Health Disparities Are a National Public Health Threat

We live in a nation with some of the most cutting-edge and innovative health care treatments available. Yet, not all populations benefit equally from these advances. In the United States, racial and ethnic minorities and other segments of our population are disproportionately affected by many preventable diseases. Addressing this issue of social justice is part of our ethical responsibility to advance the health of all Americans. As the percentage of minorities within the U.S. continues to grow, inequalities in health will continue to escalate as a public health crisis.

What Are the Social Determinants That Shape Our Health?

- Economic Stability
- Education
- Social and Community Context
- Health and Health Care
- Neighborhood and Built Environment
What makes some people healthier than others?
An individual's quality of health is determined by a complex interaction of factors, such as biology, genetics, personal behavior, access to health services, socioeconomic status, the physical environment, discrimination, racism, literacy level and legislative policies. Health disparities are largely determined by the conditions in the places where people live, learn, work and play. Collectively, these conditions are called the social determinants of health. Recent estimates suggest that 25% of health is determined by our genes, biology, and health behaviors, while the social and physical environment and healthcare are responsible for the other 75%.

It is critical to understand and address these social, biological and environmental factors in order to ensure that all members of our society have equal access to healthy environments and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives.

Health disparities are a national issue that affect all of us. Between 2003 and 2006, the combined costs of health inequalities and premature death in the United States were estimated to reach a staggering 1.24 trillion dollars. Eliminating health disparities for minorities would have reduced direct medical care expenditures by $229.4 billion for the same years.

More important is the substantial loss of human potential, talent and productivity due to premature deaths resulting from health disparities. These costs are incalculable, and we may never know how the lives that ended too soon could have contributed to society. Health disparities demand attention, resources and expertise from leaders and non-leaders alike, representing every facet of our community and working on local, state, and federal levels to enact solutions.

The future health of our nation is dependent on our ability to effectively work with communities impacted by health disparities to eliminate their burden of disproportionate rates of disease, disability and death.

Compelling evidence that race & ethnicity correlate with persistent, and often increasing, health disparities among US populations demands national attention.

CDC, Office of Minority Health and Health Equity
The Maryland Center for Health Equity:
Building Bridges, Building Trust, Building Health

September 2010 marked the launch of a new era of health equity research at the University of Maryland. Poised with a commitment to advance the elimination of health disparities and promote health equity, a dynamic team of five researchers, Drs. Stephen B. Thomas, Sandra C. Quinn, James Butler, Craig S. Fryer, and Mary Garza, established the Maryland Center for Health Equity (M-CHE) on the College Park campus. Under the leadership of Thomas and Quinn, M-CHE soon found its place within the UMD community.

The M-CHE team has since grown from five to thirteen and has supported more than a dozen students in the Center. We have seen real-world results from our vibrant programs designed to combat health disparities. By committing to the integration of research, service and practice, we have made meaningful impacts on people’s lives.

Our Mission is to advance the elimination of health disparities and achievement of health equity through innovative research, teaching and service.

Our Vision is a world in which everyone has an equitable opportunity to live a healthy life.

To fulfill our mission, we create the infrastructure to sustain community-engaged work and to equip communities with the information and resources needed to improve well-being. We cultivate relationships with people and institutions throughout Prince George’s County, especially in neighborhoods surrounding the College Park campus, to improve the lives of those living in our own backyard. We foster openness to research
Our Vision is a world in which everyone has an equitable opportunity to live a healthy life.

by establishing a culture of trust with the community that encourages members to engage with researchers.

Our work is based on the fundamental themes of health equity and social justice. Health equity is the central theme around which we revolve, the goal to which we strive. Social justice is our moral foundation and the guiding principle we follow. These concepts are crucial to our research programs, service projects and teaching.

Our Values—building community capacity, diversity and inclusion, the pursuit of excellence, action, innovation, and collaborations and partnerships—inspire our work, how we interact with each other and the strategies we employ to fulfill our mission.

This publication highlights our core values and showcases how we apply them in our community engagement, research, service, training and education activities to move closer to our goal of health equity.

Through Action, Change Happens
In 2011, we articulated a call for Fourth Generation Research that moves beyond detecting and understanding the problem of health disparities to actively implementing solutions.

