

# The Native Health Initiative's



2019

**RUNNING MEDICINE  
REPORT**



## MORE ABOUT THE NATIVE HEALTH INITIATIVE

NHI is a partnership to address health inequities through loving service.

Founded in 2005 in North Carolina, the partnership has always been grounded in principles of

- **Partnership** – a strong belief that with a “we” mentality, much more can be accomplished.
- **Love** – this is our strategy for social change, used in reverence to the ways that Indigenous communities model this ideal.
- **Strength-based approaches** to health and healing, which grounds our work with asset mapping.
- **Understanding** that Indigenous culture/language is critical component to healthy Indigenous individuals, families and communities.

NHI currently has 7 Programs

- Internships
- Asset mapping
- Breathe Tradition, Not Addiction
- Healers of Tomorrow mentoring program
- Running Medicine
- Education is Ceremony college scholarships + Community Grant Programs
- Campus outreach/education on Indigenous health



You can read more about our work at

- NHI website: [www.loving-service.us](http://www.loving-service.us)
- NHI facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/nativehealthinitiative/>



## Welcome to the Native Health Initiative's 2019 Running Medicine Report!!

Another year full of movement, medicine, spiritual practices, laughter, smiles, high-fives, encouragement, and love.

This year brought new initiatives such as the Jim Thorpe Run, our first USATF cross-country meet, and most importantly new energy from new communities (Zuni, Nambé) and families.

The Running Medicine (RM) communities of Nambé, Zuni, Farmington, Acoma/ Laguna, Rio Rancho, and Albuquerque moved together toward wellness in a big way in 2019.

In total:

- 6 RM groups/communities
- 445 Running Medicine Celebrations across the 6 RM groups.
- 11,125 people celebrating through movement in those 445 RM Celebrations
- 22,250 miles from those 11,125 participants
- 19,468,750 steps from those 22,250 miles
- 61,187,500 heartbeats together to allow the 19,468,750 steps to happen
- 35,000 hours of loving service generated by RM leaders and participants (equivalent to 18 full time employees for the entire year!)

Brothers and sisters, movement is the movement!

In health and gratitude,

Your RM Directors

*Anthony, Rod, Danielle, Stacie, and Dewayne*

## OUR MISSION

Running Medicine empowers families and communities to greater mind, body and spirit wellness through movement.

## OUR CORE VALUES FOR RM

- Inclusive to all people, all fitness and ability levels
- Provide high quality, individualized coaching to all participants at minimal cost
- Loving community where everyone supports each other's wellness
- Intergenerational – youth, elders and everyone in between!
- Emphasize the elements of “fun” and “play” in all that we do together
- Cultural, mental and spiritual aspects of running/walking will be emphasized
- Sustainability – our goal is zero waste
- Outreach to local communities and efforts to create cultures of wellness





More About NHI

1. Highlights of RM's 2019
  2. Media highlights from 2019
  3. RM from the eyes of participants
  4. 2019 RM Coaches/Leaders
  5. 2019 RM Partners
  6. Appendix 1: RM Creation Story
  7. Appendix 2: RM Annals Family  
Medicine Article
- RM Contact Information

# CONTENTS

*Table of*

# 1

## HIGHLIGHTS OF RM'S 2019

### LOVE IS FUNDING THIS WORK!

- A few minutes out at RM and you quickly see that each person is teacher and student, healer and patient. We are all putting our love, our hearts toward something beautiful – health and wellness for mind, body and spirit
- Our insistence on ceremony as the basis on RM is notable given the many changes from season to season. Ceremony is the fertile soil that allows love to sprout.
- The increase in Loving Service hours over the first four years of RM is incredible (see section 3)

