

Staff

José Ramón Fernández-Peña
Initiative Director

Stephen S. Robinson
San Francisco Center Director

Teresa Betancourt
Educational Case Manager

Adolfo L. Echeverry
Research Associate

Douglas Vasquez
Management Assistant

Fall Office Hours

Monday—CLOSED

Tuesday

8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. &
2 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday

8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. &
2 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Thursday

8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. &
2 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Friday

8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. &
2 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday

8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**To make an appointment with
the Educational Case Manager
or to confirm class or work-
shop registration, please call
(415) 561-1833**

City College of San Francisco
John Adams Campus
1860 Hayes Street, Room 221
San Francisco, CA 94117

www.welcomebackinitiative.org



Issue 19

Fall 2008

SAN FRANCISCO WELCOME BACK CENTER

From the Welcome Back Initiative Director

Seven years ago we opened the San Francisco Welcome Back Center with the firm belief that by building on our immigrant communities assets we could make a significant contribution to the diversity of the health workforce in California. This assumption has proven to be correct. In San Francisco we have worked with 2,220 participants from 119 countries. Our outcomes speak for themselves: 218 of you are now working in health for the first time, 159 of you have advanced in your careers in health, 290 of you are currently enrolled in training programs that will lead you to jobs in the health fields, 29 of you have entered residency training programs.

The success of our model has attracted national attention as well. In October of 2005 we opened the Boston Welcome Back Center. In June of this year we opened the Rhode Island Welcome Back Center, and in Octo-

ber we will open the Puget Sound Welcome Back Center. In addition, we are in conversation with other interested groups in Colorado, Texas, Minnesota, Oregon, Maryland and New York. We look forward to working with our new partners across the country as we continue to grow our Initiative.

In September of this year, we were recognized by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the JFK School of Government, Harvard University, as one of the top 15 Innovations in the country. In their website, the Institute states: "The finalists, chosen from a pool of approximately 1,000 applicants, are considered some of the most unique and effective city, state and federal government programs in a wide range of program areas -- from education and health care to affordable housing and youth services." We are grateful to Harvard University for this honor.

As we look to the future, we want to make sure we hear your voices, ideas, and suggestions. To that end, we want to invite our participants who have completed their goals to come and spend some time with us brainstorming ideas about the future and the role you may want to play in it. Many of you have been actively engaged with the center and have provided testimonials to the press, appeared on videos, talked about your experience with Welcome Back with funders and others. We are grateful for what you've done and want to explore other ways to involve you in the center's work. We invite you to join us on December 9, 2008, from 6:00 to 7:30 PM.

Until then,

José Ramón Fernández-Peña, MD, MPA
Initiative Director

From the San Francisco Welcome Back Center Director

Since the last newsletter was distributed nearly a year ago, you have heard about a number of personnel changes at the San Francisco Welcome Back Center. As the recently appointed director of the Welcome Back Center, I am very pleased to be here. I have been very, very impressed with the quality, commitment and dedication of the staff of the center. I could not imagine a team better suited to serve the needs of internationally trained healthcare professionals.

By way of personal introduction, let me say that I've had a long interest in health care and workforce development issues affecting underserved communities, both domestically and internationally. Before starting residency training in internal medicine at Harlem Hospital Center in New York City, I completed an MPH in international health at Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health. Afterwards, I was an associate administrator working on the development of a new medical school at the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education at City College, and later the head of the Physician Assistant Program at Harlem Hospital Center. I've participated in a number of international health projects under the auspices of Operation CrossRoads Africa, to Ghana in 1981, and Liberia in 1983. Most recently I spent four and a half years in Tanzania, East Africa working as a resident HIV/AIDS advisor with the Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University, as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

In my short time here, the Welcome Back Center has completed a number of important projects. Participants of the program have been featured in a short film portraying

the stories of four of them, which has been recorded on DVD. Through collaboration with the Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) and a number of agencies in the East Bay, the Welcome Back Center helped establish the Immigrant Nurse Reentry Program (INRP). Based at Chabot College in Hayward, this program enables qualified nursing participants to complete their educational requirements by taking a number of nursing courses. Upon successful completion, they will be eligible to take the NCLEX exam. Please contact us if you are interested in getting more information about this program.

In addition to these services for participants, the center is modernizing many of its internal systems. We are finalizing the development of a new online database, which will enable faster identification of participants' records, and easier display of program statistics and charts. The center's website is being overhauled so that we will be able to keep you all updated with the latest news and events from the center.

