

UNM College of Nursing receives \$4 million grant

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New Mexico is currently ranked third in the nation in midwife-attended births. Nurse-midwives have a substantial impact on the health of all New Mexicans and The University of New Mexico College of Nursing has been instrumental in the education of those nurse-midwives. In fact, one-third of certified nurse-midwives practicing in New Mexico are UNM alumni. Now, the college is getting a significant grant to help train even more.

One of these alumni, clinical educator and associate professor Felina Ortiz, DNP, RN, CNM, FACNM, in conjunction with fellow College of Nursing faculty, staff and leadership, has received a grant totaling \$4 million from the Health Resources and Services Administration to help educate more nurse-midwives. The grant is entitled "Advancing Midwifery Outcomes and Resiliency," and it focuses on increasing the number of diverse nurse-midwives in New Mexico, enhancing community partnerships and preparing students to address a broader range of maternal health care needs.

Ortiz's main objective is to use the grant to help the college's midwifery students fund their education by providing up to \$40,000 to individual students for tuition and living expenses for up to 65 students over four years. These ample scholarship goals will ensure UNM remains an influential contributor of licensed, highly qualified nurse-midwives for New Mexico and the country.

"We've had a long history of midwifery here in New Mexico, and it has evolved trying to meet the needs of the communities in the health care systems that we have," Ortiz said. "One of my favorite jobs of being a faculty member is watching the students find their voice in the program and utilize that voice to serve their communities in a holistic, comprehensive, empowering way."

The grant, awarded to serve the Maternity Care Nursing Workforce Expansion (MatCare) Program, holds the purpose of increasing the number of Certified Nurse-Midwives in New Mexico in order to enhance maternal health training that will improve maternal health and decrease maternal mortality and morbidity risk factors.

A secondary objective for this grant is to increase the awareness of the scope of nurse-midwifery practice.

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"A lot of people don't know that midwives do more than attend births," Ortiz said. "We oversee contraceptive, gynecological, and menopause care as well as other stages of women's health across the lifespan."

Nurse-midwives play a larger role in health care than currently believed. Roles the College's midwifery instructors, curriculum, clinical sites and other supporters are prepared to dedicate skills and expertise to for the sake of educating students in a program that ranks number 11 in the country, according to U.S. News & World Report.

"This grant will help fund our midwifery students so they can have immersive leaning experiences and be prepared to deliver sensitive care and promote health equity with the diverse populations of New Mexico," College of Nursing Interim Dean Carolyn Montoya, PhD, RN, PNP-PC, FAANP, FAAN, said.