### BECOMING A LEADER IN WELLNESS AND MOVEMENT

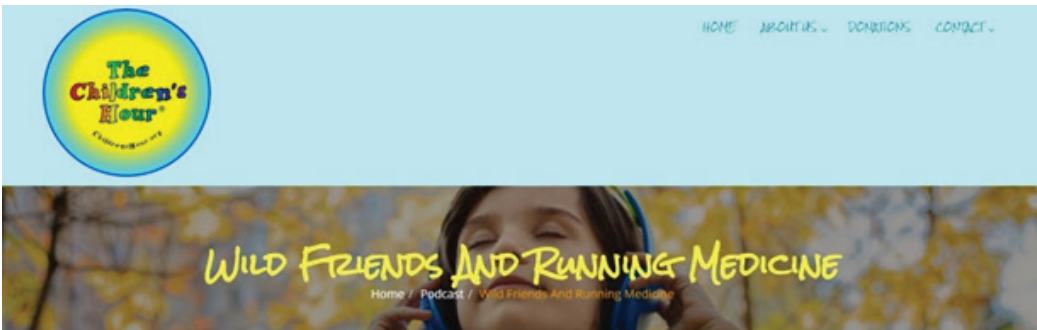
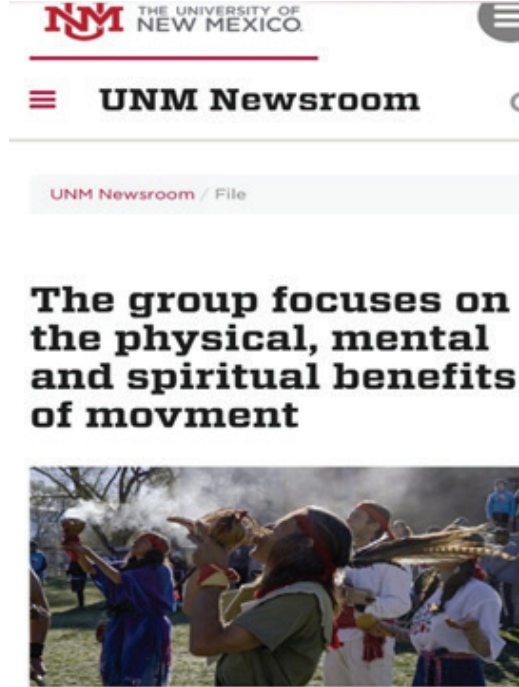
- Article in Annals of Family Medicine, the top rated medical journal in family medicine (see appendix 2)
- “Ideas for creating healthy and well Indigenous families through movement” workshop at the annual conference of the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association.
- “Mind/body/spirit wellness through Running and walking” presented at national IHS Webinar
- Organizer of 8 campus walk/runs at University of New Mexico and partnered on many community runs/walks/bikes/fitness events.
- Consultant to City of Albuquerque, Navajo Nation, Sandia Pueblo, and many organizations to help provide ideas for getting communities moving



### CONTRIBUTING TO THE WELLNESS OF INDIGENOUS AND NM COMMUNITIES

- ▶ One look at the 162 partners that collaborated with RM in 2019, with RM present at prayer runs, health and fitness events, and just about everywhere we were asked to be.

# MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019



**Clockwise from top:**  
 Navajo Times article  
 (Dec 2019),  
 UNM article  
 (March 2019),  
 KRQE segment  
 (March 2019)  
 and a show on The  
 Children's Hour  
 (April 2019)

# 2



## HIGHLIGHTS BY RM COMMUNITY

---

### **RM NAMBÉ**

- Consistent engagement of youth in walking/running

### **RM FARMINGTON**

- Big social media presence, incredible community collaboration, and put on two big events (Totah Festival 5k and Gratitude Run/Walk)

### **RM ALBUQUERQUE**

- 500 people registering each season with 100-140 people moving together on Tues/Thurs evenings

### **RM ACOMA/LAGUNA**

- Hosted RM's first-ever cross country meet, added many new families to the group

### **RM ZUNI**

- Consistent and spirited RMs throughout the year, creating a strong presence in the community



## RM THROUGH THE EYES OF PARTICIPANTS

*Running Medicine is a glimpse of what true health looks like at all stages of the life spectrum.*

