



Maryland Center for Health Equity NEWSLETTER Spring 2015

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Message from the Principal Investigators

This year marks the anniversaries of two significant events in public health history, and more specifically minority health. One hundred years ago in April, Booker T. Washington launched the inaugural National Negro Health Week (NNHW). This event continued annually until 1951 and remains one of the longest running public health campaigns. Thirty years ago, the DHHS released the landmark "[The Secretary's Task Force Report on Black and Minority Health](#)", also known as the Heckler Report, which documented the existence of health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities in the US. While minorities have improved health and health outcomes compared to 100, and 30, years ago, we are still working towards the goal of eliminating health disparities and realizing health equity for all Americans. We continue this fight in a number of ways: research to identify the causes and the solutions, outreach and engagement in the communities to bring the solutions to the people who need them the most, and through policy and social change. These steps embrace the [four generations of health disparities research](#) that the M-CHE uses as a framework to further its mission. This spring, we have continued to advance our goals in each of these areas.



March 30, 2015
Pictured in photo, from left to right: Ben Steffen, Stephen Thomas, and fellow new Commissioner Jeffrey Todd Metz.

Our research advances include progress on our [active research](#) and transitioning to dissemination of the results. In the Research News section of this newsletter, we highlight two new publications from our faculty.

Our outreach efforts continue to be a main focus as we engage with the communities around us. This spring, the M-CHE, in partnership with the Cigna Foundation, announced the expansion of the signature M-CHE HAIR program to barbershops and salons in Washington DC. This announcement was met with much media attention and the story was covered by many major media outlets helping us spread the word about colorectal cancer and the importance of screening. For more on the event and the HAIR program, read the story below.

From a policy standpoint, on Monday, March 30, M-CHE Director Stephen Thomas was successfully confirmed to serve on the Maryland Commission on Health Care by the Maryland State Senate. The Maryland Health Care Commission is an independent regulatory agency that lists as its mission "to plan for health system needs, promote informed decision-making, increase accountability, and improve access in a rapidly changing health care environment by providing timely and accurate information on availability, cost, and quality of services to policy makers, purchasers, providers and the public." Dr. Thomas was nominated for the position by Senator Rosapepe, and will serve a four-year term on the Commission.



President Wallace Loh (front right) and Stephen Thomas (front left) with AFD scholars at the graduation lunch.

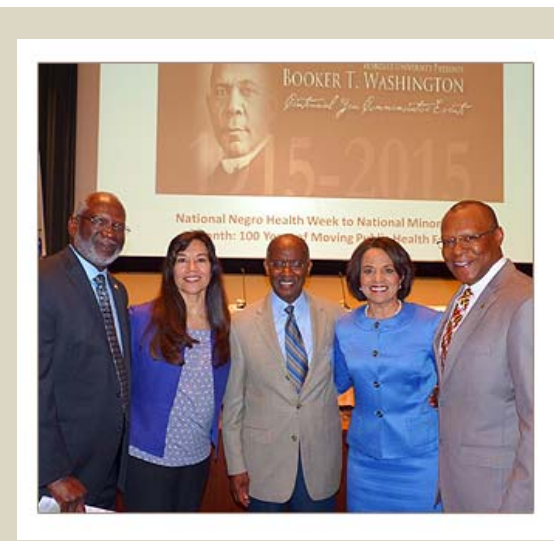
We also focus on ensuring that we build a successful next generation of health disparities researchers. This spring, Dr. Thomas was pleased to join UMD President Wallace Loh at the Advancing Faculty Diversity (AFD) Program lunch, celebrating another successful year and the graduation of a second cohort of scholars. Co-led by Drs. Thomas and Carol Espy-Wilson, the year-long AFD career development and leadership training program for UMD tenure-track faculty of color.

We also look forward this summer and fall to two training institutes the M-CHE is leading.



President Loh with M-CHE faculty and staff.

Finally, while we do our work without seeking recognition, we are, like anyone, thrilled when we do receive it. We are pleased to share that the M-CHE was the recipient of the President’s Commission on Ethnic Minority Issues (PCEMI) 2015 PCEMI Ethnic Minority Achievement Non-Instructional Unit Award. This award is given to UMD units that make outstanding contributions to the University’s equity efforts and that have worked to improve the racial climate on the College Park Campus. The M-CHE was presented the award by President Loh at a May 15th Ceremony.



In commemoration of the anniversaries of NNHW and the Heckler Report, M-CHE Director Stephen Thomas and Associate Director Mary Garza participated in the Tuskegee University, Morehouse School of Medicine, and CDC sponsored health summit [National Negro Health Week to National Minority Health Month: 100 Years of Moving Public Health Forward](#) on April 17, 2015. Thomas and M-CHE Senior Associate Director Sandra Quinn have researched the history of NNHW and have published articles on its impacts on African American Health beginning 100 years ago, and how NNHW has impacted the work we do to improve minority health today. Read more about NNHW and the articles from Drs. Quinn and Thomas [here](#).



