quality of life”; community-public ( group of individuals/human being); importance of collecting data ( Cause & effect), systems of causes; root of causes and effect and hidden opportunities to fundamentally “improve people’s quality of life”.
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3.- Working together; the healthcare community forming alliances against COVID-19 mitigation, the education community plus COVID-19 impact; keeping an empathetic state of mind, being transparent with our partners, listening to individuals. Education face opportunities “re-emerging networks”.
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4.- Social Networks research as well as social interaction changed. The use of telemedicine, “hybrid work”, what technology can do to deliver the opportunities to “Network”, create plans that we can track.
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4.- Delivery of Social Services to low socio-economic communities. Serving in a COVID-19 emergency Pandemic response, impacting the cost of portals to deliver services, assist people on how to navigate the portal; loss of local control to serve
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the community (three counties Yuma, La Paz and Mohave in case for WACOG and RCBH), and tailoring to the local level to the vulnerable populations, lack of trust in these populations, and lack of skills to access internet. Silos were created among agencies' activities (community action program), resources to be distributed fairly. Challenge, 50% apply by paper forms, emails -print; 20% online rental and energy assistance). Importance of navigating people to another system

- 5.- Yuma a "small metro", population changing and growing faster. Mean household: East 20% birth – 5 yrs.; Central Yuma: 18% birth -5 yrs. of age and South County; 32% birth -5 years of age; elder/grandparents : East Co. 19%; Central Yuma 12%; South County 30 %. Connect the Elder and Young "Outreach Integrated" to all families Child/"Abuelito" Grandparent; One third (1/3) of all families .
- 6.- Sustain our "rural heart" but embrace and look at "all" opportunities coming our way.
- 7.- A Research Agenda that translate research into action planning in our rural communities. Co-chairs to review recommendations to develop an agenda for plan action.
- 8.- Reconvene stakeholders to develop a Yuma County Research Agenda and plan of action based on proposed recommendations and suggested Objectives and Activities proposed in pre-COVID-19 forums and align with new community post COVID-19 challenges.



## 2.- Binational Work Group Discussion

Co-facilitators: Ms.Joena Ezroj, WAHEC Director, RCBH & Mr. Kevin Driesen, Ph.D., Program Development Coordinator, RCBH

Participants: All participants introduced themselves; sign-in sheet included.

Background: The LiveWell-Arizona social determinants of health (SDoH) wheel: “*Elements of a Healthy Community*” was reviewed to provide background on the SDoH model adopted. Program priorities and activities from previous Forum were identified. Four participants who had previously attended Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity forum were identified.

Question: With the interruption of COVID-19, how was your plan of action goals changed to achieve health equity, and what would you change now?

### Discussion Points:

- ✓ There is a need to identify a civic leadership group and involve local community leaders participate in the SDoH action planning.
- ✓ More community engagement activities and broader community education would be helpful. This could occur using social media. We learned that people, during times of crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic, obtained much of their information from social media sites. People are becoming more sophisticated users of social media.
- ✓ Everyone is busy. Social media allows people to obtain information according to their schedules. But an important issue is how to ensure the information being provided is reliable and truthful.
- ✓ Equal; access to food is critical. There is plenty of food available (...in Yuma); a major challenge exists in gaining access to healthy food, and not knowing how to prepare healthy foods.
- ✓ Mental health is a critical issue, increased during pandemic, Covid-19 has been very difficult in terms of contributing to mental health distress amongst children, youth and adults. Consequently, there is a lack of sufficient behavioral health care providers to render services to patient demand.
- ✓ Another problem has been transportation. People have become more isolated.

- ✓ Covid-19 has had a particularly devastating impact on disabled children and adults. They are increasingly becoming segregated and isolated from the broader community. Challenge is: how can we better address the needs of the disabled and the elderly?
- ✓ In Mexico, education as a health priority has been negatively impacted. Even telephone service seems less reliable and less accessible, especially in more remote locations. Broadband is less reliable which makes it hard for students to complete their work, therefore not being able to complete their courses.
- ✓ Access to health services continues to be a challenge. Outreach has been reduced.
- ✓ Another thing learned during the pandemic was the opportunity to increase public health outreach in retail outlets, like food / grocery stores and drug stores. Places like Food City and Walgreens; this is where people go even when social isolation is recommended. Great opportunity, to partner with grocery stores and drug stores.
- ✓ Economic conditions have become harsher with the Covid pandemic.
- ✓ Make a standardized system where patients are being seen; a top-down approach; treating the whole person.
- ✓ Lack of Health Care services in smaller/more rural communities, patients need to travel to Mexicali.