---

*I appreciate the commitment to wellness and joy!*

---

*Moving together toward wellness...one step, one breath at a time.*

---

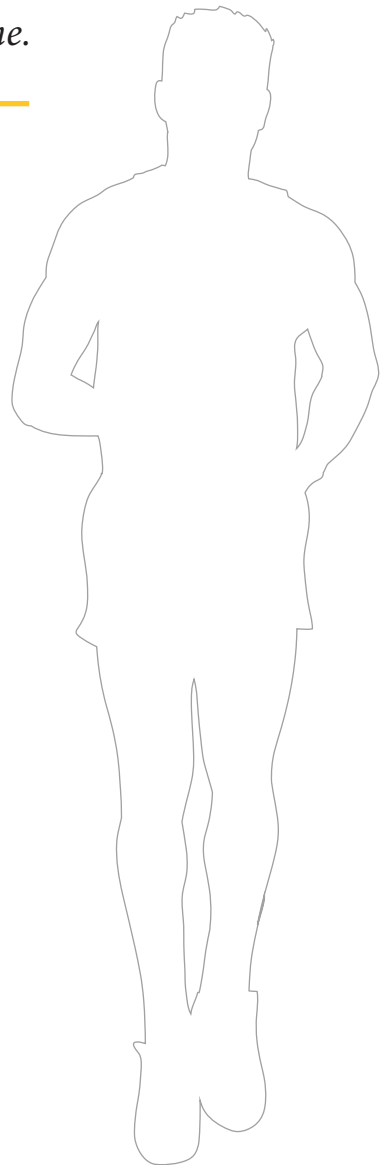
*Running Medicine is a community that brings diverse people together in a very real and meaningful way. This is exactly what we need to reconnect with one another, and repair sociocultural rifts present in our world.*

---

*The greatest benefit your program offers is a sense of community and support which can help people succeed in any endeavor; whether it be pursuing a healthier lifestyle, or in my case, getting to take time to center myself and relieve stress in a positive environment.*

---

*Movement **is** the movement*





# 2019 RM COACHES / LEADERS

2019's success is a reflection of these 43 coaches/leaders, each of whom gave unique talents and energy to make every RM Celebration the welcoming, supportive and structured environment. Together, we estimate that these leaders generated an amazing 2500 hours of loving service in 2019!

## RM NAMBE'

Victoria Martinez

Samantha Viarrial

## RM ZUNI

Carleton Albert

Josh Kudrna

Matt Laselute

Andrea Pepin

Avery Tolth

April Lahi

Tara Wolfe-Quam

Leanne Lee

Kevin Gia

## RM ACOMA/LAGUNA

Josh Lucio

Anadine Leon

Gabe Levantonio

Charles Atsye

Audrey Martinez

Thor Martinez

Greg Konico

Marie Konico

## RM FARMINGTON

Alys Maize\*

Lana Tsosie\*

Rob Felson

Ashleigh Teasyatwho

## RM ABQ

Lynette Padilla\*\*\*

Benjamin Howse

Regina Chavez

Danielle Hopkins\*\*

Veronica Hutchison\*\*

Beverly Francisco-James

Anthony Fleg\*\*\*

Rod Lansing\*\*\*

Davin Cheykaychi\*\*

Lialoni Kie\*\*

Loren Morgan\*

Ashleigh Claw

DeWayne Carl

Rachel Babb

Billy Babb

Monica Waikaniwa

Morgan Kraft

Kevin Leffler

Chris Humetewa

John Reece

Julianna Reece

Ross Hurley

Stacie Hurley\*

Colin Olson\*

Nancy Shane

TJ Begay

Destiny Waikaniwa

Antoinette Jim

\* Coach/leader for  
2018

\*\* Coach leader  
2017 and 2018

\*\*\* RM Leader 2016,  
2017, and 2018



# 5

## 2019 RM PARTNERS

The Native Health Initiative embraces the idea of being a partnership, meaning that all of our programs involve bringing as many groups into the mix, understanding that this is what it takes to create a healthy community. Take a look at the 157 RM partners that contributed to RM in 2019!

**As RM grows, so does our community of partners!**

2016 RM Partners: **65**

2017 RM Partners: **97**

2018 RM Partners: **157**

2019 RM Partners: **162**

### All-Star Partners for 2019

We give a special thanks to these groups who gave exceptional donations of time, energy and resources to RM in 2019!