- **First generation:** Detecting the problem
- **Second generation:** Understanding why the problem exists
- **Third generation:** Identifying promising solutions
- **Fourth generation:** Implementing solutions to enact change
Building Community Capacity
Helping People Build Healthy Communities

A healthy community embraces the idea that health is more than the absence of illness or disease and has access to resources, services and infrastructure that allow its members to thrive.

We build community capacity by facilitating access to information, resources, networks, skills, services and opportunities they need to improve their health and their community.

We build trusting relationships that endure beyond research studies and projects. We listen to the voices, concerns and needs of communities and use their perspectives to shape our research agenda. We hope to make each community with which we work more receptive to research and researchers.

Building Trust
Health research allows us to gain new knowledge about different diseases and conditions. With this knowledge, we can develop approaches, studies, interventions, programs and tools to prevent illnesses and disability. Yet the advances we have made in research do not reach everyone equally, in part because of the underrepresentation of minorities in research.

We seek to increase the participation of minorities in research through our Building Trust between Minorities and Researchers Initiative (Building Trust). Building Trust was a bioethics research initiative designed to address the underrepresentation of many racial and ethnic minority groups in research. During the grant, we conducted three research projects and created three educational programs. As a result, we now have a greater understanding of the importance of trust for eliminating health disparities, and so Building Trust remains one of our central commitments. We continue to explore new opportunities to develop trusting and enduring relationships between minority communities and researchers.
Maryland Community Research Advisory Board (MD-CRAB)

Our Maryland Community Research Advisory Board (MD-CRAB) ensures that the community’s voice is heard in our research endeavors.

The MD-CRAB is a sustained statewide network of diverse individuals who review research projects from M-CHE and SPH investigators to ensure that community interests are included. While similar in many ways to traditional community advisory boards, it is unique in that it exists outside any individual research study or grant. MD-CRAB members meet throughout the year and provide feedback to researchers at all stages of their community engaged research activities. The MD-CRAB also participates actively in M-CHE and UMD community activities such as the Mid-Maryland Mission of Mercy & Health Equity Festival, Maryland Day in Annapolis, and coordinating health promotion activities with the College Park Academy.

MD-CRAB’s members are health professionals, retirees from the federal government and representatives from community-based organizations, community health centers, faith-based organizations and hospitals who provide frank, direct and diverse views on the issues that matter most to the community.

Health Advocates In-Reach and Research (HAIR)

Barbers were among the first African-American business owners in our nation, and they remain trusted voices in the African-American community. Sometimes, health advice from a barber can be more meaningful than a directive from a physician. Recognizing this unique relationship between barbers and stylists and their clients, we launched the Health Advocates In-Reach and Research (HAIR) initiative, a project that transforms barbershops and beauty salons into community venues for the delivery of health-related information and services.

The HAIR Initiative launched in The Shop in Hyattsville in 2012 and grew into a network of 10 barbershops and beauty salons. One of our signature health initiatives is a colorectal cancer (CRC) screening promotion campaign. In partnership with the Cigna Foundation, we have trained 36 barbers and stylists about research ethics, CRC and screening. The barbers and stylists then provide information to their customers and have helped to recruit participants for our family health history study. We train students to work in the shops to conduct family health histories with clients and share information about the CRC program.

The HAIR network also provides health and wellness screenings and physical activity interventions, and we have invited the barbers, stylists and customers in the network to participate in a number of other studies on vaccine acceptance, black men’s health, oral bacteria in tobacco users and other health topics.
Under President Wallace Loh, the University of Maryland has made a commitment to “expand and strengthen programs of professional development that prepare individuals from underrepresented groups already on campus to move into positions of leadership. Students, faculty, and staff all benefit from a community in which those in charge reflect diversity among their ranks.” (From UMD Strategic Plan).

We support the University of Maryland’s goal to create a culture of inclusiveness throughout our campus and beyond our university borders. The M-CHE faculty, staff and students comprise different races, ethnicities, religions, genders, education levels and socioeconomic backgrounds. We are committed to integrating non-traditional strategies, cultures, communities and partners into our community-engaged research work.

Excellence requires diversity. Innovation and advancement are born from unique perspectives. By giving voice to our differences, we can advance our efforts to eliminate health disparities.

