

CENTER FOR HEALTH INNOVATION

NEW MEXICO'S PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2020



Hidalgo County Health Kids Health Communities'
Beth Cox and CHI Executive Director Susan Wilger
at the 2020 New Mexico State Legislature.

ABOUT

This annual report covers the activities conducted by the Center for Health Innovation (CHI) and its programs from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

CONTENT

The information in this report was compiled by our staff and summarized by our communications project specialist, Kendra Milligan. Photographs are by CHI staff or made available by our partners.

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MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT



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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The past year, 2020, was unusual for everyone on both a personal and professional level. In addition to navigating through one of the worst pandemics in history, we witnessed and experienced social unrest, racial injustice and the forces of a politically divided nation. The past year created a heightened awareness to the meaning of “public health”. Racism and the pandemic joined the ranks of the opioid epidemic as our nation’s latest public health emergencies. And yet, despite the challenges, fear and mistrust, leaders at all levels--from our neighborhoods to our state and nation--came together to provide relief, comfort, assistance and healing.

I witnessed strength, innovation and resiliency firsthand through the actions of the CHI team and the many individuals, groups and communities they work with.

From their new, safe, home offices the CHI team quickly pivoted programs to ensure that goals were met and customers were served. We became experts at using social media, YouTube, and video conferencing. We got to know each other’s families and pets.

Our NMCDC team rallied to create and disseminate information and maps on COVID-19 and its impacts on the health and well-being of populations and communities; at times creating dashboards for local communities to better plan their response and relief efforts.

Our food pantry volunteers in Hidalgo County worked long hours to open “pop-up” food distribution sites and find additional funding to purchase more food for the growing number of hungry families.



SUSAN WILGER

CHI Executive Director

Our Area Health Education Centers worked with local volunteers to put together and distribute hundreds of COVID safety kits to individuals in southern New Mexico.

Our UPDATE NM team developed and distributed new materials to inform healthcare providers about changing and new regulations and practices for opioid prescribing and pain treatment.

Our prevention team conducted on-line classes for youth to build their resiliency skills and launched new, brief media events to raise parent awareness of youth substance and ways to reduce risk and increase youth resilience during these trying times.

CHI teams hosted virtual suicide prevention training for community members.

Our advocacy team partnered with other public health advocates to develop and support public policy that addresses both the immediate needs of those most impacted by the pandemic and the underlying structural issues that contribute to the blatant health disparities.

As I reflect back on 2020, I am extremely thankful to the CHI team, our board members, partners, funders and all others who value and support the work and mission of CHI. I am especially grateful to all of our community coalition members, advisory groups and volunteers, because we could not do our work without them.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Wilger". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue rectangular background.

SUSAN WILGER

Executive Director

IN MEMORIAMs

Gerald 'Jerry' Montoya

In 2020 CHI mourned the passing of our friend and colleague Jerry Montoya. Jerry was a loved and highly respected Health Promotion Manager for the Northwest Region at the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH). Jerry was full of compassion for people and communities and was passionate about public health. He was an awesome mentor, visionary and leader. Jerry helped to bring together the initial group of folks who met to explore the possibility of having a Public Health Institute for our state. After two years of monthly meetings, the group asked CHI to be New Mexico's Public Health Institute. Jerry went on to serve on CHI's Leadership Team, which advises us on public health issues. We will miss him deeply.

Thomas Scharmen

In 2020 we also lost Tom Scharmen, founder of the New Mexico Community Data Collaborative (NMCDC) and NMDOH Community Epidemiologist. For many years Tom was ready and willing to assist with our requests for data, analysis, and mapping. CHI and Tom shared a deep understanding and appreciation of NMCDC as an innovative tool and resource. Tom knew that NMCDC needed a home where it could thrive and grow. He and his supervisor at the time, Jerry Montoya, asked CHI if we wanted to be that home. It was an immediate YES! We worked for over a year planning the transition of NMCDC to CHI. We were fortunate to create the future pathway for NMCDC and to allow Tom's creation and vision to live on. We are eternally grateful to spend the time with Tom that we did, and to benefit from his brilliance and his spirit.



