Mental Health, Substance Abuse & HIV Prevention Conference 2017
PROGRAM BOOK

SEPTEMBER 22-23, 2017
LOCATION:
Region One Education Service Center
1900 West Schunior St.
Edinburg, TX 78541

CMEs & CEUs available
Interpreting services are available upon request.
CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Healthy Communities 2020 “Access to comprehensive, quality health care services is important for the achievement of health equity and for increasing the quality of a healthy life for everyone.”

An opportunity for medical and mental health providers, community health workers, school personnel, health care agencies and community residents to exchange ideas, explore approaches, and enhance their knowledge about the importance of the delivery of prevention and treatment services within a cultural, holistic and interdisciplinary framework. It will also include efforts being made by the UTRGV School of Medicine to create awareness about substance use, especially heroin addiction, and the HIV/AIDS problems affecting our community, and the prevention efforts that are being made to educate young adults both on campus and in the community. Also important is the need to create awareness about the special needs of special populations, such as homeless children and families, veterans and the LGBT community. The conference will also address the issue of stigma often associated with seeking treatment for mental health disorders and HIV/AIDS.

Objectives: (operationalized to comply with CEUs/CMEs requirements)

Participants will:

• Identify the need for addressing the treatment and care of special populations such as children, adolescents, young adults, women, veterans, and LGBT individuals with mental health disorders, addictions and HIV/AIDS.

• Learn about the epidemic proportions of heroin addiction in the community and nationwide as well as the treatment and opiate agonist medications available.

• Learn about applying models of integrated care approaches that effectively address prevention as well as behavioral and medical needs of underserved populations, especially those afflicted with co-morbid mental health disorders, substance use and HIV/AIDS.

• Identify areas for the inclusion of community health workers (promotoras) in the interdisciplinary prevention and treatment teams.

• Learn about the significance of engaging indigenous health/behavioral care providers in the implementation of culturally congruent prevention and treatment services to underserved populations.

• Learn about the importance of the assessment and inclusion of the cultural beliefs of the patient in the provision of treatment services.

• Identify opportunities for self-care that minimize burnout and prevent compassionate fatigue.
The South Coastal Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is accredited by the Texas Medical Association (TMA) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The South Coastal AHEC designates this educational activity for a maximum of 9 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. South Coastal AHEC designates this educational activity for up to one hour ethic/physician responsibility credit, as required for physicians by the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners.

**Registration Information**

**Special Accommodations:**
To request special accommodations, contact the Office of Continuing Education at (956) 665-2071 or email at continuinged@utrgv.edu.

**Conference Rate:** $125 (CMEs, CEUs included)
**Promotoras:** $25
**Exhibitors:** $300

**Content**

Program Schedule ................................................................. 2
Description of Presentations ........................................................... 6
Presenter Profiles ........................................................................... 18
Hotels and Transportation .............................................................. 29

**Planning Committee**

**Chairs**
Eugenia Curet, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.
Armando Lopez, M.P.H

**Members**
Cristina Trejo, L.M.S.W.
Jayshree Bhat, M.S., M.B.A.
Norma Cavazos, J.D.
Marsha Griffin, M.D., F.A.S.P.
Gabriel de Erausquin, M.D., Ph.D.
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Mayra Avila, L.C.S.W.
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Christopher Albert, Ph.D.
Janie Escareño, C.H.W.I.
Janis Feldman, Ph.D.
Christopher Ledingham, Ph.D.
Belinda Flores, R.N., B.S.
Modesta Salinas, M.B.A.
Veronica de Hoyos
Alfonso Jaramillo

**Affiliations**

UTRGV School of Medicine
LRGV Area Health Education Center

UTRGV Engagement and Assessment
UTRGV Continuing Education
TX Department of State Health Services
UTRGV School of Medicine
UTRGV School of Medicine
South Texas College
South Texas College
South Texas College
Hidalgo-Starr County Medical Society
UTRGV Counseling Center
LRGV Area Health Education
UTRGV Department of Social Work
UTRGV Health and Human Performance
South Coastal, Area Health Education Center
UTRGV School of Medicine
UTRGV School of Medicine
UTRGV School of Medicine
CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Friday, September 22: Conference Day 1

7:30 – 8:15 a.m.                Registration/Breakfast
8:15 – 8:30 a.m.                Introductions and Logistics
8:30 – 8:45 a.m.                Welcome Remarks
8:45 – 9:30 a.m.                Keynote Speaker I
9:30 – 10:15 a.m.               Keynote Speaker II
10:15 – 10:30 a.m.              Q&A for Keynote Speaker Sessions
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.              Break
10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.         Panel/Forum
12:00 – 1:40 p.m.               Lunch and Poster Presentation
1:40 – 5:00 p.m.                Breakout Sessions

Saturday, September 23: Conference Day 2

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.                Registration/Breakfast
8:30 – 8:45 a.m.                Introductions and Logistics
8:45 – 9:30 a.m.                Keynote Speaker I
9:30 – 10:15 a.m.               Keynote Speaker II
10:15 – 10:30 a.m.              Q&A for Keynote Speaker Sessions
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.              Break
10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.         Panel/Forum
12:00 – 1:40 p.m.               Lunch and Poster Presentation
1:40 – 4:45 p.m.                Closing Plenary Sessions
4:45 – 5:00 p.m.                Evaluations
Friday, September 22: Conference Day 1

7:30 – 8:15 a.m. Registration & Breakfast

8:15 – 8:30 a.m. Introductions and Logistics
  Eugenia Curet, Ph.D., L.C.S.W, UTRGV SOM Assistant Dean
  Armando Lopez, M.P.H., LRGV Area Health Education Center

8:30 – 8:45 a.m. Welcome Remarks
  John H. Krouse, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A.
  UTRGV SOM Dean and Vice President for Health Affairs

8:45 – 9:30 a.m. Keynote Speaker I
  Héctor González, M.D., M.P.H.
  Public Health Management and Care for HIV and Addiction in Laredo, TX

9:30 – 10:15 a.m. Keynote Speaker II
  Octavio N. Martínez, Jr., M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., F.A.P.A.
  Integrated Healthcare in Addressing Health Disparities

10:15 – 10:30 a.m. Q&A for Keynote Speakers’ Sessions

10:30 – 10:45 a.m. Break

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Forum, HIV/AIDS, Substance Use, Heroin Addiction Treatment
  Henry Pacheco, M.D.
  Waldo Lopez, Ph.D., M.P.H., R.S.
  Matthew Masters, M.D.

12:00 – 1:25 p.m. Lunch and Poster Presentation

1:40 – 5:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions

Track 1 - Adults

1:40 – 2:40 p.m. Room: Fort Ringgold
  Elderly-Dementia and Alzheimer’s
  Gladys E. Maestre, M.D., Ph.D.

2:50 – 3:50 p.m. Room: Fort Ringgold
  What is the Risk for Heterosexual HIV Transmission: A Conversation About Sexual Health
  Alfonso Carlon, B.A.