## **Most Important Strategies/Activities for Improving Health Equity as Ranked by the ABRC Yuma Binational Border Health Working Group**

1. Establish an affiliation agreement with RCBH/SLWIC and Campesinos Sin Fronteras and UABC Mexicali, College of Nursing to provide binational internships and access to curriculum within six months.
2. Develop a timeline for UABC College of Engineering and Business that identifies the needs of the community and college faculty to resolve inequities in accessing health education within 5 months.
3. Integrate a patient social determinants survey Protocol into a standardized system (including Health Department, RCBH, Yuma County Public Health Services) to improve access to healthcare within one year.
4. Provide access to healthcare through monthly mobile clinics to identify at risk high poverty patients on both sides of the border (in collaboration with the Health Department, RCBH, YRMC, Yuma County Public Health Services) with the use of technology (ex. Telemedicine).
5. Provide access to healthcare education in the community through marketing in local retail and grocery stores (ex. Walmart, Food City) on a ongoing basis (in collaboration with the Health Department, RCBH, YRMC, Yuma County Public Health Services).

### **Initiatives Identified by the Binational Border Health Working Group Recommendations:**

With the interruption of COVID-19, Binational level Initiatives are to continue with:

1. Improve access to health care
2. Provide health education options

To achieve health equity at the Binational level, there is a need to identify a civic leadership group that will involve local community leaders to continuously collaborate in the SDoH action planning process.



### 3.- Workforce Working Group Session

- Participants in the Workforce Working Group offered a variety of responses to the question: *With the interruption of COVID-19, how your plan of action goals has changed to achieve health equity, and what would you change now?*
  - Telemedicine has come a long way. However, not everyone has internet access to make us of it. Federal funding is available for middle mile connections.
  - The workload for Community Health Workers (CHW) has increased. Certification is coming from AZ Health Services. This will allow CHWs to conduct home visits and follow-ups. Enrollment in the CHW program is growing at Arizona Western College (AWC). CHW wages are under discussion. Recognition at a national level is still in process. Arizona@Work requires national certification in order to post the positions on their site. Arizona@Work will be going through AWC's offerings. The next step up from CHW is a Direct Care Worker – a state licensed position. ACCHS received a grant to train 30 CHW in Yuma. Classes start on 06/06/22. Send candidate information to Lorena.
  - Internet access is a challenge in our area. Community groups such as Chicanos Por La Causa would like more information.
  - Arizona Workforce Registry needs to be recognized. Participants need to be acknowledged for their certifications.
  - A group call One Stop holds quarterly meetings with many agencies across Yuma County to address issues and to share updates, knowledge and resources with group members.
  - AWC partnered with Sunset Health to provide vaccinations on the AWC campus.
  - AWC partnered with RCBH-San Luis Walk In Clinic to provide COVID-19 testing
  - testing in collaboration with U of A Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture (water sewage testing monitoring lab team), as well as COVID-19 vaccination to faculty and students and administration staff.
  - Allied health graduates need to make sure they have access to courses that prepare them for the job market. AWC now has a science building in South County so it can offer science classes to local students. Yuma needs to track these students to see if they stay in Yuma after graduation.
  - There are some concerns about possible changes to YCAT ridership.
  - This workforce group needs to meet quarterly to stay current on issues and share information.

- The Workforce Working Group offered the following recommendations and comments related to Initiative #2: *Create higher education pathway- trade and vocational skills that lead to higher education path and cultivate additional workforce.*
  - Pathways exist for students to move from AWC to the three public universities (ASU, NAU and UA). About 654 students recently graduated from these institutions. Yuma is growing its own workforce in nursing through the AWC and NAU programs along with the nurse practitioner program.
  - AWC just opened a science building in San Luis students can take science courses in South County.
  - Yuma needs more engineers/engineering students.
  - Participants identified the following future needs and opportunities:
    - To work with industry and GYEDC to determine where workers are going.
    - To look for more university programs to support educated workforce
    - To work on degree reciprocity with Mexican universities so graduates can make use of them in the USA. CETYS in Mexicali offers WASC accredited degrees.
    - To identify individuals across the border with skills and education and develop pathways to bring them here (licensing, jobs, etc.)
    - NAU offers a one-year Post-Baccalaureate Secondary Education certificate program that is available to Mexican teacher education graduates with passing TOEFL scores that would enable them to become a certified teacher in Arizona
    - Arizona@Work has an adhoc Healthcare committee with GYEDC to determine demand for health-related occupations in Yuma. The committee started in December and is exploring the establishment of a binational labor bank.
    - The UABC nursing programs are now accredited. A need exists for clinical rotations for nursing students.



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## **Yuma County; Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity**

**Thursday, May 19, 2022**

Conference Agenda

**8:00 Registration/ Breakfast**

**8:30 MC:** r. Alex Bejarano, Director of Public Relations and Community Liaison  
Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.

