



Association of Teachers of Maternal & Child Health
1720 2nd Avenue South – Ryals 310G
Birmingham, AL 35294

May 31, 2017

Dear ATMCH Executive Committee,

My team members (Dr. Martha Coulter, Dr. Abraham Salinas, and Dr. Roneé Wilson) and I would like to thank you for providing the funding to implement *A Collaborative Teaching Strategy for Building Relationships in Maternal and Child Health*. Through the completion of this project, masters-level students in our capstone MCH course took a significant step toward improving advocacy and relationship building skills and have created a product to share this knowledge and skill with the broader MCH workforce. In addition, our project advanced collaboration between academia and practice by bringing creativity, co-learning, and integration of new technologies into relationship building efforts. The impact of this project flows beyond students and the product created may assist with the developing a capable workforce possessing relationship skills.

Together with community partners (REACHUP, Inc. and Champions for Children), students learned about building and maintaining relationships. This project allowed students to practice interview and research skills and develop a training product that is useful for academic and community-based organizations. Efforts focused on finding community-driven answers to the questions: “*How do you build a relationship to advocate for change?*” and “*How do you sustain these relationships?*” Students explored the organizations’ staff training needs versus the community’s needs and the roles of people who generally “establish” relationships versus those who generally “sustain” relationships. As a class, and with the help of an Educational Technology Assistant (Thomas Reilly), students developed their product, a course on building relationships that is now being shared with our partnering organizations, ATMCH, and the USF College of Public Health.

Currently, the course may be viewed by visiting: http://eta.health.usf.edu/MCH_Project/story_html5.html. We will be transferring to the USF Center of Excellence in Maternal & Child Health Education, Practice, & Science webpage. When the transfer happens, we will notify ATMCH of the link change. Additionally, we are sharing with ATMCH the files necessary to host the course on your own website, if desired. The course is also available via CD and PDF, provided in the accompanying email along with the project description used in the course syllabus.

Feedback from partnering community organizations has been positive and they are looking to use the product in their technical assistance and in-service trainings. While there are many lessons learned, perhaps the biggest obstacle to this project was matching schedules between community partners and students to conduct interviews, pilot the product, and solicit feedback. Many MPH students are professionals working during business hours and others do not have adequate transportation. These needs placed extra burden on students who are not working full time to travel for interviews and presentations. In implementing this project, it is necessary to brainstorm fixes for this barrier early on with both students and partnering organizations.

Thank you for this opportunity. Please find relevant documents attached to the email accompanying this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Ellen Schafer'.

Ellen Schafer, PhD, MPH, MCHES