

# Developing a Behavioral Health Career Pipeline for Latino Youth in Nebraska

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# Partners

## **Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska (BHECN)**

- BHECN was created by the Legislature in 2009 to address the shortage of trained behavioral health providers in rural and underserved areas.
- BHECN works to recruit & educate students in behavioral health fields and trains & retains professionals already in the workforce.

## **UNMC Center for Reducing Health Disparities**

- The Center's mission is to promote equity and social justice in health and health care by leading collaborative efforts to generate and disseminate evidence-based, policy-relevant solutions.





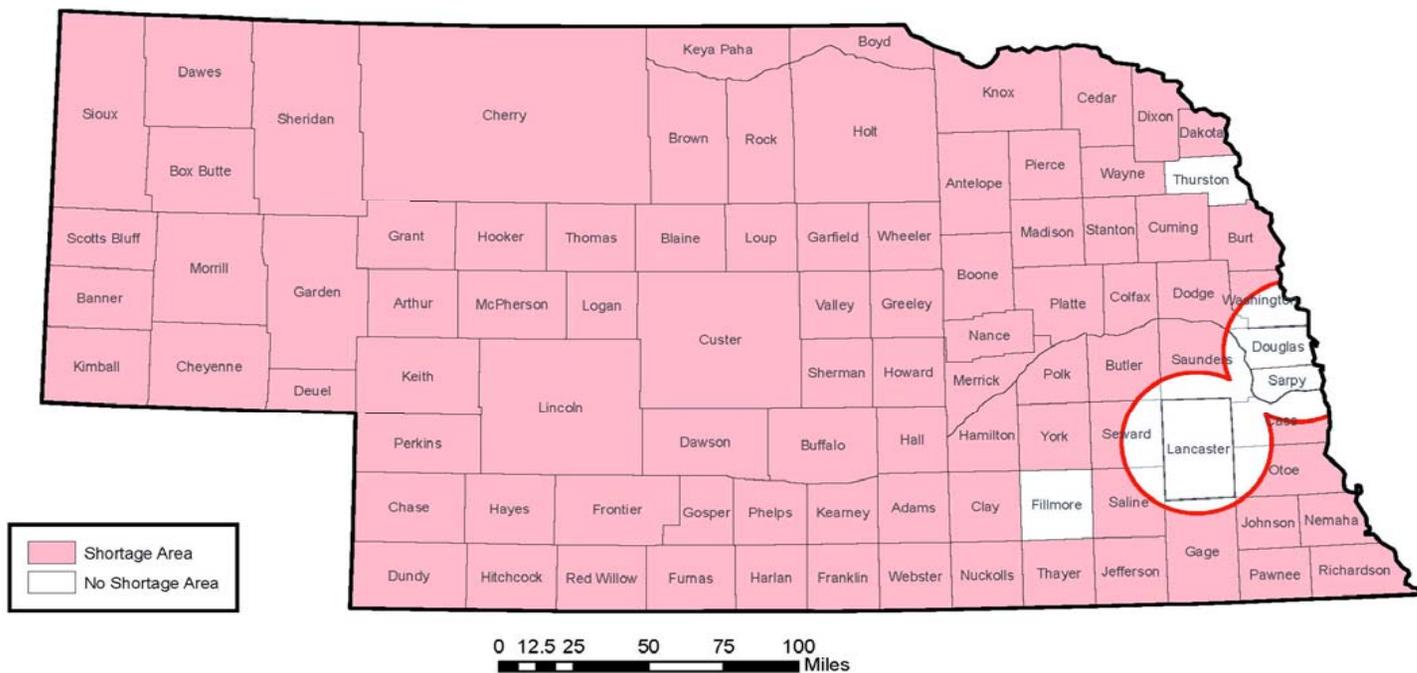
# Behavioral Health

**Behavioral health** is defined as how a person thinks, feels and acts when faced with life's situations.

- It is how people see themselves, their lives and the other people in their lives.
- It's how they evaluate their challenges and problems, and explore choices.



# Nebraska's Behavioral Health Shortage Areas



Source: Rural Health Advisory Commission  
DHHS - Nebraska Office of Rural Health  
Statewide Review: 2013  
Last Updated: July 2013

Cartography: Clark Sintek | Community & Regional Planning Intern | DHHS  
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# Healthcare Career Pipeline

Recruiting more minorities, especially Latinos, into behavioral health professions is critical given the increase in the Latino population through the country, but especially in “New Destination” states like Nebraska.<sup>1</sup>

Some best practices to grow the pipeline include:<sup>2</sup>

- Establish mentorship and leadership training opportunities to sustain and improve Latino Behavioral health workforce.
- Provide resources for students seeking education and training in behavioral health field.
- Ensure academic preparedness from K-16.
- Incorporate model High School Health & Human Service Academies.
- Create meaningful opportunities such as loan repayment, sponsored internships, scholarships.

