

# **Diversifying the Health Disparities Research & Practice Community**

*Faculty & Student Perspectives on the Importance  
Of Interdisciplinary Training, Mentoring, & Partnerships*

*Kristen Hernandez, Sujehy Arredondo, Sandra Bejarano,  
Holly Mata, & Joe Tomaka*



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- P20 Center of Excellence funded by The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute on Minority Health (NIMH)
- Five Cores:
  - *Administrative*
  - *Research*
  - *Research, Training, & Education*
  - *Environmental (new – supplement)*
  - *Community Engagement*

Joe has mentored 2 students funded through HHDC

Holly, Kristen, Sandra, Sujehy

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Everyone  
has a  
connection

- UTEP Department of Public Health Sciences
  - *Interdisciplinary PhD Program*
  - *MPH Program*
  - *Undergraduate Health Promotion major*



I'm surrounded by  
great students!

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# Why we care

- Literature highlights need for and the benefits of diversifying the public health research and practice communities
- Internships offer insight and experience into careers in health disparities research and practice
- Increased access to graduate school
- More ethnic minorities in underrepresented fields
- Research Group & Practicum Experiences facilitate our professional development

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# What's up with "3%"?

- In 2004: Blacks represented 3.3% of the physician workforce; Hispanics 2.8%
- Hispanics accounted for just over 3% of doctorates awarded in 2005, Blacks just less than 3%
- Ditto for NIH career research rewards, 2005

Cargill, 2009; Stoff et al., 2009

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# Literature: sources & inspirations

## The case for Diversity in Research on Mental Health and HIV <sup>1</sup>

- *NIH-supported Diversity Enhancing Programs*
- *Equity, broader research agenda, better access to health care*

## Lessons Learned from a Decade of Focused Recruitment & Training to Develop Minority Public Health Professionals<sup>2</sup>

- *Diverse set of role models*
- *Commitment to working with students with varied levels of academic prep*

## Race, Ethnicity, & NIH Research Awards<sup>3</sup>

- *Blacks less likely receive to receive awards (other factors accounted for)*
- *Blacks & Hispanics less likely to resubmit revised applications*
- *Policy implications*

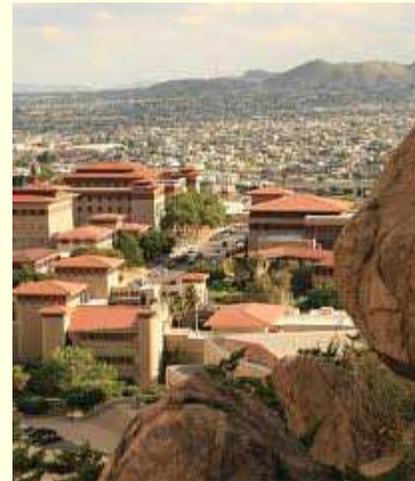


<sup>1</sup>Stoff et al., 2009; <sup>2</sup>Kreuter et al., 2011; <sup>3</sup>Ginther et al., 2011

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# UTEP

- On the U.S. – Mexico border
- 77 % Hispanic
- 83% from El Paso county
- “first Tier 1 university serving a 21<sup>st</sup> century student demographic”



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# MPH Students

- First generation college students
  - Native El Pasoans
- Undergraduate
  - Health Promotion/ Community Health
- Graduate
  - Public health with emphasis on border health issues
- Community Health Practicum with HHDRC
  - Program implementation & evaluation
- Interdisciplinary research group
  - Exposure – Experience - Confidence



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# Faculty



- Joe Tomaka, PhD (1993)
  - Social and Health Psychologist
  - Stress, Coping and Cardiovascular Reactivity to Stress, Brief Interventions for Alcohol and substance use
- Holly Mata, PhD (2011), CHES
  - Clinical mental health background, now focusing on translational health disparities research (tobacco-related disparities; community health)

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# Community Health Practicum

- Health Promotion major/Community Health minor
- 320 hours of practicum experience with community agency
- 7 with Community Engagement since 2009
- Graduate school (5 MPH, 1 in OT, 1 in MRC)
- Fall 2011 became preceptor with DHPE Health Equity internships
  - Increased focus on social determinants of health
  - Students get paid
  - Benefit from additional mentoring



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# Areas of Responsibility for Health Education Specialists (NCHEC)

- I. Assess Individual and Community Needs for Health Education**
- II. Plan Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs**
- III. Implement Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs**
- IV. Conduct Evaluation and Research Related to Health Education**
- V. Administer Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs**
- VI. Serve as a Health Education Resource Person**
- VII. Communicate and Advocate for Health and Health Education**