Gerald 'Jerry' Montoya
1961-2020



Tom Scharmen
1950-2020

TO OUR SUPPORTERS

CHI would like to express our gratitude to our supporters, who gave our organization unwavering dedication during this our most harrowing year as we responded to the largest public health crisis to emerge this century - the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are grateful for the tireless efforts of our board: Dr. Magdaleno Manzanarez for his leadership as our board president; Frank Chaires for his fiscal support as vice president; Katy Estrada for her keen eye which has kept our financials sterling as Secretary and Treasurer; Dr. John Andazola for his dedication to bettering access to health care; A. Manuela McDonough for her tireless dedication to see the rural and underrepresented sectors are brought to the forefront of our work; Joaquin Baca for his insight into the complex equity issues our state faces; and John E. Kutinac for his dedicated support of our outreach efforts in southern New Mexico.

Also, we want to express our deep appreciation for our over 300 community advisors who donate their time on the 11 coalitions and councils which offer their expert insights into their communities' unique strengths and diverse challenges so that CHI can better serve New Mexico residents.

Finally, thank you to our talented and dedicated staff for facing the COVID-19 pandemic with an innovative spirit which accounts for our continued success as New Mexico's Public Health Institute.

Learn more about CHI at:



chi-phi.org



[centerhealthinnovation](https://www.facebook.com/centerhealthinnovation)



[chi_nmphi](https://twitter.com/chi_nmphi)

2020 CHI Advisory Groups

Cibola Substance Abuse
Prevention Coalition

FORWARD NM AHEC
Advisory Board

Grow Our Own Behavioral
Health Workforce
New Mexico

Hidalgo County Health
Council

Luna County Health Council's
Coalition Against Teen
Substance Use

Southern NM AHEC
Advisory Board

New Mexico Community
Data Collaborative Program
Advisory Group

NM Public Health
Leadership Team

Unified Prevention Coalition
for Doña Ana County

Understanding Provider
Demands and Advancing
Timely Evidence in
New Mexico

Youth Substance Abuse
Prevention Coalition of Grant
County

OVERVIEW

As New Mexico's designated Public Health Institute, the Center for Health Innovation (CHI) is dedicated to working with communities to advance health and social justice through innovative and effective policies and programs for all the residents in our state, and beyond.

How do we do this?

We engage with New Mexicans of all ages, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds to create informed solutions to the challenges facing New Mexico's residents. We accomplish this by offering a unique mix of cutting-edge research, community collaboration, innovative programs and health care workforce development.

Last year, we were informed by 11 local community coalitions from around the state, which were comprised of 326 individuals!

We were proud to receive continued funding from the U.S Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Rural Communities Opioid Response Program to engage 14 southern New Mexico counties to meet their prevention, treatment and recovery needs in a community-driven comprehensive assessment process.

New Mexico Department of Health funded an expansion to our academic detailing program to train health care providers regarding best practices for clients with non-cancerous pain management throughout the state.

CHI by the Numbers

1 State

2 Area Health
Education Centers

3 Prevention Programs

2 Health Councils

11 Community
Advisory Groups

33 Counties Covered

326 Local Advisors

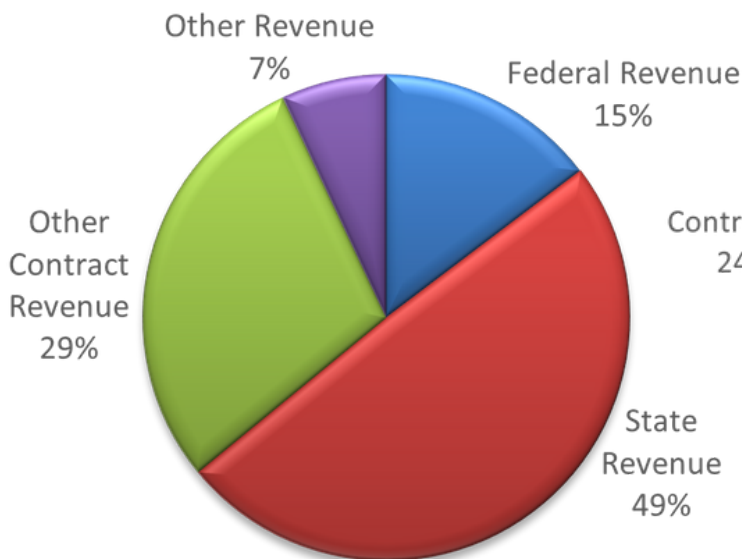
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

CHI has a diverse funding portfolio with support from the State of New Mexico, federal grants, private foundations, fee-for-service and other revenue generating contracts. In 2020 CHI managed about 26 different grants and contracts. Our fiscal year spans from January 1 to December 31.