About 25 people were sitting around the conference table. No more than two or three of those people had the same disciplinary backgrounds and were of all different racial and ethnic backgrounds. You just don’t get that everywhere. It’s hard for me to think of more than one or two places in the U.S. where that sort of interchange happens. And it happens at M-CHE all the time.

Michel Boudreaux
Assistant Professor, Health Services Administration, UMD SPH
Healthy Al-Huda
Less than three miles from UMD and nestled in the Dar-Us-Salaam Islamic community, sits the Al-Huda School. This school is committed to instilling a love of learning in children and providing them with a quality K-12 education. M-CHE and the Al-Huda School have partnered to form Healthy Al-Huda, a shared commitment to build a healthy school community founded on mutual respect, openness to understanding and integrating cultural and religious principles.

Through this collaboration, M-CHE has developed the Dar-Us-Salaam Healthy Al-Huda Cookbook, a physical activity curriculum that promotes health within Islamic traditions, and the Produce of the Month program that teaches children about fruits and vegetables and promotes physical activity.

Advancing Faculty Diversity
In higher education institutions across the country, racial and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in faculty appointments, tenured positions, as department heads and in many other leadership roles. By strengthening the ability of faculty from underrepresented populations to move into these positions, we embrace the value of their unique contributions to teaching, research and mentorship.

Advancing Faculty Diversity (AFD) is a partnership between the University ADVANCE program (led by Kerry Ann O’Meara), the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Faculty Affairs and two distinguished UMD faculty leaders: Dr. Thomas and Carol Espy-Wilson. A key university-wide initiative, AFD seeks to move our campus closer to “inclusive excellence” by providing leadership training and research career development planning for UMD faculty from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. AFD works to teach participants about the tenure and promotion process, expand peer networks, reduce feelings of isolation and foster collaborations.

Collegium of Scholars
Collegium of Scholars (COS) is an open monthly forum that engages scholars in meaningful discussions about the impact of race, racism, ethnicity, gender, class and discrimination on health and wellness. Recognizing that these topics can be sensitive and sometimes difficult to discuss, the COS creates a gracious and safe space to engage in thought-provoking and respectful dialogue. We have drawn national speakers as well as colleagues from across campus to foster a broader conversation about race and racism within our university community.

The COS has created opportunities to network, collaborate and partner on health equity projects. The COS draws participants beyond the School of Public Health and the university campus, including local, state, and federal government employees, researchers from other area universities, members of community and faith-based organizations, hospital systems and members of the general public interested in health equity.
The Pursuit of Excellence
Fostering the Next Generation of Health Equity Leaders

Great leaders don’t create followers; they create more leaders. The M-CHE leadership team makes building the next generation of health equity scholars a priority. We cultivate interest in and awareness about health disparities and health equity in order to build a robust, culturally competent cohort of future leaders in health equity. M-CHE is a hub for learning, training, mentoring, support, dialogue, debate and activism for both the university and the community.

Perhaps the best way to elucidate our impact is through the voices of the faculty and students we’ve supported.

“M-CHE is a life-saving collaborative of scholars and academicians that KNOW the worth of equaling the playing field so scholars of Color feel they have a voice, a place of refuge and feel centered in ALL of our efforts to achieve health equity and eliminate health disparities.”

Dr. Typhanye Vielka Dyer, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, UMD SPH

“I didn’t imagine my experience was enough to make a difference in my community. M-CHE gave me the courage to stand up and make a difference.”

Amber Lighston, undergraduate student, Family Science, UMD SPH

“I-CHE is more than a research center; it is a collaborative of health equity advocates. MCHE is a community, [and has] heightened my sense of social justice and has helped me think critically about what I can do to contribute to achieving health equity in my research and in my personal life.”

Elizabeth Seaman, doctoral student, Behavioral and Community Health, UMD SPH

“M-CHE is a family. It gives me mental power. I know I am supported. M-CHE makes me love myself more.”