- *City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation*
- *Presbyterian Community Health*
- *NB3 Foundation*
- *Heart and Sole Sports*
- *Wings of America*



## INDIGENOUS NATIONS (11)

- Pueblos of Laguna
- Acoma,
- Jemez
- Sandia
- Zuni
- Nambé
- Pojoaque
- Isleta
- Tohajiilee
- Crownpoint (Navajo) Communities
- Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation

## INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS(16)

- Pueblo Resurgents
- Totah Festival
- Indian Education, Albuquerque Public Schools
- Rio Rancho Public Schools Native American Committee
- APS Indian Parent Committee
- Notah Begay 3rd Foundation (NB3)
- Red Ribbon Relay promoting drug and alcohol-free lifestyles
- Three Sisters Kitchen
- Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women
- Healthy Native Communities Partnership
- Chef Joe Romero
- Native on the Run
- Zuni Youth Enrichment Project (ZYEP)
- Pueblo of Nambé Wellness Center
- Pueblo of Zuni Wellness Center
- Zuni Pueblo Healthy Lifestyles Program

## RUNNING/FITNESS ORGANIZATIONS (33)

- Wings of America
- Sports Warriors Track Club
- USA Track and Field (USATF) NM
- NM Sol Youth Running Club
- Race NM
- Special Olympics New Mexico
- Senior Olympics New Mexico
- Pueblo Crossroads series
- Marathon Kids
- NavajoYES
- iRunFar.com
- Bike ABQ
- Brooks Beasts
- Spirit of Hoops
- Dukes Track Club
- Albuquerque Road Runners
- Marathon Kids (Nike)
- Bears Ears Prayer Run Alliance
- Just Move It series
- Sabrina's Z Crew Fitness
- Running for Resilience prayer run
- Run Fit
- TCR Race Productions
- ACCESS NM
- Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation
- City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation
- International Indoor Soccer Arena
- New Mexico United
- Albuquerque Biopark and their Run for the Zoo
- Slow Roll 505
- Acoma Running Club
- Trailblazers Running Club
- Team Haanu Running Club

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS (17)

- Three Sisters Kitchen
- Rail Yards Market
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- Albuquerque Public Schools
- New Mexico State Parks
- Black Lives Matter
- City of Albuquerque Open Space Division
- Office of Bernalillo County Commissioner Maggie Hart-Stebbins
- Mindful New Mexico
- Fish and Wildlife Partners Program
- Middle Rio Grande Conservation District
- Herba Mansa Project
- Bike in Coffee/Old Town Farm
- Los Poblanos Community Center
- MLK Jr Commission
- Share NM
- Animal Protection of New Mexico



## CONFERENCES (4)

- 5th Annual New Mexico Leaders in Mindfulness Conference: Mindfulness, Equity and Social Justice
- World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians (WONCA) Annual Conference
- UNM HSC Education Day
- Native American Fatherhood and Families Association Annual Conference



## HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS (28)

- First Nations Community Healthsource
- Journey Pediatrics
- Pathways to a Healthy Bernalillo County Program
- Langford Physical Therapy
- International District Healthy Communities Coalition (IDHCC)
- Four Winds Recovery Center
- Global Health Partnership (GHP) and their Safari Run
- Indian Health Services
  - Albuquerque Indian Health (AIH) clinic
    - » Employee Association
    - » Diabetes Program
  - Albuquerque Area IHS Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
  - Bemidji Area IHS
- Hemish Public Health (Jemez Pueblo)
- UNM
  - » Department of Family and Community Medicine
  - » Physical Therapy Program
  - » Sports Medicine Program/Fellowship
  - » Healthy and Fit Children's Clinic
  - » Pain Clinic
  - » 1209 Clinic (Family Health)
  - » Southeast Heights Clinic
  - » Truman Clinic
  - » Sandoval Regional Medical Center
  - » UNM Employee Wellness
  - » UNMH Employee Wellness
  - » UNM Health Sciences Campus
    - Chancellor's Office
    - Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
    - Health Sciences Library and Informatics Center
    - BeWell



