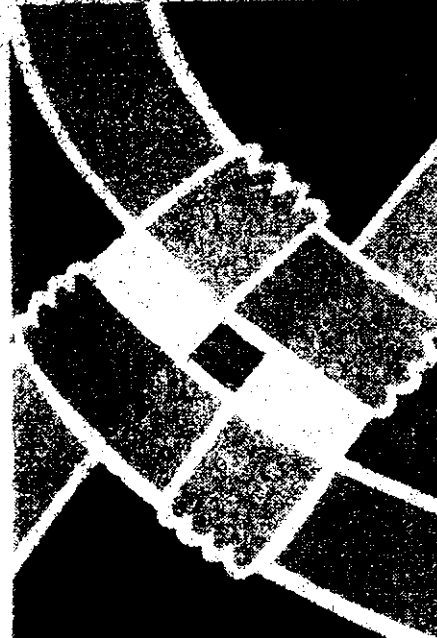


# 16th Annual PINAL COUNTY TOWN HALL

Rural Health Care



TODAY'S  
CHALLENGE

**2003 OFFICIAL REPORT**

**April 16-18, 2003**

**Gold Canyon Golf Resort**

6100 S. Kings Ranch Road

Gold Canyon, AZ 85218

# Summary Report

**"Partnering may be sharing all efforts  
toward making sure our own state  
and federal elected officials  
are aware of our health needs"**

**Discussion Group 3  
2003 Pinal County Town Hall**

# SUMMARY REPORT OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PINAL COUNTY TOWN HALL

April 16 – 18, 2003

## I. OVERVIEW

The Pinal County Town Hall convened April 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> at the Gold Canyon Golf Resort to focus on the topic “**Rural Health Care: Today’s Challenge**”. A total of one hundred thirty-two (132) delegates from throughout Pinal County attended the Town Hall.

Participants heard from a variety of speakers and panelists including *Mr. Allan Stephens*, Chief of Staff for Arizona Governor *Janet Napolitano*. The “**Rural Health Care Outlook**” was explored by *Alison Hughes*, Director, Rural Health Office, University of Arizona; *Susanne Straussner*, Director of Public Health, Pinal County and *Teresa Wall*, Executive Director of the Public Health Department, Gila River Indian Community. In addition, the subject of “**Mental Health: Issues and Opportunities**” was shared by speakers *Jack Beveridge*, CEO Pinal Gila Behavioral Health Association; *Laura Lawless*, Miss Arizona 2002; *Steve Balance*, Director Statistical Analysis, Center Criminal Justice Commission, State of Arizona and *Steve Sparks*, Manager, Office of Prevention, Division of Behavioral Health, Arizona Department of Health Services. A number of behavioral health providers from throughout the network shared their views and comments regarding mental health as seen from their perspective.

Delegates also heard an update on **Homeland Security (2002 topic)** from a number of state and local officials. Speakers included among others *Chuck Blanchard*, Director of Homeland Security, State of Arizona and *Frank Navarreta*, Director, Arizona Division of Emergency Management.

The fifth annual **Pinal County Outstanding Youth of the Year** program recognized five outstanding youth nominated by their respective high schools. The students recognized from the participating high schools as their local **Youth of the Year** included:

Genese Chapman, Maricopa High School  
Connor Mansager, San Manuel High School  
Clarissa Orzell, Ray High School (Kearny)  
Thomas “TJ” Shope, Coolidge High School  
Megan Smith, Apache Junction High School

For the first time in the five years that the award has been presented, the judges declared a tie and the names of **Megan Smith and Connor Mansager** were declared co-winners of the Pinal County Outstanding Youth of the Year award. All nominees received medallions and engraved pens, while the co-winners each received a \$500.00 scholarship to be applied to future education and training. Assisting *Lacy Gambee*, Town Hall Advisory Committee member in the presentation of the awards were *Laura Lawless*,

various stages of program development, including the "Celebration of Health" were (among others) the following individuals and organizations:

**Abbott Laboratories – Ross Products Division**

- *Davy Crockett*, Comptroller
- *Laurie Meier*, Occupational Health Nurse

**Casa Grande Regional Medical Center**

- *K ai Gerkey*, Vice President of Business Development

**Central Arizona College**

- *Cheryl Foster*, Associate Vice President, College Development
- *Dr. Beth Price*, Coordinator, Center for Economic Research

