The summer months have been busy ones for our team at the Maryland Center for Health Equity (M-CHE). We are incredibly excited about the launch of our Building Trust between Minorities and Researchers Web-Based Interactive Educational Program. NOW LIVE, this program, designed for people to learn more about why and how to become involved in research, provides users with information about health disparities and the fundamentals of health research, how to make an informed decision about participating in a research study, and ways to become involved with research or researchers. The website combines select content from our two facilitator-led Building Trust Curricula, results from our Building Trust research projects, resources and information from NIH, CDC, and other health agencies with interactive features, provocative video clips, and discussion questions to challenge users to consider the information they learn. The site was designed to be appropriate for individual users, as well as for groups such as community partners, classes, and research teams. We encourage you to visit and explore the site! Please share it with your colleagues and community partners. To visit the site, go to www.buildingtrustumd.org

Message from the Principal Investigators

Principal Investigators:
Sandra Crouse Quinn and Stephen B. Thomas

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Kicking off our fall semester, M-CHE co-sponsored the Civil War Civil Rights: The Well-Being of a Nation Symposium at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center on September 5-6. In observation of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, the symposium brought together the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, M-CHE, and two UMD schools, Arts and Humanities and Public Policy to host the free, National Symposium. The symposium combined scholarly presentations with artistic interpretations of the progress we have made in promoting civil rights, and the work that still lies ahead to end the inequalities that remain today. Following a keynote address by Julian Bond, M-CHE Director Stephen Thomas spoke on “Why Race Matters in Eliminating Health Disparities”. Be sure to visit www.umdmarcheson.org to access the presentations and to keep up to date on this two year celebration.

Also of note in the past several months was Stephen Thomas’ leadership in the launch of the new Advancing Faculty Diversity initiative, and M-CHE’s co-sponsorship of a number of events including the Pre-K to Prison Pipeline: Changing the Odds for Boys of Color Symposium, and the Maryland Population Research Center’s Fall 2013 Seminar Series talk by University of Michigan’s James S. Jackson.

These are just a few of the many activities with which we’ve been involved in the past few months. Please continue reading to learn about our research progress, international travel and presentations, new community partnerships, and other training and educational programs we offer!

**RESEARCH NEWS**

**Influenza Pandemic Disparities Model: International Reach**

In an exciting opportunity to spread the word on influenza pandemic preparedness, Dr. Sandra Quinn presented results from her vaccine research team’s study to an international audience at the 21st World Conference on Health Promotion, sponsored by the International Union of Health Promotion and Education in Pattaya, Thailand August 25-26. Dr. Quinn’s presentation examined the applicability of the team’s empirically tested disparities model that predicts exposure and susceptibility of racial and ethnic minorities during a flu pandemic to global settings. Building on that model and its earlier application to India, she further explored the implications for pandemic planning, policies and health promotion in global settings. “The World Conference literally brings health promotion and public health professionals from across the globe together to address key issues. Influenza is always a potential threat, and we can alter planning now to address the multiple factors that drive disparities,” she said.

Also this summer, the M-CHE research team has made substantial progress on our NIH Center of Excellence (COE) sponsored research projects:
The Vaccine Study group completed all their focus groups, and the team is now in the process of analyzing and coding the results. These results will help inform the next stage of the project, which involves the development of a survey instrument designed to uncover reasons for the disparity in vaccination rates between African Americans and Whites.

With leadership from Drs. Craig Fryer and Susan Passmore, the Black Men’s Health Initiative has completed one of its specific aims, which was to conduct interviews with leaders of university-based Men’s Health Research Centers across the nation. With these interviews complete, coding and analysis will begin, and the team is also preparing to begin the second set of interviews, those with Black men to assess their knowledge and attitudes on a number of men’s health related topics.

Finally, we have also completed the data collection portion of our FDA study, in which research and industry personnel were interviewed to better understand minority inclusion in FDA regulated drug trials. Analysis is currently ongoing, and Dr. Quinn presented initial results at M-CERSI Day, a one-day conference sponsored by the University’s Center for Excellence in Regulatory Science and Innovation (CERSI) on September 5th.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

One of the M-CHE’s missions is to improve the health of Marylanders, and particularly those who live in the neighborhoods surrounding the UMD College Park Campus. In keeping with this mission, this past July the M-CHE established a new partnership with the Embry Center for Family Life. This partnership, titled “The Healthy Lakeland Project” is dedicated to developing mutually beneficial programs, projects and activities to support the health and well-being of residents of Lakeland, MD, the historic African American neighborhood established in 1890, on the doorstep of the University of Maryland in College Park. The M-CHE will provide resources, support, and expertise to The Embry Center for Family Life to help them accomplish their goal of improving the lives of community members through education, training, counseling, and support. The M-CHE will assist the Embry Center for Family Life with preparation of grant proposals, provide materials, opportunities, and institutional support for community based projects such as Health Expos and Community Forums, information sharing on research data related to health equity and nutrition, and support in developing and conducting a health needs assessment.