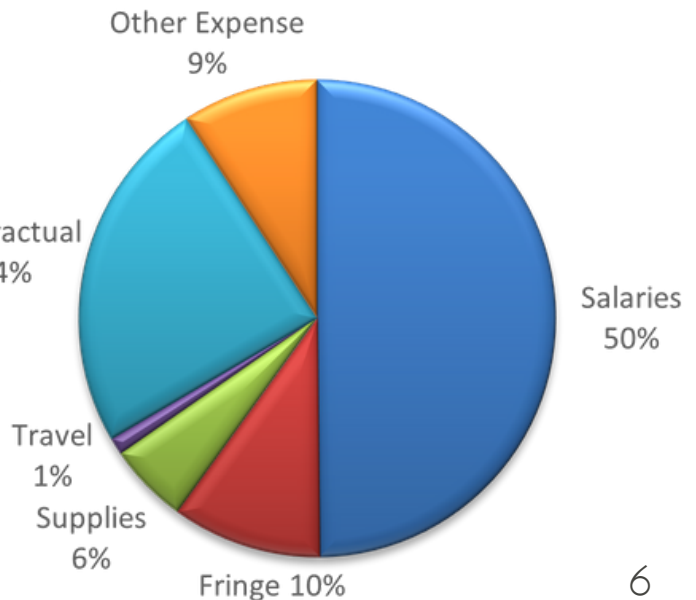
In Fiscal Year 2020, CHI generated \$1,845,872 in revenue; 17.2 percent increase over the previous year. A majority of our funds, 48 percent, were from state contracts. For the same period, CHI reported \$1,706,432 in expenses. A majority of our expenses, 50 percent, were staff salaries. CHI believes in giving back to our communities and accomplishes this by prioritizing people-on-the-ground staffing to better serve the diverse and unique populations found throughout New Mexico, and beyond.

For Fiscal Year 2020 CHI posted a net income of \$139,440.

FY2020 Revenue



FY2020 Expenses



ADVOCACY

In 2020 CHI was pleased to see our advocacy efforts as New Mexico's Public Health Institute score big wins for public health efforts state-wide including:

- Securing \$192,500 per year in recurring funds through the New Mexico Department of Health's (NMDOH) Public Health Division to support comprehensive health career programs and regional primary care training opportunities, which include Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) offices in Silver City, Las Cruces, Las Vegas and UNM in Albuquerque.
- \$150,000 in the FY2021 NMDOH's budget to support public access to accurate and timely neighborhood and small area data for health planning. Communities need real-time data to make informed decisions and for effective community and health planning. Small area data brings to light communities' unique health disparities, resource allocation, racial inequities, and vulnerable populations.

Also CHI and other public health advocates:

- Identified 5 key legislative priority areas, which include: 1) healthcare workforce development, 2) value and support Health Councils, 3) support for public access to accurate and timely neighborhood/small area data, 4) affordable health coverage for all New Mexicans and 5) Social Determinants of Health—specifically Food, Housing and Broadband.
- Presented to the NM Legislative Health and Human Services Interim Committee.
- Gathered data, collaborated with partners, planned and prioritized issues at the 2021 NM Legislative session.

Advocacy by the Numbers

1 State

2 Publications

5 Legislative
Priorities

\$342,500 in
State Funding
Secured

COVID-19

When COVID-19 pandemic emerged in New Mexico, forcing the state into a historic shutdown not experienced in over a century, CHI launched into action through its diverse programming to meet the needs of residents and health providers alike.

Many of CHI's advocacy efforts in 2020 resulted from the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, particularly the severe impact on state's underserved populations and communities of color. COVID-related advocacy efforts focused in the areas of workforce development, affordable health care, broadband infrastructure, evictions and affordable housing and access to food.

With the Hidalgo County Health Council, we convened quarterly meetings with local leaders to discuss current COVID-19 response efforts, barriers and needs. Through these discussions, CHI secured a \$1,000 grant from the New Mexico Foundation for food and personal hygiene supplies for the Hidalgo County emergency food pantry. (See Food Security for more details)

Our New Mexico Community Data Collaborative team of epidemiologists, analysts and public health workers developed publicly accessible maps reflecting the COVID-19 case rates and related health and social determinants factors to provide insight for community-level planning on infectious disease risk and protective factors.

Our UPDATE NM program created a supplement to the *Academic Detailing Provider Guide: Best Practices for Pain Management during a Pandemic*, providing best practices regarding pain management for health care providers.

