

## The Accreditation Edition

Volume 3, Issue 2  
April 2023

### It's Official!

We are delighted to announce that *AdvancingPractice* is now accredited by the Consortium of Advanced Practice Providers as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Fellowship! In the midst of training and guiding our current cohort of fellows through their program, the fellowship staff has been working behind the scenes for almost a year to secure this honor. In this newsletter, we will give an overview of what this process entailed.

From the start of the fellowships inception, obtaining accreditation was a priority of *AdvancingPractice*. Since post-graduate training programs are relatively new, there are only a few accrediting bodies that exist. The Consortium for Advanced Practice Providers was born directly out of the first ever APRN residency at Community Health Center Inc. Their firsthand knowledge with APRN residencies and fellowships, their thoughtfulness behind their accreditation quality standards, and their commitment to ensuring ongoing quality initiatives are all reasons why we selected this accrediting organization. You can learn more about this organization at [www.appostgradtraining.com](http://www.appostgradtraining.com).



Kimario Murray, Former FNP Fellow, Kiersten Solis, Program Director, Lucy Amaro, Former FNP Fellow and Medical Director of School-Based Health during the site visit.

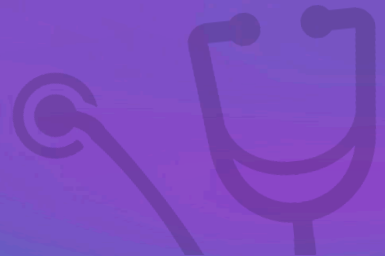
There were two parts to the accreditation process: a written narrative, referred to as the Self Study, and a site visit. Both pieces of the process are used to identify whether accreditation standards are being met. The standards are:

1. Mission, Goals, Objectives
2. Curriculum
3. Evaluation
4. Program Eligibility
5. Administration
6. Operations
7. Staff
8. Post Graduate Trainee Services

The Self Study was written by the fellowship staff during the summer and fall of 2022 and is essentially a blueprint of how

*AdvancingPractice* operates and exists. Writing this content took a lot of critical thinking and reflection that alone made our program stronger. Once submitted, a two-day site visit was scheduled for January 26th and 27th with four representatives from the Consortium: Kandree Hicks, DNP, MPS, APRN, NP-C; Margaret Flinter, PhD, APRN, FNP-C; DoQuyen Huynh, DNP, FNP; and Bethany Robertson, DNP, CHM.

The site visit consisted of various meetings with internal stakeholders, the fellowship staff, current and former fellows, as well as observations of the fellows in clinic. The site visit concluded with a summary from the site visitors, going through each standard one



*“The accreditation process was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our program and all the progress that was made in the first three years. We were able to analyze our goals, systematically review our curriculum, and focus on our program’s mission and vision. Through this reflection we were able to identify areas of strength as well as areas for improvement. Through all the hard work, we were able to see the important impact AdvancingPractice was making on patients, communities, and the future leaders of healthcare.”*

– Kiersten Solis, MSN, FNP-BC, Program Director, Erie Family Health Centers

the site visitors. We would also like to thank all of the leadership team who either met or helped coordinate meetings with the site visitors. We would also like to give a special thanks to Dr. Natalie Raghu, DNP, FNP-C, BC-ADM, who supported the program faculty through the entire process.

An additional thank you to everyone else who participated in the site visit interviews, including preceptors, nurses, and medical assistants who discussed their working relationships and experiences with the fellows. Lastly, and most importantly, we must thank all 26 fellows who have been through or are still in the program who trusted us enough to make this program possible. With this accreditation, we hope to bring future fellows’ additional confidence in selecting AdvancingPractice to begin their APRN journey.



Natalie Raghu, Medical Director of Advanced Practice Providers, giving Margaret Flinter a tour of Erie West Town Health Center

However, our accreditation doesn’t stop here! Accreditation is an ongoing process that must be maintained. In three years, we will apply for renewal of accreditation. In the meantime, The Consortium for Advanced Practice Providers requires us to report annually any changes to the program as quality assurance.

## Many Thanks

We have many people to thank for meeting this milestone. First and foremost, thank you to the Consortium for Advanced Practice Providers, especially the site visitors who so eloquently understood and believed in our program, as well as the mission of Erie Family Health Centers.