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Room: Fort Ringgold
  Suicide Prevention
  Eugenia Curet, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.
### Track 2 – Children and Adolescents

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Session Title</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:40 – 2:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: Fort McIntosh</td>
<td>Prevention of Suicide Among Youth and Adolescents</td>
<td>Eugenia Curet, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:50 – 3:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: Fort McIntosh</td>
<td>Engaging Families of Children with Autism Through Summer Camp Experiences</td>
<td>Hsulying C. Ward, Ph.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: Fort McIntosh</td>
<td>Middle School Teachers: Mental Health Knowledge, Perceived Roles and Training</td>
<td>Nancy Pena Razo, Ph.D., L.S.S.P.</td>
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### Track 3 – Promotoras and Curanderos: Health Educators

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<th>Time</th>
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<th>Session Title</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1:40 – 2:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: Sal del Rey</td>
<td>Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention</td>
<td>Iris Reyes, M.P.H.</td>
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<td>Paula Saldana, C.H.W.I.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: Sal del Rey</td>
<td>Culture, Healing &amp; Herbal Remedies</td>
<td>Noé Garza, M.D.</td>
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### Track 4 – Special Populations: Veterans and LGBT

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<th>Time</th>
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<th>Session Title</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1:40 – 2:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: Falcon Dam</td>
<td>Women Veterans: Transition and Reintegration</td>
<td>Arlene Laboy, M.S.W.</td>
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<td>Struggles Into Civilian Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:50 – 3:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: Falcon Dam</td>
<td>Substance Abuse Recovery Among Returning Veterans</td>
<td>Twana Cooks-Allen, Ph.D., L.M.F.T., L.C.S.W., M.A.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: Falcon Dam</td>
<td>Mental Health Diagnoses Among LGBT and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals</td>
<td>Chase Valenciano, L.M.S.W.</td>
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### Track 5 – Self-care

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Session Title</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1:40 – 2:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: La Lomita</td>
<td>Mindful Meditation</td>
<td>Annyl Torres- Reveron, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Thalia Morin, B.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:50 – 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Room: La Lomita</td>
<td>Combating Compassion Fatigue and Burnout in Healthcare Professionals</td>
<td>Andrea Lerma, B.S.N.</td>
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</tbody>
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Saturday, September 23: Conference Day 2

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.  Registration & Breakfast
8:30 – 8:45 a.m.  Introductions and Logistics
                 Eugenia Curet, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UTRGV SOM Assistant Dean
8:45 – 9:30 a.m.  Keynote Speaker I
                 Koko Aung, M.D. M.P.H., F.A.C.P.
                 HIV Prevention
9:30 – 10:15 a.m. Keynote Speaker II
                   Pedro Ruiz, M.D.
                   Drug Addiction, Culture and Psychiatry and Dual Disorders:
                   Co-morbidity of Addiction and Other Psychiatric Conditions
10:15 – 10:30 a.m. Q&A for Keynote Speakers Sessions
10:30 – 10:45 a.m. Break
10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Forum – Caring for Homeless Children on the Border:
                        Risks, Challenges and Opportunities
                        Marsha Griffin, M.D., F.A.A.P.
                        Rose M. Pones, R.N., B.S.N., M.P.H.
                        Diana E. Clough, B.S.
12:00 – 1:40 p.m.  Lunch and Poster Presentations
1:40 – 4:45 p.m.  Closing Plenary Sessions
4:45 – 5:00 p.m.  Evaluations

Closing Plenary Sessions

1:40 – 2:40 p.m.  Room: Fort Ringgold  An Interdisciplinary Look at How the Opioid Crisis is Impacting Healthcare in Texas
                 Eric Grayson, Pharm. D.
                 Juan Castro, M.D.
2:40 – 4:45 p.m.  Room: Fort Ringgold  HIV in Hispanic Women
                 Carmen Zorrilla, M.D.
                 Border Health Efforts Regarding ZIKA, HIV/AIDS,
                 Mental Health, and Substance Use, and the Utilization of Promotoras as Effective
                 Cultural Brokers
                 Norma Cavazos, J.D.
Description of Presentations

PUBLIC HEALTH MANAGEMENT AND CARE FOR HIV AND ADDICTION IN LAREDO, TX
Héctor González, M.D., M.P.H.

This presentation features how HIV/STIs and Hepatitis C disproportionality affects South Texas, specifically the Texas-Mexico border. Adding to this crisis is the lack of access to care, coupled by co-occurring disorders and morbidities – behavioral health and addiction (particularly heroin and synthetic drugs). To address these disorders and especially addiction to heroin in Laredo we have integrated behavioral health and substance use screening, treatment and prevention services into our primary care and HIV services. One model that was implemented collocates with a community-based organization (CBO) that provides additional behavioral health and substance use services along with the City of Laredo Health Department’s primary care, medical case management, and counseling services in a neighborhood setting that allowed us to provide comprehensive wraparound services to those most in need and at risk with co-occurring infections and disorders. In particular, addiction and heroin use were targeted as integrated services partnering with the CBO and other treatment partners to assure onsite care. Laredo doesn’t have a permanent in-house treatment, detox and rehabilitation facility which warrants prompt acute care and addiction management services within the primary care service and within a safety net of services. For rehabilitation and hospitalization, linkages were enhanced by the mental health authority and local treatment services, which are limited but established as a standard of care for all persons seen through our services. We are working with methadone alternatives and looking at other treatments such as suboxone, which are always accompanied by counseling and treatment therapy (matrix model, motivational and dialectic therapy models). A new addition to address both addiction and behavioral health is telemedicine care through the South Texas Behavioral Health staff. Finally, treatment and therapy cannot replace prevention, education and outreach that acknowledges the recognition of addiction (due to psychosocial and economic disparities) as a major public health and medical healthcare problem in the U.S. and along the Texas-Mexico Border.

INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE
IN ADDRESSING HEALTH DISPARITIES
Octavio N. Martínez, Jr., M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., and F.A.P.A.

Our children and youth are often referred to as the future. If this is true, current trends and statistics indicate a dismal future not only for our children, but for society in general. This presentation will highlight key trends and statistics and emphasize the role integrated healthcare can play in addressing the health disparities and inequities inherent in our current healthcare delivery model.

Learning Objectives:
1. Participants will be able to list three reasons why incorporating cultural and linguistic appropriate services is needed in health, behavioral health, and integrated healthcare as it relates to our children and youth.
2. Participants will be able to explain how the integrated healthcare delivery model can address and eliminate health disparities and achieve health equity for our children and youth.
HIV/AIDS, SUBSTANCE USE, HEROIN ADDICTION TREATMENT FORUM

Waldo Lopez, Ph.D., M.P.H., R.S.
Henry Pacheco, M.D.
Matthew Masters, M.D.

Dr. Lopez will review Laredo’s Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and HIV SAMHSA project’s best practices and innovative approaches. Much has been done to interact with the Laredo target population through our evidence-based project entitled, “Erasing Barriers.” Most recently, we have discovered the unique factors that influence risk behaviors, and effective interventions for the target population in Laredo, which is mostly Mexican-American or other Hispanics, people of color, and Asian descent. Laredo is undergoing an evolution of emerging issues such as the transgender shift, MSM, adolescents, substance abuse, increasing suicide rates, and primary use of heroin. Some of the co-morbidities include lack of access to healthcare because of individual apathy or other factors that influence health, limited substance use treatment facilities, and an adolescent population that continues to adopt risky behaviors early in life, and the migration of HIV from the MSM to the heterosexual population. To provide the best of care, Laredo has integrated primary care with behavioral health, substance use, and HIV interventions.

Dr. Pacheco will discuss the South Central AIDS Education & Training Center (SCAETC), an HRSA-funded project with a mission to improve the clinical care of people in the region living with HIV/AIDS by providing clinical consultation, and education and training for clinicians and other healthcare providers serving minorities and other disproportionately affected populations. The SCAETC headquarters is at Parkland Hospital in Dallas with multiple health center partners in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana and Arkansas.

Dr. Masters will present an overview of the current epidemic of overdose deaths due to opioids, the antecedent causes of the epidemic, and the usefulness of Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT) in the treatment of opiate dependence. If time permits, the pharmacology of buprenorphine and methadone will be discussed along with the federal regulations governing the use of these medications.

ELDERLY-DEMENTIA AND ALZHEIMER’S

Gladys E. Maestre, M.D. Ph.D.

Alzheimer’s disease (AD) has a disproportionately high impact upon aging Hispanics. In the U.S., Hispanics manifest 150% higher prevalence, incidence and significantly earlier onset of AD than in Caucasians. Greater prevalence of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and lifestyle and socioeconomic characteristics including lower education levels, higher poverty rates, and greater exposure to early life adversity and discrimination, may partially account for the elevated AD risk in Hispanics, but pathways, mechanisms and critical windows for interventions are unknown. We will discuss explanatory models that link risk factors for AD in Hispanics to current evidence-based strategies for their care and support.