### **Welcoming Remarks**

Amanda Aguirre, President & CEO  
Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.  
and Fmr. AZ State Senator

Michael Sabath, PhD, Associate Vice President /CEO  
NAU-Yuma

### **Speakers:**

- 1) 8:45am Robert T. Trotter, II PhD, Regents' Professor of Anthropology and CHER, Northern Arizona University
- 2) 8:55am John Garcia, MBA, CPM, Program Director, Arizona Biomedical Research Center (ABRC), Arizona State Public Health Laboratory Arizona Department of Health Services

9:00am-9:45am

## Special Guests Panel

### “What’s New and Cool in Rural Health Equity”

Daniel Derksen, M.D., Associate Vice President for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities, University of Arizona

### NAU’s “CHER” Model”

Julie Ann Baldwin, PhD, Regents’ Professor and Director, Center for Health Equity PI, Southwest Health Equity Research Collaborative

### “Biomedical Road Map Sustainable”

Mary O’Reilly, Ph.D., Vice President Bioscience Research Program  
Flinn Foundation

9:45am Q & A Session

10:00 am 11:00 am Breakout Sessions

**1. Binational Working Group: San Luis R.C. Son. Mex /Yuma County, AZ. Solutions to Social Determinants of Health**

- **Facilitator:** Joena Ezroj, M.Ed., WAHEC Director and Kevin Driesen, PhD, MPH, Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.

**2. Workforce Working Group**

- **Facilitator:** Michael Sabath, PhD, Associate Vice President /CEO Yuma Campus, Northern Arizona University, and Dr. Linda Elliott-Nelson, Strategic Partnerships/Vinculacion, Arizona Western College

**3. Community Engagement & Research Working Group**

Reduce health inequities through collective community engagement and health research capacity in the Yuma/Sonora border region.

- **Facilitator:** Robert T. Trotter, II PhD, Regents' Professor of Anthropology and CHER, Northern Arizona University and Amanda Aguirre, President & CEO, Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.

11: 15 am - 11:45 am     **General Session Speaker**  
**Dr. Jose Cruz Rivera, President**  
**Northern Arizona University**

12:00 pm     **Luncheon and Concluding Remarks**

**THANK YOU**

## Keynote Speaker



**José Luis Cruz Rivera** began his tenure as the 17<sup>th</sup> President of Northern Arizona University (NAU) on June 14, 2021. Prior to joining NAU, Dr. Cruz Rivera served as President of Lehman College of The City University of New York and as Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost of the 25-campus system. During his tenure at CUNY, Lehman enhanced its national reputation as an engine of social mobility and the Central Office of Academic Affairs registered important accomplishments on behalf of the University's more than 20,000 faculty members, 26,000 professional staff and 500,000 students and learners. A leading national advocate for policies to expand opportunities and improve educational outcomes for all students—especially those who have historically been underserved—Cruz Rivera is a frequent keynote speaker and writer on higher education issues. He has testified several times before the U.S. Congress, and his work has been covered by many media outlets, including *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Univision*.

Previously, Cruz Rivera served as provost of California State University, Fullerton. He is a former vice president of Higher Education Policy and Practice at The Education Trust in Washington, D.C. and a former Chief Student Affairs Officer for the University of Puerto Rico system. He began his career as a faculty member in engineering at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, rising through the ranks and serving as chair of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department and dean of Academic Affairs.

Cruz Rivera chairs the board of directors of The Education Trust and serves on the board of the Data Quality Campaign. He is also a member of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) advisory board, the Anchor Institutions Task Force, and the steering committee of the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration. In the past, he has served on the board of directors of the New York Botanical Garden, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, the Regional Plan Association, and the Association of Chief Academic Officers. He has also served as a member of the Community Advisory Group of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the advisory board of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities Committee on Academic Innovation and Transformation, and as a commissioner on the Postsecondary Value Commission.

Cruz Rivera is a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, a patented inventor, and a National Science Foundation Career Award recipient. His work as a faculty member on optical interconnections for massively parallel processing systems was published in scientific journals and presented at international conferences. He earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering (*magna cum laude*) from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez and his master's and doctorate degrees from the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is an alumnus of the Harvard Institute of Educational Management.

## SPEAKERS



**Amanda Aguirre** Fmr. Arizona State Senator, she presently serves in the capacity of President & CEO of the Regional Center for Border Health, Inc. since 1991 and its subsidiary San Luis Walk-In Clinic, Inc., a primary care rural health medical center. Ms. Aguirre has been involved for more than 35 years in health care and business administration. She possesses a life-long commitment to education and in 2007 she established a licensed post-secondary vocational training center in the area of allied health training, which has generated job opportunities for over 3,000 individuals. Ms. Aguirre has built these corporations that have become multi-million dollar corporations providing employment for 435 employees in a slow recovering economy. Ms. Aguirre also worked for Arizona Western College from 1995-1999 as the South Yuma County Campus Director.