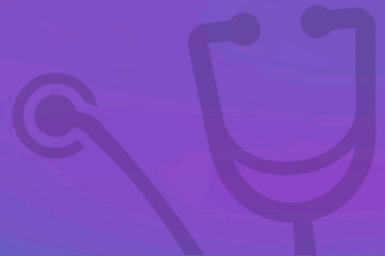
We would like to thank all of our executive leaders who have supported this program from the start and took time to explain the importance and the impact of the fellowship at Erie to



AdvancingPractice Faculty: Jeni Poell, Reproductive Health Lead, Esther Sault, Fellow Development Lead, Emily Bettencourt, Program Administrative Manager, Kiersten Solis, Program Director, Natalie Raghu, Medical Director of Advanced Practice Providers

by one, detailing their findings, providing recommendations, and informing us whether the standard had been met, partially met, or not met. We were extremely pleased to learn that we had met all the standards in full, and on March 28th, we received the official news that we were granted accreditation.





Top Row: Lee Francis, MD, MPH, CEO and President of Erie, Margaret Flinter, PhD, APRN, FNP-C, Site Visitor, Kandree Hicks, DNP, MPS, APRN, Site Visitor DoQuyen Huynh, DNP, FNP, Site Visitor, Esther Sault, MSN, FNPBC, Fellow Development Lead, Jeni Poell, MSN, CNM, WHNP-BC, Reproductive Health Lead, Bethany Johnson, DNP, CNM. Bottom Row: Kiersten Solis, MSN, FNP-BC, Program Director, Emily Bettencourt, Program Administrative Manager, Natalie Raghu, DNP, FNP-C, Medical Director of Advanced Practice Providers

## The Last Word

The road to accreditation was long and winding, but the payoff is so rewarding and motivating. We have always been proud of the work we do to train the next generation of APRNs but receiving such strong and meaningful feedback from the site visitors, who are all successful and influential APRNs, was validating. AdvancingPractice is committed to continually improving our program

to sustain our accreditation to best serve the fellows who graciously chose us to support them in their first year of practice.

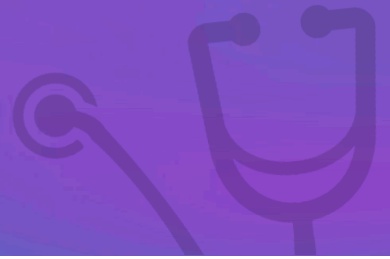
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*Enjoying our Newsletters?  
What else do you want to know  
about the Fellowship?*

*Let us know what you think by  
emailing us at [advancingpractice@eriefamilyhealth.org](mailto:advancingpractice@eriefamilyhealth.org).*

**THANKS FOR READING!**

**DONATE**



## Meet the Faculty



Kiersten Solis, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC,  
Program Director, Erie Family Health  
Centers



Sarah Fitz, MSN, APRN, ACNP,  
Health Education Specialist, Clinical  
Assistant Professor, UIC



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



Emily Bettencourt, Program  
Administrative Manger,  
Erie Family Health Centers



Esther Sault, MSN, FNP-BC,  
Fellow Development Lead,  
Erie Family Health Centers



Jenifer Poell, MSN, CNM, WHNP-BC,  
Reproductive Health Lead,  
Erie Family Health Centers



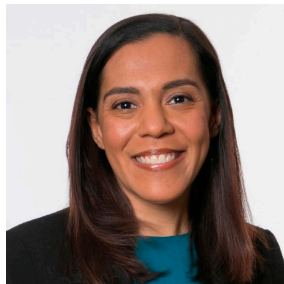
Natalie Raghu, DNP, APRN, FNP-C,  
Fellowship Program Director &  
Medical Director of Advanced  
Practice Providers, Erie Family  
Health Centers



Afrodita Salievksa, DNP, FNP-BC,  
Curriculum Development Lead,  
Clinical Assistant Professor, UIC



Miriam Rodriguez, FNP,  
Erie HealthReach Waukegan  
Health Center



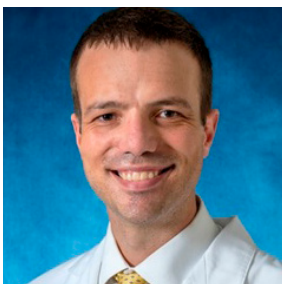
Santina Wheat, MD, MPH,  
Program Director, Northwestern  
Family Medicine Residency,  
Erie Family Health Centers



Meredith Berlin, DNP, APRN, FNP  
Erie School-Based Health



Ana Perez, MSN, FNP  
Erie West Town Health Center



Edgar Woznica, MD, Psychiatrist,  
Erie Family Health Centers



Lucy Amaro, DNP, FNP,  
Medical Director,  
Erie School-Based Health