

Insights

NICHQ Employee Spotlight: Gabe Soto

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Gabe Soto
Accounts Payable Coordinator

Full name and title: Gabe Soto, Accounts Payable Coordinator

Time with NICHQ: 1.5 years

How has your past experiences led you to work for a maternal and child health organization?

I have five children, thankfully, but before I was lucky enough to be a parent for the first time, we lost our first pregnancy. My history of being new to the pregnancy and the parenting experience, and not having the proper counseling to know how to deal with pregnancy loss, really inspired me to look for an opportunity to help individuals who have experienced similar challenges make more sense of the process. And with the work we do at NICHQ, we're helping to improve the probability of that not happening again in the future for other families. Having the experience of losing my first child was very difficult and it made me more dedicated to making a difference, and making sure that nobody else has to go through the same experience I did.

June is Men's Health Month and I want to get a little bit of advice from you for other MCH organizations working to create initiatives that better support fathers and partners?

One of the most important things that the organization can do is be flexible and allow the dad, for example, to be able to attend the monthly checkup or the every two weeks checkup. During that time, the more information you're able to share with the specialist, the better prepared you are to handle any potential dangers that might be in the horizon. Most of the time, when my wife was pregnant, her job was very, very flexible in allowing her to make sure she made all the appointments. But I always try to be there with her, not only to support her, but also to know the process as well. I always think two sets of ears can listen more than one. It's always good to be there and support in that way so we can build that communication with the specialist who is going to be part of such a such an amazing process to be able to have a child. It's an amazing process to be honest.

What is your favorite part of your role as NICHQ's account payable coordinator?

One of the cool things, considering that we are a hundred percent remote, is the fact that I'm able to interact with basically everybody in the company. At one point or another we're able to meet to pay a vendor or we have to pay a consultant. That's always a good time for me to get to know some of my coworkers, and definitely a highlight of the job. I think the second one would be when I'm lucky enough to be able to speak with some of the consultants that work with us on the project level. Some of them are very nice and very knowledgeable and they're able to share their knowledge with me. In a sense, it's a double whammy. I get to learn maternal and child health concepts more in-depth because I get to know more about the project.

Definitely, the best part of it is being able to be involved in the projects. I get to learn what the project is all about, which populations we are targeting, and what our goals are. And that allows me to put myself in a position where I can help my team be more efficient.

What is one professional goal you're working to achieve this year?

Structurally, each project is allowed a certain amount of money to be able to do the research and conduct the work that they do. In order for us to be very impactful on the project, it's important that we use every single fund available to conduct that work. One thing I've learned since I've been here is how to be more efficient and utilize all the funds available. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many programs were not able to continue doing the same kind of work they were doing because people were not meeting face-to-face. As in-person meetings have ramped back up, I want to make sure I'm a source of information to the project teams to make sure they know where we are as far as the budget is concerned and make sure that we use all the funds to continue to make an impact in what we do, because we have an amazing mission. We're on the right path and we're in the right organization. My coworkers are very dedicated, and everybody lives for this.

You mentioned you have five children. In what way has your parenting experience been impacted by your work at NICHQ?

I think with the pregnancy and being able to work here, I realized the importance of having good, open communication with providers and health workers. Not just taking someone's word at face value, especially in our case where we have prior experience of pregnancy loss, making sure

that we use that experience to provide more insight on how things should be considering the previous outcome. In that sense, we felt like instead of just listening to one source, we use that source combined with our knowledge to be able to come up with a better plan if we were uncomfortable. I'm making sure that my wife's voice was heard every time. If she's not feeling well, making sure her providers actually understand the severity, and it might not just be a typical pregnancy pain. Working at NICHQ has given me that insight into how important it is to make sure that there was this early period of time with communication to try to keep everybody on the same page.