Ms. Aguirre has lived in Yuma, Arizona for the last 30 years. Her commitment to education is lifelong since she was raised by parents who both were elementary school teachers. Her Democratic values come from her parent who taught her to work hard and to serve her community before everything else. Ms. Aguirre holds a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry from the University of Sonora in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. In 1981 received her Master Degree from the California State University in Los Angeles, California with emphasis in Nutrition and Dietetics. In April 2013, Ms. Aguirre completed a Certificate Program in Executive Leadership for Healthcare Professionals at Cornell University (online). In July 2005 Ms. Aguirre completed a Training Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. In January 2018, Ms. Aguirre was invited to join the Advanced Nursing Education Workforce (ANEW) Advisory Committee by the University of Arizona, also in December 2017 became member of the NAU Advisory Committee for the Southwest Health Equity Research Collaborative (SHERC).



**Michael J. Sabath** is an Associate Vice President for Northern Arizona University and Campus Executive Officer for NAU's Yuma Branch Campus. He earned a B.S. in Business Administration from the Haas School of Business at the University of California-Berkeley, an MPA from California State University, and a PhD from the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Dr. Sabath was with San Diego State University for 23 years serving as a professor, division chair, and Associate Dean. Prior to this, he taught in the School of Business and Public Administration at the University of Missouri-Columbia and at Indiana University-Bloomington. His research has focused on public policy and management issues related to the justice system and transnational cooperation.





**Dr. Robert T. Trotter** is an Arizona Regents' Professor in the department of Anthropology, and a senior scientist in the NAU Center for Health Equity Research (CHER). His research interests include cross-cultural health care issues, organizational models for change, social network impacts on health and social structures, innovation, exploring advanced ethnographic methods, and translational science. He has conducted research for the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, and the Surgeon General's Office of HIV/AIDS Policy. His work in medical anthropology addresses cross-cultural issues in health care delivery and prevention, focused on cancer, cardiac care, HIV prevention and intervention, disabilities, and addiction studies. He also designs and conducts evaluation programs for complex partnerships (industry-university, government-university-community, community-scientist), creating cultural models of collaborative systems, ethnographic explorations of institutional dynamics, and organizational network analysis. His publications include books and articles on Mexican American traditional healing, cross-cultural alcohol and drug studies, migrant farm worker health and education, HIV/AIDS, alcohol and drug prevention studies, partnership design, diagnosis and intervention, and anthropological ethics.



**John Garcia**, MBA, CPM, Director of the Arizona Biomedical Research Center for Arizona Department of Health Services.



**Daniel Derksen, MD** is the University of Arizona Health Sciences Associate VP for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities. He is a Professor in the Zuckerman College of Public Health with joint appointments in the Colleges of Medicine and Nursing.

Dr. Derksen was born in Phoenix, attended UArizona for both his B.S. (1979) and M.D. (1984) degrees, did his family medicine residency at the University of New Mexico (1987), and was on the UNM School of Medicine faculty for 25 years. He returned to UArizona in 2012. He was the 2019 College of Medicine Alumnus of the Year.

Dr. Derksen completed a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellowship in 2007-08 with U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman (NM). He researched and drafted provisions to improve the supply and distribution of the nation's health workforce enacted in 2010. Working for Governor Martinez in 2011-12 as Director, NM Office of Health Reform, he established their health insurance exchange, now known as *Be Well New Mexico* which currently has more than 45,000 enrollees. At the University of Arizona, Dr. Derksen directs the Arizona Center for Rural Health and is Principal Investigator (PI) of grants including the state and federally funded and designated State Office of Rural Health and the Arizona Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program. He is also PI of the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program, and several Arizona Department of Health Services Interagency Services Agreements including the CDC COVID Disparities initiative. In his academic career he has been PI of federal, foundation and state grants of more than \$85 million.

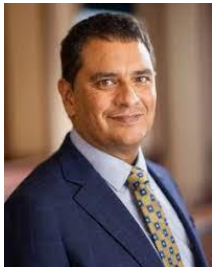




**Julie Ann Baldwin**, Dr. Baldwin is a Regent's Professor at Northern Arizona University's College of Health and Human Services and the Director of the Center for Health Equity Research. Her research has focused on alcohol and drug abuse prevention in youth and young adults, utilizing community-based participatory research approaches, working with underserved and/or marginalized populations (particularly American Indian), and addressing health disparities by developing and implementing culturally competent public health interventions. As an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, she has made a life-long commitment to serving diverse communities and to advocating for health promotion programs for children, adolescents and families.



**Mary O'Reilly** oversees the Foundation's basic and translational research programs, and serves as the Foundation's lead official in interfacing with the scientific-research community. She also guides the Foundation's interest in emerging grant opportunities in biomedical-research sector and measures to assess the impact of Arizona's investments in the biosciences.