Learning Objectives:
1. Identify risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease in older Hispanics.
2. Describe strategies to provide care and support for older Hispanics with memory disorders and their caregivers.
WHAT IS THE RISK FOR HETEROSEXUAL HIV TRANSMISSION: A CONVERSATION ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH
Alfonso Carlon, B.A.

This workshop will offer an opportunity for participants to discuss and explore what sexual health is, how it can be defined by our clients, as well as provide us an opportunity to grow in our awareness and understanding that sexual risk is often balanced against many complex and competing priorities set by our clients and impacted by sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Learning Objectives:
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
1. Define what is sexual health.
2. Describe how sexual health is impacted by sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.
3. Explain three ways to reduce the risk of HIV transmission

SUICIDE PREVENTION
Eugenia Curet, Ph. D., L.C.S.W.

Suicide is a major public health concern and one of the most preventable deaths. Studies have shown that over 90% of people who die from suicide have one or more acute or chronic mental health disorder at the time of their death. Over 40,000 people die by suicide each year in the U.S.; being the 10th leading cause of death overall (Centers for Disease Control). This presentation will focus on the warning signs for suicide and how to intervene to save lives.

Learning objectives:
1. Learn about the incidence of suicide among various age groups.
2. Learn about possible causes of suicide ideations and attempts.
3. Learn about the signs and symptoms inherent in suicidal ideations.
4. Learn about utilizing the Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR) prevention model as intervention with individuals exhibiting signs and symptoms of suicidality.
PREVENTION OF SUICIDE AMONG YOUTH AND ADOLESCENT
Eugenia Curet, Ph. D., L.C.S.W.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) 2015, indicated that suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth 10–24 years of age. In 2014, suicide accounted for 5,504 deaths among young people and almost 157,000 hospital visits for self-inflicted injuries were documented (CDC, 2015). Underlying suicidality among children and adolescents is the fact that depression and thoughts of suicide are disturbingly common among high school youth, which have increased over the last five years. Studies conducted by Kann, et al (2014), found that in 2013, 29.9% of high school students felt so sad or hopeless every day for two or more weeks that they stopped doing some usual activities, 17.0% seriously considered suicide, 13.6% made a suicide plan, 8.0% attempted suicide, and 2.7% sought medical treatment for a suicide attempt. The risk for suicide among youth varies by gender and ethnicity; nearly double among females compared to males, but males accounted for four out of five deaths by suicide among young people. Furthermore, youth who identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native were at increased risk of death and Hispanic/Latino youth were at increased risk of suicidal thoughts (CDC, 2015).

Learning Objectives:
1. To learn about the prevalence of suicidality among children and adolescents.
2. To learn about the reasons for children and adolescents’ suicidal ideations.
3. To learn about recognizing signs and symptoms of suicidality among children and adolescents.
4. To learn appropriate interventions for preventing and/or minimizing suicidal attempts among children and adolescents.

ENGAGING FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM THROUGH SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCES
Hsuying C. Ward, Ph.D.

This presentation will report findings from a survey of 21 special education practitioners’ summer camp experiences of engaging families of children within the autism spectrum. From designing to delivering an eight-day summer camp, special education practitioners were mindful of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Family-centered Practices. Peer observation data will also be reported from these practitioners’ interactions with family members.

Learning Objective:
Participants will learn a useful roadmap to successful family engagement of children with autism and explore tools to measure effective family-centered interactions.
According to the U.S. surgeon general, one in five children and adolescents will encounter a significant mental health problem (Murphey, Barry, & Vaughn, 2013). Students facing mental health problems struggle to finish tasks, have poor school attendance records, and experience new struggles with peer and adult relationships (Hill, Ohmstede, & Mims, 2012). Mental health conditions are bringing about an apparent prospect of academic failure, school dropout, and may interfere with social and behavioral issues as well (Breslau, 2010). Understanding and addressing students’ mental and behavioral needs has increased in recent years, but statistics show that one-third of mental illnesses in adolescents are undetected (American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Mental Health, 2010). Early detection of mental health problems is complex but extremely necessary (Heller, 2015). Since teachers are at the frontline of identifying potential issues that can arise with students, it is important that teachers have knowledge, training, and skills to be able to help students with potential mental health issues and refer them to school-based professionals, when necessary. This study surveyed middle school teachers to examine the knowledge, perceived roles, and professional development needs they have concerning mental health issues. Teachers expressed needing additional knowledge and/or skills training in dealing with students with mental health issues and not having enough training. They also reported they should have knowledge of referring children and families to school-based service providers as well as how to implement classroom behavioral interventions and conduct behavioral assessments. These findings identify a great need that should be addressed by educator preparation programs as well as school districts in order to help teachers help students.
SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND HIV PREVENTION
Iris Reyes, M.P.H.
Paul Saldana, C.H.W.I.

The residents of South Texas continue to be heavily impacted by HIV, accounting for high rates of new infections, AIDS diagnoses and people living with HIV. The Texas-Mexico border region is a major port of drug-trafficking as well as a string market for “holding houses” for drug redistribution. A significant consequence of the drug trafficking in the area is the increase of HIV largely due to intravenous drug use and risky sexual behaviors. This presentation will focus on the work that has been done by the UTRGV School of Medicine in collaboration with community-based organizations to provide substance use and HIV prevention education to university students and community residents between the ages of 18–24. It will illustrate how we utilized an evidence-based approach to successfully engage college students through peer educators and community members through promotoras (community health workers) in order to provide prevention education and HIV testing that could facilitate timely referral for treatment to those found to be positive. (Funded by the SAMHSA MSI/CBO grant.)

RESILIENCE AND ADVOCACY: EMPOWERING OURSELVES
Janie Escareño, C.H.W.I.

In this interpersonal session, participants will learn to adjust their mindset into a state of resiliency and self-advocacy. Resiliency is the capacity to bounce back with a process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, heartbreak, threats, or other significant sources of stress. It is also the ability to not just survive, but to thrive. Being a Self-Advocate means that you are able to ask for what you need in an appropriate and respectful way. In order to remain strong, we must stretch ourselves to spring forward. Learning techniques will include instructor-led presentations, class discussions and activities.

CULTURE, HEALING & HERBAL REMEDIES
Noe Garza, M.D.

This presentation will highlight the importance of learning about the cultural resources many of the Rio Grande Valley residents utilize to address issues of illness and mental health. It will also emphasize the need for traditional healthcare providers to learn about reaching out to those natural support systems in order to provide healthcare that is culturally congruent. A curandera (folk healer) will also be present to describe the work that she does.

Learning objectives:
1. To learn how traditional healthcare providers handle patients, depending on the types of illness and mental health.
2. To learn the border culture of the Rio Grande Valley and the reason why people like to visit traditional healthcare providers according to the age, gender, culture, ethnicity, and other life circumstances of the patient.
Women have volunteered to serve in the U.S. military since the American Revolution. Today, there are over 213,000 women in the active component of the U.S. Armed Forces and about 190,000 women in the reserves and National Guard. Though the fraction of women veterans is still relatively small, their numbers have been increasing over the past several decades and are projected to continue to increase in the future. Women continue to effectively perform vital roles which have made great impact in every branch of the military. Although performing these roles may bring a sense of pride and empowerment for women veterans, they commonly bring feelings of detachment and remorse when transitioning back into society. The unique needs of women veterans are diverse and intricate, spanning the areas of employment, finance, social issues and the elimination of sexual assault. This presentation seeks to explain the roles of women in the military and society, and the unique challenges they face in their transition into civilian life.
**SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND RECOVERY AMONG RETURNING VETERANS**  
Twana Cooks-Allen, Ph.D., L.M.F.T., L.C.S.W., M.A.C.