**Pinal County Health Development**

- *Donna Robb*, Director
- *Susanne Straussner*, Director of Public Health

**Pinal County Tech Prep**

- *Karl Peterson*, Director

**Pinal Gila Behavioral Health Association**

- *Jack Beveridge*, CEO
- *Linda Yarrington*, Planning and Human Relations Director

**Pinal-Gila Council for Senior Citizens**

- *Olivia Guerrero*, Executive Director
- *Dorothy Powell*, Board member

**The Town Hall Advisory Committee extends its appreciation and thanks to the above individuals, as well as all others who shared their thoughts and ideas throughout the planning process.**

**III. REPORT OF FINDINGS**

**A. Process**

Town Hall delegates were divided into five (5) discussion groups. Each group was led by a facilitator and recorder who were currently serving in a healthcare or

- Advertising of drugs/lawyers
- High expectations from the public
- Difficulty in getting information out due to censorship issues (e.g., sex education)
- Sex education needs to be more than recommending abstinence
- Ignorance of the health issues in our county
- Teenage pregnancy: financial, personal responsibility, health and sexual issues
- Nursing shortage
- Unfunded health mandates
- No HMO's
- Personal responsibility for health
- Parity in mental/physical health
- Funding streams
- Loss of mining industry in eastern Pinal County
- Education on health issues
- More emphasis on healthy lifestyles
- Lack of access: transportation issues (both local and out of county)
- Poverty and education levels affect on health
- Smoking issues: education, role modeling, etc.
- Rising cost of prescriptions
- Lack of access to hi-tech diagnostics and telemedicine
- Lack of hospital/urgent care centers in certain areas of the county
- Shortage of health care professionals and recruitment/retention issues
- Lack of accessibility to general health care services (SNF's, LTC beds, Pharmacies, Hospice, Adult Day care, etc.)
- The need to partner with those who can enable us to have comprehensive quality and accessible health care services throughout the county
- Public education and promotion
- Support for the Governor's plan on health care
- Advocacy for universal drug card program
- Lack of facilities, lack of access to care, lack of providers with no integrated services of medical, dental or behavioral health care
- The rising cost of insurance and decrease in availability for the AHCCSS program results in decreased coverage for all

**C. Critical health care issues that are unique to certain areas of Pinal County**

- Lack of accessibility to general health care services (SNF's, LTC beds, Pharmacies, Hospices, Adult Day Care, etc) in eastern Pinal county
- Lack of hospitals/urgent care center in certain areas of the county
- Shortage of funds and lack of providers and facilities are county-wide, but especially felt in rural areas. Eastern Pinal, where mine closures have impacted the local economy most, lack access to services.
- Support for rural pharmacies for Pinal county i.e. supplemental grants for profit of firm/individual pharmacy in rural towns

- Lack of valuable resource – people leaving the area.
- High charges for ambulance service
- Very limited competition and choices
- Negative social behaviors
- Economic implications i.e. job loss, family needs, financial help (food stamps, housing) – a vicious circle that costs more in the end

### **HEALTH CARE ISSUE NUMBER THREE – Personal responsibility for health**

#### **Causes:**

- Cultural/social/organizational thinking
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of information
- Lack of interest in seeking information
- Self control
- Not realizing cause and effect
- Fear of consequences
- Lack of funds (poverty)
- Family values: modeling healthy behavior
- Victim mentality (e.g. McDonald's lawsuit)
- Lawsuits driving up costs
- Diet on cultural implications
- Schools cutting back on physical education

#### **Extent:**

- Global
- Impact of media
- Convenience of fast foods and processed/prepared foods
- Covers all age groups
- Greater in lower socio/economic levels (money and time)

#### **Implications;**

- Accidents
- Higher rates of illness and death
- Traditions within families becomes the norm
- Laws get passed (e.g., smoking bans)
- Funding tied to outcomes: incentive or dis-incentive
- Fines tied to certain types of behavior
- If individuals don't accept responsibility for health, who will?