**José Luis Cruz Rivera** began his tenure as the 17<sup>th</sup> President of Northern Arizona University (NAU) on June 14, 2021. Prior to joining NAU, Dr. Cruz Rivera served as President of Lehman College of The City University of New York and as Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost of the 25-campus system. During his tenure at CUNY, Lehman enhanced its national reputation as an engine of social mobility and the Central Office of Academic Affairs registered important accomplishments on behalf of the University's more than 20,000 faculty members, 26,000 professional staff and 500,000 students and learners. A leading national advocate for policies to expand opportunities and improve educational outcomes for all students—especially those who have historically been underserved—Cruz Rivera is a frequent keynote speaker and writer on higher education issues. He has testified several times before the U.S. Congress, and his work has been covered by many media outlets, including *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Univision*.

Previously, Cruz Rivera served as provost of California State University, Fullerton. He is a former vice president of Higher Education Policy and Practice at The Education Trust in Washington, D.C. and a former Chief Student Affairs Officer for the University of Puerto Rico system. He began his career as a faculty member in engineering at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, rising through the ranks and serving as chair of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department and dean of Academic Affairs.

Cruz Rivera chairs the board of directors of The Education Trust and serves on the board of the Data Quality Campaign. He is also a member of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) advisory board, the Anchor Institutions Task Force, and the steering committee of the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration. In the past, he has served on the board of directors of the New York Botanical Garden, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, the Regional Plan Association, and the Association of Chief Academic Officers. He has also served as a member of the Community Advisory Group of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the advisory board of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities Committee on Academic Innovation and Transformation, and as a commissioner on the Postsecondary Value Commission.

Cruz Rivera is a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, a patented inventor, and a National Science Foundation Career Award recipient. His work as a faculty member on optical interconnections for massively parallel processing systems was published in scientific journals and presented at international conferences. He earned his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering (magna cum laude) from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez and his master's and doctorate degrees from the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is an alumnus of the Harvard Institute of Educational Management.



**Dr. Linda Elliott-Nelson** serves in Strategic Partnerships/Vinculación at Arizona Western College where she has worked since 1994. She previously served as the Vice President for Learning Services, the Dean of Instruction, Division Chair of Modern Languages and Professor of Spanish at Arizona Western College. Her prior work experience also involved several years in the international business sector.

Dr. Elliott-Nelson earned a Ph.D. in Education from Walden University, an M.B.A. and an M.A. in Spanish from Arizona State University, and a B.A. degree from Northern Arizona University. Her activities have included co-founding the Yuma Youth Town Hall; founding and coordinating the Gifted Summer Academy for 4th – 8th graders; co-coordinating the Binational Conference on Education with Baja California, Mexico; serving on the national Modern Language Association Committee on 2-year Colleges; and evaluating employee Spanish language proficiency for the City of Yuma. She received the Arizona Woman of the Year 2021 from Arizona Women in Higher Education, the Athena Leadership Award in 2019, the Outstanding University/College Educator Award from the Arizona Language Association in 2000 and the Teacher of the Year from Arizona Western College in 1999.

Elliott-Nelson presents internationally on community outreach and engagement, regional collaboration, partnerships, accelerative learning techniques, and community college trends. She served as the Chairman of the Board of Arizona Town Hall during 2015-2017, Chair of Arizona Women in Higher Education during 2019-2020, Co-chair of the AZTransfer Steering Committee and Chair of the Arizona Community College Chief Academic Officers, and currently serves on the boards of the Yuma Orchestra Association, Arizona Town Hall, Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board, Yuma Regional Council; as well as steering committees for Southwest Arizona Town Hall and the Yuma Education Advocacy Council. In 2021, Governor Ducey appointed her to the Arizona Historical Society Board. Her current activities focus on community engagement, education, and development in the Arizona/California/Sonora/Baja California mega-region



**Joena Ezroj, M.Ed.**, is currently the director of the Western Arizona Health Education Center for Regional Center for Border Health, where she oversees educational programming and the recruitment and retention of health care professionals in Yuma, La Paz and Mohave counties. Her work experience includes Coordinator and Assistant Clinical Professor for Arizona State University, Instructional Coach for Gadsden Elementary School District, and teacher for Yuma Elementary School District. She is the 2012 Teacher of the Year for Yuma County. Joena is highly active in the regional area and is the co-chair of the City of Somerton Parks and Recreation Committee, member of the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Cocopah Tribe Regional Partnership Council, and she is also a member of the Somerton Rotary. Joena holds a bachelors and Masters degree in Education from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Educational Leadership and Administration from Grand Canyon University. Joena believes that success is achieved for communities through servant leadership and building partnerships.



