

Health Care Enrollment through Community Engagement

WCU & the Health Care Enrollment Program: Informing, Educating, and Enrolling North Carolinians into Affordable Health Insurance Programs

Under the direction of Social Work Assistant Professor Amy Murphy-Nugen (abmurphynugen@email.wcu.edu) in her SOCW364 Community Practice course, Bachelor of Social Work students (Howard Anderson, Alex Ehrnsberger, Hannah Sisk, Ginny Spencer Eudy, Jeanine Valkos, and Chelsea White) collaborated with Enroll America and local organizations to develop and implement an outreach and educational strategy to increase health insurance enrollment in western North Carolina. Enroll America is an independent nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to maximize the number of Americans who enroll and retain health coverage under the Affordable Care Act. The service provided by the SOCW364 team resulted in 600 contacts being made with uninsured and underinsured western North Carolinian residents. These contacts resulted in individuals being connected with local health navigators whose purpose was to inform and enroll North Carolinians into affordable health insurance programs. Further, the student team helped to strengthen communication and coordination among existing service providers in North Carolina.

About this collaborative project as an example of community engagement, Assistant Professor Nugen said, “Community engagement is at the heart of my academic identity – intersecting my teaching, scholarship and service. Specifically, my teaching, research and service overlap in the areas of community economic development, not-for-profit management/leadership, public policy and the scholarship of teaching and learning. I was drawn to the social work profession because of its commitment of working in collaboration with individuals and communities to expand social, economic and political justice. By teaching, providing service and expanding knowledge, community engagement offers an incredibly valuable approach to empower emerging leaders (our students) and community partners as problem-solvers and opportunity creators.”

If you would like your community engagement work recognized through the STAR Engagement Projects program, please submit your proposals through the [Community-based Activities Faculty Survey](#) administered annually in the spring semester from early April – late May.

Website(s): Enroll America, <https://www.enrollamerica.org/>; Pisgah Legal Services, <http://www.pisgahlegal.org/>; Mountain Projects, <http://www.mountainprojects.org/>