SOURCES: (1) Ramos, A. et. al. (2013). Health Profile of Nebraska’s Latino Population. (2) Chapa, T. & Acosta, H. (2010). Movilizandonos por Nuestro Futuro: Strategic Development of a Mental Health Workforce for Latinos. Report for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health and the National Resource Center for Hispanic Mental Health.



# Recruiting Students: The BHECN Ambassador Program



- “Grow our own” approach based on the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) model
- Week-long **college conferences** started in 2010; switched to shorter program in 2015
- First **high school conference** held in 2013
- Focus on introducing rural students to behavioral health professions
- Provide mentorship opportunities and encourage students to consider behavioral health careers







# High School Ambassador South Omaha Conference

One full day of programming:  
March 6, 2015

25 students from 5 urban high schools participated:

- 7 Male
  - 17 Female
  
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade: 4
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Grade: 5
  - 11<sup>th</sup> Grade: 7
  - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade: 8
- 14 providers and faculty/community facilitators



# Agenda/Topics Discussed

- Stories from People with Lived Experiences
- Panel Discussion on Behavioral Health Careers (family medicine, psychiatry, nursing, counseling, substance abuse)
- “Mi Cultura Cura: Cultural Healing”
- Case Discussion Activity on Self-Harm (cutting)
- Table Top Discussions
  1. Bullying
  2. Suicide
  3. Teen Depression
  4. Substance Use and Abuse
  5. Healthy Relationships





# Evaluation

## What did you think?

- “I think after this I know I want to do family and marriage therapy”
- “I thought today was wonderful. It kept me very engaged and curious”
- “It is very uplifting to learn my interests in psychology is needed and I could help.”

## What did you feel?

- “More relieved because now I know the steps into helping other people”
- “I felt good being more aware of these mental health careers. It really opened my mind”
- “I feel very lucky to have the opportunity to learn more about a career field I am interested in”

## What are you going to do?

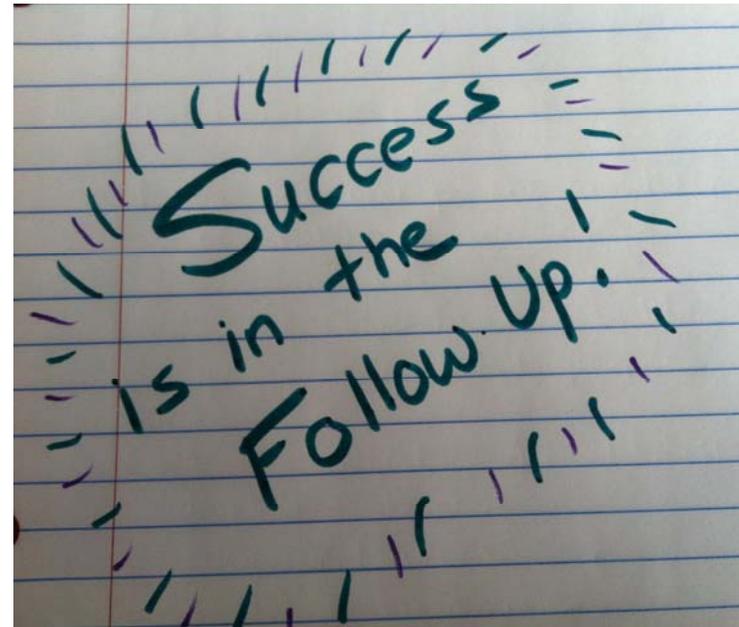
- “With the things that I learned today, I will be able to help people dealing with depression because I learned I can help”
- “I will keep following the path I am already on, to help as many people as I can by passing on the information learned”
- “Help out that person. Keep in contact with the people that I met today.”
- “I hope to network with the professionals and do more research on resources in our community.”
- “I’m going to be a psychologist”





# Follow-up Plan

- Some of the students will participate in planning next year's conference (Youth Advisory Group).
- Every student is tracked into college and we hope that once in college they will continue to participate in the college Ambassador program.
- Students have the opportunity to develop mentoring relationships with the College/Graduate students as well as with the professionals.



*Future programming will be determined by the Youth Advisory Group.*



# Future of Behavioral Healthcare Workforce





# Contact Information

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