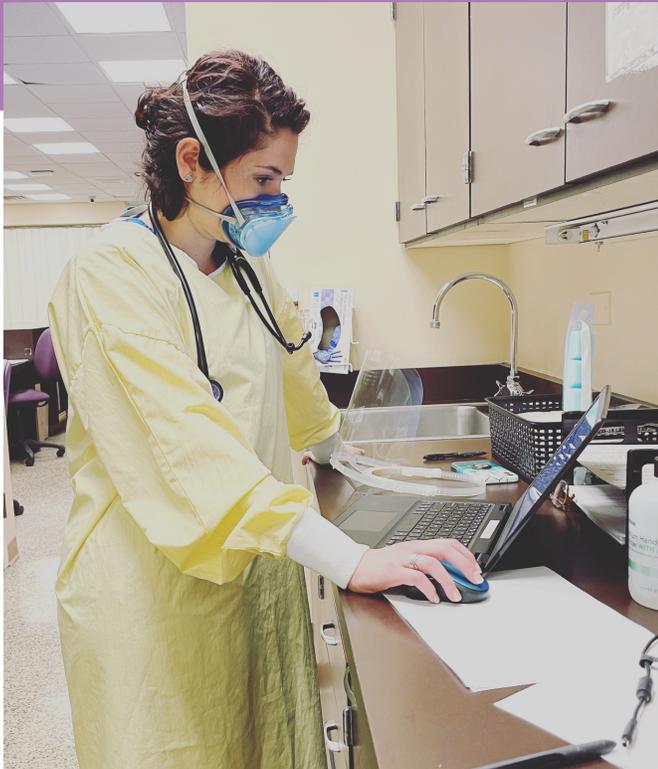


# THE ADVANCING PRACTICE PAGES



Maria Pirotte, FNP Fellow

Growing  
Into the  
New Year

## OVERVIEW

Hello and welcome back! For those who are unfamiliar, the AdvancingPractice Pages is a quarterly newsletter that keeps you updated on events and updates surrounding Erie Family Health Centers & University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Nursing's APRN Fellowship, AdvancingPractice. We are a HRSA-funded training program that mentors and supports recently graduated APRN's to be the next generation of nurse leaders in community health. We are nearing the end of our first year, and if you read our previous newsletter, you'll remember that we were wrapping up a difficult quarter where the Fellows were feeling understandably overwhelmed in their new roles as providers, but also dealing with external factors such as COVID-19. However, it is amazing how much can happen in just a few short months. The Fellows have taken huge strides in their professional and personal growth.

# I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN ME



## CHECK IT OUT!

The Fellows have been rotating more frequently through procedure clinic with Dr. Mandy Gittler. Dr. Gittler is a Family Medicine Doctor whose expertise is in performing procedures such as joint injections, punch biopsies and skin tag removal, to name a few. Once a month, we have been sending a Fellow with her to get experience with these common outpatient procedures. Pictured to the left (from left to right) is one of our faculty members, Kiersten Solis, APRN, Dr. Mandy Gittler, Dr. Meredith Berlin, FNP Fellow, Kelly Quaine, AGNP Fellow, and Allee McDaniel, PNP Fellow

During quarter three, Erie Family Health Centers saw a steady decline in COVID-19 cases. Though the pandemic is not over, with more employees and patients being vaccinated, we were able to refocus our attention on the primary and preventive healthcare needs of our patients. The Fellows have become much more comfortable with the 20 minute appointment times and our preceptors have definitely noticed a shift in how often they are needed for support. The Fellows have grown tremendously through such a challenging time in healthcare and the level of care they provide and confidence in moving from in person to telehealth visits continues to amaze our faculty and Erie providers

Professional development and job placement has been a primary focus this quarter. Though we would like nothing more than to have all of our Fellows be able to work at Erie after their Fellowship year, we believe it is important to prepare our Fellows to be savvy in understanding their value as an advanced trained nurse. Our Fellows have completed multiple didactic sessions lead by Dr. Natalie Raghu, our director. These sessions have focused on resume writing, interviewing, and negotiating tips. UIC-CON has also supported our Fellows and had a special session with career services from UIC's Jean Riordan. We are happy to report though that all of our fellows are currently interviewing for positions at Erie.

