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Stephen Thomas accepts, on behalf of M-CHE, the 2016 Maryland Public Health Association President's Award.



*Principal Investigators:
Sandra Crouse Quinn and
Stephen B. Thomas*

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Read about the following events, along with additional highlights from our Research, Community Engagement, and Education endeavors, in this issue of our newsletter!

Mona Center: The launch of the Susan D. Mona Center for Health & Wellness is underway! Our partnership with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington and Doctor's Community Hospital has been formalized, paving the way for development to move forward. The Mona Center will provide a broad range of health and wellness services to the people of southern Prince George's County. Informed by the best and latest scientific evidence about health promotion and disease prevention, the innovative center will serve those most at risk for premature illness and preventable death in a respectful and trusted setting. Read more about the progress of development and the services provide in the **Community Engagement Section** below.

Research on the Hill: Health Equity Briefing: On September 8, Stephen Thomas moderated the Research on the Hill forum, a discussion con-

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vened by The **University of Maryland Office of Research**, and sponsored by Congressman **John P. Sarbanes** with co-host support from the **Big Ten Academic Alliance**. A little over 100 people from academia, congressional staff, federal health agencies and private businesses participated in the event at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C. The forum focused on strategies to achieve health equity. The topics ranged from the progress that has been made in access to medical care as a result of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to challenges that still remain in improving quality of care and in making the medical care system incorporate public health and address the “social determinants of health” that prevent people from acting on health promotion and disease prevention recommendations. The panel members recommended that researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders must address broader issues beyond the traditional biomedical model and build trust between those who control health care delivery system and those who have lost hope in the system, and that health equity be incorporated into all public policies, not just those related to health care, to reduce and ultimately eliminate health disparities. Congressman Steny Hoyer delivered closing remarks ending with a standing ovation!

APHA Presentations (November 2016): We are pleased to announce that this year, our team at M-CHE has **eight** presentations at the APHA Annual



meeting in Denver, CO. Read more about the topics that we will cover during the event in our **Research Section**.

Health Equity and Prosperity Assembly: On August 4-5 the Institute for Alternative Futures, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Maryland Center for Health Equity convened a historic gathering of 400 leaders representing health, business, non-profit, philanthropy, education, faith, housing and other sectors at the University of Maryland, College Park for The Health Equity and Prosperity Assembly. President Wallace Loh delivered welcoming remarks. This event was part of the umbrella initiative, 100 Million Healthier Lives, a movement that seeks to improve the health of 100 million Americans by 2020. The assembly of hundreds was described by Elizabeth Prewitt as “far and away the most unusual and inspiring. There was poetry, music, theater, storytelling.” There was also time set aside for the development of an action plan to promote health equity and prosperity. Stephen Thomas hoped that the “the conversations started here, like the one between [barbershop owner] Fred Spry and entrepreneur [NAME] will spark not just a national dialogue, but national action to improve the health of those populations suffering the greatest burden of preventable disease and premature death.” The assembly was sponsored by RWJF in collaboration with nine partners, including the University of Maryland’s Center for Health Equity, Academy Health, and the Institute of Healthcare Improvement.

National Research Mentoring Network: In her role as a co-investigator in the Mentor Training Core of the NIH funded National Research Mentor Network (NRMN), Dr. Quinn traveled to the University of California-San Francisco in early October. Working with two NRMN colleagues, Dr. Angela Byars-Winston (Wisconsin) and Dr. Rick McGee (Northwestern), she co-facilitated a six hour workshop on Culturally Aware Mentoring for 35 faculty and administrator participants from the UC system. Additionally, she and



Dr. Byars-Winston filmed two videos about diversity and the critical importance of culture in mentoring at the UCSF studio of IBiology (<https://www.ibiology.org/>), which is part of the larger NRMN consortium.

RESEARCH NEWS

Health Information and Social Media: New Publication

The number of worldwide social media users is expected to reach an estimated 2.95 billion by 2020, about a third of Earth's population. As of 2016, 78 percent of the United States population had a social networking profile. The rise of social media and networking introduces a new avenue to provide health information to consumers, yet little research exists that examines patterns of social media use and engagement with Health information Technology (HIT). In a new publication in *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, Devlon Jackson, PhD, and colleagues are among the first to address this gap in our knowledge. Using data from the 2013 Health Information National Trends Survey, they found that social media use was significantly associated with HIT engagement.

