

Arizona's Women: Reducing Health Disparities

The Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW) (<http://sirow.arizona.edu>) currently partners with over 30 UA and community groups in Arizona to address health disparities among Arizona's women - with a specific focus on women of color and those who are resource-challenged, including those without health insurance. Well over 7,000 women have accessed SIROW community-based programs located at Mujer Sana and SIROW Central, both which provide easy access for participants. Unlike many health promotion programs, SIROW's programs are tied to a comprehensive evaluation that illuminates structural and individual contributors to health disparities while also informing on strategies that are acceptable, feasible, and effective.

In developing programs, SIROW not only uses data from prior projects but also looks to its university and community partners to identify issues that need to be addressed. One of SIROW's current projects, **Working Poor Mothers of Minors Project (MOMs)** (<http://sirow.arizona.edu/substanceabuse>) was envisioned when community leaders came to SIROW for help in addressing the lack of residential substance abuse treatment for women with children who are employed but without health insurance or access to drug treatment. A 3 year federally funded project that follows a long history of SIROW funded projects in this area, MOMs is currently in its second year. MOM's is a residential treatment, prevention, and recovery support program for pregnant and postpartum women and children providing: (1) screening/assessment; (2) substance abuse treatment; (3) PTSD/trauma treatment; (4) women-centered health education; (5) children's services; (6) family supports; (7) case management; and (8) program evaluation. To date MOMs has served 86 mothers, their children, and other family members.

Collaborating with SIROW is (1) The Haven - a mothers and children residential substance abuse treatment; (2) Arizona's Children Association - a child welfare and behavioral health agency serving families and children; (3) Compass Affordable Housing - a behavioral health agency dedicated to providing low-cost affordable housing, and (4) Community Partnership of Southern Arizona - the regional behavioral health administration for publicly-funded substance abuse and mental health dollars in southern Arizona. Synergistically, these agencies strategically implement the MOMs, while a Recovery-Oriented System of Care Consortium comprised of leaders from various service fields (UA-Department of Family & Community Medicine, El Rio Health Center, Compass Health Care, Juvenile Court Services, Adult Probation, Child Protective Services, Pima Community College, and others) foster system linkages and coordination and promote program sustainability. Moreover, UA student engagement and interns from the Tucson component of ASU School of Social Work contribute to the project's success.

MOMs enrolls working women living below the poverty level who do not qualify for state-funded health care or drug treatment services filling an unmet need by providing flexible residential substance abuse treatment while the women continue to work. Preliminary outcome data suggests positive outcomes including reductions in substance use and mental health problems, increases in parenting skills and child custody, and improved living conditions. While this data demonstrates success, perhaps success is best expressed by one of MOMs first participants:

Marana mother recovers from meth addiction with "MOMs" program

<http://www.kvoa.com/news/marana-mother-recovers-from-meth-addiction-with-moms-program/>