THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

CENTER FOR HEALTH EQUITY

The Maryland Center for Health Equity (M-CHE) is a catalyst for the advancement of health promotion and the elimination of health disparities to achieve health equity.

OUR MISSION

To raise the visibility of racial and ethnic health disparities and implement promising solutions to advance a better state of health through diverse partnerships, programs and campaigns. We seek to establish and sustain a community-engaged research enterprise on critical health disparities to achieve health equity.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Designed to address the Healthy People 2020 definition of health disparities: “...a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage...” our projects include:

Building Trust Between Minorities & Researchers: an interactive web-based portal, funded by the National Institutes of Health, with the goals of:

• Increasing participation of minority populations in public health and biomedical research, including clinical trials.

• Strengthening capacity of investigators, institutional review board members, and other research personnel to work effectively with minority communities.

• Creating a sustainable infrastructure of training and educational initiatives to improve minority participation in research.

Visit: http://sph.umd.edu/buildingtrust
**Research:** Our research is grounded in “Fourth Generation Research,” which applies and translates current knowledge about the causes and potential solutions to health disparities to research interventions. We engage multidisciplinary scholars and work with community leaders to design, implement, evaluate and sustain scientifically sound and culturally-tailored interventions, such as:

- **Uncovering and Addressing Cultural Beliefs Behind Vaccine Racial Disparities:** This study seeks to uncover the factors responsible for lower immunization rates in African American adults and test the effectiveness of new communication materials to increase routine and emergency immunization.

- **Sisters Healthy and Physically Empowered (SHAPE):** This is a beauty salon-based study that aims to assess the health behavior and physical activity support networks of African American women, and to determine if these networks vary by age or physical activity level of the women.

- **Health Advocates In-Reach and Research (HAIR):** Building upon a decade of community based research, this project establishes and maintains a network of Black and Hispanic barbershops and beauty salons; and it trains barbers and stylists as Lay Health Advocates to conduct health education and health promotion focused on common risk factors associated with preventable chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma and some cancers. The HAIR network also serves as a venue for medical and public health professionals to deliver health care and to develop their cultural confidence skills. One of the current initiatives of HAIR is the Colorectal Cancer Screening and Prevention Project, in partnership with the CIGNA Foundation, which is training 40 barbers and stylists through 10 barbershops and beauty salons in Maryland and Washington, D.C.

Learn more: [http://sph.umd.edu/healthequityresearch](http://sph.umd.edu/healthequityresearch)

**Education:** The goals of our educational programs are to:

- Assist minority communities in understanding research, research methods, human subject protections and benefits of research.

- Increase capacity of researchers to become “culturally confident” investigators, committed to establishing ethical working relationships with minority communities, and to recruit and retain minorities in research.

- Accelerate the research career development of scholars committed to achieving health equity by eliminating health disparities.

**Collegium of Scholars:** A monthly educational forum that engages scholars in meaningful discussions regarding the complexities and impact of race, racism, ethnicity, gender, class, and discrimination on health and wellness [http://sph.umd.edu/collegium-scholars](http://sph.umd.edu/collegium-scholars)

**Community Outreach and Engagement:** Our aim is to develop and sustain active community participation in research, based upon trust and trustworthiness.

- **Our Maryland Community Research Advisory Board** consists of researchers and community members working to build trust between minority communities and researchers, and ensure that the results of health science research benefit vulnerable populations. It provides researchers with community insight to strengthen their research and inform data collection materials.

**ABOUT M-CHE**

M-CHE is an NIH-designated Center of Excellence in Race, Ethnicity, and Health Disparities Research, funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

**M-CHE CONTACT:**

[http://sph.umd.edu/healthequity](http://sph.umd.edu/healthequity)

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