### **E. Key activities/resources/stakeholders for addressing the identified health care issues**

#### **Activities**

- Job Fairs at high schools, community colleges

### **Resources**

- Explore federal grants to support some basic services
- Explore ADOT grants for improving transportation services
- Utilization of mobile unit
- Expansion of telemedicine
- Impact fees/ in kind support
- Support from CAVIT
- Explore establishment of community health centers (i.e., Sun Life) in communities such as Hayden/Kearny/Superior.
- Create a Wellness Prevention Network
- Work with colleges, universities, on supplying students in training/internship programs to rural areas.

### **F. Specific commitments Town Hall delegates can make toward addressing these rural health care issues**

- Contact legislators to keep them apprised of the issues.
- Student delegates start peer counseling groups
- Each of us return home energized to raise issues and concerns, start grass roots efforts,( e.g. scholarships, get a doctor or dentist into our town, etc.)
- Form local coalitions to work with insurance companies to offer AHCCHS plans, additional practitioners
- Work with legislators to implement rule changes to encourage AHCCHS assistance in bringing in providers
- Work with legislators on tort reform (support tort reform)
- Communities should support local providers (shop at home)
- Encourage insurance companies to operate in rural areas
- Increase lobbying efforts to get tax credits for providers in rural areas
- Support Workforce Investment Board
- Contact Sun Life Family Health Center to explore joint ventures to increase/expand service delivery
- Develop a task force to follow up on the issues raised at Town Hall
- Contact Arizona State Department of Commerce.
- Work with Colleges/Universities to support internships and educational opportunities to draw medical professionals to rural areas
- Educate the population/partner with community to raise awareness of health care needs and ways to develop/increase services
- Encourage/take part and develop a variety of partnerships within the county that will enable us to have comprehensive, accessible, and quality, health care services

## **IV. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

### **A. Develop a county wide plan to reduce teen pregnancy**

- 1. Members of partnership (projected)**
  - County Superintendent of Schools

Delegates also recognize there is much that can be done to help ameliorate a number of the health issues and problems within our own county, communities and families. **Specific attention should be given by all individuals to the specific commitments and recommendations section of this report that require our action and involvement.** A number of these are currently being addressed through a variety of entities, however, those and others will need the collective and individual support of all delegates and citizens.

**The Town Hall report, as is customary, will be forwarded to all delegates, partners, Chambers of Commerce, non-profit organizations, schools, colleges and health related organizations. In an effort to monitor the results of the 2003 Town Hall, the Town Hall Advisory Committee has established the following steps:**

- A. Present a follow-up report at the 2004 Pinal County Town Hall
- B. Schedule an Advisory Committee meeting in late 2003 or early 2004 in conjunction with key rural health care personnel to discuss progress to date.
- C. Seek periodic brief updates from the various organizations and agencies that are actively involved in active follow-up activities.
- D. Encourage individual delegates and citizens to get involved locally and to contact Town Hall committee members and/or facilitator with updates as to their follow-up efforts.

**Please consider this report as a reminder as to the work to be done and the commitment we must meet if we are to impact the critical health needs of our county.**

**A commitment is doing what you would do long after the feeling you said it in has passed.**

Taken from the PGBHA News  
and Views

June, 1999



## DISCUSSION GROUPS

**The Pinal County Town Hall Advisory Committee extends its appreciation and thanks to the following individuals who served in the capacity of discussion group facilitator or recorder.**

### **Group 1**

**Facilitator:** *Bob Rundio*, Chief Executive Officer  
Superstition Mountain Mental Health Center, Apache Junction

**Recorder:** *Donna Simpson*, Director, Horizon Home Care, Coolidge

### **Group 2**

**Facilitator:** *Olivia Guerrero*, Executive Director, Pinal-Gila Council for  
Senior Citizens, Casa Grande

**Recorder:** *Dr. Bryant Ridgway*, Registered Representative, Mutual of  
Omaha, Casa Grande

### **Group 3**

**Facilitator:** *Dr. Larry Cline*, Dean of Academic Services, Superstition Mtn.  
Campus, Central Arizona College, Apache Junction