**Kevin Driesen, PhD, MPH** received a Doctorate from the University of Arizona's Department of Psychology with a specialty in epidemiology, and a Master's Degree in Public Health from the University of California at Berkeley with a specialty in Health Education. Previous employment includes: Assistant Professor, Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health (University of Arizona); Regional Administrator, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS); Research Scientist, University of Arizona's Rural Health Office; and founding Director, Border Health Foundation. Dr. Driesen is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Colombia, 1978-81); past President of Partners of the Americas, Arizona-Oaxaca, and past-President of the Arizona Rural Health Association.

Special recognition for all the support to the planning of the 4<sup>th</sup> ABRC Yuma County Forum to:

**Staff at Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.:**

Mariajose Almazan, Executive Assistant to the President & CEO

Alex Bejarano, Community Liaison and Public Relations

Jessenia Herrera, Administrative Assistant

Sarahi Saavedra, Administrative Assistant

Maria Ramirez, Family Care Coordinator Registration Desk

Liceth Nunez, Family Care Coordinator

Mariaelena Figueroa, Family Care Coordinator

**Staff at Northern Arizona University:**

Marcelle Lavieue Coder, Assistant Director, Center for Health Equity Research

Steve Palmer, Professor, Department of Health Sciences

Taylor Scarlett Lane, Ph.D., Research Scientist, SHERC

Nicolas Beckett, M.A., Senior Events Coordinator, Center for Health Equity Research



Center for Health  
Equity Research

## 2nd Annual ABRC Yuma County Forum “Improving Health Equity Through Collective Community Action”

### 1) Binational Border Health Working Group

- **Most Important Strategies/Activities for Improving Health Equity as Ranked by the ABRC Yuma Workshop Development Committee**

- 1) Increase awareness of services available in region (both sides of border) that can address social determinant-related problems
- 2) Provide industrial skills training/ workforce development, especially health-related careers
- 3) Make healthy foods available in schools
- 4) Inventory and map social and health-related services in region
- 5) Develop binational early childhood nutrition programs/careers to serve children living in poverty
- 6) Build on existing, effective binational structures/programs and use virtual communication and technology

### 2.) Community Engagement Working Group

- **Most Important Strategies/Activities for Improving Health Equity as Ranked by the ABRC Yuma Workshop Development Committee**

- 1) Share data
- 2) Develop policy driven initiatives/attend council meetings (walkability/bikeable goals)
- 3) Expand worksite wellness initiatives
- 4) Establish/ strengthen agency partnerships
- 5) Have agencies support sustainability changes
- 6) Create social services database-informing public and health professionals

### **3.) Clinical Research Based Agenda Working Group**

- **Most Important Strategies/Activities for Improving Health Equity as Ranked by the ABRC Yuma Workshop Development Committee**

- 1) Large student population at the master's and graduate level from Yuma in Phoenix & Tucson conducting research projects that can be tied to the Yuma communities and local health issues.
- 2) Active community engagement from local health groups/agencies.
- 3) Many Yuma students want to return to Yuma.
  - 4) Develop a border-health care delivery model.
- 5) Improve relationships within the three state universities.
- 6) Finding all agencies who are already doing research and connect them. There's a huge disconnect. Bring all of these together. Many of the agencies may be see themselves in health-related role.
- 7) Need structured partnerships.

### **4.) Workforce Development Working Group**

- **Most Important Strategies/Activities for Improving Health Equity as Ranked by the ABRC Yuma Workshop Development Committee**

- 1) Mirror or create opportunities for growth within industry, i.e., for community health workers, etc.
- 2) Create higher education path and mobilize community members
- 3) Cultivate additional workforce from Yuma; bring in others from outside Yuma
- 4) Develop relationships and move forward on actionable items. Form a coalition.
- 5) Address cancer, mental health, diabetes and memory – using model from neuropsychology.
- 6) Collect and analyze statistical data for neuro-physical testing in children and adult populations; obtain statistical data for different populations.

## Background Documents for 4<sup>th</sup> Annual ABRC Forum Participants

### 2nd Annual ABRC Yuma County Forum “Improving Health Equity Through Collective Community Action” Initiatives Identified by the Committees:

#### 1.) Binational Border Health Working Group Recommendations:

##### What initiatives at the binational level could be done?

- Improve access to health care
- Provide health education options

Create follow up system: partner with NAU students and assist with behavioral health, partner with doctors to provide right away follow up services and utilize radio stations to disseminate information.

#### 2.) Community Engagement Working Group Recommendations:

##### *Initiative 1: Share Data*

- Creating database for resources (user friendly) for community and providers; & Strengthening partnerships – keep up-to-date – look at Arizona@Work database for ideas – do community members want written database or electronic database? – complete resource (health, peer groups) appropriate to clients’ needs – workgroup where we can learn about each other’s resources that meets regularly (what they do, what works for them) - Yuma County Library has resource guide on website – pay attention to dissemination (include high-risk individuals that may not reach out) – Sharing and strengthening partnerships

##### *Initiative 2: Policy Development Collaborative*

- Forum for multiple groups to meet on a regular basis to discuss policy (health department, community gardens (Yuma Heals at Mesa Heights), increasing physical activity, smoke-free parks) – bring together existing data pockets in the community; form core group to identify stakeholders and working groups to develop policies.