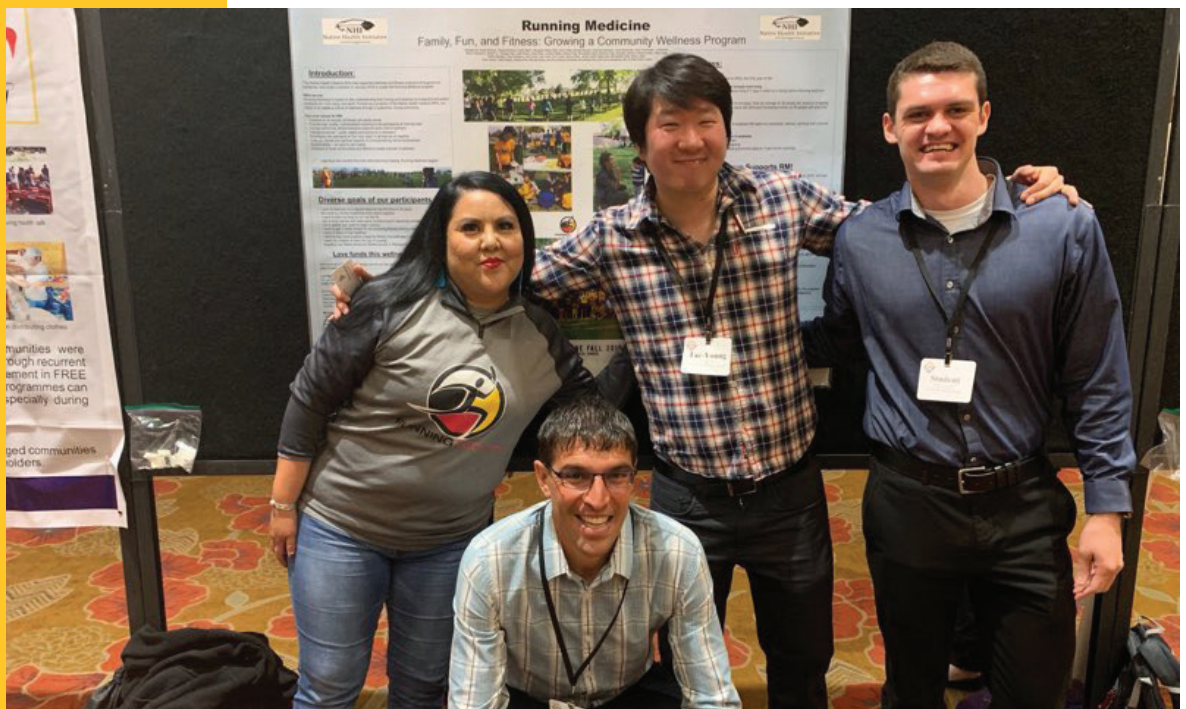


## SCHOOLS (11)

- Native American Community Academy
  - » High School Wellness Program
  - » Cross country and track program
- Bosque School
- Longfellow Elementary
- McCollum Elementary
- Downtown Collaborative
- Albuquerque High School
- Sandia High School
- ATC Charter School (Santa Fe, NM)
- St. Joseph's School (San Fidel, NM)
- Albuquerque Public Schools

## UNIVERSITIES (9)

- Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI)
- Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health
- University of Wisconsin Native American Center for Health Professions
- University of New Mexico (UNM)
  - » American Indian Student Services
  - » Office of the President
  - » Office of the Provost
  - » Athletic Program
  - » Cross Country and Track Program
  - » Recreational Services







## MEDIA (11)

- Navajo Times
- Alibi
- UNM Communications
- UNM HSC Communications
- Dizruns podcast
- Rio Rancho Observer
- KOAT Channel 7
- The Children's Hour
- KRQE Channel 13
- National Native Network Webinar Series
- Walker Martin



## BUSINESSES (22)

- Bosque Running Shop
- Heart and Sole Sports
- Athlete's Edge
- Sports Systems
- Brooks Sports, Inc.
- Albuquerque Isotopes
- Go2Girls Print Services
- Lovishly, Inc.
- General Mills, Inc.
- I Scream Ice Cream
- Flatline Design, Inc.
- Einstein Bagels
- Tailwind Nutrition
- Runner's Edge
- Roma Bakery and Deli
- Southwest Runners
- Dicks Sporting Goods
- TCR Race Productions
- Trek Bike Superstore
- Stella Coffee and Espresso
- Taj Mahal Restaurant
- Wecks



# RM FUNDERS

While the Native Health Initiative prides itself on its ability to make great things happen with love as our foundation and primary funding source, we do appreciate those who have contributed financially to help sustain NHI's Running Medicine program, keeping it very low cost for participants.