A milestone we achieved this quarter was expanding the Fellowship to another site, Erie HealthReach Waukegan Health Center. This site has a strong APRN presence. Miriam Rodriguez, APRN and Interim Site Director at Erie HealthReach Waukegan, joined our Faculty Advisory Board a few months ago and served as our first preceptor at that location for one of our FNP Fellows. We are thrilled to be sending our Fellows there and look forward to rotating our next cohort of Fellows there more consistently.

Speaking of our next cohort, the faculty advisory board, with help from some of our current Fellows, completed two rounds of interviews during January and February. We met with so many talented and interesting candidates all throughout the country, the majority of whom seemed to have a strong interest in Community Health. Our holistic interview process, with a focus on finding candidates who align with Erie's mission, helped the team narrow down 74 applicants to 10 Fellows who will begin the program on July 6th, 2021! We cannot wait to introduce everyone to this new cohort. More to come next quarter!

"It has been an honor to be part of the Fellowship and having an APRN Fellow work at Erie HealthReach Waukegan. Having the Fellow have previous experience in other areas and neighborhoods has helped to focus on specific learning needs and to provide a safety net to her learning experience."

- Miriam Rodriguez

# THE LAST PAGE

This quarter, we have been doing a lot of reflecting on the past. March 2021 marked the one year anniversary of the pandemic. A heartbreaking and and challenging year for many. However, while writing our annual HRSA report, in which we had to report on all the project tasks and accomplishments that were made within the past year, we felt extremely proud of the fact that we were able to build a successful program all while dealing with significant changes in our work and personal environments. And even though the Fellows are not quite done with the training year, they, along with the staff, cannot help but reflect on how far they have come as individuals and providers since the start of the Fellowship. The Fellowship for our first cohort will officially end on June 30th. We can't wait to wrap up this inaugural year and send our Fellows off into practice, wherever that may be!



Laura Nozicka, CNM Fellow and Ana Perez, FNP Fellow

**Enjoying our Newsletters? What else do you want to know about the Fellowship? Let us know what you think by emailing us at [AdvancingPractice@eriefamilyhealth.org](mailto:AdvancingPractice@eriefamilyhealth.org)**

## THANKS FOR READING!

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### CONTACT US

Email: [AdvancingPractice@eriefamilyhealth.org](mailto:AdvancingPractice@eriefamilyhealth.org)

Phone: 312-432-2056



# MEET THE FACULTY



Natalie Raghu, DNP, APRN, FNP-C  
Fellowship Program Director



Charlie Yingling, DNP, FNP-BC, FAANP  
Associate Dean for Practice and  
Community Partnerships  
Clinical Associate Professor, UIC



Jean Reidy, DNP, MPH, APRN,  
ANP-C  
Sr. Director, Nursing and Clinical  
Transformation  
Erie Family Health



Kathy Rugen, PhD, FNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN  
Clinical Associate Professor, UIC



Kiersten Solis, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC  
Faculty Development Lead



Sarah Quirk, MSN, APRN, CNM, FNP-C  
Women's Reproductive Health  
Development Lead



Allison Clark Young, MSN, APRN, CPNP-PC  
Fellow Development Lead



Emily Bettencourt  
Fellowship Program Coordinator



Kelly Vaez, DNP, FNP-BC  
Clinical Assistant Professor, UIC



Mary McNamara, DNP, FNP-BC  
Clinical Assistant Professor, UIC



Karelle Webb, MPH, RN  
Compliance and Clinical Education, Erie



Santina Wheat, MD, MPH  
Program Director Northwestern Family  
Medicine Residency Erie



Miriam Rodriguez, FNP  
Erie HealthReach Waukegan