Many of our men and women are returning from military service with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and are experiencing a difficult time readjusting to life outside of the military. They often feel alone, misunderstood and judged. Therefore, they react to family, friends and peers in a guarded manner. This presentation will inform the audience about the signs and symptoms of PTSD. This presentation will also explore the risk factors (biological, psychological, and social) and describe the relationship between this disorder and other mental health disorders, such as substance abuse, anxiety and depression. In addition, the discussion will identify the treatments for the disorder and how mental health professional and non-mental health professionals can help and support them in their journey toward health.

**MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSES AMONG LGBT AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING INDIVIDUALS**  
Chase Valenciano, L.M.S.W.

Societal discrimination and familial rejection are common causes of anxiety and depression and other mental health diagnoses among LGBT and gender non-conforming individuals. There is also research that has found an increase of substance use amongst the LGBT community. This workshop will address the issues as they relate to college students, and the ways to change climate culture and create LGBT resources such as support groups and student-led organizations that provide social support, but also normalize and integrate LGBT and gender non-conforming with their heterosexual and cis-gendered counterparts.

**MINDFUL MEDITATION**  
Annelyn Torres-Reveron, Ph.D.  
Thalia Morin, B.A.

The purpose of the Mindful Meditation presentation is to define meditation and mindfulness and describe their core concepts in theory and practice. The audience will be provided with information about the evidence-based benefits of mindfulness and meditation, and will be taught how to incorporate these techniques at home and in the workplace to promote self-care and self-regulation.
COMBATING COMPASSION
FATIGUE AND BURNOUT IN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS
Andrea Lerma, B.S.N.

Why are healthcare professionals at risk for compassion fatigue and burnout? What happens when burnout leads to exhaustion and inability to function on the job? Burnout and lack of satisfaction with work are the major reasons why healthcare professionals leave their jobs. An increased focus on self-care can improve the work milieu and lead to improved patient care. This presentation will discuss compassion fatigue in healthcare professionals, the effectiveness of a program on combating compassion fatigue, and the Professional Quality of Life (PROQOL) used to assess Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout, and Secondary Trauma.

Learning Objectives:
1. Participants will increase their understanding about why compassion fatigue and burnout occur.
2. Participants will learn new ways to cope with personal and professional stressors and more effective techniques for communication.

HIV PREVENTION
Koko Aung, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.P.

This session will summarize an overview of historical and epidemiological perspectives of HIV infection worldwide and the emerging HIV epidemic in the U.S.-Mexico border region. It will explore the social, behavioral and biomedical aspects of prevention of HIV transmission with specific focus on the border region.

Learning Objectives:
At the end of the educational activity, the participants should be able to:
2. Recognize multiple facets in prevention of HIV transmission.
3. Formulate preventive strategies commensurate with local epidemiological and social factors.
DRUG ADDICTION, CULTURE AND PSYCHIATRY, AND DUAL DISORDERS: CO-MORBIDITY OF ADDICTION AND OTHER PSYCHIATRIC CONDITIONS
Pedro Ruiz, M.D.

The presentation will address the concept of co-morbid disorders in which substance abuse is at the core of the problem. The focus will be on the need to develop educational programs for medical students, psychiatric residents and psychiatrists as well as psychologists, social workers, nurses, and other professionals that can provide or enhance their knowledge about the need to develop integrated approaches for the treatment of the dually diagnosed patients.

Learning Objectives:
Participants will learn about:
1. The future of dual pathology based on epidemiological evidence and educational development.
3. Co-morbidity of addiction and other mental health disorders focusing on the identified pathways of the brain.

CARING FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN ON THE BORDER: RISKS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
Dr. Marsha Griffin, M.D., F.A.A.P.
Rose M. Pones, R.N., B.S.N.,M.P.H.
Diana E. Clough, B.S.

The panel will identify causes of homelessness on the Texas-Mexico border, the particular needs of homeless children, the challenges of providing care, and one school district’s response under the mandated requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. In addition, the increased risk for mental health issues, infectious disease and substance abuse will also be addressed along with models of care.

Learning Objectives:
1. Who is designated a homeless child under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987?
2. What are the mandated requirements under the act?
3. Learn about the number of homeless children in various school districts that comprise Region One.
4. Hear about the risks of mental illness, infectious disease and substance abuse among homeless children and models of care.
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY LOOK AT HOW THE OPIOID CRISIS IS IMPACTING HEALTHCARE IN TEXAS

Eric Grayson, Pharm. D.
Juan Castro, M.D.

With over 33,000 deaths in 2015, opioid abuse is a rampant problem throughout our nation and was the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S. While breast cancer related deaths have decreased by 20% from 2000-2015, deaths from opioid overdose have increased four-fold over the same time span. There are many factors that have contributed to the opioid epidemic and this panel will highlight two primary causes: drug diversion and overprescribing. To mitigate the problems of diversion and overprescribing, more than 30 states have turned to the use of prescription drug monitoring programs with varying degrees of success. Despite these efforts, the prevalence of opioid use disorders continues to grow nationally as the rate of death exceeds 90 per day. While the opioid crisis is a national problem, the consequences can be seen the most in local communities. Healthcare providers practicing in local communities often must dedicate more time and resources caring for patients with opioid use disorder. This can have a profound impact on public health as patients transition from one level of care to another. These issues often extend past the practice of healthcare and manifest as a burden within regulatory agencies such as the Texas State Board of Pharmacy. The challenges that arise from regulation and enforcement diverts attention from other glaring issues within the community.

Learning Objective:
This interdisciplinary panel discussion is to address these issues prevalent in the local community, form conclusions to be considered with the anticipated changes by House Bill 2561, and propose possible interventions.
HIV IN HISPANIC WOMEN
Carmen Zorrilla, M.D.

This session will present a description of the HIV/AIDS epidemic patterns in the U.S. and how recent planning and guideline documents such as the National HIV/AIDS Strategy do not mention or focus on Hispanic women. Specific strategies for retention of women in care proposed by the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC) will also be discussed.

**Learning Objective:**
1. Participants will learn about issues related to the barriers affecting the care of Hispanic women and potential solutions.

BORDER HEALTH EFFORTS REGARDING ZIKA, HIV/AIDS, MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE, AND THE UTILIZATION OF PROMOTORAS AS EFFECTIVE CULTURAL BROKERS
Norma Cavazos, J.D.

This presentation will discuss the utilization of promotoras and the efforts along the Texas-Mexico border to prevent ZIKA, a sexually transmitted disease. It will also expand on the additional efforts to educate and bring awareness about mental health and substance use to the border communities through Mental Health First Aid. The spread of HIV/AIDS as a substantial global health threat and the role of promotoras to educate the communities along the border will also be talked about.

**Learning Objectives:**
1. Learn about the efforts being made along the Texas-Mexico border to prevent the spread of the ZIKA virus.
2. Learn about the utilization of community health workers (promotoras) to educate community residents along the border about mental health and substance use issues affecting families.
Presenter Profiles

HÉCTOR GONZALEZ, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Héctor Gonzalez received his medical degree from Universidad Autónoma De Guerrero, México and MPH from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health. He is currently the director of health for the City of Laredo Health Department. In that position since 2001, Dr. Gonzalez oversees 350 full-time/temporary staff, and a budget of $18 million, which provides disease control, prevention, public health response and primary medical and dental care, and supervises a biosafety level III laboratory. With over 34 years in public health, Dr. Gonzalez has served in the following positions: past chief epidemiologist, San Antonio Metro Health; director, Office of Border Health for the Department of State Health Services; physician assistant, Vida Y Salud Health Systems Inc.; quality management HIV chair, Laredo and Lower Rio Grande Valley; past president, US-Mexico Border Health Association 2007; current president, Los Dos Laredo Binational Council; clinical assistant professor, San Antonio Health Science Center Family and Community Medicine since 2004; member, Local Government Advisory Committee, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; city liaison, Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Committee on Health Issues and Mayor’s Blue Ribbon Committee on Persons with Disabilities. His research includes the following: Diabetes Community Project – Healthy Living/Viviendo Mejor Disease Self-Management integration; Behavioral Health Integration in Primary Care in particular with HIV/STI patients (SAMSHA and Methodists Healthcare Ministry funded); National Institute of Health Institute for Allergy and Children’s Health, “Acellular Vaccine Clinical Trial in a Public Health Setting.” 1990-1993; conducted evidenced-based cancer early detection of high-risk vulnerable populations along the Texas-Mexico Border, 2010 with the Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas; served as co-investigator of “Walking Laredo,” a study on low impact exercise for adults with the University of Georgia, The University of Texas at San Antonio, and the City of Laredo Health Department, 2005.