Research News

How Race Matters for Minority Research Recruitment



Published online in the March 13th edition of *Qualitative Health Research* was an article led by Craig Fryer investigating the question: Is racial concordance between researchers and study participants a successful strategy to improve recruitment and retention of racial and ethnic minorities in public health and biomedical research? To answer this question, Fryer and colleagues interviewed 31 principal investigators and researchers who are experienced in working with

minority communities, asking them to reflect on how their race has influenced their relationships and outreach efforts with the community. Fryer et al. discovered from the responses that while matching the racial and ethnic identity of the investigator with the study population is undeniably important, it is not a panacea. Race-matching alone opens a door but “does not automatically instill the internal virtues such as honesty, humility, and empathy that are critically vital components of a trusting and mutually beneficial relationship with minority communities. There is no simple recruitment strategy that can overcome the burdens of race and history or the vestiges of racial discrimination embedded within the research enterprise. Nevertheless, successful investigators make clear that research with minority populations necessitates the same things that any good relationship demands—honesty, reciprocity, and trust.” This article emerged from our Building Trust Between Minorities and Researchers: A National Bioethics Research Infrastructure Initiative (Award Number 7RC2MD004766 (PIs, S. Quinn and S. Thomas) from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) and the Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health).

Read the full article [here](#).

Public Acceptance of Experimental Drugs During Pandemics



Also new online is an article headed by Sandra Quinn on factors that influence the public’s willingness to take new or unproven drugs in the context of pandemic diseases. This article was published April 15 in *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*. During the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus pandemic, Quinn and colleagues explored public willingness to accept Peramivir in a hypothetical medical crisis situation and the factors associated with the decision. Per-

amivir is an intravenously administered antiviral medication that was approved by the FDA for use in hospitalized adults through the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) mechanism. The drug had still been in early clinical trials with adults, and never tested with children.

The Emergency Use Authorization mechanism enables the FDA to identify and approve drugs, vaccines or devices in the event of a declared public health emergency. In such emergencies, there may not be existing approved drugs or vaccines, yet the need is immediate and often urgent. Identifying drugs for use is only one step of the process, however. Public health and medical officials also need to win public acceptance of the new, and sometimes unproven, medications they are asking people to take. Through the use of a national online survey of over 2000 adults, Quinn and colleagues explored the reasons people will or will not take an unproven or experimental drug in the context of a pandemic. What they discovered is that trust in government is one of the main predictors of willingness. Other important factors include a doctor’s recommendation and lack of other options. These findings suggest it may be important for the government, and the FDA specifically, to increase communication efforts to both health care providers and the public, with particular emphasis on outreach to minority communities to improve public acceptance of EUA treatments for future pandemic threats.

The full article is available [here](#).

#notyourparentsresearch: Use of Twitter Data in Research

In another research highlight, Joe Zimmerman of *The Diamondback* interviewed Sandra Quinn as part of his [article on the way social media is changing the landscape of research](#). Dr. Quinn is working with a team, headed by Drs. David Broniatowski (George Washington University), and Karen Hilyard (University of Georgia and part of Dr. Quinn's vaccine team), on their new study, *Supplementing Survey-Based Analyses of Group Vaccination Narratives and Behaviors Using Social Media*. As part of their study, Dr. Quinn and colleagues are comparing Twitter data with conventional survey statistics to determine if there are correlations or differences between the data from the two sources.

In the article, Dr. Quinn said that "the results might provide us with some level of confidence that we can look at social media and have some sense of where the public is with regard to these public health issues in a way that could be quicker and more cost effective than national surveys."

Community Outreach

[HAIR Program Expands to the District of Columbia](#)

On April 23, 2015, the M-CHE, in partnership with Cigna Foundation, announced the expansion of the [Health Advocates In-Reach & Research \(HAIR\) campaign](#) to the District of Columbia. The HAIR program capitalizes on the trusting relationship that forms between barbers and stylists and their customers by training them to educate their clientele about health and preventive services. The current campaign focuses on colorectal cancer and the importance of preventive screenings. Colorectal cancer is of particular importance as the second deadliest cancer in the US. African Americans have the highest rates of colorectal cancers and are the most likely to die from the disease. Early detection through screening is proven effective for catching the disease in early stages and saving lives. Colonoscopy is one of the three recommended methods of screening, and Capital Digestive Care (CDC) has partnered with M-CHE and Cigna to provide colonoscopies to patients identified through the HAIR program.

The event, held at Christopher's Grooming Lounge in DC, drew widespread media attention. In addition to the announcement, the event included a demonstration of how the program works.