Dr. Jie Chen, Associate Professor, Health Services Administration, UMD SPH
Masters in Health Equity
The Masters of Public Health (MPH) in Health Equity degree program is one of the first in the nation to provide an advanced degree in health equity. Administered by the Department of Health Services Administration under the leadership of M-CHE director Stephen Thomas, the MPH in Health Equity is a critical step in the school’s commitment to the elimination of health disparities and advancing public health. The M-CHE plays a pivotal role in curriculum development, teaching and mentorship for this MPH program, which is designed to integrate transdisciplinary expertise.

Fearless Ideas
In fall 2016, the M-CHE and the Department of Health Services Administration developed the first Fearless Ideas course in the School of Public Health, Redesigning Health Care: Developing a Clinic to Meet Community Needs. Fearless Ideas courses are university-wide undergraduate classes designed to challenge students to exercise their innovation muscles and solve tough problems in a variety of fields.

“[M-CHE] has changed the way I see the world. As a white woman, I had only the vaguest notions of inequality.... But working with M-CHE, I learned to approach race and gender and class from a critical perspective and see the ways inequality was structuring society all around me. Once I saw, I couldn’t un-see.”
Amelia Jamison, MPH student (now alum), Epidemiology & Biostatistics, UMD SPH

The Health Equity Leadership Institute
Underrepresented minority scholars often must travel a rugged road, left to pave their own way to achievement without the support of institutions or mentors who have faced similar challenges.

Since 2010, the M-CHE has sought to smooth the journey for rising health equity scholars through the Health Equity Leadership Institute (HELI), an annual week-long research bootcamp conducted in partnership with the University of Wisconsin, Madison’s Collaborative Center for Health Equity. HELI gives post-doctoral scholars and junior faculty a safe space to learn how to navigate the academic career process, hone leadership and grant writing skills, do some soul searching, share their personal stories and map out their career paths. HELI focuses on increasing the number of racial and ethnic minorities in health disparities/health equity research and equips participants with the skills to successfully advance to tenure track and leadership positions.

Today’s students are tomorrow’s leaders.
• The M-CHE prepares future leaders through several programs and partnerships.
• We work with The College Park Academy for middle and high school students.
• The NIH National Research Mentor Network connects undergraduates with professional mentors.
• We provide opportunities for graduate assistantships, internships and postdoc fellowships.
• Our leaders mentor students and support faculty in their research.

“When I first became a HELI scholar, I was on an island... alone. HELI is a God-send. It was one of the reasons I chose to remain at UMD. I don’t think there is anything like it, at most universities.”
HELI alum

“I was still kind of new to the school at that time, and was looking for new directions [for] my career. My trip to HELI in the summer of 2013 opened the door for me. It made me feel my research is being appreciated.”
HELI alum
Some people look at a glass as half-full; others see it as half-empty. We say the glass is the wrong size and create a new glass. We look at what exists and wonder what can be. We look at health disparities and envision a world where everyone’s healthiest self is possible. Our country has been fighting health disparities for decades, yet the vision of health equity eludes us. We must change the way we do our work if we are to achieve our goal.

We embrace innovation by bringing our message to the community in non-traditional ways. We draw on the arts to connect with people in ways that can touch their souls, through drumming, drama, poetry and storytelling. We meet people in non-traditional places: at the barbershop or beauty salon, or at church. Instead of expecting people to come to us, we go to them; we bring healthcare services into the community and facilitate access to healthcare, research and health-related information.

We also keep pace with our changing global community and bring advancements in science and technology to our research and to the communities we serve. We keep abreast of health research news and we investigate ways that online advancements such as eHealth and the rise of social media can be harnessed to deliver information and care.

The Mona Center

The Catholic Charities-Susan D. Mona Center is an integrative health and wellness center that supports comprehensive needs of the Temple Hills, Maryland community. Through a partnership with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington and Doctors Community Hospital and M-CHE, The Mona Center addresses many of the social factors that impact health by providing health and social services to the community.

The Mona Center features a medical clinic, dental clinic, a teaching kitchen for job readiness and nutritional literacy and a wellness community garden. The Mona Center also serves as a site for us to conduct community-engaged research and implement evidence-based interventions to prevent and control conditions such as diabetes and hypertension through lifestyle changes. The second-floor M-CHE Health Promotion Suite features physical activity classes, smoking cessation programs, healthcare navigation assistance and other health education workshops.
The Mona Center also serves as a model of integrative care that can be provided when general practitioners, dentists, health coaches, nutritional experts and researchers work in partnership with the community.