OCTAVIO N. MARTINEZ, JR., M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., F.A.P.A.

Dr. Octavio N. Martinez Jr. is the fifth executive director to lead the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health since its creation in 1940. The foundation is part of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Martinez holds an appointment of associate vice president within the division; he is also a clinical professor with an appointment in the university’s School of Social Work; and holds an adjunct professor appointment at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio School of Medicine’s Department of Psychiatry. He currently serves on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s, Health and Medicine Division’s Standing Committee on Medical and Public Health Research during Large-Scale Emergency Events, and on HMD’s (Health and Medicine Division) Roundtable on the Promotion of Health Equity and the Elimination of Health Disparities. He has formerly served on the IOM’s (Institute of Medicine) Committee on the Governance and Financing of Graduate Medical Education (2014) and on the Committee on the Mental Health Workforce for Geriatric Populations (2012). From 2002 to 2006, he served as a Special Emphasis Panel Member for the National Institutes of Health, National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities. Dr. Martinez is also a former commissioner of the Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families from 2010 to 2016. He serves on the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services. He is the board chair of the National Hispanic Council on Aging, board chair for the Meadows Mental
Health Policy Institute, and committee chair for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission – Behavioral Health Integration Advisory Committee. He is a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, a member of The American College of Psychiatrists, a member of the American College of Mental Health Administration, the National Hispanic Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the Texas Society for Psychiatric Physicians, and The Philosophical Society of Texas. He has a master’s degree in public health from Harvard University’s School of Public Health, a doctor’s degree in medicine from Baylor College of Medicine, and master’s and bachelor’s degrees in business administration with a concentration in finance from The University of Texas at Austin. He was chief resident during his psychiatric training at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and is an alumnus of The Commonwealth Fund/Harvard University Fellowship in Minority Health Policy at Harvard Medical School.

HENRY PACHECO, M.D.

Dr. Henry Pacheco has many years of working in public health medicine, including program development and program implementation with a particular focus on education and training, prevention, healthcare delivery in the country. He has worked as a private consultant in various health research and training projects in Latin America with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/OPS) and other agencies. He also worked as senior health specialist with CDC-INFO, director of the Center for Health Promotion (CHP) at the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), and program director at the National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA) both in Washington DC. When he moved to Texas, he joined Parkland Health & Hospital Systems in Dallas, where he holds the position of program director for the Texas/Oklahoma AIDS Education and Training Center (TX/OK AETC), one of the 11 regional centers of HRSA’s (Health Resources and Services Administration) Ryan White program, which later became the five-state South Center AIDS Education and Training center (SCAETC). Prior to his work in public health, Dr. Pacheco was a primary care physician in the State of Maryland for over ten years. He was born in Bolivia, received his Medical Degree in Spain and has lived for many years in Kansas City, Dallas, Baltimore and Washington DC metro-area.

WALDO LOPEZ, Ph.D. M.P.H, R.S.

Dr. Waldo Lopez has 21 years of experience as a preventive medicine specialist with the U.S. Army serving in the United States, Italy, El Salvador, and Germany. He has earned 15 awards and decorations, which include the Humanitarian Service Medal, DoD Meritorious Service Medals, and Army Achievement Medals. He possesses a NATO SECRET clearance and has 19 years of experience with the City of Laredo Health Department covering the Counties of Webb, Duval, Jim Hogg, and Zapata. A total of 40 year experience in public health, he entered the City of Laredo Health Department as a professional registered sanitarian, and he later became the first epidemiologist in the County of Webb. He also served as the epidemiology and PHEP (Public Health Emergency Preparedness) supervisor, chief of Disease Control and Epidemiology, and associate director for the City of Laredo Health Department. Dr. Lopez has extensive experience with immunology, primary care, laboratory operations (include BSL III level), maternity, family planning, tuberculosis, HIV, STDs, HIV, behavioral health, and substance abuse, environmental health, hospital preparedness, public health preparedness and emergency response. In addition, he has written more than 50 public health grants and publications. He attended a preventive medicine course at the U.S. Army
Medical Department School (accredited by Baylor University), and earned his associate’s and bachelor’s degrees in Applied Environmental Science at Thomas Edison State College, New Jersey, and a Master of Public Health (policy management), and Ph.D. in Public Health (epidemiology) with Texas A&M.

MATTHEW MASTERS, M.D.

Dr. Matthew E. Masters Jr. is an assistant professor at Texas A&M College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, who is currently teaching addiction medicine to 3rd- and 4th-year medical students. He completed his doctor of medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Medical School in 1987; followed by an internship and residency in internal medicine at the Brackenridge Hospital in Austin, Texas (1987-1990). Dr. Masters is the sole proprietor of the Austin Addiction Medicine Associates Clinic and has been the medical director of the MARS Opioid Treatment Program since June 2013 to present. He also served, from February 2008 to October 2012, as the attending physician in addiction medicine at the Texas Star Recovery. Dr. Masters is a diplomate from the American Board of Addiction Medicine and from the American Board of Internal Medicine.

GLADYS E. MAESTRE, M.D. PH.D.

Dr. Gladys Maestre received her MD at the University of Zulia in Maracaibo, Venezuela, where she also received training in psychiatry and geriatrics. She received her master’s degree in philosophy at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University and her Ph.D. from the Department of Pathology and the Center for Neurobiology and Behavior at Columbia University in New York. She completed a fellowship in psychiatric neurosciences at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston. Dr. Maestre has received numerous distinctions, including the 1992 Stanley Cobb Award by the Boston Society of Neurology and Psychiatry, the Bruce S. Schoenberg Award by the American Academy of Neurology; the San Sebastian Order from the City of Maracaibo, Venezuela; a member of the Cabinet for Quality of Life, Granada University, Spain; and the Highest Distinction, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, Peru. She is on the advisory board of the Alzheimer’s Association in Bolivia, Fundación Alzheimer de Venezuela, AgeCap of the Gothenburg University, and is the neuroethics chair of Canada. Dr. Maestre’s clinical expertise includes Alzheimer’s disease, vascular cognitive impairment including vascular dementia, hypertension in old age, depression, and end-of-life. Her research interests emphasize risk factors for cognitive aging and Alzheimer’s disease, and developing and testing strategies to maintain and improve cognitive abilities affected by age and/or degenerative disease. She is involved in building capacity for science in Latin America and the Caribbean through human resource development, institutional strengthening, and enhancing partnerships. She has accumulated extensive experience developing and managing training pipelines for Hispanics/Latinos that have supported the training of over 60 completed and 40 on-going doctoral degrees, over 100 master’s trainings and about 150 graduate interns, mostly from underrepresented backgrounds. Dr. Maestre has also contributed to the creation of the first memory clinic in Latin America, and the first school for non-professional caregivers that are now been replicated in several cities of Venezuela, Colombia, and Bolivia.
**ALFONSO CARLON, B.A.**
Mr. Alfonso Carlon is a project director with Cardea in Austin, Texas. He has served in numerous roles in public health over the past 25 years, including community clinic health educator, community outreach worker, state health services trainer-facilitator. He currently manages the Texas Department of State Health Services-HIV training contract and is an avid gardener in his free time.