COVID-19 Response by the Numbers

1 State

1 Publication

Statewide Map on
COVID-19 Risk and
Protective Factors

Secured Data on
NM Courts Evictions
for Public Information

4,000 Pounds Monthly
of Additional
Food Distributed

436 Households Fed

CHI worked with community leaders from Grant, Sierra, Socorro, Catron and Valencia Counties on place-based healthcare workforce development planning. The work resulted in two publications and laid the groundwork to open opportunities for clinical supervision via telehealth for behavioral health professionals (see 2021 NM Legislature – HB125). Both of these publications are available by download on our website.

- *Policy Goals to Improve Behavioral Health Needs of Individuals, Employers and Communities in Rural New Mexico*
- *Policy Goals to Support the Healthcare Workforce in Healthy Aging Communities*

Below: Western New Mexico University's Community Health Workers students visited Gila Regional Medical Center's Emergency Medical Services to donate COVID Care Packs. FORWARD NM Area Health Education Center helped coordinate the program.



HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Our two Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), FORWARD NM AHEC and Southern AHEC, serve 17 counties in southern New Mexico. These AHECs work to expand and retain the health care workforce through education, promotion and support.

Because a majority of our workforce development efforts were conducted in-person, the COVID-19 pandemic - and resulting school closures - challenged us to take new and innovative avenues to continue to reach our communities. We learned to virtually connect with classrooms and conduct trainings for community members through a variety of online platforms.

With a grant from the American College of Rheumatology, we were able to offer bi-lingual trainings in southern New Mexico and community health workers - 113 people total - to increase their understanding of the Lupus, a long-term autoimmune disease in which the immune system becomes hyperactive and attacks normal, healthy tissue.

Our partnership with Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine helped us host bilingual trainings on HIV/AIDS and suicide prevention - called Question, Persuade Refer (QPR) - for the another 174 community members, and 93 percent reported sharing the information they received with a friend, family or community member. This was accomplished with a grant from the National Library of Medicine.

AHEC by the Numbers

17 Counties

12 Student
Rotations/Residencies

119 Dream Makers
Health Career Club
Participants

287 Community
Members Trained

395 Health Career 101
Participants

639 Participants at
Health Career Fairs

Our AHEC staff worked with schools districts to find new venues to reach students who were cloistered at home to share with them the opportunities and benefits of pursuing a career in health care. We were able to reach 395 students with our Health Careers 101 presentations, which bring people working in specific health care fields to share their career journey and share with students tips on how to pursue such a career themselves.

Next, our AHECs were still able to offer 12 current and aspiring college students chances to shadow health care professionals in their communities to experience the first-hand details of the profession during a pandemic, which proved to be one of our most challenging endeavors yet to assure both our students and the public were COVID-Safe.

Finally our AHECs are dedicated to expanding the knowledge base of our current health care professionals and communities, by offering cutting-edge training on topics that address the needs of our state like Question Persuade Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention and the Opioid Pain Management and Opioid Use Disorder Conference in Ruidoso.

In 2021, look for our AHEC staff to distribute Mask Up! Kits throughout southern New Mexico thanks to CARES Act funding to help prevent or limit spread of COVID-19 through community-wide education. The grant also will help fund mask distribution to rural and underserved communities called #LandOfEnMASKment.

PREVENTION

CHI administers four local prevention coalitions in Cibola, Doña Ana, Grant, and Luna Counties. These coalitions work closely with locally-lead community coalitions to change environmental norms and institutional policies to prevent adverse behaviors in youth. Each coalition's efforts are tailored through vigorous yearly assessment to focus on the unique strengths and challenges faced by their specific community. No two programs are alike, just like no two counties are alike!

With our staff working from the safety of their homes during the COVID-pandemic, we were still able to accomplish our goals to prevention youth substance misuse through a variety of innovative outreach efforts.

The Cibola Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition concluded its grant cycle in September after coordinating for over five years with the community. Their efforts made safe disposal of medications available in the county and decreased self-reported youth alcohol and prescription medication misuse.

Our Unified Prevention Coalition for Doña Ana County established their county's Youth Coalition, which held its first meeting in August 2020. Along with that effort, the Coalition was able to host a virtual summer camp for 50 teens to learn how substance misuse can effect their long-term health and wellness. The UP! Coalition also published a bilingual handbook on prescription medication safety for families called, "A Handbook for Keeping Families Safe from Prescription Pain Killers/Un Manual Para Proteger A Familias Del Peligro De Las Medicinas Recetadas Para El Dolor. Both versions are free and available for download on our website.

