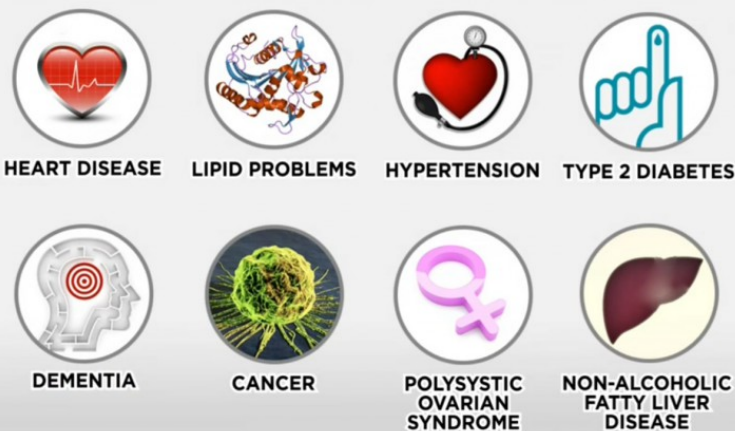




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THE METABOLIC SYNDROME



UCTVPrime



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

In the last quarter of 2015, our team spent time building collaboration for submission of an NIH proposal to establish the University of Maryland Transdisciplinary Center on Prevention of Cardiometabolic Syndrome among African Americans (TCC). Our proposal was 600 pages and requested \$10M over five years. Our proposal builds upon our success with research on vaccine acceptance, physical activity among African American women and the Mission of Mercy emergency dental clinic. African Americans suffer more from the most prevalent cardiometabolic factors, hypertension and obesity, than other populations. If funded, our Center will focus on alleviating the impact of cardiometabolic syndrome in Maryland and across the Mid-Atlantic states. The good news is that there is a solid body of scientific evidence indicating that individuals with cardiometabolic syndrome will benefit from lifestyle interventions designed to reduce risk factors resulting in prevention or delay of T2D and CVD. The proposal is currently under review at the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD). We will keep you posted.

Throughout the planning of this TCC we realized something exciting. We knew that our outreach within both the community and private and public sectors was

central to M-CHE's mission, but this was the first time that we invited all these diverse groups to participate together in one mission. In fact, we hadn't really considered how many groups and institutions with which we had connected in our five years here in Maryland. Together, the consortium of partners integrates public and private health and human service sectors, community-based organizations, our own Maryland Community Research Advisory Board, academic partners, and policy makers across regional boundaries. It may be an overstatement to say we were surprised to receive commitments from 20 collaborators to formally join our Center, but we cannot emphasize enough our appreciation and satisfaction that we have such an extensive network of allies in our commitment to address racial and ethnic health disparities through reduction of cardiometabolic risk. Dr. Quinn reflected on these partnerships and the opportunity, "Working to eliminate disparities in cardiometabolic syndrome in Maryland fits with the policy goals of the state to achieve health equity and the state's Health Care Commission goals to reduce re-hospitalization and foster more effective care. What we learn here can contribute to efforts across DHHS Region 3 and beyond." Thank you to all of our partners!

We are also grateful for and acknowledge the support we received from our own Dean of the School of Public Health, Dr. Jane Clark, Vice President of Research, Dr. Patrick O'Shea, and UMD President Dr. Wallace Loh. With the backing of the university at these different levels, we are encouraged that our plan is in alignment with the goals and mission of the entire institution.

Our funding from the NIMHD to establish our existing COE-P20 provides the foundation for institutional transformation that can only happen when you build partnerships committed to addressing the needs of people living in our most vulnerable neighborhoods.

RESEARCH NEWS

Emerging Research on Emerging Diseases

In an infectious disease outbreak, a pandemic or a terrorist attack, it is critical that the public understand and accept the use of medical countermeasures such as a new vaccine or drug to protect their health and prevent spread of disease. New infectious diseases emerge continuously, as we are all aware with the newest outbreak of Zika virus, now categorized a public health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO). Understanding the public's attitudes towards medical countermeasures in a public health emergency is integral to developing the appropriate promotional and informational materials that will encourage the public to accept new treatments in the context of these emerging illnesses or terrorist incidents. Yet there are significant challenges to such acceptance, particularly among minority populations.





Dr. Sandra Quinn and colleagues seek to increase our knowledge about public attitudes about medical countermeasures through a pilot research study funded by the FDA. In her study, the team will explore public understanding of FDA communications and knowledge of FDA terminology and will examine public response to research on medical countermeasures in the context of a public health emergency. Dr. Quinn, her UMD collaborator, Dr. Brooke Liu, and her vaccine team members, Drs. Freimuth and Hilyard, are working along with undergraduate research assistants to conduct central intercept interviews at local sites in the Baltimore-Washington region (i.e. metro stations) and testing of prototype FDA materials (such as fact sheets and social media posts). The team will be conducting 50 interviews each with English speaking Latinos, African Americans and Whites.

