PUENTES: AN AMPATH/MAPAS MÉXICO INITIATIVE

BRIDGING CARE, EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH IN PUEBLA AND TEXAS

The University of Texas at Austin is a member of the Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare (AMPATH) (MAPAS in Spanish), which improves the health of people in underserved communities by working in partnership with academic health centers, public sector health care delivery systems, and global community partners.

AMPATH has now embarked on a multi-country replication of the original AMPATH Kenya model: in Ghana, Nepal, and Mexico. Led by UT's Dell Medical School in partnership with the Facultad de Medicina at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), AMPATH/MAPAS México aims to transform primary health care and improve the health of marginalized populations in Mexico and Texas. To support collaborative BUAP and UT Austin faculty-led projects addressing interdisciplinary health challenges across countries, the AMPATH/MAPAS México Bilateral Innovation Award (AMBIA) provides internal seed funding opportunities of up to $20,000.

Building from two previously successful research summits known as Puentes ("Bridges") I and Puentes II, Dell Med and BUAP organized Puentes 3 in 2022. Hosted in

Puebla, 70+ researchers from BUAP, UT Austin, and other institutions gathered to forge working relationships and cultivate AMPATH/MAPAS Mexico care delivery, education, and research projects.

A successful turning point in the replication efforts of AMPATH/MAPAS México, Puentes 3 focused on launching long-term impact on the health care of Mexico's economically poor and marginalized people. Ahead of the third summit, working groups comprised of clinicians and researchers from UT Austin, BUAP, and Mexico's INSP (National Institute of Public Health) formed around six priority areas. The groups developed community-based health improvement, training, and research for 3-5 pilot sites in rural communities surrounding the city of Puebla. With these initial efforts, AMPATH/MAPAS México will serve approximately 2,500 people in three communities, to eventually impact primary health care and population health for 6.2 million people in Puebla state, as well as in Central Texas.

The University of Texas at Austin
Dell Medical School

SUPPORT THE PUENTES 4 SUMMIT IN 2023

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PUENTES 3 WORKING GROUP GOALS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Nutrition:** Develop an evidence-based nutrition intervention for implementation. Evaluate its effect on family nutritional status, assess food, cultural and intergenerational practices, and understand the influences of migration. Deliver a series of needs-targeted nutrition trainings to *pasantes* and nurses.

- **Diabetes:** Develop and test community-based diabetes interventions – such as risk factor screening – improve the cascade of care by supporting clinics, leaders and *pasantes*, diabetes education and cooking groups, and create a community-sourced cookbook as a household-level resource.

- **Maternal Health:** Improve sexual and reproductive health services demand and provision for both men and women. Identify structural, cultural, and other barriers to accessing services using a mixed-methods diagnostic and design an appropriate intervention.

- **Mental Health:** Address priority mental health concerns of heads of households, children, and adolescents and their access to mental health services. Complete a mixed methods survey and design an effective pilot instrument for the representative communities. Deliver mental health training to *pasantes* and residents.

- **Mental Health Education:** Implement Project ECHO binationally to support frontline mental health clinicians in both Puebla and Central Texas to screen and provide better mental health services.

- **Health Professions Education:** Generate tools so *pasantes* can develop their communication skills and integrate into the communities where they will provide medical care. Target 80 *pasantes* with two-day training workshops and regular check ins focused on communication, community engagement, team building, conflict resolution, leadership, and *pasante* mental health support, including how to personally access help and manage challenges.

- **Evaluation:** Identify sources of data on health care delivery, public health, social determinants of health, and clinical outcomes. Review access requirements, identify contacts at each source, and analyze sample data from each source. Collaborate with all working groups to address data and evaluation needs in the implementation of their respective projects.

- **Palliative Care:** Improve binational palliative care in Puebla and Central Texas. With the support of an AMBIA seed grant, the UT and BUAP Co-PIs traveled to each other's institutions to conduct site visits and focus groups to understand existing services and design trainings for engaging in sensitive palliative care conversations with patients.

PUENTES 4 GOALS

The Division of Global Health seeks funding for the Puentes 4 summit in 2023:

- Support current and future Puentes Working Groups' research efforts to enhance access to care amongst the most marginalized communities in Puebla and Central Texas.

- Support program administration, team travel, and simultaneous Spanish-English interpretation to facilitate Working Groups' initiatives.

- Support IRB workshopping to orient UT and BUAP experts to UT and BUAP's IRB / Comité de Ética.