In one of the newer projects we are beginning, we hope to involve many of you. Over the past seven years the Welcome Back Center has assisted over 2200 participants with their educational and career plans. A number of you have gotten licensed and are now successfully employed in the health sector. All of you represent a tremendous well-spring of experience, possible job leads and information about how to navigate the health field here in California. For starters, we want to encourage each of you to sign up on a discussion list established on Google specifically for the Welcome Back participants. Although

we will set up the discussion group, it will be open to whatever you choose to share. In this way, you can continue to assist each other, plan study groups, exchange materials and stay in touch. And, we can let you know of various course and workshop schedules, training opportunities and job openings as soon as we become aware of them. Those of you who'd like to subscribe, please contact Douglas Vasquez (415-561-1933 or dvasquez@ccsf.edu).

In addition, we would like to establish a network which would benefit more experienced participants, as well as newer ones. We would like to encourage your involvement, lively exchange of information, stories, job leads and other hints offered to those tackling the challenges of entering the health professions. We are confident that what you share can be of great value to each other and to participants still moving along the path to licensure.

To begin this process formally, we have scheduled a kickoff celebration to take place at 6 PM on Tuesday, December 9 at a location to be determined. We are extending an invitation to all of you, and our office manager, Douglas Vasquez, will be in touch by e-mail, phone or mail, to confirm your attendance. Please give us an idea, at your earliest convenience, about how many of you will be able to attend.

Thank you very much for your kind attention. Sincerely,

Stephen Robinson, MD, MPH
Center Director
(sf_wbc@yahoo.com)

ESL for Health Communication @ CCSF

City College of San Francisco will be offering ESL20, the first of the three ESL courses of Health Communication at work in the Spring 09. The class will be held Mon/Wed at the Downtown Campus from 3:30-6:00. The class can be taken as a credit or non-credit. If a WB participant wants to take it as non-credit class, he/she can take it for free, or take it without being a resident for one year. They can also enter the class at any point in the semester. The class can also be taken Pass/Fail as a credit class. Contact Terri Massin, course instructor @ (415) 241-2299 or tmassin@ccsf.edu to register or for information.

Upcoming Courses and Presentations

The Welcome Back Program is pleased to announce its Fall 2008 series of noncredit courses, specifically designed to assist internationally-trained health care professionals. Location for this course will be the CCSF John Adams Campus, 1860 Hayes Street. Room 218.

Public Health & Society

October 4 & October 11, 2008 9:00 AM — 1:00 PM

This course will provide an overview of the nature of health and wellness in the U.S. and will compare and contrast elements of a health and biomedical approach to health and in the context of American's core beliefs and values. The history and evolution of biomedicine will be addressed.

Health Professions & Practice

November 1 & November 8, 2008 9:00 AM — 1:00 PM

This course was developed to give participants an overview of health care practices and professional culture and will describe the major health professions and occupations, educational pathways, the organization and culture of their practice, licensure, and other regulations affecting professional practices and delivery of health services.

Residency Training in the United States for International Medical Graduates

December 6, 2008 10 AM — 12 PM

Current system for residency training in California and the U.S.

Application process for residency training

Resources available to applicants

Current trends for admission of International Medical Graduates

If you are interested in enrolling in the courses listed above, please contact (415) 561-1833 as soon as possible. If you leave a voicemail message, please spell your first and last names and leave a phone number so we may return your call.

WELCOME BACK NETWORK REUNION

The San Francisco Welcome Back Center wants to invite all its participants who have accomplished their goals to a reunion. The idea is to create a group of people interested in exchanging ideas about their experiences when going through their professional development process, as well as to create a network to help those who are just starting their process, by mentoring them or by sharing experiences through group presentations.

Please join us on December 9, 2008 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. Location to be announced later.

Please RSVP by November 21. Call Douglas Vasquez at 415-561-1833 or email him at dvasquez@ccsf.edu.

Thanks a lot for your interest. It will be nice to see you all again.



A Joint Project of San Francisco State University and City College of San Francisco

Mission Statement

“To build a bridge between the pool of internationally trained health workers living in the United States and the need for linguistically and culturally competent health services in underserved communities.”

Other Welcome Back Centers

San Diego

Grossmont College
3955 Bonita Road
Building A, 1st Floor
Bonita, CA 91902
(619) 409-6417

Los Angeles

Mt. San Antonio College
1100 N. Grand Ave. - Bldg.35
Walnut, CA 91789
(909) 594-5611 x6102

Boston

Bunker Hill Community College
250 New Rutherford Ave.
Boston, MA 02129
(617) 228-4226

Rhode Island

Dorcas Place
220 Elmwood Ave
Providence, RI 02907
(401) 273-8866 x155

Puget Sound

Highline Community College
Building 9 – 207
2400 S. 240th St MS 9-3
Des Moines, WA 98198
(206) 878-3710 x3345



San Francisco Welcome Back Center

CCSF John Adams Campus
1860 Hayes Street, Room 221
San Francisco, CA 94117-1220