KATHERINE L. GUDGEL, MS: BIOGRAPHY

Education

Rice University, BA in Biology

University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine, MS in Pathobiology

Job Title and Employer

Director of Community Programs, HealthPoint

Katherine is a seasoned community health professional with a strong foundation in public health. Prior to becoming Director of Community Programs for HealthPoint, she worked for the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), Group Health (now Kaiser Permanente of Washington) and a non-profit health information technology firm. At DOH, she helped craft the Total Coliform Rule and was a liaison to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a Water Quality Specialist in NW Drinking Water Operations. In other roles, Katherine provided education on radiation health effects as part of the Hanford Health Information Network and worked with all 32 (at the time) local health jurisdictions to expend their Local Health Capacity funds from the state legislature. Her final chapter at DOH was a 15-year tenure in the Sexually Transmitted Diseases program. Here she built on her academic research in infectious disease and previous experience as a pharmacy technician. During this time, she worked closely with the Family Planning program and secured funding for several innovative grants and a Washington State Legislature decision package in order to improve adolescent health and reduce infectious disease burden.

Before departing the DOH in 2011, she became passionate about ending the health disparities between South King County and other parts of King County. As Community Benefit Program Manager for Group Health, she advocated to strengthen school-based health centers and programs that promoted healthy communities of color, including Cascade Bicycle Club's Major Taylor project. As a consultant, she wrote Community Health Needs Assessments for hospitals in Washington and Oregon, again identifying health disparities and recommending strategies to reduce them.

At HealthPoint, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) that serves South King County, Bothell and Redmond, Katherine is responsible for several HealthPoint initiatives to provide health services outside of traditional health care settings. The Homeless Services team directly engages people experiencing homelessness, provides them with limited support like blood pressure monitoring and cold weather clothing and strives to connect them to primary care and a health home. The Early Education team supports strong health practices among Early Head Start and Head Start enrollees. Finally, the School-Based Health team operates five full-service primary care clinics with behavioral health care in schools in the Federal Way, Highline and Renton school districts. Across these teams, staff are encouraged to identify and deconstruct racist policies and practices. The teams confront language, education and income barriers to provide whole person care in a setting that those receiving care are already familiar with.

Katherine is a member of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council for HealthPoint. This body exists to ensure that HealthPoint policies, practices and procedures foster a safe, respectful, equitable environment for staff, people served and community members.