### **3.) Clinical Research Based Agenda Working Group Recommendations:**

***Initiative 1: Support development of regional research council as a coordinating group to direct and implement a local research agenda.***

- Identify members to be in the council (who are the key players)
- Create a charge/action for the council
  - i. Promote networking and collaboration (e.g., MOUs)
  - ii. Proactively prioritize local research needs
  - iii. Development of action plan that defines how to address health inequities
  - IV.** Responsibility to give feedback to community on ongoing research and potential impacts
    - and promote visibility, awareness, and education.
  - v. Make a commitment to action and develop sustainable partnerships

***Initiative 2: Workforce development/Capacity building:***

- Create task force/work with workforce development group to identify workforce needs
- Build capacity for and invest in career development to entice people to remain in the community
- Increase awareness of volunteer opportunities to facilitate research



#### **4.) Workforce Development Working Group Recommendations:**

***Initiative 1: Create higher education pathway- trade and vocational skills that lead to higher education path and cultivate additional workforce.***

- Trade and vocational programs - community outreach/advertisement of educational opportunities and what can be done with degree/certificates/trade training, ensure diversity in options for class schedules and possible hybrid classes, partner with educational organizations and professional organizations, assess communities needs/interests or opportunities, identify gaps in health care careers, partner with schools and universities, healthcare entities, agriculture companies, and politicians.

***Initiative 2: Create opportunities for economic, professional, individual growth.***

- Promote local support of contractors and companies, reach out to local professional organizations, take polls and advertise, competitive wages, invite elected officials and school district leaders to meetings, start primary and high school exposure earlier and more in depth (tours of campus facilities? career day? Shadowing program?) Census for 2020 - count everyone! Work with elected officials, radio stations, news (develop campaign for education), way to get more money to the community for higher impacts, use familiar organizations.

# Yuma County: Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity

*Thursday May 19, 2022*

Yuma Pivot Point Conference Center

Yuma, Arizona

**Working Group Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1.-With the interruption of COVID-19, how your plan of action goals has changed to achieve health equity, and what would you change now?**

**2022 Yuma County Forum: Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity**

**Timeline**

**Lead Agency and Stakeholders**

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## Yuma County; Resilient Communities and Sustainable health Equity

### Breakout Sessions

#### Discussion Agenda:

Time	Item	Responsible
5 minutes	<b>I. Session Purpose &amp; Expectations</b>	Kevin Driesen
5 minutes	<b>II. Brief Introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name</li> <li>• Organization</li> <li>• Previous participation</li> </ul>	Participants
5 minutes	<b>III. Background: (2018) Forum</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determinants</li> <li>• Recommendations</li> </ul>	Kevin Driesen
20 minutes	<b>IV. Sub-Group Discussion</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. With the interruption of COVID-19, how has your plan of action goals changed to achieve health equity, and what would you change now?</li> <li>2. Plan Update: Timelines and Action Plan (Next Steps)</li> <li>3. Lead Agencies &amp; Stakeholders</li> </ol>	Joena/Participants
20 minutes	<b>V. Report Back---Sub-Groups</b> What is your timeline action plan? Who are the lead agencies and stakeholders?	Joena/Participants
5 minutes	<b>VI. Summary and Appreciation</b>	Joena/Kevin

Forum Participants:

**ABRC Forum - Community Engagement and Research**

Name(First)	Name(Last)	Role (e.g. title, student, community member)	Affiliation (e.g. Organization or Institution)
John	Garcia	Program Funder	Arizona Biomedical Research Centre
Erika	Argueta	ECSE Specialist	Arizona Department of Education
Judy M	Smith	CEO	Child & Family Services of Yuma, INC
María Fernanda Soledad	Sarabia Montoya	Estudiante de Maestría	Facultad de Ingeniería y Negocios de Guadalupe Victoria, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California
Nicolas	Beckett	Event Coordinator	NAUCHER
Amanda	Aguirre	President & CEO	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.
Marisol	Penuelas	Quality Assurance Compliance Manager	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc./San Luis Walk-In Clinic, Inc.
Jessica	Urzua	Estudiante	UABC Facultad de Ingeniería y Negocios Guadalupe Victoria, extensión Ciudad Morelos
Jonathan	Redondo	Student	Universidad Autónoma de Baja California Facultad de Ingeniería y Negocios Guadalupe Victoria Ext. Cd Morelos
Lynne	Pancrazi	Supervisor	Yuma County Board of Supervisors
Pamela	Cuebas	Resident Physician	
Gina	Whittington	Deputy Director	WACOG