# The Purpose of our Health Education Efforts Through the Coalition

- highlight ethnic and gender disparities in HIV prevalence
- to provide accurate information about HIV
- to promote HIV/STI testing in our community
- to develop, implement, & share evaluation of coalition events
  - Evaluation of event my major project



# Creating & Sustaining Partnerships

- Partnerships enhance health education efforts in our region
- Increase the reach of community partners
  - Events w/Black Student Union
  - Community events (walk; outreach)
  - Clinic partner provides free monthly testing; we provide education



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# Lessons Learned

- Our skills benefit the community
- Events bring more confidence to us as health educators and advocates
- Ongoing collaboration, evaluation, innovation



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# Other practicum experiences

- International AIDS Empowerment
- Northeast Coalition, a community network devoted to improving the lives of youth
- College Bound program through United Way
- ***Developed and conducted a workshop on the importance of breast cancer screening for women in the YWCA Transitional Living Center***
- Helped develop an evaluation tool for the Youth Gang Outreach Program at Boys and Girls Club

# BGC Healthy Habits

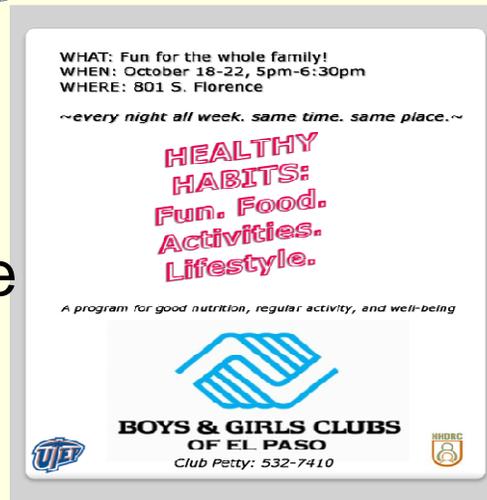
Funded by  
TX Dept of Agriculture

Student Educators  
provided programs

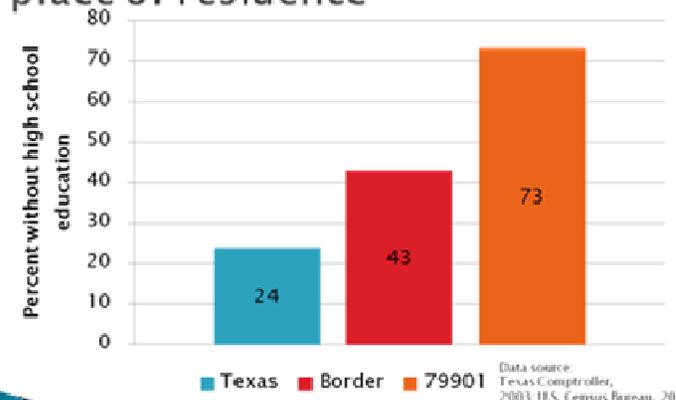
Adapted curriculum and  
evaluation plan

Enhanced club offerings  
while providing  
experience for us

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Percentage of Adults age 25+ without high school education by place of residence



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# Healthy Habits: Parts I & II

➤ Training staff for sustainability

➤ Replicable in other club sites

➤ Evaluation component strengthened (bilingual & interactive)



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# Strategic mentoring

## Self-Assessment for Health Educators (SAHE)

- Assesses perceived competence in Areas of Responsibility for Health Educators (multiple sub-competencies)
- Previous work has shown the positive impact of community health education project on perceived competence
- Currently, using SAHE and other mentoring tools to improve quality of mentoring and service to community partners

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# HHDRRC Mentoring Plan

- Developed after Holly & Kristen attended several mentoring workshops
- Merged mentoring successes from other universities with Areas of Responsibility – tailored to HHDRRC and intern assets and areas of focus
- Using SAHE and other mentoring tools to improve quality of mentoring and service to community partners
  - Holly, Kristen, Samantha (undergrad intern)
  - Evaluation of improvement in Areas of Responsibility & benefit to Community Partner

