

*Teaching and leading beyond the traditional
four classroom walls:
A nursing-led public health program to
improve early childhood outcomes*

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Community Background

- Ector County is one of the unhealthiest counties in the state of Texas
- Ranks 193 out of 244 in health behaviors, and 143 in health outcomes (this has steadily improved over the past 5 years)
- Community consists of 2 cities approximately 15 miles apart
- Population between both cities approximately 250,000



University Experience

- Nursing Program started August 2013
- Class cohort sizes—average 22 students
- 50% of students are first generation college students
- Public health clinicals historically clinically driven
- Meaningful public health experiences needed



First 5 Permian Basin

- Grant-funded, home visiting services for socioeconomically challenged families with children age 0 to 5
- Participation is voluntary and free
- Focus: parent child interactions, developmentally-centered parenting, family well being, health outcomes, assessment with resource connections and school readiness
- Housed within the College of Nursing, led by Assistant Professor



Early Development Instrument (EDI) outcomes

- Only 50% of kindergarteners are prepared for school in five key domains: social competence, emotional maturity, physical health and well-being, communication skills, and language and cognitive skills
- Study identified one target neighborhood with high vulnerability in terms of child performance and school performance
- Program outreach revised based on results



Student engagement & impact

- Shadowing during home visits
- Involvement in First 5 group connections with families and children
- Participation in large community events led by First 5
- Windshield assessment of various neighborhoods
- Focus on county health rankings, outcomes, and interventions
- Participation in broader community events:
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Hope for the Homeless
 - Real Talk-Substance Abuse
 - Harmony Home Champions for Children Conference
 - Kick off for Prevention (Child Abuse Awareness Month)
 - Disaster Drills





Reflection & Evaluation

- “my biggest take away has been that public health is completely integrated into ALL areas of nursing”
- “my biggest take away from this course is humility” I remember at one of the First 5 events serving food to attendees and disparaging about how irrelevant the role was to being a nurse. Throughout the other events, I began to realize how such a small effort and time affected the attendees and myself”
- Real life/true interpretation of population served, and overall community health and well-being



References

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