**Recorder:** *Marie Botello*, Administrator, Eloy Chamber of Commerce

### **Group 4**

**Facilitator:** *Marcia Romano*, Board member, The RTA Hospice Charitable  
Foundation, Casa Grande

**Recorder:** *Jean Slater*, Member, Planning and Zoning Commission, Kearny

### **Group 5**

**Facilitator:** *Susanne Straussner*, Director of Public Health, Pinal County,  
Florence

**Recorder:** *Denise Keller*, Library Director, Pinal County Library District,  
Florence

# Partners in Economic Progress

**“Partners may include various  
areas of our county cooperating  
to ensure health care for those  
needing it most”**

Discussion Group 3  
2003 Pinal County Town Hall

## **CORPORATE AND BUSINESS PARTNERS**

### **MAJOR:**

Abbott Laboratories, Ross Products Division\*\*  
Arizona Public Service\*\*  
Arizona Tech Radiology & Family Health Center  
Casa Grande Regional Medical Center\*\*  
El Dorado Holdings, Inc.  
Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino Resort  
Pinal County Federal Credit Union  
Sun Life Family Health Center  
The Remington Group  
The Village at Copper Basin  
Rural Metro Fire Department

### **SUPPORTING:**

Sharp's Welding and Mechanical Works  
SunWest Educational Associates, Inc.\*\*

### **SUSTAINING:**

DBK, Inc.  
the Dolly Steamboat  
Fast Stop Convenience Stores\*\*  
Fitzgibbons Law Offices, P.L.C.  
Goldfield Ghost Town & Mine Tours, Inc.  
The Mahoney Group\*\*  
Mining Camp Restaurant and Trading Post  
Shope's IGA  
Southwest Gas Corporation\*\*  
Sunstate Bank\*\*  
TRICO Electric Cooperative, Inc.

**\*\* Partners for fifteen years**

**\* Partners for ten or more years**

## **Pinal County Town Hall**

The Pinal County Town Hall began in 1988 due to the interest of a number of individuals and organizations to bring together a cross-section of Pinal County leaders in a town hall framework to study and discuss issues of importance to Pinal County and its citizens. From the beginning, the Town Hall has focused on issues relating to economic development. The annual Town Hall is planned by a county-wide advisory committee which meets monthly throughout the year. The Town Hall receives financial support from the Pinal County Board of Supervisors along with delegate fees and corporate/community support. The supporters in this public-private partnership are identified as "Partners In Economic Progress".

Each spring, approximately 130-150 delegates come together for two days to deal with a specific topic that impacts the county as a whole and its respective communities and citizens. Topics over the fifteen years include:

- 1988 A Symposium on Economic Development
- 1989 Pinal County Futures: Tomorrow's Vision - Today's Plan
- 1990 Horizon 2000: Strategies For Action
- 1991 An Inside Look at Pinal County Government: Taxes Vs. Services - A Delicate Balance
- 1992 The Year For Action: Implementing a County-wide Economic Development Plan
- 1993 The Changing Workplace: Education's Challenge
- 1994 Today's Crisis: Confronting Juvenile Crime In Our Communities
- 1995 Pinal Tomorrow: Building Healthier Communities
- 1996 Volunteers in Service to Communities: People Making A Difference
- 1997 Environment and Growth: The Delicate Balance
- 1998 Aging of the Population: A Public and Private Challenge
- 1999 Pinal's Commitment To The Future: Meeting The Needs Of Our Youth
- 2000 Charting Our Future
- 2001 Intellectual Capital - Tomorrow's Dividend: Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- 2002 Being Vigilant, Being Normal - A Call to Service
- 2003 Rural Health Care: Today's Challenge

**An annual report, which includes recommendations and/or suggestions, is prepared after each Town Hall, and distributed to delegates and partners and is monitored during the year for progress and action by members of the advisory committee. While the Town Hall possesses no official power or authority, it is significant to note that many of the delegate recommendations and/or ideas have been implemented over the fifteen year history of Town Hall.**

SunWest Educational Associates, Inc. has served as the "administrative arm" in working with the advisory committee to plan, organize, and implement the Pinal County Town Hall. For more information contact, Wayne G. Gerken, SunWest Educational Assoc., Inc., 1182 E. Bonita Pl., Casa Grande, AZ 85222 - or (520-836-2065)

**PINAL COUNTY TOWN HALL**  
**Mission Statement**

Pinal County Town Hall is an assembly of annually convened delegates that identifies critical issues facing Pinal County, creates the forum for education and exploration of the topic, and fosters networking and collaboration among its participants. By drawing upon Pinal County's diversity of citizens, the Town Hall process promotes public consideration of these issues, builds consensus, and supports implementation of the resulting outcomes.