

Bridge to Health Connects New Mexico Residents to Local Resources to Help Families Live Healthier Lives

Over 2,200 attend events in Las Cruces and Albuquerque; over 1,100 bags of groceries distributed to families

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Meeting people where they are is an important step to helping to close health care gaps in underserved communities. Bridge to Health, a newly created community health and wellness program, launched with this goal in mind. The program's mission is to help connect community members to local resources by bringing together a wide range of organizations providing access to vital services.

Bridge to Health is funded by Quest Diagnostics through its Quest for Health Equity (Q4HE) initiative, which focuses on improving health equity in underserved communities. Quest Diagnostics is the world's leading provider of diagnostic information services.

Bridge to Health hosted two events in December in Las Cruces and Albuquerque, New Mexico to help connect community members to health screenings, educational

resources, wellness testing and local services at no cost to them. Over 1,100 bags of groceries were distributed to families along with healthy recipes and grocery gift cards.

The events offered an array of local resources by bringing together a wide range of organizations providing access to vital services including dental and vision screenings, health insurance enrollment, COVID-19 vaccinations, and Blueprint for Wellness health screenings.

Nearly 300 attendees took advantage of this comprehensive screening which includes important biometrics like blood pressure; glucose and A1C testing, both important indicators for diabetes risk and diagnosis; as well as a comprehensive metabolic panel, lipid panel, and complete blood count. The personalized results provide powerful information highlighting strengths and risks to allow people to take control of their health.

“Access to health services is vital, especially as the pandemic caused many people to delay routine care,” said Mandell Jackson, Vice President and General Manager, Quest for Health Equity. “By joining forces with trusted community organizations, we dramatically increase our potential to address the needs of the community in a more comprehensive way.”

Over 2,200 people attended the events, including local volunteers from the community. The New Mexico Department of Health in partnership with the National Guard administered COVID-19 vaccinations to eligible adults and children. Free transportation to the events was offered and dozens of local organizations, were on-site to provide information on community services and programs. The events also included a Kids Zone with arts and crafts, balloon animals, and Wii fitness games.

One of the nearly 100 community programs in attendance was Ideas for Cooking and Nutrition (ICAN); a New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service program funded by Federal grants to provide nutrition education to SNAP-eligible audiences in New Mexico with a mission to inspire families to make healthy food and lifestyle choices and to make those choices possible by creating health-friendly communities.

“Too many communities across New Mexico lack access to essential resources like healthcare, affordable food, and safe housing,” said Donna Sauter, ICAN Director, New Mexico State University. “Making health care services available to all New Mexicans is a critical first step to improving the lives of and investing in the future of our communities. We must continue to work together to ensure that access to affordable and healthy food as well as safe housing is accessible to all residents in our great state.”

To learn more information and to access Bridge to Health's online services, visit www.bridgetohealth.com or www.bridgetohealth.com/es/ for the Spanish version of the website.

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