**Embracing the Arts**

Through our partnership with the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, we embrace the arts to raise awareness about health disparities and health equity by reaching people in ways that a journal article never can. A newsletter may provide the facts, but music can thrum the heartbeat; a picture can illustrate the vision.

In one M-CHE-Clarice collaboration, we hosted the Health Equity Drum Circle as part of UMD’s annual Maryland Day activities. This event brought together a diverse group of more than 900 people from around the region, and raised awareness about disparities in health in underserved communities and promoted the importance of community building in achieving health equity.

A second collaboration between the M-CHE and The Clarice in concert with the Charles R. Drew Pre-Medical/Health Society resulted in Hair, Health and Neighborhood Stories: Celebrations and Traditions. Supported by a Moving Maryland Forward grant from the UMD Office of Diversity and Inclusion, this project used the powerful art of storytelling to capture and recount the tale of The Shop’s clientele. Students created an artistic exhibit and performance featuring stories based on interviews conducted with barbers. Through movement, video, photography and illustrated writing, students depicted the voice and rhythm of the barbershop and celebrate its traditions.

**Information Technology**

The rise of health information technology, the use of the internet to find health information, and the expansion of social media as a major method of communication constitute emerging avenues to address health disparities. At M-CHE, we embrace these new ways to convey information and also conduct research to better understand both how they are, and can be, effectively used.

One way we investigate how they are being used is by exploring how social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter both reflect and influence public attitudes and knowledge about vaccines, in a line of research led by Dr. Quinn.

We have also partnered with other researchers to bring cloud-based technologies to health screening and promotion events as a way to integrate data collection, analysis, and messaging systems. One system, Community Well (CW), is a software application developed by Kenyon Crowley of UMD in partnership with the Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County and the Fraunhofer Center for Experimental Software Engineering.

And in recognition of the use of the internet when seeking health information, we adapted our in-person Building trust education programs into a freely accessible, interactive online version, called Building Trust On-line [www.buildingtrustumd.org](http://www.buildingtrustumd.org).

We also host, through the University of Maryland Library System, the Health Equity Archive, an online repository of health disparities and health equity materials, including peer-reviewed journal articles as well as government documents and plans, original photos, presentations, websites.
Over the past several decades, we have witnessed an increase in research studies that document the existence of health disparities and many of their causes. We even have research on how to address the causes. Now, it is no longer enough to talk about what we know and what needs to be done to address health disparities. At the M-CHE, we take the needed action and we inspire others to act.

Action
Less Talk, More Action

Over the past several decades, we have witnessed an increase in research studies that document the existence of health disparities and many of their causes. We even have research on how to address the causes. Now, it is no longer enough to talk about what we know and what needs to be done to address health disparities. At the M-CHE, we take the needed action and we inspire others to act.

Often our action takes place in communities, in the classrooms, and in our offices and in the field where we continue our research to fill in the gaps of what we still don’t know. Still other times, our action takes place in the state legislature, where we seek to influence policy in ways that break down barriers and build access to care. Together, action in each of these places moves us closer to health equity.
Changing Policy
The M-CHE champions changing policy and garnering institutional support for combatting health disparities. As a member of the Lieutenant Governor’s Health Disparities Workgroup, Dr. Thomas shared the M-CHE’s research on health disparities with state legislators and was instrumental in the passage of the Maryland Health Improvement and Disparities Reduction Act of 2012. This Act established Health Enterprise Zones to bolster economic development in five of Maryland’s most economically deprived communities through innovative strategies and incentives to address community health and health disparities.

Legacy Leaders
The Legacy Leaders program engages community members who are 50 and older in volunteer activism in the state legislature. Directed by Mr. Wes Queen, the program is housed in the Department of Health Services Administration and supported by M-CHE. Members are trained in the rigors of state legislature and volunteer in legislators’ offices for up to six months after graduating from the program. As co-chair of the MD-CRAB, Mr. Queen works with the M-CHE to develop and present a Health Disparities/Health Equity module for the annual Legacy Leaders training program. The Legacy Leaders program informs the SPH and M-CHE about state legislative issues and translates the M-CHE’s research into policy action.