We also just hosted the first MD-CRAB meeting of the 2013-2014 Academic Year. This first meeting of the year was focused on public release of the online Building Trust Education program. MD-CRAB will also keep busy with tracking implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare) across the state. We are excited that the state of Maryland is on track to open the Health Benefit Exchange in October.
Nearly everyone recognizes the value of a good mentor to a developing researcher. Less straightforward to many, however, is how to be a good mentor. Coming this fall, the M-CHE is pleased to offer a mentor training program to senior faculty who mentor or would like to mentor developing faculty, post-doctoral fellows, or graduate students in the area of community engaged research. Organized by Drs. Quinn and Passmore, our COE Project Director, this training is the first partnership between M-CHE and the Office of the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs. The evidenced-based curriculum, developed by the University of Wisconsin Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (UW ICTR), focuses on training the mentors of researchers whose work is conducted with the input and, in some cases, the direct and full participation of community members. The sessions will be co-facilitated by M-CHE Director Stephen Thomas and Dr. Ruth Zambrana, Maryland Population Research Center’s Director of the Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity and Professor of Women’s Studies. Together, these two senior faculty and experienced mentors themselves will offer participants resources on how to be a more effective research mentor, and opportunities to discuss mentoring challenges among peers, develop a mentoring philosophy, take a reflective approach to mentoring, and share best mentoring practices. We believe mentoring is both an art and science and we are committed to making sure faculty at the University of Maryland have the best skills available.

For more information on session dates and times and to reserve a spot in the program, www.healthequity.umd.edu.

We are also currently accepting applications to our upcoming Public Health Critical Race Praxis Institute, to be held February 17-19, 2014. The Institute is intended for scholars and researchers interested in learning how to incorporate the principles of Critical Race Praxis into their work. For more information, and to apply for the institute, visit our website (http://www.healthequity.umd.edu/events_2013_august5.asp).

Applications are due soon (November 15th) so get yours submitted before it’s too late!

Finally, we have a new contract with the Delmarva Foundation for Medical Care. M-CHE will provide technical assistance on health disparity research and health equity to the Disparities National Coordinating Center which serves the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) for the state of Maryland and the District of Columbia, and QIOs across the country. We presented the virtual conference “Data Driven Action: Pathways to Health Equity” on October 1 to 200 registered participants. The conference highlighted select content from our Building Trust curriculum, Becoming a Self-Reflective Researcher and introduced the audience to the economic issue of health disparities. It is noteworthy that CMS has a new Office on Minority Health established as part of Affordable Care Act Law.
BUILDING TRUST

While our most prominent news about Building Trust is the launch of our online curriculum, it’s not the only update and we want to mention two other highlights.

The first is a new publication from results of our BT online survey of researchers, published in the September 2013 issue of Contemporary Clinical Trials. In the article, Characterizing researchers by strategies used for retaining minority participants: Results of a national survey, the M-CHE team reports that researchers can be characterized into a systematic typology based on the retention strategies they use. A cluster analysis of the results indicated that there were three distinct groups of researchers based on the number and types of retention strategies they employed. The cluster groups, labeled 1) comprehensive, 2) moderate, and 3) limited, differed not only in the number of retention strategies used, but also on a number of other factors. Comprehensive and moderate retention strategy researchers, for example, were more likely than limited retention strategy researchers to: conduct health outcomes research, work with a community advisory board, hire minority staff, use more steps to overcome barriers to retention, develop new partnerships, modify study material as needed, and allow staff to work flexible schedules. These researcher characteristics may have implications for how successful these researchers are in their retention of study participants from racial and ethnic minority populations. To access the full article: http://bit.ly/17p0ikc.

Our second Building Trust update is the announcement of an upcoming theme issue in the American Journal of Public Health, which was funded by our NIH-NIMHD Building Trust between Minorities and Researchers Research Infrastructure Initiative. The theme issue editorial, Building Trust for Engagement of Minorities in Human Subjects Research: Is the Glass Half Full, Half Empty or the Wrong Size?, is authored by guest editors Sandra Quinn, Nancy Kass (Berman Institute of Bioethics at Johns Hopkins University) and Stephen Thomas. The theme issue includes 17 original articles addressing the complex issues associated with the ethical and equitable inclusion of underrepresented populations in research. The issue will be available in-print December 2013, with first-look online in November!

SPECIAL SECTION: STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

As the Center continues to expand and add new research studies, community partners, and staff, we have come to rely more on the efforts of our group of student workers. We currently have our largest group of students working with us, including graduate students John Hart, Norah Aljohani, Amelia Jamison, Danielle Motley, and Julie Maier, and undergraduate Michelle Belton. Individually, each student has made unique contributions to different projects, utilizing their natural interests and skills. Combined, this group has helped us, among other things, make significant progress on two of our most active research protocols: the vaccine study and the Black Men’s Health Initiative.