The team aims to complete data collection by the end of February (weather permitting), and will continue working with the FDA on the next steps for this research area. Dr. Quinn and her team published the first articles examining acceptance of such countermeasures including an article on postal workers' acceptance of the anthrax vaccine, public acceptance of a new emergency vaccine in the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, and patient acceptance of a new drug, Peramivir, which was approved through FDA's emergency use authorization mechanism. "We know that even in an emergency, from a bioterrorist attack such as the anthrax attack in 2001 or a novel influenza pandemic, public health professionals will often need the public to respond quickly and take the vaccine or drug available to address the emergency. Our own research shows that African Americans in particular are the least willing to do so, and that could place them at higher risk in a public health emergency" says Dr. Quinn.

Latino Employees at UMD: Assessing their Health Needs to Promote Health and Well-being



Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disabilities in the US, and recent scientific evidence suggests that the workplace interventions can have a powerful impact on health, including reducing chronic diseases. But while these studies may have been conducted on university campuses, most researchers have neglected to focus on the impact of wellness programs on a very specific group the employees of the universities in which these studies are conducted. **Dr. Mary Garza**, with co-PI Dr. Lesliam Quiros Alcala, seeks to fill this gap through a study that will assess health needs and personal health attitudes/behaviors as well as identify risk factors potentially linked to chronic diseases for Latino workers at the University of Maryland, College Park. Latinos in Maryland are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to live without health insurance and to be unable to afford health care. Additionally, they suffer more from many chronic diseases than whites while also having lower levels of physical activity and higher rates of obesity. By studying the health attitudes and behaviors of Latino employees in a university setting, this project will serve as the foundation for an NIH/CDC proposal as key factors that contribute to chronic health conditions among Latino workers will be identified. Funding for this project comes from a UMD Tier I Seed Grant.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Al-Huda: Produce of the Month Club

This January, we implemented an exciting new campaign at the Al-Huda School called Produce of the Month Club. This Program is a monthly educational research intervention designed to promote fruit and vegetable consumption by introducing a featured fruit or vegetable for the students to learn about and taste. In addition to tasting the selected fruit or vegetable, the students will be given recipes that include the produce, learn about healthy eating, and the importance of physical activity. All these lessons will consider the dietary and cultural requirements of this Muslim school community. Working closely with Al Huda teachers and parents, Shawnta Jackson, Community Health Program Manager, and Norah Eid Aljohani, Graduate Research Assistant, developed the program from feedback from two 2015 Al-Huda adult focus groups. Produce of the Month Club will run for five months. The first lesson in January featured mandarin oranges. See our website for more details and to learn about the other featured produce.



Back in the Barbershop

In our Health Advocates In-Reach & Research (HAIR) program, we continue to bring services to the shops in our barbershop network while seeking ways to bring expand our contributions. Since February 2015, M-CHE has partnered with Adventist HealthCare’s Center for Health Equity & Wellness (CHEW) to provide blood pressure, carbon monoxide and body composition screenings directly to barbers, stylists and their customers during shop business hours. Between February and October 2015, CHEW conducted 206 blood pressure screenings, 156 carbon monoxide screenings, and 63 body composition screenings. Starting in February 2016, we will add an additional screening option called DermaScan. DermaScan is machine that uses ultraviolet light that shows sun damage that the naked eye cannot see. Seeing that sun damage provides CHEW volunteers an opportunity to education people about the importance of using sunscreen and other sun protection. We are also happy to report that our funder, Cigna Foundation was in the news for the National Business Group on Health Honors Cigna for Advancing Health Equity through the Black Barbershop HAIR network addressing colon cancer screening!