Several members of the MD-CRAB are Legacy Leaders program graduates. Mrs. Edith Perry, an MD-CRAB member, decided after completing the Legacy Leaders program to complete another rotation in Annapolis, this time as a volunteer with Delegate Joseline Penâ-Melnyk’s office.

The Mission of Mercy and Health Equity Festival
In September 2014, the M-CHE joined Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington to transform the UMD Xfinity Center from a basketball court into an emergency dental clinic in our first Mid-Maryland Mission of Mercy & Health Equity Festival (MOM-HEF). During that inaugural undertaking, approximately 1,200 patients received more than 1.5 million dollars’ worth of dental services delivered by 1,400 volunteers over a two day period, addressing what Former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher called a “silent epidemic” of unmet dental needs of the nation’s population.

Our 2014 MOM-HEF was the first in the nation to combine free dental services with comprehensive wraparound care. In addition to x-rays, fillings, crowns, cleanings, root canals and extractions, we also provided additional health, legal and social services such as free flu shots and health promotion resources, along with blood pressure, blood sugar, vision and HIV screenings.

Our MOM-HEF also include a research component to expand our understanding of the characteristics of the actual populations in need. We use the data to better understand the factors that contribute to poor oral health among MOM attendees and to characterize the attendees, assess their overall health and determine new opportunities to serve those who may lack access to other health services.
Collaborations & Partnerships

Alone We are Strong; Together We are Stronger

Independently, the M-CHE can and does make great strides toward the elimination of health disparities, but by combining the distinct strengths of our partners with our own capabilities, we enhance our ability to move closer to health equity.

The Maryland Center for Health Equity pursues strategic collaborations and partnerships to build healthy communities throughout Maryland and beyond. Since 2010, we have nurtured a far-reaching network of collaborations and partnerships within the public and private sectors, including community-based organizations, faith-based groups, hospitals, health centers, schools, other academic institutions, health insurance companies, local/state/federal agencies and foundations.

Through our collaborations and partnerships, we have been able to:

• Extend our community-engaged research in racial and ethnic minority communities
• Increase our dissemination of health-related information into the community
• Expand our mentorship of students and junior faculty;
• Bring needed dental health services, health screenings and social services to the community
• Build community capacity

The Mission of Mercy and Health Equity Festival

The Mid-Maryland Mission of Mercy and Health Equity Festival (MOM-HEF) would not have happened without collaboration and partnerships. This event was made possible by a network of 1,462 volunteers, more than 25 sponsors and partners, almost 20 exhibitors and many valuable donors.

MOM-HEF volunteers represented various professions and agencies, including physicians, dentists, scientists, educators, nurses, students, and employees of local, state and federal agencies such as local Departments of Health, MD Office of Oral Health and the U.S. Public Health Service Commission Corps.

The participation of prominent leaders in dentistry, oral health advocacy, academia, faith-based entities, public health, science and medicine was critical to providing care to the thousands of patients who came to the clinic. The presence of local, state and federal legislators and representatives and community-based organizations allowed us to broadly raise awareness of the immense need for dental care that exists in Maryland.
The BIG TEN Academic Alliance
The Big Ten Academic Alliance was established in 1958 by the presidents of the Big Ten Conference members as the athletic league’s academic counterpart, recognizing that together they could do more than any single institution could do on its own. The Big Ten Academic Alliance is a now collaborative of 15 world-class universities committed to working together to advance their academic missions. The M-CHE became involved with the Big Ten Academic Alliance in 2012, when Director Stephen Thomas was selected by UMD President Wallace Loh as a member of the Presidential Commission on the Big Ten Integration. In 2013, UMD was welcomed as a member university.

Today, the M-CHE helps lead the University of Maryland’s team on the Big Ten Academic Alliance’s Health Disparities Initiative to address infant mortality in African American communities. This initiative is a unique collaboration between the 15 member universities and their state health departments to bolster health equity. By understanding and addressing the social determinants of health, the Big Ten Academic Alliance Health Equity Initiative is poised to improve the health outcomes of vulnerable children and infants across the Alliance’s 11-state region and across the nation.