Additionally, the HAIR program is now featured as part of the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center exhibition. The Clarice, in partnership with the M-CHE, launched [Hair, Health and Neighborhood Stories](#). The idea was to create a multimedia art installation that featured stories collected from barbers and customers that would reveal their personal stories, their family traditions and their passion about working in the unique environment of a Black and Latino barber shop. For this project, UMD students interviewed barbers and customers from The Shop in Hyattsville. The installation was unveiled on March 13, 2015.



M-CHE's Stephen Thomas and Susan Passmore with representatives from Capital Digestive Care.

Now Available! The Dar-Us-Salaam Healthy Al-Huda Cookbook! This cookbook is one result of the ongoing collaboration between the [M-CHE and the Al-Huda school](#). The cookbook is a compilation of parent-submitted recipes, student artwork and photos from community events, and it reflects the diversity of the Al-Huda Muslim community.

TRAINING & EDUCATION



MD-CRAB members and Legacy Leaders in Annapolis

On March 25, 2015, past and present scholars from the Legacy Leaders for Public Policy program were among the special guests at the Maryland Day celebration in Annapolis. The Legacy Leaders program orients retired professionals on public policy issues and matches them with legislative offices where they serve a 4-6 month rotation working on various policy issues. The day's activities included an opportunity to observe the Maryland General Assembly meeting and participate in our monthly MD-CRAB meeting. Many of our MD-CRAB members are also Legacy Leaders.

At the day-long celebration, Dr. Thomas was joined by Jane Clark, Dean of the University of Maryland's School of Public Health, in accepting a citation from the Prince George's County House of Delegates presented by Delegate Joseline Pena-Melynk. The citation recognized Catholic Charities of Washington and the University of Maryland's School of Public Health for executing a fearless idea to serve more than 1,000 individuals with emergency dental care during the [Mission of Mercy and Health Equity Festival](#) held in September 2014 under the auspices of M-CHE.



Upcoming Training Institutes

While the Legacy Leaders represent the experienced and mature generation of professionals, many of whom have significant impacts on legislative actions in the state of Maryland, the M-CHE also focuses on mentoring and training the up-and-coming generation of health equity scholars. Each year, M-CHE faculty participates in the [Health Equity Leadership Institute \(HELI\)](#), a week-long research bootcamp for junior public health professionals interested in the field of health equity. This year's HELI is the 6th annual program, and will be held June 14-19 at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

The M-CHE will also host an additional training institute this fall at the University of Maryland. Details on this program will be available soon on our [website](#).



FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS

We extend our congratulations to John Hart, postdoctoral candidate in the department of Family Science and one of the M-CHE's graduate assistants. John was recently awarded the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) Minority Supervisor Award. This highly competitive national award is given to one minority supervisor-in-training per year as a way to expand the recruitment, training and retention of minorities as AAMFT Approved Supervisors for the field of marriage and family therapy. The award will be presented to John during the AAMFT National Convention in September 2015 in Austin, TX. John is also a past recipient of the AAMFT Master's Student Minority Scholarship in 2011. Well done, John!

UPCOMING EVENTS

6th Annual Health Equity Leadership Institute (HELI). June 14-19, 2015, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

2015 NIMHD Translational Health Disparities Course: *Integrating Principles of Science, Practice and Policy in Health Disparities Research*. Course will be held August 3-14, 2015 on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland. [Click here to apply](#). Letters of acceptance will be sent the week of June 15, 2015.

UMD Advancing Faculty Diversity 2015-2016 Program: Call for Applications. To apply: submit a short letter of interest discussing why this program is of interest to you to advance@umd.edu. Applications are accepted until the program is full. For more information, click [here](#).



In the NEWS

[A Drug Trial's Frayed Promise](#)

By Katie Thomas. April 17, 2015, The New York Times

Last fall, an [article](#) in The American Journal of Psychiatry caught the attention of specialists who treat [borderline personality disorder](#), an intractable condition for which no approved drug treatment exists.

[1.5 Million Missing Black Men](#)

By Justin Wolfers, David Leonhardt and Kevin Quealy. April 20, 2015, The New York Times

For every 100 black women not in jail, there are only 83 black men. The remaining men – 1.5 million of them – are, in a sense, missing.

[Health Problems Take Root in a West Baltimore Neighborhood That Is Sick of Neglect](#)

By Sabrina Tavernise. April 29, 2015, The New York Times

In Upton-Druid Heights in West Baltimore — one of the city's poorest neighborhoods and, in recent days, the scene of some of its most vocal protests — the cost of long-term poverty is counted in lives. Its residents [die from nearly every major disease at substantially higher rates](#) than the city as a whole — nearly double the rate from heart disease, more than double the rate from [prostate cancer](#), and triple the rate from [AIDS](#). Life expectancy here is just 68 years, [one notch above Pakistan](#).

[Poor D.C. babies are more than 10 times as likely to die as rich ones](#)

By [Abigail Hauslohner](#). May 4 2015, The Washington Post

Infants are more than 10 times as likely to die in the District's poorest ward than they are in its richest, the international advocacy group Save the Children said Monday.