**EUGENIA CURET, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.**
Dr. Eugenia Curet is the assistant dean for Support/Counseling and Wellness Services for medical students at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine and lecturer at the Department of Psychiatry and College of Health Affairs. She holds a master’s degree in social work with a specialization in psychiatric social work from New York University Graduate School of Social Work, a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies focusing on public health and substance abuse from The Union Institute and University, Cincinnati, Ohio, and continuing doctoral studies at Adelphi University. She attended the two years One Spirit Seminary in New York City and was ordained as an interfaith minister. Dr. Curet also served as the assistant dean for Student Health Services and Clinical Associate Professor at The University of Texas at Brownsville-TSC and The University of Texas-Pan American, and was the PI for the following funded programs: Weight Management: A Biopsychosocial Approach; Project Peer Educators: Survey of Students’ Sexual Behaviors and Knowledge and Attitudes About HIV, Campus Suicide Prevention Program; Violence Against Women Campus Program; and the MSI/CBO Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention Program. For 17 years she served as the director of the Vincent P. Dole Research and Treatment Center for Opioid Addiction at Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC), and as an instructor in public health. She has presented at numerous national and international conferences and has provided training on mental health, substance abuse, suicide prevention, HIV prevention, co-morbidity of HIV, HCV and substance abuse, and the importance of the provision of integrated and culturally sensitive delivery of treatment services to Hispanic communities. She has been instrumental in the planning and implementation of wellness/self-care programs for students and healthcare providers. She has experience in providing technical assistance for CARF accreditation and was instrumental in getting the clinic at Weill Cornell accredited by the Joint Commission and the student health services clinic at UTB/TSC accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Healthcare, Inc. (AAAHC).

**HSUYING C. WARD, PH.D.**
Dr. Hsuying C. Ward is a special education assistant professor from the Human Development and School Services at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. She has written a book chapter on engaging first generation immigrant parents of children with disabilities. During the 15 years of teaching in public schools, she worked extensively with parents and their children with Autism.

**NANCY PENA RAZO, PH.D., L.S.S.P.**
Dr. Nancy Pena Razo is a Rio Grande Valley native. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Notre Dame and her doctorate in school psychology from Texas A&M University. She has been licensed as a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) since 2005. Dr. Razo has worked in private practice, school districts, and the juvenile justice system, which
has allowed her to have first-hand knowledge of how mental health issues affect children and adolescents. She has vast experience presenting workshops on issues affecting children in schools, including mental health, discipline, behavior management, bullying, social/emotional wellness, and disabilities. Dr. Razo is currently an associate professor in practice and the School Psychology Program coordinator at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

IRIS REYES, M.P.H.

Ms. Iris Y. Reyes is the senior program coordinator for the MSI/CBO Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention Program for The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine. In her position, she coordinates on-campus and community activities for health education and HIV testing. She facilitates, monitors, and develops new evidence-based strategies for educational sessions on substance abuse, HIV, sexually transmitted infections and ZIKA. She has worked on advancing an evidence-based approach in the development of community-level health, behavioral health and social problems. She has been involved in public health and research projects locally, in cultural competence programs and research of food deserts. She attended Texas A&M University and graduated with a master’s degree in public health with a concentration in community health sciences.

PAULA SALDANA, C.H.W.I.

Mrs. Paula Saldana is a community health worker (CHW) and a CHW instructor for the Texas A&M National Community Health Worker Training Center. In her job she revises and develops curricula for community health workers and the general public, and delivers courses for CHW/instructor certifications and continuing education units. As a bilingual, bicultural CHW, she also helps translate materials between English and Spanish. In addition, she has worked as a CHW for close to 20 years, and has advocated for her community in South Texas across a range of venues, including the “Rachel Maddow Show.” Mrs. Saldana brings extensive teaching, advocacy, and capacity building experience to the training center. She has also co-authored multiple presentations across Texas and the country, including sessions at the National Rural Health Association Multicultural & Minority Health Conference, the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, the M.D. Anderson HPV/Cervical Cancer Summit, and the Texas Breast Annual Conference. In May 2017, she was named a finalist for the Esther B. Holderby Award at the CHW Unity Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

JUANA ESCAREÑO, C.H.W.I.

Ms. Juana Escareño is a community health worker instructor (CHWI) for South Coastal AHEC, promotoras of South Texas Training Program. In her role as a CHWI, she facilitates for health education resources, develops curriculum for workshops, and assists with the health literacy, cultural sensitivity and appropriateness of the CHWI training materials for the Train-the-Trainer workshops offered to CHWs in South Texas by the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, South Texas Environmental Education and Research (STEER) Program Research Scholars. As a bilingual CHWI, she assists in the translation of materials between English to Spanish. She has been involved with CHWI since February 2014. She delivers courses for CHW certifications and continuing education units. Ms. Escareño is an advocate for a healthier South Texas.
NOE GARZA, M.D.

Dr. Noe Garza is a lecturer for the South Texas Environmental Education and Research (STEER) Environmental Medicine Program at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) Regional Academic Health Center in Harlingen. Dr. Garza received his master’s in public health and dental public health from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Brownsville Regional Campus in 2004. In addition, he is a bilingual doctor in dentistry surgery, trained in Mexico at the University of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico. He has extensive experience in environmental medicine and public health. He served as a co-investigator of the Human Papillomavirus Infection and P53 Codon 72 Genotypes in a Hispanic Population at High-Risk for Cervical Cancer. (2005). He also worked on a study on Hispanic women living in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and Valle Hermoso, Tam., Mexico. In addition, he worked on research of organic compounds detected in deciduous teeth: A replication study from children with autism in two samples. (2105). In addition, Dr. Garza coordinates all the phases of the STEER program rotations in Harlingen, which features a one-month elective for health professions students which focuses on environmental medicine, community health, public health, and international health on the U.S.-Mexico border. He also serves as an instructor to students and community health workers (promotoras) on autism, asthma triggers, colonias, lead, household hazards, dengue and other related public health issues through border health and environmental medicine elective. He provides research mentorship to medical and public health professions students by assisting in the design of research posters, presentations and reports. He currently serves on the Hispanic Autism Research Center, is working on a pilot study and Tooth Fairy study, and is responsible for study coordination, recruitment, and study interviews and follow-up of participants.

ARLENE LABOY, M.S.W.

Ms. Arlene Laboy is a U.S. Army veteran and the president and founder of Veteran Females United, a local 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization in the Rio Grande Valley. She holds a master’s degree in social work from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, which allows her to employ her knowledge within the organization and the community to better serve women veterans and their families. In addition, Ms. Laboy is a Certified Peer Facilitator, which has allowed her to assist veterans with post-traumatic stress through peer-to-peer support groups since 2013. She is a Certified Suicide Prevention Trainer through the QPR Institute and has provided Gatekeeper Training to many parents, students, faculty, staff and other professionals in her community. Ms. Laboy has participated in various projects within UTRGV that have allowed her to gain diverse facets of knowledge in topics of interest within communities. Today, Ms. Laboy continues to seek ways to assist her peers and their families to live their post-military lives to their utmost potential.

TWANA COOKS-ALLEN, PH.D., L.M.F.T., L.C.S.W., M.A.C.

Dr. Twana Cooks-Allen is currently the marriage and family therapist at the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System in Harlingen, Texas. There she provides veteran- and client-centered care to veterans, their spouses and children. Dr. Cooks-Allen has been in the mental health field for 30-plus years. She holds a Ph.D. in counseling psychology and marriage and family therapy. She has an extensive background in mental health and has worked with clients who struggle with depression, PTSD, TBI, anxiety, substance abuse, sexual assault, pedophilia, eating disorders, schizophrenia,
personality disorders and various women issues. She has worked for the Department of Immigration/ Homeland Security, Department of Defense, and various other local and state agencies in Missouri and Illinois. Dr. Cooks-Allen interests include mentoring children and teens and educating others on mental health topics.