- Center for Educational Initiatives
- UNM HSC Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Presbyterian Community Health
- NB3 Foundation
- City of ABQ Parks and Recreation
- Sandia Pueblo
- UNM Health Sciences Center, Office of the Chancellor
- Friends of Pat Bradley
- Adam Delu
- Bernalillo County Commissioner Maggie Hart Stebbins
- Deb Hoffman
- Bike ABQ
- SVC Construction
- Steve Allison
- Khalid Family
- Murry Family
- Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
- NHI Advisory Board
- Miller-Herbert Family
- Hoffman family
- Fleg Family
- Sampat Family
- Paul and Katrina Poplett
- Anonymous
- Revolution Reflexology
- Sandoval Regional Medical Center
- Love One Another
- Freeman Hrabowski
- Jay and Pam Smith
- McGinn Law
- Blanco Family
- Ward Family
- Serfontain Family
- Kalishman Family
- Microsoft
- Dairy Queen on Coors and Montano
- Lobo RVQ Ham Radio Club
- Albuquerque City Council Vice-President Borrego
- Native American Fatherhood and Families Association
- Jonathan Eldridge
- Olivia Roanhorse
- D'Santi Nava



# 6

## Appendix 1

### **“CREATION STORY” FOR RUNNING MEDICINE**

It was during exercise (biking) that a clear vision for Running Medicine came, 12/8/15. Anthony Fleg, a family physician was frustrated by not finding a place to put his energy toward creating more active communities. He knew Running Medicine as a core part of his life and his medicine, and had even started using that term a decade earlier. But until the vision came, he hadn't been able to put the pieces together. Creator has a way of doing that for us...

The vision was to create a loving community, one inclusive and embracing of all differences in ability, age, speed, background, etc. that would promote mind, body and spirit wellness.

The Native Health Initiative (NHI), a non-profit partnership that was created in 2005 to improve the health and well-being in Native American communities, would become the organization to support Running Medicine, noticing that no low-cost, family-oriented running/walking programs existed in Albuquerque, the biggest city in New Mexico. NHI hoped to fill the void of all three with the creation of Running Medicine (RM). This name was a way to connect the program to Native American culture, where running is universally a part of ceremonies and healing, done as a way of giving thanks and praying. We also wanted to invoke the idea that running is indeed medicine for mind, body and spirit.

In January 2016, we launched RM with a meeting in the Fleg living room. Though the room had many accomplished runners, we all felt that a focus on family, having fun, and being inclusive was what we wanted to see in this program. We decided that a launch of the program in March was possible, and began to work as a team of volunteers to make this happen.

There were no monetary funds, and we didn't feel that money was needed to launch RM. There was not even a mention of money or fundraising at those initial meetings. We needed good people, and we had that. We needed love for self and community, and we had that.

One key step in this was a logo contest for the RM logo, won by Nate Smith (Jemez Pueblo). The logo helped solidify our image, invoking much more than cardiovascular fitness. It got people excited to get some of that Running Medicine!

# Appendix 2

## ANNALS OF FAMILY MEDICINE ARTICLE

(Sept/Oct 2019 Issue)

### INNOVATIONS IN PRIMARY CARE

## Running Medicine: Mind, Body, and Spirit Wellness Through Walking and Running

Anthony Fleg, MD, MPH<sup>1,2</sup> Stacie Hurley<sup>1</sup>  
Danielle Kie<sup>1</sup> Lynette Padilla<sup>1</sup>  
Rod Lansing<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Native Health Initiative, Albuquerque, New Mexico

<sup>2</sup>University of New Mexico Family and Community Medicine, Albuquerque, New Mexico

*Ann Fam Med* 2019;17:466. <https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2417>.

### THE INNOVATION

Getting our patients and communities moving is challenging, with too few outlets for families to exercise together in low-cost, inclusive spaces. Running Medicine (RM) (<https://running-medicine.org>) came from a vision of the Native Health Initiative (NHI) to provide such a program. Running Medicine has found a unique blend of intergenerational play, partnerships, and culturally grounded wellness creating an inclusive space for movement. The program operates as a program of a nonprofit partnership, the NHI, and like all NHI programs, is very intentionally strength based in all of its elements.

