April is a big month for public health researchers, as the nation celebrates National Public Health Week and Minority Health Month. In recognition of the increased attention given to our mission and focus in the next few weeks, the M-CHE is promoting several events that raise awareness about health inequities and promote health equality.

The first of these is our co-sponsorship (with the Advance Program for Inclusive Excellence) of the Public Health Innovation Grand Rounds Lecture given by Dr. Paula Braveman on April 21. Dr. Braveman’s lecture on “Shorter Lives, Poorer Health: The U.S. Health Disadvantage Relative to Other Affluent Countries” will highlight topics that are of major importance to all public health researchers. Dr. Braveman’s experience with health disparities, health equity, and social determinants of health research make her well-suited to deliver this significant presentation. See our Events section for more details.
Secondly, we are organizing the Health Equity Drum Circle: Drum Beats for Health and Wellness. We are attempting to assemble the largest hand drum ensemble ever and set a new Guinness World record. In addition to the world record attempt, we want to raise awareness about health inequalities and how everyone can help to break the cycle of health disparities to achieve a more healthy nation for everyone. This event will be held on Maryland Day, April 26th. Click here for more details about the event and how to register to participate.

We are also excited to share some important recent and upcoming speaking engagements on our calendars. On April 7, Dr. Thomas spoke at the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s meeting “Innovations in Workplace and Community Wellness: Navigating the New Terrain” on the business case for equity of care. At the end of April he will present at the University of Cincinnati/Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Center of Clinical and Translational Science and Training Speakers Series and will speak at the PRIDE Annual meeting in Washington, DC. In May, both Drs. Thomas and Quinn will present a lecture at the NIH National Human Genome Research Institute. And in June, Dr. Quinn will further disseminate the results of her vaccine research to a global audience at the University College London School of Life and Medical Sciences Academic Careers Office/National Institute for Health Research UCL Hospitals Biomedical Research Center’s Conference Series “Regulating Experimental Medicine during a Pandemic”. Among the objectives of this conference, held in collaboration with the World Health Organization, are to make recommendations and to suggest revisions to the WHO’s guidelines on research ethics during a pandemic.

And finally, we express our deepest gratitude to Dr. John Ruffin, founding director of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, as he retires from the NIH after 24 years of service. In NIH’s director Francis Collins’ words, Dr. Ruffin has done “everything in his power to bring attention to and find solutions for the unequal burden of illness affecting minority, rural, and poor populations in this country”. On a personal level, we have worked with Dr. Ruffin on a number of different projects over the years, and we deeply appreciate all his efforts to bring an end racial and ethnic health disparities. While we are sad to see him leave the NIMHD, we know that he leaves the Institute in a solid position to continue the work he started, and we wish him happiness in all his future endeavors.

Drs. Thomas and Quinn recently had the opportunity to discuss with Dr. Ruffin a variety of issues related to the importance of including minorities in research. Select audio clips and the full written transcript of the interview are available in the M-CHE sponsored December 2013 theme issue of the American Journal of Public Health. (http://ajph.aphapublications.org/toc/ajph/103/12)
RESEARCH UPDATE

In the past few months we have made several key accomplishments in our vaccine study. We have completed all nine of our focus groups and are currently conducting our belief elicitation interviews. For these, we are seeking opinions from African American and White individuals who are both takers and non-takers of the flu vaccine. If you are interested in participating, please visit our website here.

In addition to progress on the study itself, we also have two recent publications on trust and acceptance related to the H1N1 vaccine during the 2009 pandemic:


- **Determinants of parental acceptance of the H1N1 vaccine**, by Karen Hilyard, Sandra Quinn, Kevin Kim, Don Musa, and Vicki Freimuth, published in Health Education & Behavior, doi: 10.1177/1090198113515244

We also have an upcoming poster presentation at the Kentucky Conference on Health Communication, *The Case of Peramivir during the 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic: Implications for Essential Partnerships for Risk Communication in a Public Health Emergency*. Dr. Quinn will present the team’s findings during the April 10-12 conference in Lexington. Additional authors on the poster are Karen M. Hilyard, Kevin H. Kim, Nestor Castaneda-Angarita, and Vicki S. Freimuth.

In other research news, we were pleased to have had a presence at the 74th Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, held March 18-22 in Albuquerque, NM. M-CHE Project Director Dr. Susan Passmore presented results from our Building Trust project in her talk ‘Reframing Research Engagement: Building a “Deep Fund of Good Will”’. The results came from our semi-structured interviews with researchers experienced with engagement of minority communities, and provide insight into how public health researchers may need to rethink their approach to communities to be more successful at engaging them in research. A manuscript reporting these results is in prep and we hope to announce its forthcoming publication soon!