Prevention Coalitions

Cibola Substance Abuse
Prevention Coalition

Luna County Health
Council's Coalition Against
Teen Substance Use

Unified Prevention
Coalition for Doña Ana
County

Youth Substance Abuse
Prevention Coalition of
Grant County

Our Youth Substance Abuse Coalition of Grant County (YSAPC) went one step further with a virtual training on how to use naloxone, a powerful anti-opioid treatment that reverses overdoses, for International Overdose Awareness Day on Aug 31. This coalition also hosted two trainings on safe medication storage to area seniors and supplied them with medication lock boxes so their families will be safe from medication misuse.

The Coalition Against Teens using Substances (CATS) in Luna County partnered with the DWI Council on a media campaign "Not In My House" in an effort to dissuade parents from serving alcohol to minors in their homes. Over 23,000 listeners tuned in to hear local teens discuss youth access to alcohol.

Our four programs also partner closely with national, state, regional and local law enforcement to host DEA Drug Take Back Days, especially in rural communities where chances to dispose of medications safely might be available towns away.

This year proved particularly challenging with the first Drug Take Back Day that was ever cancelled. Our programs ramped-up their efforts in October when Drug Take Back Day returned with drive-thru options. Our coalitions helped support four new rural locations to participate and aided in collecting 934 pounds of medications that were safely disposed of by the DEA.

For 2021, look for our coalitions to focus even more on their communities as they create local statistical reports, with the aid of the New Mexico Community Data Collaborative, on substance use and misuse in their respective counties to better serve residents unique needs.

Prevention by the Numbers

4 Counties

153 Local Advisors

50 Virtual Summer
Camp Students

595 Medication
Disposal Bags

934 Pounds of
Medication Collected

115,739 Community
Members Reached

NEW MEXICO COMMUNITY DATA COLLABORATIVE

The New Mexico Community Data Collaborative (NMCDC) collects and develops data and statistics and transforms it into visual maps to promote community assessment, health in all policies and participatory decision making by communities. This proved an invaluable program to our public health institute as the COVID pandemic struck in Spring of 2020.

Our team of epidemiologists, analysts and public health workers raced to develop publicly accessible maps reflecting the COVID-19 case rates and related health and social determinant factors to provide insight for community-level planning on infectious disease risk and protective factors. NMCDC also maintained an active project with the City of Albuquerque's Office of Equity and Inclusion to view indicators at small area and zip code geographies.

In 2020, NMCDC worked with 10 New Mexico Health Councils, 5 County Substance Prevention Coalitions, 4 Community-based Organizations and 2 Health Promotion Regions in the State to gather data specific to their areas and unique needs.

Because of the moratorium on evictions due to COVID-19, NMCDC was able to inspect NM Courts evictions filed from 2017 to 2020, which is currently being processed. Look for the updated maps on eviction to be available by the Spring of 2021. Also NMCDC will offer more outreach technical assistance, data access and mapping literacy training in the coming year throughout the state.

NMCDC by the Numbers

1 State

55 Active Mappers

58 Local Advisors

169 Datasets Collected
or Updated

175 Maps Published

RURAL COMMUNITY OPIOID RESPONSE PROGRAM

In August 2020, CHI successfully completed a one-year planning grant for Rural Community Opioid Response Program (RCORP) for 16 counties in southern New Mexico funded by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The following month, CHI was awarded a three-year RCORP implementation grant to put those plans into action in 14 rural counties in New Mexico.

The effort provides resources to these counties and focuses on 15 core activities to improve access and services around prevention, treatment and recovery of Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

The Consortium working on this multi-year grant consists of local, regional and state partners who are collaborating to fill major gaps in SUD services in Catron, Chaves, Cibola, De Baca Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Lea, Lincoln, Luna, Otero, Roosevelt, Sierra, and Socorro Counties - an area with a combined population of over 413,000, effecting roughly 20 percent of the state's population.

Throughout the recruitment and convening of various partners, community members, and individuals from many different backgrounds and expertise, we have had, and hope to continue to have, the unique opportunity to “connect the dots” between programs and initiatives that are too often siloed.

RCORP by the Numbers

1 Needs Assessment

16 Counties

29 Consortium &
Community Advisors

A major activity of the RCORP Implementation project in 2021 will be to work in partnership with the NM Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS), Western New Mexico University (WNMU) and employers to improve the capacity of SUD/ODU clinical and social service providers to provide Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and integrate certified behavioral health workers into patient care teams.