### WHO & WHERE

Running Medicine takes place in the parks and open spaces of 6 urban and rural communities in New Mexico. It is a year-round program that offers 8- to 10-week seasons. Running Medicine leaders include health professionals and experienced coaches, all of whom are looking to improve their wellness. Running Medicine aims to be inclusive to all, and participants represent a diverse group of Tribes/ethnicities, ages, and fitness and ability levels. In a given community, RM happens 3 or 4 times a week, with intentional elements to create community and allow participants to improve their mind, body, and spirit wellness.

### HOW

Running Medicine "celebrations" begins with an opening circle, often 80 to 100 people strong. A meditation/inspiration/game

*Conflicts of interest: authors report none.*

### Corresponding author

Anthony Fleg  
University of New Mexico  
MSC 09 5040  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131  
[afleg@salud.unm.edu](mailto:afleg@salud.unm.edu)

is offered to begin the day, followed by dynamic stretches to get muscles warmed up. The youth are in the center of the circle, allowing parents to begin to focus on themselves. We then break up for a 30- to 40-minute walk/run, with a wide range of speeds, abilities, and levels of competitiveness. During this time, we are giving high fives and have additional ways to make the experience communal. The RM closes with static stretching, core strengthening, and a closing inspiration followed by a "handshake line" familiar to traditional American Indian ceremonies. This gives each person a chance to thank the others for their "medicine," and a chance to build community in a very consistent way as the group gets bigger and absorbs new people.

The RM celebrations take place on soft surfaces such as trails and grass, which, along with the stretching and core work, have led to a remarkably low rate of injuries (approximately 2 injuries per 100 people per season). We incorporate healthy food and water at every RM in addition to other "Food is Medicine" elements that encourage people toward healthier eating.

Sprinkle in 160+ community partners that range from Tribes, health clinics, schools, and nonprofit organizations and you have the RM community approach to building wellness. This leads to intersections with clinic-based programs (eg, diabetes prevention programs). RM allows us to bring our wellness approach to local events, conferences, and as a valuable "classroom" for health professions students that do internships and projects with RM.

Improving physical health, mental health, and social support, along with a culturally grounded approach to exercise are the primary motivations participants list for joining RM. Over 90% of our participants feel that the program improved their wellness in each of these domains.

### LEARNING

RM is a powerful reminder that individuals and communities thrive in an environment that creates a low-cost, inclusive place for movement; moreover, this is an important complement to our high-cost, disease-oriented health care system. Keeping an element of "sacred play" and a strength-based model, we find that people explore their needs naturally and lead themselves to healing beautifully well.

To read or post commentaries in response to this article, see it online at <http://www.AnnFamMed.org/content/17/5/466>.





Submitted February 3, 2019; submitted, revised, February 26, 2019; accepted March 28, 2019.



# RUNNINGMEDICINE

*For information on Running Medicine, our Running Medicine Wellness Grants program, and to join us in 2019, please feel free to contact us*

---

www	Website	<a href="https://runningmedicine.org/">https://runningmedicine.org/</a>
@	Email	runningmedicineabq@gmail.com
	Twitter	( @RunningMedABQ ) <a href="https://twitter.com/RunningMedABQ">https://twitter.com/RunningMedABQ</a>
	Instagram	( @runningmedicine ) <a href="https://www.instagram.com/runningmedicine/">https://www.instagram.com/runningmedicine/</a>
	Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Running-Medicine-Albuquerque-598936590256892/">https://www.facebook.com/Running-Medicine-Albuquerque-598936590256892/</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/RunningMedicineRR/">https://www.facebook.com/RunningMedicineRR/</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/RMFarmington/">https://www.facebook.com/RMFarmington/</a>
	NHI Website	<a href="http://www.loving-service.us/">http://www.loving-service.us/</a>
	Snail Mail	Native Health Initiative, PO Box 26374, Albuquerque, NM 87125



Native Health Initiative  
[www.loving-service.us](http://www.loving-service.us)