



CENTER *for* HEALTH EQUITY

School of Public Health

Maryland Center for Health Equity

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012

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MD Officials Hold 1st Bill Signing of 12' Legislative Session



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Message from the Directors

Each April is National Minority Health Month, and this year's theme was **Health Equity Can't Wait. Act Now in Your CommUNITY! 2012.** We appreciate the national attention given to minority health in April, which is a priority for us at the Maryland Center for Health Equity (M-CHE) every month of the year. Here are some highlights of our recent efforts to improve minority health in the Free State of Maryland.

The Prince George's County Public Health Impact Assessment: This multipronged study included a random household survey under the direction of M-CHE. The telephone survey was conducted in January-March 2012 with residents of Prince George's County. As part of a larger public health impact study at the University of Maryland's School of Public Health, M-CHE led the development and implementation of the survey, which was designed to assess the health and healthcare needs of Prince George's County residents. Results from this survey will provide resident input that can be incorporated into the county plans to establish a new and improved its healthcare delivery system. More information is available at: http://issuu.com/umchemlife/docs/umdsphnews_fall2011/5

In late February, M-CHE Director, Dr. Stephen Thomas provided testimony before the Maryland House of Delegates. Thomas spoke to the Health and Government Operations Committee, Minority Health Disparities Subcommittee on the progress of M-CHE to eliminate health disparities in Maryland. Thomas' testimony was delivered at a time when the State General Assembly was considering legislation, the Maryland Health Improvement and Disparities Reduction Act of 2012 (HB 439).



Baltimore County Delegate Dan K. Morhaim (district 11); Baltimore County Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam (district 10); Stephen B. Thomas, director of the University of Maryland Center for Health Equity; and Prince George's County Delegate and member of the Maryland School of Public Health Board of Visitors James W. Hubbard (district 23A)

This legislation has since passed and the governor signed it into law in early April. Its passage will establish Health Enterprise Zones and the Maryland Health Innovation Prize, both initiatives designed to close the health disparity gap. This law positions the state of Maryland to be a leader in the national effort to embrace the promise of the Affordable Care Act to eliminate health disparities. Thomas' briefing to the subcommittee reiterated the evidence that the current and future health and wellbeing of Maryland depends on the health and wellbeing of its growing racial and ethnic minority populations.

Additional M-CHE activities from the past few months include the launch of our Maryland Community Research Advisory Board (MD-CRAB) (see article below), continued development of our two research Curricula on Building Trust Between Minorities and Researchers (see article, pg. 3), and national speaking engagements, including Dr. Thomas' delivery of a keynote address at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Conference, *Engaging the Community for Research Success: What Scientists and IRBs Need to Know*, where he also moderated the panel discussion on: *Ethical Considerations of Community Engaged Research in Minority and Disadvantaged Communities*. We are very pleased to report that M-CHE is featured on the current episode of the University of Maryland's TerpVision television program, available at: <http://www.terpvision.umd.edu>

Act Now in Your CommUNITY!



Mary A. Garza

Community engagement is central to improving health in minority communities, and was identified as such in the second part of this year's theme for National Minority Health Month. M-CHE is always committed to being involved with our community. Below we offer some information about a few of the relationships we are building with our local community :

In February, we launched our Health Advocates In-Reach and Research (HAIR) campaign. This is an innovative community engagement and research initiative anchored in black barbershops and beauty salons. During this event, M-CHE director Stephen Thomas and Eva Sharma, a doctoral student and researcher in the department of Behavioral and Community Health, provided blood pressure screenings and health education counseling to Next Step barbershop patrons. This event is featured in the TerpVision video, and additional information about the use of black barbershops to promote health can be found in a chapter of the newly released book: *Community Organizing and Community Building for Health and Welfare* .



HAIR Launch at Next Step Barbershop

Early March saw the formal launch of our Maryland Community Research Advisory Board (MD-CRAB), a group of local community members interested in ensuring that vulnerable communities benefit from the results of health science research, with a meet-and-greet designed to bring members together in one room to set priorities and define our plan to move forward. The aims of MD-CRAB are to generate research ideas important to the community, increase awareness of risks and benefits of research participation, serve as a forum for researchers to present their ideas and allowing the community to offer feedback, and serve as a community voice to policy makers. Our current membership of over 30 individuals,



Maryland Community Research Advisory Board

including representatives from local CBO's, healthcare organizations, faith groups, and policy makers, continues to grow. We look forward to continuing to build this group, whose overarching goal is to make meaningful contributions toward the elimination of health disparities by building trust between minority communities and health science researchers.

In the past several months, we have also established a relationship with the Community Ministry of Prince George's County's Community Place Café, which provides food, comfort and support to the area's homeless and struggling working families. Through the help of volunteers and donors, the Community Place Café serves meals four days a week. We are currently working with the Community Ministry to expand a day of the Café to include a health fair. With a target date of June 18, the health fair will include health screenings and education, organization of a health education library based on the needs of the populations, and other services based on the capacity of the vol-

unteers. Under the direction of Dr. Sandra Quinn, M-CHE Senior Associate Director, we are collaborating with the Commissioned Officers Association of the US Public Health Service, who will provide volunteers to staff the health fair.

Building Trust Curricula Updates



Meleah Himber

The Building Trust team is looking forward to a summer – fall 2012 release of our two curricula programs: *Enhancing Minority Engagement in Research* for racial and ethnic communities who want to become more involved with researchers and *Becoming a Self-Reflective Researcher: Successfully Engaging Minority Communities* to strengthen the capacity of researchers to ethically engage with racial and ethnic communities. It is our goal that these two programs will help minority communities and researchers work together to understand and implement changes that will ultimately eliminate health disparities.

