

School Creates International Partnership to Study Health Care Needs of Oregon Migrant Workers

Thanks to the generous support of the Oregon Community Foundation, we will kick off an international partnership this summer which will have a strong and positive impact on our community.

The School of Social Work will collaborate with Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center and The Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla (UPAEP) to address the health care needs of migrant and seasonal workers in Oregon.

By 2025, Oregon expects to gain about 197,000 residents through international migration resulting in a 184% increase in the Latino population. An additional 10,000 Mexicans arrive in Oregon each year. Due to the lack of access to health care, this highly productive community has some of our worst health outcomes.

This project will pilot test innovative health education and self-management interventions, provide culturally appropriate best practice guidelines, add significant knowledge about the incidence of chronic disease among the Oregon farm worker population, and contribute to the education of culturally responsive health and behavioral health service providers.

“We are very excited to work with the staff from Portland State University’s School of Social Work on this program. With this program we will be able to develop and implement new popular education strategies to help our patients learn about the health issues that are affecting them. Additionally,



Photo provided by Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center, a non-profit organization providing health-care in Washington and Yamhill counties. Photographer Steve Hambuchen of Hambuchen Photography, <http://www.stevhambuchen.com/>.

the medical professionals from Mexico joining in this effort will help us undertake the first comprehensive health evaluation in the migrant farm worker camps of Washington County,” said Chris Shine, Interim Executive Director, Virginia Garcia Memorial Foundation.

The Health Worker Outreach Project begins with a seminar to bring students up to date in the latest research for working in multi-professional and multicultural health service delivery contexts. The second component will place UPAEP and M.S.W. students in teams at various Virginia Garcia clinics from July 2–August 3rd. Students will spend one day per week with the mobile clinic in the migrant camps, one day at an established clinic site, and one day collecting data on chronic health conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure, and depression.

Each student will complete 120 hours of work in the field for a total of 1,200 hours of service.

Principal Investigator of the project, Assistant Professor Dr. Ted Donlan, received his doctorate from Arizona State University School of Social Work in 2006 and joined the SSW faculty in the fall of 2006. Dr. Edgar Orea Cardoso from UPAEP will lead the student delegation from Mexico and Marco Polo Tellez de Vasso will co-teach the seminar.

“This will be a great opportunity for our students to develop their abilities to work across cultures and languages. I look forward to developing long-term collaborative relationships with my colleagues from Mexico,” said Dr. Donlan.