National Research Mentor Network
In 2014, The Maryland Center for Health Equity joined forces with Boston College, the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW), the University of Minnesota and the University of North Texas in leading a new research mentor and mentee training initiative, the National Research Mentor Network (NRMN), funded by the NIH. The NRMN’s goal is to establish a national network of mentors and mentees through a consortium of research-intensive and minority-serving institutions.

The M-CHE collaborates with UW as part of the Mentor Training Core (MTC), one of five Cores in the NRMN initiative. Dr. Thomas serves as a co-core director with Drs. Chris Pfund and Janet Branchaw, both of UW. Dr. Quinn is a co-investigator on the MTC. The Mentor Training Core (MTC) serves as a national hub to prepare evidence-based training programs designed to help mentors and mentees engage in productive, culturally responsive mentoring relationships, both in-person and online. Both Drs. Quinn and Thomas have been working with colleagues on the development and pilot testing of a new training module on Culturally Aware Mentoring.

As a national initiative, the NMRN’s overall reach and extent is accomplished through strategic partnerships across the United States. This creates a network of biomedical professionals and institutions to provide enhanced networking and mentorship experiences to support the training and career development of individuals from groups underrepresented in biomedical, behavioral, clinical and social science research careers.
M-CHE Milestones

Maryland Center for Health Equity Team

Stephen B. Thomas  
Director  

James Butler, III  
Associate Director  

Craig S. Fryer  
Associate Director  

Mary A. Garza  
Associate Director  

Sandra C. Quinn  
Senior Associate Director  

Susan R. Passmore  
Assistant Director  

Erica T. Casper  
Scientific Writer and Editor  

Shawnta Jackson  
Community Health Program Manager  

Devlon Jackson  
Study Coordinator  

Amelia Jamison  
Faculty Research Assistant  

Nanette Rode  
Executive Administrative Assistant  

Teri Smith  
Program Manager  

Kester Williams  
Health Equity Fellow  

MCHE  
founded  
at UMD  

Collegium of  
Scholars  

Prince George's  
County  
Health Impact  
Assessment  

M-CHE  
designated  
NIH Center  
of Excellence
We Need Your Help!

- The M-CHE’s work **unites communities and researchers** to **reduce health disparities** among minority groups.
- You can help now by **donating** to our Center!
- Your **contribution** will help reduce and eliminate health disparities because it will **directly support** the programs you have just read about.
- To make a gift, please visit [www.sph.umd.edu/center/che/make-gift](http://www.sph.umd.edu/center/che/make-gift)
- Contributions to the University of Maryland are **tax deductible** as allowed by law.

**Selected Health Equity Partners**

- Adventist HealthCare
- Al-Huda School
- Beltsville Lions Club
- Catholic Charities
- Center for the History of the New America
- Charles County Department of Health
- Cigna Foundation
- Clarice Smith Center for Performing Arts College Park Academy
- Community Education Group
- Community Ministry of Prince George’s County
- Community Wellness Alliance of Washington, DC
- DentaQuest
- Dimensions Healthcare System
- Doctors Community Hospital
- Joslin Diabetes Center
- National Cancer Institute
- National Institute on Minority Health & Health Disparities
- Office of the Director
- Office of Minority Health, HHS
- Port Towns Community Health Partnership
- Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County
- Prince George’s County Health Department
- Prince George’s County Public School System
- Reid Temple
- Research Talk
- Samueli Institute
- Brightwood College
- The Fit Solution Healthier You
- Thomas Jefferson University
- Totally Linking Care in Maryland
- UMD Extension
- University of Maryland School of Public Health
- College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- College of Arts and Humanities
- College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Robert H. Smith School of Business
- Philip Merrill College of Journalism
- University of Wisconsin, Madison Institute for Clinical and Translational Research
- Collaborative Center for Health Equity
- U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps
- Walgreens
- University of Ulster
- Tel Aviv University
- **HAIR NETWORK OF BARBERSHOPS/SALONS**
  - The Shop
  - Ebony Barbers
  - Smith’s Barber Studio
  - A Cut Above
  - Tre Shadez Hair Studio and Kids Day Spa
  - Greene’s Barber Service
  - Metro Hair Station
  - Kutz by Kelvin
  - Christopher’s Grooming Lounge