Specifically, Jackson et al. examined predictors of two HIT activities: 1) communicating with a healthcare provider using the Internet or email and 2) tracking personal health information electronically. Results revealed that persons who were females, had higher education, were of non-Hispanic ethnicity, had a regular healthcare provider, and were between 35–44 years of age were more likely to participate in these HIT activities. After controlling for socio-demographics and health correlates, social media use was significantly associated with HIT engagement. "The documented associations between social media and health IT use," said Jackson, "suggests that HIT developers, clinicians, and researchers must consider

M-CHE Presentations at APHA

Oral Presentations

- Utilizing Black barbershops and salons to conduct a family health history intervention to promote colorectal cancer screening among African Americans
- Conveying the Gist About Vaccination: Examination of Effective Health Communication Messages
- "Toughin' It Out": Understanding Mental Health Coping Strategies among Black Men
- Challenge and Opportunity of Islamophobia: Building Trust with an Islamic Community to Promote Health
- Effect of Local Health Departments on Preventable Emergency Department Visits for Individuals with Mental Disorders --- Evidence from the State of Maryland

Poster Presentations

- Health Advocates In-Reach and Research (H.A.I.R.): Transforming Black barbershops and salons to promote colorectal cancer screening
- Influence of Social Norms on Flu Vaccination Among African-Americans
- Both Mirror and Complement: A Comparison of Social Media Data and Survey Data about Flu Vaccination



patients' online habits and preferences when designing and implementing HIT platforms in order to optimally meet their needs.” Read more in the full article: [Implications of social media use on health information technology engagement: Data from HINTS 4 cycle 3.](http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13142-016-0437-1) (<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13142-016-0437-1>)

This year, the M-CHE has eight presentations at the annual meeting covering public health topics including vaccine communication and acceptance (three presentations), our signature HAIR program and colorectal cancer screening promotion (two presentations), community engagement with the Muslim community, coping strategies (from our [black Men's Health initiative](https://sph.umd.edu/center/che/active-research#BMH) -<https://sph.umd.edu/center/che/active-research#BMH>), and local health departments impact on emergency room visits. All our presentations, both oral and poster are on Monday and Tuesday. See the complete schedule: [MCHE Presentations at APHA 2016](http://sph.umd.edu/center/che/m-che-apha-2016) on our website (<http://sph.umd.edu/center/che/m-che-apha-2016>).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Construction Begins on Mona Center

The M-CHE, in partnership with *Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington and Doctor's Community Hospital* recently announced our plans to construct and operate the Susan D. Mona Center, an innovative health center that will provide not only medical, dental, and legal services to the underserved in Prince George's County, but also programs that address job readiness, physical activity, nutrition literacy and access to healthy foods.

“This comprehensive health center will help address health disparities in the state of Maryland by providing preventive health services and emergency resources for those in crisis,” said Dr. Stephen Thomas, “We're very excited to engage the community in our mission to eliminate health disparities, and that our students will have the opportunity to put public health principles to work as we design and transform health care delivery in one of our local communities.”

Among the services that will be provided by the Mona Center are:

- **A Medical Clinic** to provide health services with a focus on primary care and endocrinology.
- **A Dental Clinic** to address the significant need for dental care services, while reflecting growing evidence of links between oral health and chronic disease.
- **Evidence-based interventions** to prevent and control diabetes and hypertension through healthy eating and physical activity.
- **Community-engaged research** designed to ensure clinic patients' voices are heard in public health research.
- **A Teaching kitchen** for job readiness and nutritional literacy, which will provide marketable culinary skills to community members and nutrition workshops.



- **A Wellness community garden** with space for up to 50 plots to provide fresh produce to individuals, families, and for the teaching kitchen.
- **M-CHE Health Promotion Suite** featuring physical activity classes, smoking cessation, ACA navigation assistance and other health education workshops.

Construction is currently underway, and services will be implemented as they become available!

Planning is underway and we will provide updates in the coming months leading up to the event. There will be plenty of opportunities to volunteer, so consider how you want to be involved and stay tuned for your chance to join this transformative event next September!

*2017 Mid-Maryland Mission of
Mercy and Health Equity Festival:
September 7-10, 2017*

Save the Dates!

Thursday September 7: Set-up.
Friday, September 8: First Treatment Day.
Saturday, September 9: CLOSED.
Sunday, September 10: Second Treatment Day.

Staff and Student News:

We extend a warm welcome to our newest Graduate Research Assistant, Taylor Rogers. Graduate Research Assistant for the Maryland Center for Health Equity (M-CHE). She is one of the inaugural students in the MPH's new Healthy Equity focus, and hopes to continue on for her PhD after she completes her MPH. She was inspired by the M-CHE's mission to eliminate health disparities, and is currently involved in some of our signature programs, including HAIR and the Mona Center development. We are thrilled to add her dedication and commitment to our team. Welcome Taylor!