**ABRC Forum - Workforce Group**

Name (First)	Name (Last)	Role (e.g. title, student, community member)	Affiliation (e.g. Organization or Institution)
Joann	Chang	Associate Dean	Arizona Western College
Linda	Elliott-Nelson	Strategic Partnerships	Arizona Western College
Laura	Torres	Manager	Campeños Sin Fronteras
Yolanda	Nunez	Education Specialist	Chicanos por la Causa ECD
Maria	Barajas	HR coordinator	City of San Luis
Maria	Munoz	HR Analyst	City of San Luis
Jacob	Gubler	Assistant Clinical Professor	Northern Arizona University
Susan	Lauer	Manager, Operations	Northern Arizona University
Michael	Sabath	Associate Vice President NAU/ CEO Yuma Campus	Northern Arizona University
Lorena	Zendejas	Campus Administrator	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc dba College of Health Careers
Tanya	Hodges	Regional Academic Programs Manager	UA
Daniel	Derksen, M.D.	Associate Vice President for Health Equity, Outreach & Interprofessional Activities	University of Arizona
Valeria	Pedregon	Health educator	
Lynn	Pancrazi	Member	Yuma County Board of Supervisors
MARIA	SOSA	UABC	
Taylor	Lane		NAU
Steve	Palmer		NAU
Robert	Trotter		NAU

## ABRC Forum - Binational Group

<b>Name (First)</b>	<b>Name (Last)</b>	<b>Role (e.g. title, student, community member)</b>	<b>Affiliation (e.g. Organization or Institution)</b>
Veronica	Shorr	Community Member, Regional Director	Arizona Community Foundation
Lois	Adams	community member	Arizona Department of Health Services
Mayte	Cazarez	social worker	Campeños Sin Fronteras
Liliana	Cruz	Farmworkers Service Programs Coordinator	Campeños Sin Fronteras
Krizia	Godinez	Community Health Worker	Campeños Sin Fronteras
Monica	Vargas	Health Services Coordinator	Gadsden Elementary School District #32
Edna	Cordova	Manager	Goodwill of Central and Northern Arizona
Luz	Rios	medicare agent	Humana
Michelle	Gillard	Student	NAU
Lupita	Lopez	FCC	RCFBH
Lceth	Nunez	Health Education	RCFBH
Maria	Ramirez	FCC	RCFBH
Naim	Duran	Community Member	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.
Mariaelena	Figueroa	Family Care Coordinator	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.
Ines	Gonzalez	Behavioral Health Executive Director	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.
Mariajose	Almazan	Non profit	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.
Jessenia	Herrera	Community	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.
Gustavo	Alvarez, MPH	Chronic Care Management Education Coordinator	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.
Alex	Bejarano	Community Liaison	Regional Center for Border Health, Inc.
Stephen	Scheufler	Registered Sanitarian	RSLLC
Elena	Rodriguez	COO	San Luis Walk In Clinic, Inc
Martha	Flores	lic. Enfermera	Secretaria de Salud
ALMA ANGELICA	VILLA RUEDA	RESEARCHER	UABC
Janeth	Hernandez	Estudiante	UABC FINGV
FABIOLA	CORTEZ RODRIG	UNIVERSITY PROFESOR	UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE BAJA CALIFORNIA
Ana Lourdes	Medina Leal	Mental Health Profesor	universidad autonoma de baja california
Myrna	Ruiz Salazar	Teacher	UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE BAJA CALIFORNIA
Denisse Alicia	Ortiz Duran	Student	Universidad Autónoma de Baja California
Elizabeth	Farfan	Community Engagement Specialist	YCPHSD
Nicole	Daniel	Resident physician	YRMC
Suzanne	Cooper	Program Coordinator	Yuma County Public Health Services District
Annette	Perez	Grant Writer	Yuma County Public Health Services District
Paul	De Anda	Fire Chief	
Elva	Durkin	Health District Analyst	
Gloria	Esquivel	Occupational Therapy Doctoral Student	
Gilberto	Galín	External professor	

# 4th Annual Yuma County Forum: Resilient Communities and Sustainable Health Equity

**FREE WORKSHOP!**  
**THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2022**  
**8:30 AM - 12:00 PM MST**  
Join us in-person at  
**PIVOT POINT CONFERENCE CENTER**  
200 N. Madison Ave - Yuma, AZ  
Registration starts at 8:00 am!

Join a discussion with decision makers, health officials, educators, and researchers on improving health equity in the border region through workforce development and community engagement and research.

Register at [nau.edu/cher/events](http://nau.edu/cher/events)



*Funded by the Arizona Biomedical Research Centre, presented in collaboration with NAU's Center for Health Equity Research, the Regional Center for Border Health, Inc., and the Western Arizona Area Health Equity Center.*



Continuing Education: Provider approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing, Provider number CEP 14594, for 3.0 contact hours. CME pending approval by the American Academy of Family Physicians.