The program plans to train several staff as Practice Facilitators. Practice Facilitation, also referred to as quality improvement coaching, is an approach that focuses on building organizational capacity for continuous improvement. This practice has been used successfully in the implementation of various models, such as patient centered medical homes and care team models and is recognized as an evidence-based practice by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Further, RCORP also expects to recruit up to 10 provider organizations that are interested in improving their capacity to recruit, train and mentor interdisciplinary teams or improve on-the-job training practices. Primary health and behavioral health integrated care has been recognized as a best practice for well over a decade. And yet, organizations still struggle with operationalizing interdisciplinary treatment teams. The trained practice facilitators will provide coaching and mentoring to the chosen provider organizations around best practices.

UPDATE NM

After its inception 2019, CHI continued to provide Academic Detailing, a service that delivers the most current, evidence-based practices for pain management to licensed healthcare prescribers statewide in 2020. The program is now called Understanding Provider Demands and Advancing Timely evidence in New Mexico (UPDATE NM) and due to it's success our funder, New Mexico Department of Health's Epidemiology and Response Division, increased funding to expand the program statewide.

By providing this service, providers are directly involved in improving patient care and outcomes, including reducing risk for opioid overdoses.

UPDATE NM trained 8 individuals to provided academic detailing for 39 healthcare providers during 82 one-on-one educational sessions in 2020.

Pilot program participant, Dr. Salvador Adame-Zambrano, MD, Family Medicine Doctor at Memorial Medical Center in Las Cruces said, "UPDATE NM has given me the confidence to show patients that they have other options to treat their pain and goals for their treatment without opioids. If I rate how confident I am [communicating with patients around realistic expectations of pain management]on a scale one to ten, I would say I am a nine or ten."

In the spirit of ensuring the information offered is relevant, CHI created a supplement to the Academic Detailing Provider Guide: Best Practices for Pain Management during a Pandemic, providing best practices, tips and tricks for our current situation.

UPDATE NM by the Numbers

8 Academic Detailers

39 Health Providers
Educated

82 One-On-One
Sessions

97 Hours of
CMEs Awarded

FOOD AND PUBLIC HEALTH

One of CHI's main public health concerns is access to essential, nutritionally adequate and safe food for everyone. This year's pandemic, and subsequent economic downturn leaving millions unemployed, made food insecurity a priority in the rural areas of the state, especially in Hidalgo County where we staff the county Health Council and staff three food pantries.

Located in the southwest corner of the state, Hidalgo County is the size of Connecticut with a population of only 4,240. Over 25 percent of residents live in poverty, and when COVID-19 struck the community and our staff jumped into action. We convened quarterly meetings with local leaders to discuss current COVID-19 response efforts, barriers and needs including securing a \$1000 grant from the New Mexico Foundation to get food and personal hygiene supplies for the county's emergency food pantry.

We also contract with Roadrunner Food Bank to distribute food at three mobile pantries in Hidalgo County: Lordsburg, Animas and Cotton City. In 2020, the Roadrunner Food Bank and local leaders were able to secure additional funding to meet the record demand for food. Any extra food not distributed through the mobile food pantries was distributed in Virden.

From January to June 2020, we served an average of about 8,100 pounds of food to 359 household members per month, which rose from July to December to an average of about 12,000 pounds of food to 436 household members per month.

Food Security by the Numbers *(Monthly Average)*

436 Households Served

\$1,000 secured for the
emergency food pantry

1,308 People Fed

12,000 Pounds of
Food Distributed

HIDALGO COUNTY HEALTH COUNCIL

CHI serves as the fiscal agent and provides staffing for the Hidalgo County Health Council (HCHC). The HCHC stepped up efforts to coordinate local leaders and community during the pandemic by securing funding and food for the counties food pantries. With new staff on board, HCHC also began a campaign to increase residents' awareness of local mental health resources for a suicide prevention effort funded by the All Together New Mexico Fund through the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico. HCHC also partnered with the NM Health Promotion team to host virtual Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Trainings which focus on suicide prevention by giving residents the tools and resources to respond when someone expresses suicidal ideation.

NONPROFIT SUPPORT SERVICES

CHI offers support services to other nonprofits whose missions are unified with ours. Under contractual agreements, CHI provides fiscal, human resource management and communications support to the National Center for Frontier Communities (NCFC) and the New Mexico Primary Care Training Consortium (NMPCTC).