TRAINING & EDUCATION

ADVANCING Faculty Diversity: 2016-2017 New Cohort

The ADVANCING Faculty Diversity Program was established at UMD in 2013 by Stephen Thomas and Dr. Carol Espy-Wilson, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering. It had had three consecutive cohorts. The 2016-2017 AFD year opened with a reception at University House hosted by President Wallace Loh and Provost MaryAnn Rankin.

This year the AFD team hopes to build bridges between the previous years' attendees and the new class of 2016-2017. Members of each cohort are invited to participate in dynamic new activities this year, including one on one individual mentoring sessions for faculty nearing the promotion and tenure process, a writing retreat (co-sponsored with CRGE) designed to foster progress on manuscript development, a session on strategic self-promotion and how to win awards, and development of strategies for self-care, managing stress, and finding allies on campus.



The ADVANCING Faculty Diversity Program is administered by ADVANCE and the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, and supported by funds from the Provost's Office, the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Division of Research, Academic Colleges, the Graduate School, and the Undergraduate School.

Fearless Ideas Come to the SPH

Fearless Idea courses are a set of classes where Fearless Ideas are created. Multidisciplinary teams of faculty across campus create courses where students can exercise their innovation muscles and come up with unexpected solutions to tough problems in a variety of different fields and disciplines.

This year, Stephen Thomas, Luisa Franzini, and Dylan Roby launched a Fearless Ideas course through the Department of Health Services Administration called Redesigning Health Care: Developing a Clinic to Meet Community Needs. This is the first Fearless Ideas course offered by the School of Public Health. The course invited 20 students interested in working “with patients in an actual community health clinic to understand their problems, create systematic solutions, and put them into action!” Throughout the semester-long class, students are using design thinking to help with the development of the Mona Center for Health and Wellness.



MPH in Health Equity

The Master of Public Health (MPH) degree with a concentration in Health Equity is an interdisciplinary professional degree. It is a school wide program, currently administered by the Department of Health Services Administration.

The MPH program in Health Equity is designed to train students as public health scientists and practitioners that focus practice and/or research activities on the recognition, description and elimination of health disparities. Health disparities exist across several groups such as race/ethnic groups, geographic residence, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability status. Public health and health care practitioners and researchers play a critical role in the identification and amelioration of health disparities and in working towards achieving health equity.

The MPH program in Health Equity is a unique and interdisciplinary program with students taking courses across all departments at the UMD School of Public Health and across the UMD campus. The expertise gained through the MPH in Health Equity prepares students for careers that involve integrating health equity into public health practice at various levels.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[APHA 2016 Annual Meeting and Expo](#),
Denver, CO. October 29-November 2, 2016.

[M-CHE Presentations at APHA](#).
(<http://sph.umd.edu/center/che/m-che-apha-2016>)

[Reducing Cancer Disparities by Engaging Stakeholder \(RCaDES\) Initiative 1st Annual Conference](#),
Thomas Jefferson University, Friday, December 2, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

<http://sph.umd.edu/event/reducing-cancer-disparities-engaging-stakeholder-rcades-initiative-1st-annual-conference-dr>

[Maryland Public Health Association 2016 Annual Conference](#).

Tuesday, October 25, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. Towson University.

<https://sph.umd.edu/center/che/event/maryland-public-health-association-2016-annual-conference>

IN THE NEWS

Barbershop gives special discount to kids who read aloud

By Jennifer Earl, CBS News, October 17, 2016.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/barbershop-gives-special-discount-to-kids-who-read-aloud/>

Maryland Commission Approves Plans for Prince George's County regional Medical Center

By Gina Cook and Lexi Schapiti, NBC Washington, October 21, 2016.

<http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Maryland-Commission-Approves-Plans-for-Prince-Georges-County-Regional-Medical-Center-397795051.html>

Fair housing group: Bank of America foreclosed homes in white neighborhoods are better maintained than those in black and Latino neighborhoods

By Luz Lazo, The Washington Post, August 31, 2016.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/local/wp/2016/08/31/fair-housing-group-bank-of-america-foreclosed-homes-in-white-neighborhoods-are-better-maintained-than-those-in-black-and-latino-neighborhoods/>

Their Soil Toxic, 1,100 Indiana Residents Scramble to Find New Homes.

By Abby Goodnough, The New York Times, August 31, 2016.

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/31/us/lead-contamination-public-housing-east-chicago-indiana.html?_r=0

to higher stress levels and poorer health, researchers report. <https://consumer.healthday.com/public-health-information-30/discrimination-health-news-739/discrimination-cited-as-common-stressor-in-u-s-708897.html>