We are currently finishing final revisions of the modules and writing comprehensive in-depth facilitators' guides for both programs. We are also beginning to discuss strategies for distribution and implementation of the curricula. We appreciate the excitement and insight we have received from our research colleagues and community partners.



Stephen Thomas and Sharon Adams at the launch of the Building Trust Curriculum in Milwaukee, WI

In particular, we would like to acknowledge the Walnut Way Community Research Council of Milwaukee, Wisconsin for sharing their thoughts and a great meal with us during their March meeting. After presenting selected parts from a module of our *Enhancing Minority Engagement in Research* on research and health disparities, council members and the Building Trust PIs began a conversation as to how the council could use the curriculum to enhance their research knowledge and educate others about the role of research in improving community health. Earlier in the day, the Building Trust team also presented pieces of the *Becoming a Self-Reflective Researcher* curriculum to a panel of researchers and physicians at the University of Wisconsin Collaborative Center for Health Equity. We are inspired by the enthusiasm and insightful discussion that came out of both meetings and look forward to finalizing these education programs in the coming months.



Critical Conversations on Race, Justice, and Health Equity: Collegium of Scholars



Craig S. Fryer

The Collegium of Scholars (COS) is a Maryland Center for Health Equity (M-CHE) forum that engages scholars in meaningful discussions as well as exchange of ideas about race, racism, ethnicity, gender, class, discrimination, and the interaction of these factors on health and wellness. Launched in October 2011, each month the Collegium features a unique topic or speaker to focus discussion on such issues as: the social construction of race and its role in research; family discussions on race and racism; moving from science to policy and community practice; environmental justice; and Latino population health. M-CHE welcomes faculty, staff, students, and other interested individuals to join the conversation as scholars, each bringing his or her distinct and valuable perspective about these complex and sensitive issues.

Coordinator of the COS, Dr. Craig S. Fryer, Assistant Professor in the Department of Behavioral and Community Health at the UMD School of Public Health and Associate Director of M-CHE, describes the Collegium as “the M-CHE’s initiative to create a safe space to discuss the complex and multilevel factors that shape health disparities and health equity research. To this end, the forum supports scholarly interaction and debate of racialized issues within this field of research.”

This April, to highlight the 2012 National Minority Health Month theme, *Health Equity Can't Wait. Act Now in Your CommUNITY*, the Collegium hosted Dr. Rochelle L. Rollins, Director of the Division of Policy and Data in the Office of Minority Health (OMH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Dr. Rollins provided important background information and an overview of the process of developing the national plan to address health disparities through her presentation titled “Implementing the National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity”, which was followed by a period of question and answers between Dr. Rollins and the attendees. Through interactive discussion, participants offered feedback on the plan and highlighted activities occurring in their communities during the month of April. For more information on the Collegium of Scholar’s program, please visit our website at www.healthequity.umd.edu.

CELEBRATING
Minority Health Month 2012
*Health Equity Can't Wait.
Act Now in Your CommUNITY!*

Join Us!
Collegium of Scholars
Wednesday, April 11
12noon -1:30PM
Feel free to bring your lunch
Location: Dean's Suite, Conference Room, #2242H, SPH
www.healthequity.umd.edu / 301-405-8859

Featured Speaker:
Dr. Rochelle Rollins
Director, Division of Policy and Data
Office of Minority Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The Collegium of Scholars is a Maryland Center for Health Equity (M-CHE) forum, which through a range of activities, engages scholars in the exchange of meaningful discussions regarding the complexities and impact of race, racism, ethnicity, gender, class, and discrimination on health and wellness.

Please join us for a presentation and interactive discussion regarding **Implementing the National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity.**



In the News



Erica T. Casper

Thousands of Seniors Lack Access to Lifesaving Organs, Despite Survival Benefit

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/01/120112111946.htm>

ScienceDaily (Jan. 12, 2012)— Thousands more American senior citizens with kidney disease are good candidates for transplants and could get them if physicians would get past outdated medical biases and put them on transplant waiting lists, according to a new study by Johns Hopkins researchers.

Breast Cancer Study Says More Than 1,700 Black Women Die Unnecessarily Each Year

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/breast-cancer-study-says-more-than-1700-black-women-die-unnecessarily-each-year/2012/03/21/g1QALGggSS_story.html

The Washington Post, By Vanessa Williams (Mar. 21, 2012)—Nearly five black women per day die needlessly from breast cancer because they don't have information and access to proper care, according to a study released Wednesday.

Stem-Cell Therapy Takes off in Texas: A Boom in Unproven Procedures Is Worrying Scientists

<http://www.nature.com/news/stem-cell-therapy-takes-off-in-texas-1.10133>

Nature News, By David Cyranoski (Feb. 29, 2012; Updated Mar. 1, 2012)—With Texas pouring millions of dollars into developing adult stem-cell treatments, doctors there are already injecting paying customers with unproven preparations, supplied by an ambitious new company.

Meetings and Engagements

April 19-20, 2012: University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine, Dean's Translational Seminar Series. Pasadena, CA. Drs. Thomas and Quinn will present a special seminar entitled: *Toward a Fourth Generation of Disparities Research to Achieve Health Equity*, and will present Grand Rounds at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles on: *Facilitating Openness to Research: Opportunities for Clinical Researchers Working with Minority Families*.

June 10-15, 2012: University of Wisconsin Madison— Collaborative Center for Health Equity's 3rd annual Health Equity Leadership Institute. Madison, WI. M-CHE, in partnership with the Collaborative Center for Health Equity will host the institute, a weeklong "research boot camp" focused on increasing the number of investigators successfully engaged in health disparities and health equity research .