CHASE VALENCIANO, L.M.S.W.

Mr. Chase Valenciano is a Licensed Master Social Worker and a LCSW candidate, who has worked for the UTRGV Counseling Center for the last three years. Prior to counseling, he worked as an educator for HIV and substance use prevention. Mr. Valenciano has also worked with male adolescents in the juvenile system boot camp in Hidalgo County. Prior to that he worked as a home study assessor conducting supervised visitations for Child Protective Services, and as a case manager for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services. He is passionate about the social work profession and the role of mental health in the LGBT community. A proud transgender man, Mr. Valenciano is publicly out and visible for the purpose of normalizing how society views transgender individuals. He is the advisor for Student Equality Alliance (LGBT student-led organization at UTRGV) and he is the facilitator for the LGBT support group led by the counseling center. He is a member of the South Texas Equality Project and other LGBT advocacy organizations in the Rio Grande Valley.

ANNELYN TORRES-REVERON, PH.D.

Dr. Annelyn Torres-Reveron joined the UTRGV School of Medicine faculty on September 2016 as an assistant professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences, Division of Neuroscience. Dr. Torres-Reveron received a bachelor’s in science from the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey. She completed a Ph.D. in neural sciences and behavior from the State University of New York, Health Sciences Center at Brooklyn followed by post-doctoral training in neuroanatomy and neuroendocrinology from the Weill Cornell College of Medicine. At Cornell, she worked with Dr. Teresa Milner on the colocalization of opioid peptides and estrogen receptors in the brain. In 2012, she joined the faculty at Ponce Health Sciences University in Puerto Rico, where she taught physiology, neuroscience and started her research in the animal model of endometriosis. It was during her second year at Ponce that Dr. Torres-Reveron received her K07 award to examine the role of the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis in the development of endometriosis. She currently studies the use of non-traditional approaches such as environmental enrichment to reduce the progression of endometriosis. Due to her interest in mind-body approaches and complementary medicine, on 2016 she received a certification on Integrated Health from the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine. She enjoys training graduates as well as undergraduate students, and is passionate about promoting women’s health.

THALIA MORIN, B.A.

Ms. Thalia Morin-Reyna has a background in medical/nutritional anthropology. She worked in various research and community projects in public health and has presented in local and national conferences. She was drawn to yoga and meditation after a physical injury and after experiencing the effectiveness of the two, became a meditation and yoga teacher. A seasoned yoga and meditation
instructor, Ms. Morin has led yoga and meditation classes, retreats, and workshops all over the U.S., Mexico and Cuba. She is an occupational therapy graduate student and she integrates her academic knowledge in her yoga and meditation classes.

ANDREA LERMA, B.S.N.

Texas Woman’s University MSN Psychiatric Nursing Post masters FNP Texas A&M Corpus Christi Taught Nursing at both BSN and ADN programs Work history Education, Consultation, Management, and last 20 years working in prescriptive management of Outpatient and Inpatient clinical setting patients. Last 12 years at Rio Grande State Center providing care to patients. Advocate 29 years for Texas Peer Assistance for Nursing.

KOKO AUNG, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.P.

Dr. KoKo Aung is the assistant vice president for Faculty Affairs of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso and the associate dean for Faculty Affairs of the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine. Dr. Aung received his medical degree from Rangoon University Medical College and MPH degree from the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health. He completed the Internal Medicine Residency at Temple University School of Medicine/St. Luke’s University Hospital where he served as chief medical resident. He is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the National Board of Public Health Examiners. He received training on conduct of systematic reviews and meta-analysis at Tufts University School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, and the U.S. Cochrane Center, and training on outcome research at Harvard School of Public Health. He conducts and publishes systematic reviews and meta-analyses. He taught evidence synthesis, meta-analysis, and systemic reviews in the MPH program, Master of Science in Clinical Investigation Program, and Clinical Safety and Effectiveness Training Program at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA), and the Society of General Internal Medicine (GSIM) Scientific Meetings. He directed the courses on Clinical Epidemiology, Informatics, and Advanced Evidence-based Medicine in the UTHSCSA. He is a member of the Cochrane Collaboration, a sentinel reader of the McMaster Online Rating of Evidence System, and a member of the U.S. Medical Licensing Examination Step 3 Test Materials Development Committee. He chairs the Up-to-date® Review Leadership Committee of the SGIM. He also has considerable leadership experience in overseeing academic departments, undergraduate and graduate medical education programs, and developing new educational programs in academic health centers in multiple institutions of higher learning in Texas.

PEDRO RUIZ, M.D.

Dr. Pedro Ruiz holds a medical degree from the University of Paris Medical School (Sorbonne), Paris, France (1964). His medical faculty affiliations include: professor emeritus, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University, New York City; clinical professor, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas (1981-1993); clinical professor, University of Texas Medical School at Houston (1993-2010); professor emeritus, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. He held the following presidential positions: American College of Psychiatrists (2000-2001); American Association for Social Psychiatry
Dr. Ruiz has been the recipient of 96 academic awards and honors for his work in the field of psychiatry and addiction medicine. His educational contributions include the following: a member of 56 editorial boards; 283 published original articles and editorials; 28 published books; 120 published book chapters; 58 published books reviews; invited to 270 grand rounds and invited lectures, and 514 presentations at national and international congresses.

MARSHA GRIFFIN, M.D., B.S.N., M.P.H.

Dr. Marsha Griffin is clinical professor of pediatrics at the UTRGV School of Medicine. She also is the director of the Division of Child and Family Health, which is working for health equity for all children along the border, including homeless children. She is the co-founder and director of Community for Children, a social justice and advocacy elective for upper-level medical students, residents and fellows. Through Community for Children, Dr. Griffin collaborates with staff at the Office of Refugee Resettlement immigrant children’s shelters for unaccompanied immigrant children. In addition, she works with legal organizations to provide services to immigrant children and families, and teams up with community-based organizations that work with the poor along the border. Dr. Griffin continues to write and speak nationally about her concerns for the children and families of this region and those who pass through.

ROSE M. PONES, R.N., B.S.N., M.P.H.

Ms. Rosa M. Pones, a Rio Grande Valley native, obtained her B.S.N. at Beth El College of Nursing, which is part of the University of Colorado. She also obtained her master’s degree in public health from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health in December 2005. She has worked as a floor nurse in postpartum, as a charge nurse in the following areas: labor and delivery, postpartum, newborn nursery, pediatrics and medical surgical units. She was also the area manager supervisor for a home health agency and the director of the surgical unit at Valley Baptist Medical Center. She has approximately 18 years of experience in being a school nurse at the elementary, junior and high school levels. For the past four years she has been the administrator for health services at Brownsville Independent School District, which has 59 schools, supervising 64 RN’s, 9 LVN’s, 27 health aides, one CPR instructor, three full-time office staff and one part-time office staff. She volunteers in Brownsville with different organizations and has organized multiple health awareness fairs and presentations for the Point Isabel School District and Brownsville Independent School District. Her mission is to promote school nursing as a specialty because school nurses are a necessity in schools, and they make a difference in a student’s life. School nurses no longer are just for first aid, they are managing different chronic conditions, decreasing hospital admissions, increasing attendance and academic success, and decreasing parents’ work absenteeism. The school nurses are an asset to the school districts by saving lives, reducing medication errors, liability and precious time to principals, teachers and support staff.
DIANA E. CLOUGH, B.S.