In addition, one of our student workers, Amelia Jackson, who will receive her Master’s degree in anthropology this May, served on several student sessions at the meeting. After the success of some of the more experimental sessions, the UMD student conference restaged a few of the presentations at the April 5th Anthro+ student panel.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

In early April, several members of the M-CHE team had the opportunity to join members of the Legacy Leadership Institute on Public Policy’s Retreat at the Maryland State Legislature in Annapolis, MD. Drs. Thomas, Garza, and Passmore, along with Wesley Queen, Coordinator of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute on Public Policy and MCHE’s Community and Outreach Coordinator Shawnta Jackson joined the 2014 Legacy Leaders Class as they experienced the workings of
the general assembly while it was in session. The retreat was one of the steps in introducing a new component of the legacy curriculum: examining and evaluating the health impact of legislation. During their retreat, the Legacy Leaders had an opportunity to join the Assembly’s discussion of a fracking bill, as an example of future legislative initiatives that they will evaluate and on which they may make recommendations based on potential health impacts. This updated component of the Legacy Leader curriculum will be officially introduced to the 2015 class. A number of Legacy Leaders are standing members of our MD-CRAB.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Our community engagement work continues to be a central part of our focus; in particular we are working with several local communities and offering support for their health needs. One such relationship we have been deepening for the past several months is that with the Al-Huda School, a full-time K-12 Islamic school in College Park, MD. Our first project with the school is to develop a cookbook that incorporates traditional dishes from the many countries and cultures that are represented in the school. We recently announced a competition for the elementary, middle, and high school students to submit photographs or illustrations, with the winning submissions featured on the cover and back designs of the book. In addition to the inclusion of the recipes, we will also feature a section on nutrition, with information on how to interpret nutritional labels, how to make better food choices, and tips on how to enjoy less healthy food options in moderation. We are also in the process of setting up some meetings with the parent/teacher/student groups to discuss the development of focus group questions to help guide us forward with our project and relationship with the Al-Huda School. During these meetings, we will go over the IRB process, talk about what we would like to ask and get feedback on the proposed questions, and will share our BT online website with them. Stay tuned for updates on our next goals and projects for Healthy Al-Huda 2020.

STUDENT AND STAFF NEWS

We hope you share our excitement as we introduce the newest member of the M-CHE team, Ms. Kester Williams! Kester recently joined the M-CHE on assignment from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) at the National Institutes of Health. At M-CHE, she will be a Health Equity Fellow involved in the Center’s communications and community outreach activities. She has been with the NIMHD for the past 12 years serving as a Special Assistant to the Institute Director, and more recently, as Communications Officer for the Institute. She earned her mas-
Kester’s degree in International Relations and International Communications at Boston University, and her undergraduate degree in Mass Communications and Foreign Languages (French & Spanish), at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, CT. Prior to joining the NIMHD she worked at the National Kidney Foundation as a programs manager administering patient education programs. She has also worked as a public relations associate at Ogilvy Adams & Rinehart.

“I am very pleased to be with M-CHE. It is an opportunity for me to be exposed to academia and gain new knowledge and insights into the research process by being involved in research at the community level and interacting directly with health disparity communities. Through this experience, I hope to better understand the communications needs of our grantees and the affected health disparity communities so that we can better serve them through our health communications efforts.”

We extend the warmest of welcomes to Kester!

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 21, 2014: Joint ADVANCE/M-CHE lecture
1312 SPH Building, University of Maryland, College Park
Featured speaker: Dr. Paula Braveman, Professor of Family and Community Medicine and Director of the Center on Social Disparities in Health at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)

April 26, 2014: Health Equity Drum Circle: Drum Beats for Health and Wellness
Byrd Stadium, University of Maryland College Park
Join the M-CHE at Maryland Day 2014, and their attempt to break the Guinness World record for largest hand drum ensemble while raising awareness of health disparities. Register NOW!

September 5-6, 2014: The Maryland Health Equity Festival Presents The Mid-Maryland Mission of Mercy
Cole Field House, University of Maryland, College Park
This Mid Maryland Mission of Mercy event is a gathering of volunteer dental professionals who along with a volunteer staff of several hundred hold free, two day dental clinics at locations around the State.

September 18-19, 2014: Health Across Borders: Migration, Disease, Medicine, and Public Health in a Global Age
University of Maryland, College Park, MD
The Center for the History of the New America and the Center for Health Equity at the University of Maryland will co-host a conference exploring the connections between migration, race, disease, and public health. Dr. David Satcher, 16th Surgeon General of the United States, will be the keynote speaker.
NEWS WORTH READING:

Law Lifts Enrollment in Medicaid by Millions

WASHINGTON — Enrollment in Medicaid has increased by three million people, to a total of 62 million, largely because of the Affordable Care Act, the Obama administration said Friday.

Study finds many preteens have high cholesterol
March 28, 2014, By Associated Press

There’s fresh evidence that a lot of young people could be headed for heart trouble. A large study of preteens in Texas found that about one-third of them had borderline or high cholesterol when tested during routine physical exams.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/study-finds-many-preteens-have-high-cholesterol/2014/03/28/bae891b6-b673-11e3-9eb3-c254bdb4414d_story.html

Still Too Few Minority Participants in U.S. Clinical Trials, Study Finds
By Mary Elizabeth Dallas, March 21, 2014, HealthDay News

It’s been 20 years since Congress required that research funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) include minorities, but non-whites still account for less than 5 percent of clinical trial participants, according to a new report.
http://health.usnews.com/health-news/articles/2014/03/21/still-too-few-minority-participants-in-us-clinical-trials-study-finds

School Data Finds Pattern of Inequality Along Racial Lines

Racial minorities are more likely than white students to be suspended from school, to have less access to rigorous math and science classes, and to be taught by lower-paid teachers with less experience, according to comprehensive data released Friday by the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights.