

# UC-Mexico Initiative

## Health Working Group

### Origins

The University of California – Mexico Initiative (UC – MX) is a collaboration between the National Autonomous University of Mexico (abbreviated UNAM), the National Council of Science and Technology (abbreviated CONACYT), and the University of California Office of the President (UCOP). The objective of the Initiative is to create and sustain a strategic and equitable alliance between Mexican institutions and the UC system. The Initiative aims to produce scientific knowledge in topics of common interest as well as offer education and training to the next generation of leaders.

More specifically, the Health Working Group (HWG) of the UC – MX was created to develop research in the three most critically important areas for both countries: diabetes, violence, and maternal/neo-natal health. Moreover, the HWG is producing two online certificate programs, one in regulatory sciences and the other in health leadership and management.

### Subgroups

**DIABETES:** This subgroup has three projects:

1. *Metformin Study:* A randomized clinical control trial that aims to evaluate a primary care intervention with people diagnosed with prediabetes. The study consists of either a lifestyle intervention (LI) or a LI with metformin for 2-3 years before developing Type II diabetes and other associated health problems.
2. *Retinopathy Study:* A pilot project for the early detection of diabetic retinopathy and diabetes-related chronic diseases in the vulnerable adult population. The objective of the project is to assess the feasibility to develop a national program for the prevention of diabetes and diabetic retinopathy.
3. *Study of the Prevention of Diabetes Among Agricultural Workers:* This study aims to motivate and train agricultural workers to adopt life styles, which result in better health. The project is co-financed by commercial businesses, as well as the National Institute of Health (NIH), and will be implemented in selected California strawberry fields. The aim is to demonstrate how positive health markers (such as a lower body mass index and better control of diabetes) could benefit vulnerable populations in both countries.

Participating Mexican institutions in this subgroup include the National Institute of Medical Sciences and Nutrition “Salvador Zubirán”, The National Institute of Public Health, and the Mexico City Secretariat of Health; participating UC institutions include UC San Francisco, UC-Davis, and UC-Berkeley.

**MATERNAL/ NEO-NATAL HEALTH:** This subgroup is developing the following projects:

1. *Binational Perspectives on Adolescent Childbearing, Obesity, Diabetes, and Cesarean Sections:* This project compares

experiences in prenatal and labor services in the cities of Fresno, California and Irapuato, Guanajuato; to explore program experiences, effective activities, and specific barriers in access to contraception. The study also looks at local and migration factors affecting adolescent pregnancy. It is financed by PIMSA.

2. *Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy: From Lives at Risk to Successful Interventions:* Provides assistance, research, and knowledge with a multidisciplinary focus (endocrinology, nutrition, psychology, and fetal medicine). The project includes 3 levels:
  - i. Prevention of first pregnancy.
  - ii. Right to a healthy pregnancy and a healthy newborn.
  - iii. Prevention of a second pregnancy.
3. *Prevention of Pregnancy among UNAM Medical Students:* Using a mobile unit called “INPer-móvil”, this program administers a survey among new medical students to evaluate risky behavior and their knowledge of contraception methods.
4. *Youth Digital Initiative:* An intervention based on digital media that aims to improve the sexual health and the socioeconomic wellbeing of vulnerable youth ages 13-19. The study focuses specifically on homeless, LGBTQ and other at-risk youths.

Participating institutions include the National Institute of Perinatology, UNAM and UC-San Francisco.

**VIOLENCE:** This subgroup has the following project:

1. *Create a Binational Network to Prevent Youth Violence Using a Social Cohesion Framework that Analyses the Following Interventions:*
  - i. School programs for children and adolescents that transmit educational messages against violence.
  - ii. Programs and interventions based on behavioral science and change theories.
  - iii. Early intervention programs directed at children who have witnessed domestic violence and potential entry points for reducing the possibility that these individuals convert to violence perpetrators or victims in the following years.
  - iv. Recruitment of key groups, in particular adolescents and males, alongside key leaders at the community level.

Participating Mexican institutions include the National Institute of Psychiatry; participating UC institutions include UC Los Angeles, UC-Davis, and UC-Berkeley.

**ONLINE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN HEALTH LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT:** This online certificate program consists of 10 modules:

- The Mexican Health System.
- Decisions Based on Evidence and Performance Improvement Project.
- Management of Human Resources in the Health Sector.
- From Values to Mission.
- Implementation of the Strategy.
- Leadership and Organizational Change.
- Organizational Behavior, Design, Governance and Learning.
- Budgeting and Financial Decisions in the Health Sector.
- Accountability and Control Systems.
- Management of Information Technology in Health Services.

The National Institute of Public Health (INSP) and UNAM are developing a pedagogical strategy and a technological platform in accordance with the teaching practices of UC- Berkeley.

Participating Mexican institutions in this subgroup include the INSP, the UNAM accounting department, and the UNAM University Health Research Program; participating UC institutions include UC- Berkeley

**ONLINE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN REGULATORY SCIENCES:** This online certificate program consists of 5 components:

- Introduction to Regulatory Sciences
- Public Health Regulation
- Health
- Facilities and the Practice of Medical Regulations
- Research, Bio-informatics; and the Regulation of Health Care Products

There is a projected total duration of 42 hours.

Participating Mexican institutions in this subgroup include UNAM's Legal Research Department, and the Federal Commission for the Protection against Sanitary Risk (abbreviated COFEPRIS); participating UC institutions include UC Berkeley. Consultants in the field have also participated.

### **Opportunities and Future Projects**

- The subgroups of Violence, Maternal/Neo-natal Health, and Diabetes could work together to improve the lives of youth living in Border States.
- The projects and courses could be tailored to and used in other U.S. states.
- Creation of comprehensive websites to share data and resources.
- Development of training programs for American and Mexican students.
- Expand collaboration to include other key organizations (for example with the Mexican Social Security Institute).
- Develop longitudinal and multilevel projects for the three research subgroups.
- Work with COFEPRIS to open a Latin American market for

Regulatory Sciences.

- Incorporate new subgroups in relevant health topics.
- Establish strategic alliances with Casa California for the HWG/ UC – MX Initiative.

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### **Acknowledgements:**

This fact sheet was updated and reviewed with the support of Solange Madriz from Global Health Sciences, UC San Francisco; Bianka Aguilar, Katherine Calero-Vargas, Valdemar Díaz Hinojosa, Caroline Dickinson, Liliana Osorio, Carlos Páramo Brotzman, Stephany Pizano, Clara Ramirez-Lopez, Luis Sánchez, and Laura Torres from the Health Initiative of the Americas, University of California Berkeley School of Public Health.

### **Suggested citation:**

Castañeda, X., Ponce de León, S., Márquez, G. (2017). "UC-Mexico Initiative Health Working Group". (Fact Sheet) UC-Mexico Initiative, Health Working Group