Ms. Diana E. Clough is a homeless coordinator for Brownsville ISD. She received her Bachelor of Science from The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College. Her career with the district started as a paraprofessional in 1989 and she became a teacher in 2001. Her passion is to serve the homeless children and youth with dignity. She strives to provide services within the school district and utilizes community resources to provide support and stability to homeless families. She was named a Building Community Hero by the Building Community Workshop based in Dallas, Texas. The organization recognizes people that inspire by striving to bring greater economic, social and environmental justice in their communities. Ms. Clough is very active in her professional and social life. She volunteers and continually builds relationships to enrich the lives of impoverished and the less fortunate children of Brownsville, Texas.

ERIC GRAYSON, PHARM. D.

Dr. Eric Grayson received his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Texas at Austin in 1985 and his Pharm. D. from the University of Texas at Austin in 2002. He is a clinical assistant professor with Texas A&M University Health Science Center in the Department of Pharmacy Practice at Rangel College of Pharmacy and a member of the Practitioner Faculty with the University of Texas at Austin. He lectures at the Rangel College of Pharmacy in Kingsville on medical ethics, infectious disease, toxicology, bioterrorism, gastrointestinal, and urological diseases, and diseases of the eye. Dr. Grayson is also an active member of the Professional Affairs Council of the Texas Society of Health System Pharmacists in Round Rock. His practice of pharmacy is in acute care general medicine at Valley Baptist Medical Center in Harlingen, Texas. His research interests include medication reconciliation processes, transitions of care, medication dosing in the elderly, and pharmacy informatics. Dr. Grayson has worked as the director of pharmacy at Solara Healthcare in Harlingen and Brownsville Texas; department manager of the Home Infusion Therapy Pharmacy at Valley Baptist Medical Center; director of pharmacy of the Home Infusion Pharmacy with Cardinal Health; and is currently the managing consultant at I.C. Pharmacy Services in Harlingen, Texas.

JUAN CASTRO, M.D.

Dr. Juan Castro is the interim vice chair at Texas A&M University Health Science Center Rangel College of Pharmacy in Kingsville, Texas. He is the founder of Fe Medical Services, P.L.L.C, a clinic in Corpus Christi, Texas, that specializes in the healthcare of the uninsured. In 1984, he obtained a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Texas at Austin and in 1988 a medical degree from Texas A&M University. He finished his residency in family medicine from the Corpus Christi Family Residency Program at Christus-Spohn in 1991. In 2000, he received a Master in Business Administration from the University of Houston-Clear Lake. From 2000–2008, he was the director of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center Coastal Bend Health Education Center in Corpus Christi where he developed multiple public health programs for the Coastal Bend area, such as diabetes education, medication assistance, and health careers recruitment programs. As healthcare giver for patients without insurance, he also manages patients with chronic pain who have no access to expensive pain medications or pain specialists, thus managing patients with available medications while trying to avoid opioid use.
CARMEN ZORRILLA, M.D.

Dr. Carmen Zorrilla is a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine and is certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the American Academy of HIV Medicine. She has experience in both OB-GYN and HIV-related research, and is currently part of the group of examiners for the American Oral Board of OB-GYN (ABOG) and past residency program director for the UPR OB-GYN program. Dr. Zorrilla also established the first group prenatal care program in Puerto Rico (Centering Pregnancy) with funds from the Innovation Center of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the first Spanish Centering Program outside mainland U.S., which has helped reduce preterm births and low birth weight among infants born of women enrolled in group prenatal care at the University Hospital. She has additionally provided expertise in the development of a prenatal care educational video (Spanish) distributed by Kimberly-Clark. Dr. Zorrilla also serves as a consultant for diverse national and international organizations including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Agency for Health Research Quality (AHRQ), and others. She is a former member of the Office of Women’s Health Advisory Committee and the CDC/HRSA AIDS and STD Advisory Committee (CHAC).

NORMA CAVAZOS, J.D.

Dr. Norma Cavazos is a border specialist with 28 years of experience in social services. She started her social service career in the Office of Eligibility with Texas Health & Human Services Commission. After which, she was promoted to the Department of Family and Protective Services as a child protective services specialist working with neglected and abused children and families. She moved on to work for several years with Tropical Texas Mental Health and Mental Retardation offering support to mental health patients. She served under the Cameron County Juvenile Justice System working with juveniles and families. She then advanced as a guardianship specialist and regional guardianship supervisor with the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services working with the elderly and disabled. Dr. Cavazos has served for several years as a border specialist with the Office of Border Affairs in the Center for Elimination of Disproportional and Disparities at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. She collaborates with all organizations to bring health services to a vast array of populations like colonia residents, the underserved and very hard to reach residents of South Texas. She mentors undergraduate and graduate level students majoring in social work, psychology, pre-med, as well as medical students. Dr. Cavazos is a mental health first aid trainer and serves on several advisory boards, task forces and coalitions including the Cameron County Mental Health Task Force and holds a doctorate degree in law, a bachelor’s degree in mass communications, and an associate’s degree in sociology and journalism. Dr. Cavazos is a volunteer advocate with the American Red Cross in the “Restoring Family Links” project representing the Texas Gulf Coast Region and National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. She also works with undocumented minors as a child advocate at The Young Center.
Nearby Hotels

Double Tree Suites by Hilton in McAllen
1800 S 2nd St.
McAllen, TX 78503
1-800-939-9299 / 956-686-3000
Amenities: Indoor pool, complimentary breakfast and Wi-Fi, restaurant, bar/lounge, and fitness facilities. This hotel is near the airport in McAllen, shuttle service available.

Drury Suites McAllen
300 W Expressway 83,
McAllen, TX 78501
1-800-378-7946/ 956-682-3222
Amenities: Outdoor pool, fitness facilities, business center, dry cleaning/laundry services, complimentary Wi-Fi, kitchen area, this hotel is near the airport in McAllen.

Holiday Inn Express & Suites
3801 South Highway 281 Edinburg, TX 78539
956-378-9955
Amenities: Outdoor pool, fitness facilities, business center, dry cleaning/laundry services, complimentary hot breakfast and Wi-Fi. Manager’s reception 5:30–7:00 pm.

Drury Inn Suites
612 W Expressway 83
McAllen, TX 78501
956-687-5100
Amenities: Outdoor pool, fitness facilities, business center, dry cleaning/laundry services, complimentary hot breakfast and Wi-Fi.
Kickback hour 5:30–7:00 pm
This hotel is near the McAllen airport.

Casa De Palmas Renaissance McAllen Hotel
101 N Main Street,
McAllen, TX 78501
1-866-678-6350 / 956 631-1101
Amenities: Outdoor pool, fitness facilities, complimentary Wi-Fi, restaurant, bar/lounge, meeting rooms, business center, roundtrip airport shuttle. This hotel is near the airport in McAllen.

Courtyard by Marriott McAllen Airport
2131 S 10th Street,
McAllen, TX 78503
956-668-7800
Amenities: Outdoor pool, fitness facilities, complimentary Wi-Fi, restaurant, bar/lounge, meeting room, business center, dry cleaning/laundry service. Complimentary breakfast Saturday and Sunday.

Staybridge Suites McAllen
620 Wichita Avenue
McAllen, TX 78503
1-800490-6129 / 956-213-7829
Amenities: Free airport shuttle, near the La Plaza Mall, Complimentary breakfast, outdoor seasonal pool, fitness facilities, business center, and dry cleaning / laundry services.

Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott McAllen Airport
2117 South 10th Street, McAllen, TX 78503
956-971-9444
Amenities: Complimentary continental breakfast, indoor pool, fitness facilities, business center, dry cleaning / laundry services, complimentary Wi-Fi.

Airports

McAllen/Miller International Airport (MFE)
2500 S Bicentennial Blvd., McAllen, TX 78520
956-681-1500

Valley International Airport (HRL) Harlingen, Texas
3002 Heritage Way, Harlingen, TX 78550
956-430-8600