And the impact goes both ways: the students are influenced by the work we do. Norah Aljohani is a devout Muslim and doctoral student in Human Nutrition. She brings an international perspective to health disparity research and insight into discrimination based on religion. She is helping M-CHE develop culturally appropriate nutrition and physical activity interventions for the Muslim community in College Park. According to John Hart, doctoral student in Family Science, “I have learned that health disparities is both simple and complex in that we know what we need to do but we have to make sure that we are culturally competent and sensitive to the different minority populations out there as we hope to effectively assist them, he said.” Michelle Belton, undergraduate in Family Science, reflected that “my attitude towards health and
disparities has changed." Anthropology student Amelia Jamison, who was new to the field of public health before joining the M-CHE, said she feels “lucky to have found this position”…then adds that “health disparities has now taken over my brain.” Though spoken jokingly, the sentiment of Jamison’s comment is sincere and important to us as we continue to spread the word about health disparities and introduce the next generation of researchers who will face, and fight, this critical issue.

Many thanks to all our student workers for their dedication and efforts!

We also extend our congratulations to M-CHE student worker, Ebony Edwards. Ebony first joined the M-CHE two years ago as she was beginning her Master’s Degree in Couple and Family Therapy. She has now completed her degree, and passed her state board examination as a licensed graduate marriage and family therapist. She has just accepted a position as a family therapist at the Center for Children in LaPlata, MD. With new appreciation for the “many people who make it their goal to end disparities”, Ebony expressed a growing interest in addressing disparities in mental health as part of her future professional goals.

Finally, we bid a good luck and thank you to Natasha Brown, the M-CHE’s first post-doctoral fellow who recently started a new appointment as a tenure track Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. In her new position, Dr. Brown will teach undergraduate nutrition courses and continue her research in the area of childhood obesity disparities. Her work examines the influence of extended family members on children's dietary and physical activity behaviors. In Greensboro, Dr. Brown will examine rural-urban differences in African American families and have the opportunity conduct research with immigrant children and their families. As a postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Brown contributed to MCHÉ’s Building Trust initiative and coordinated a study, sponsored by the FDA and M-CERSI, which focused on minority participation in FDA regulated research. We wish the best of luck to Dr. Brown!

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**American Public Health Association, 141st Annual Meeting and Exposition, November 2-6, 2013, Boston, MA:** M-CHE presentations schedule:


- **Poster Presentation:** *Latinos’ willingness to participate in research: A national random survey*. Presented by Mary Garza, with co-authors S. Quinn, R. Zambrana, K. Kim, E. Casper, J. Butler, C. Fryer, S. Thomas. Session 3411.0: Best Practices in Research, Public health Interventions, and Services for Vulnerable Latinos: **Monday, Nov. 4: 4:30-5:30**.

**COME VISIT!** The M-CHE team at the School of Public Health’s reception at APHA. The reception is November 4, 6:30-8:00 pm in the Douglas Room of the Westin Waterfront.

**Mentorship Training Program**

Development opportunity for researchers who mentor or would like to mentor junior faculty, post-doctoral fellow or graduate students in the area of community engaged research. Three session course: November 11, 11:30-1:30, December 5, 11:30-2:30, and December 19, 11:30-2:30. If you would like to participate, please send your curriculum vitae and a brief statement detailing your commitment to community engaged research and mentorship to Susan Passmore: spassmor@umd.edu or 301-405-8221 by October 14, 2013.
NEWS WORTH READING:

- **Children suffer from growing economic inequality among families since recession.** (September 11, 2013, Bridgid Schulte, The Washington Post)
  
  American families are becoming increasingly polarized along race, class and educational lines, according to a new report released Wednesday, a sign of growing economic inequality that was exacerbated by the Great Recession…
  

- **Ethical questions linger in cervical-cancer study.** (August 31, 2013, Bob Ortega, USA Today)

  Researchers found that a simple test had cut the rate of death from cervical cancer, but the study included a control group in which women were monitored but not screened or routinely treated.


- **U.S. Weighs Informed Consent Rules in Wake of Infant Study Controversy.** (August 30, 2013, Arthur Allen, Science Insider)

  The U.S. government is considering changing how biomedical researchers inform patients about the risks of some clinical experiments in the wake of an acrimonious debate over a study involving premature infants. The rules and the controversy—which put some neonatal research on hold for several months this year—were the subject of a daylong public hearing held earlier this week by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in Washington, D.C.


  Henrietta Lacks was only 31 when she died of cervical cancer in 1951 in a Baltimore hospital. Not long before her death, doctors removed some of her tumor cells. They later discovered that the cells could thrive in a lab, a feat no human cells had achieved before.

  http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/08/science/after-decades-of-research-henrietta-lacks-family-is-asked-for-consent.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

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