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# HHDCRC Mentoring Plan

PLANS ARE MADE FOR UG AND GRAD

<b>HHDCRC MENTORING PLAN</b>							
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DISSEMINATION CORE</b>							
FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS PER SEMESTER: AS NEEDED							
INTENDED FUNCTIONS OF MEETINGS: TO PLAN COMMUNITY AND CAMPUS PROJECTS IN UNCTION WITH PARTNERS							
FREQUENCY AND TYPE OF GROUP MEETINGS: WEEKLY MEETINGS WITH THE ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OVERSEEING ON-GOING STUDENT FACILITATED PROJECTS, HHDCRC GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT-MPH STUDENT PLANNING, ORGANIZING, IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECTS, AND HHDCRC SENIOR HEALTH PROMOTION PRACTICUM INTERN IMPLEMENTING AIDING IN PLANNING							
INTEDED FUNCTIONS: TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS ON-GOING PROJECTS							
MODE OF COMMUNICATION : E-MAILS & FACE TO FACE MEETINGS							
<b>HHDCRC SENIOR INTERN</b>							
Course	Title	CRN	Days	Time	Location	Instructor	
HSCI 4309	Program Evaluation	23516	TR	7:30 am – 8:30 am	Undergraduate Learning Center 334	Lester	
HSCI 4600	Practicum	23223	T	4:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Health Sciences Building 216	Rescon	
HSCI 4304	Public Health Administration	22069	W	4:30 pm – 7:30 pm	UGLC 216	Davis	
HSCI 3311	Epidemiology	22065	R	9:00 am – 11:30 am	Health Sciences Building 217	Ibarra	
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: NETWORK WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, NPO'S, CAMPUS ACTIVITIES, ETC... PARTICIPATE AND HELP COORDINATE CENTER'S WORKSHOPS MEDIA COMMUNICATION DISSEMINATION							
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: VII 6.1 READ PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS ATTEND PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS(RESEARCH GROUP) PARTICIPATING IN OTHER PROFESSIONAL DELEVOPMENT ACTIVITIES							
SKILL DEVELOPMENT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INCREASE SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR HEALTH EDUCATORS SCORE OF PERCEIVED COMPETENCE FROM BASELINE ASSESSMENT</li> <li>MID-TERM AND FINAL EVALUATION</li> </ul>							
BODY OF WORK: CONCENTRATION TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INTEGRATE HEALTH EDUCATORS' 7 AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN PRACTICE</li> <li>CREATE AN UNDERSTANDING IN ADDRESSING SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH ALONG THE U.S. MEXICO BORDER</li> <li>ADHERE TO HEALTHY PEOPLE 2020 –FOUNDATION TO HEALTH MEASURE GOALS (DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH [SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL]&amp;</li> </ul>							

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# Research Group

- Weekly forum for graduate and undergraduate students conducting research in public health
  - 4+ years
- Reasonably interdisciplinary
  - Backgrounds in Public Health, Nursing, Nutrition, Biology, Psychology, Communication
- Forum for Informal training/mentoring in many areas:
  - Pre-Planned topics
    - Developing a research question, research design, statistical analysis, presentation style, and scale development
  - Participants discuss current or planned projects
    - Range from initial ideas → practice dissertation defenses
    - Chance to rehearse/practice
    - Receive feedback from other group members

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# Recent Topics



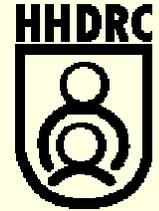
- Missing Data Analysis
- Instrument Design
- Factor Analysis, SEM, AMOS
- Poster Design
- Proposal and Defense Practice
- Conference Presentation Practice
- Support & Resource Sharing
- Mediation and moderation

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# What students get out of RG?



- Learn some new things
- Gain experience
- Receive feedback from other group members
- **Opportunity to engage in critical thinking**
- **Opportunity to engage in scholarly discussion and debate *in a relatively “safe” environment***

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# Research to help reduce youth smoking susceptibility (PhD, MPH, BS students involved)



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*Development and Evaluation of a Personalized Normative Feedback Intervention for Hispanic Youth at High Risk of Smoking*

- Research experience for graduate & undergraduate students
- Informing community youth programs & future research
- Youth involvement

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# Giving back to my community

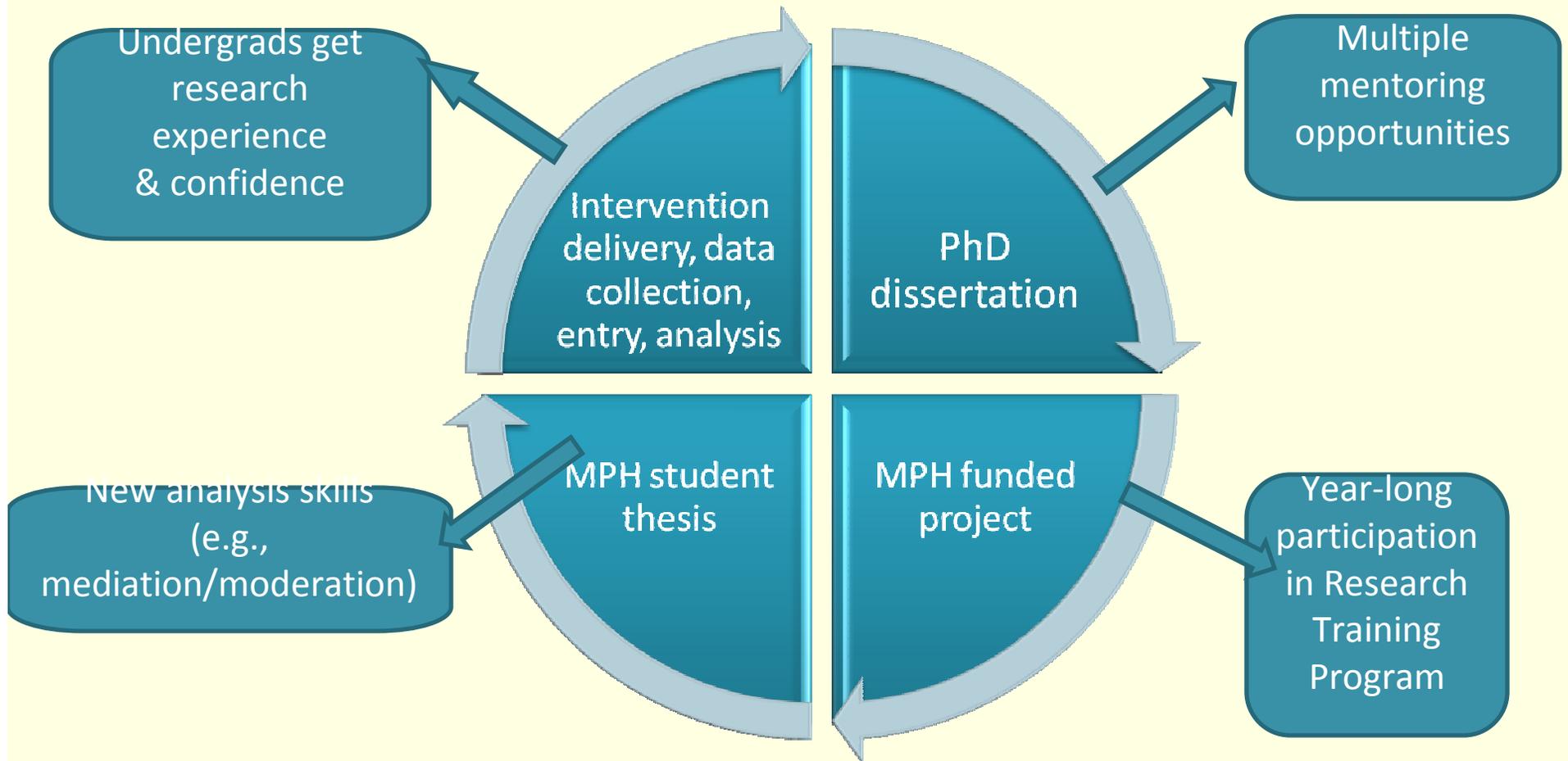
- Serving as a resource for youth
- Being a role model
  - Staying in school
  - Achieving your dreams
- Research – gaining experience while facilitating participation & recruitment
  - Talked with youth about colleges and majors
  - Helped start youth-led Teen Service Club (now thriving)

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# Multilevel mentoring



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# What we do

## **Kristen – GRA for HHDRC Community Engagement Core**

*Thesis topic: Social desirability in self-reported drinking behavior*

## **Sujehy – GRA for School of Nursing (Project VIDA II)**

*Thesis topic: Relationships between substance abuse and IPV among Hispanic women in the U.S. – Mexico border region*

## **Sandra – GRA Dept. of Public Health Sciences**

*Thesis topic: Sexual behavior among migrant men*

## **Holly – Research Ass't Professor, HHDRC and School of Nursing**

*Promoting health, educational attainment, & civic engagement in vulnerable communities*

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# Other Experiences

- Planning & participating in HHDRC workshops
  - Grant writing
  - Mental health in the Border Region
  - HIV, Substance use, & Intimate Partner Violence
  - Policy Advocacy to Build Health Equity
- Professional Organizations
  - Regional & National Conferences
  - Service
- Additional Internships
  - Minority Health International Research Training
  - Cancer Prevention Research

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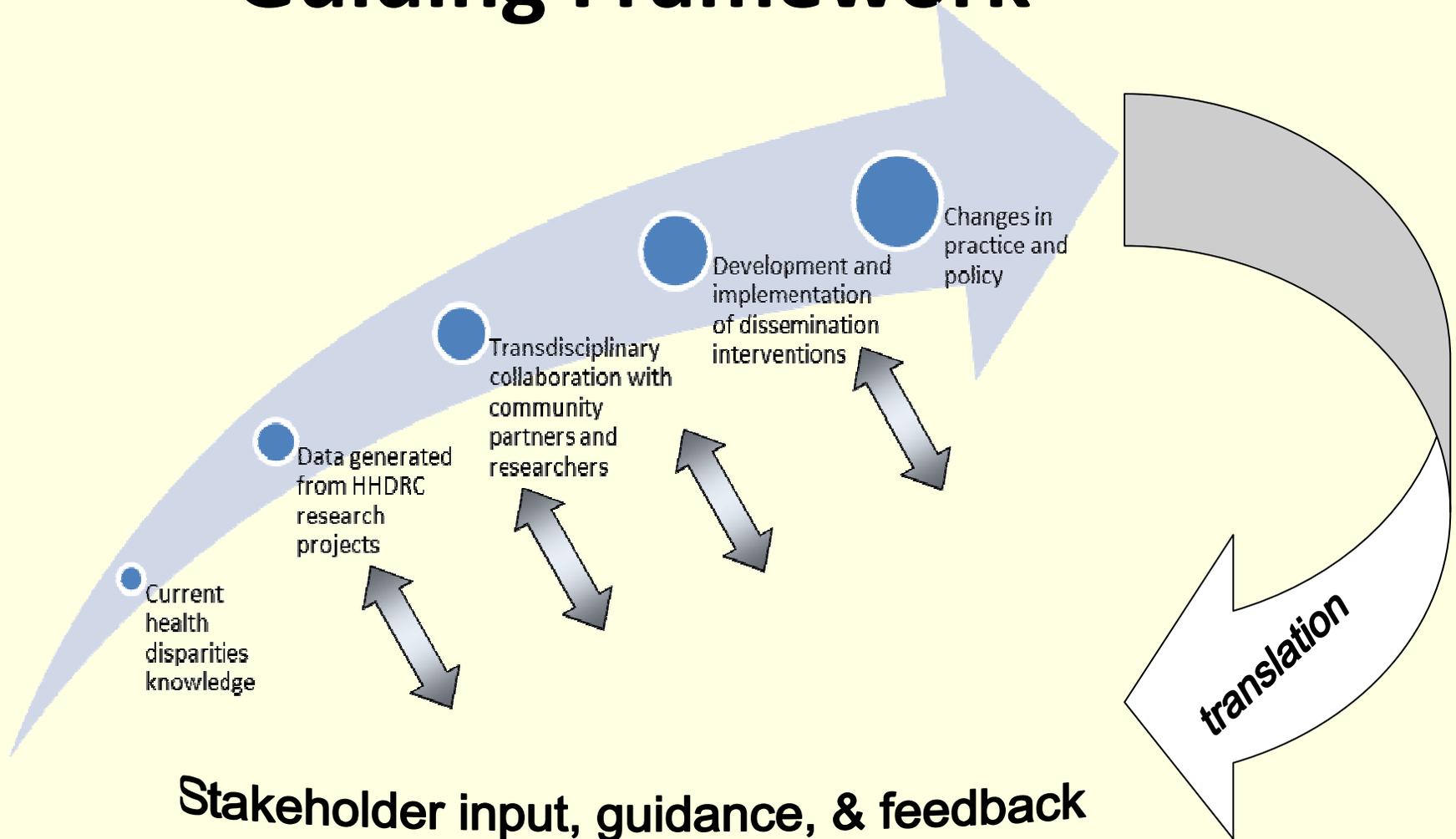
# SOPHE APHA SBM



**Research group, ESG, SPH,  
Paso del Norte SOPHE**

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# Guiding Framework



**Stakeholder input, guidance, & feedback**

**Community Members ♦ Partners ♦ Leaders**

**Researchers ♦ Policy Makers**

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# Closing thoughts

➤ More funded opportunities for students



➤ Build & sustain partnerships

➤ Encourage and support multi-level mentoring

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# Thank you!!

Cargill, V. (2009). Recruiting, retaining, and maintaining racial and ethnic minority investigators: Why we should care. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*(S1), S5-S7.

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Stoff, D., Forsyth, A., Marquez, E., & McClure, S. (2009). Introduction: The case for diversity in research on mental health and HIV/AIDS. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*(S1), S8-S15.

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