TRAINING & EDUCATION

7TH Annual Health Equity Leadership Institute



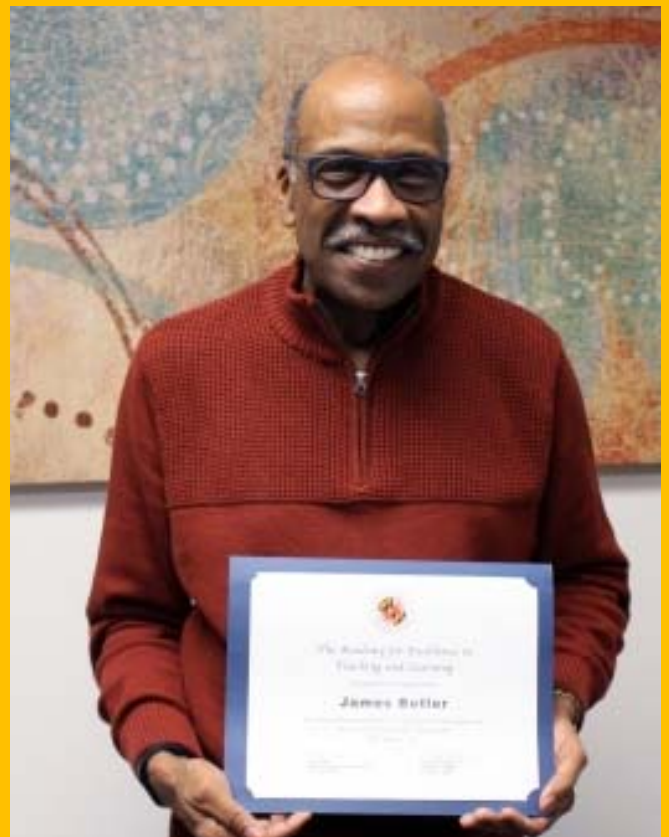
For the seventh year, the faculty of the Maryland Center for Health Equity will partner with the UW-Madison Collaborative Center for Health Equity to offer the Annual Health Equity Leadership Institute (HELI) coming up **June 12-17, 2016** on the campus of the **University of Wisconsin-Madison!** Drs. Stephen Thomas, Sandra Quinn, Craig Fryer and Mary Garza will lead specific components of the week long institute. Aimed at under-represented scholars, at the level of post-doctoral fellows and junior faculty and other scholars committed to health equity research, this intensive week focuses on research, career development, and the issues experienced by young scholars.

STUDENT AND STAFF NEWS

M-CHE graduate student assistant **Amelia Jamison** successfully defended her thesis proposal on Risk and H1N1 Vulnerability: Applying Intersectionality in a Pandemic Context, last semester. She will be working on her MPH research with two waves of survey data collected by Dr. Quinn during the 2009/10 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic to understand the relationship between race, sex, and social vulnerability on perceived risk of H1N1, and to connect these factors to vaccination behaviors. In addition, Amelia began working as

Congratulations !!!

Congratulations to **James Butler III**, DPH, who was recognized by the Academy for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (AETL) at the University of Maryland for his “outstanding contributions to teaching and learning.” AETL is an initiative led by University of Maryland faculty from all disciplines to build a community of scholars committed to fostering a culture of excellence in teaching and learning at the University of Maryland. Dr. Butler received an award at an AETL ceremony to celebrate teaching contributions that was held on November 4, 2015 in the Special Events Room of McKeldin Library. This award is a result of Dr. Butler’s remarkable teaching efforts and his commitment to innovative teaching and learning among students at a research one university. For more, click [here](#).





an Epidemiology Intern at the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, conducting outbreak surveillance and emergency preparedness in the Communicable Disease Epidemiology Division. Amelia reported that she “hopes to gain some experience working in infectious disease epidemiology and an understanding of how disease surveillance operates at a local level. Furthermore, Amelia states, “So far I’ve learned a lot about Zika Virus and how Montgomery County is preparing for Zika and other vector-borne illnesses.”

Congratulations to **Jie Chen**, PhD, Assistant Professor of Health Services Administration and affiliate in the Center for Health Equity, who received an R21 award to investigate the Effect of Local Health Departments on Health Care Disparities for Individuals with Mental Health Disorders. The objective of this study is to identify effective Local Health Department activities that reduce racial and ethnic disparities in health care for individuals with mental health disorders, including those with mental health disorders and coexisting chronic diseases. Dr. Chen’s central hypothesis is that local health department service provision and health promotion can reduce disparities. This funding is provided by the NIH National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. Thomas is co-investigator on the grant and Dr. Chen’s primary mentor.

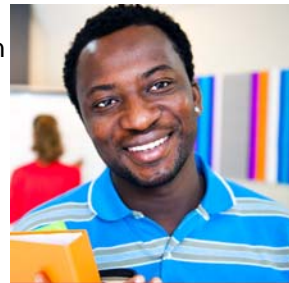
Assistant Professor in the Maryland Institute of Applied Environmental Health and Faculty Affiliate in the M-CHE, **Devon Payne-Sturgess**, DrPH, published an article investigating the impact of community engagement on increasing our understanding the role of nonchemical stressors and developing analytic methods for cumulative risk assessment in seven projects funded by the EPA. The projects were unique in that the EPA required a CBPR plan in each proposal. The funded projects ranged from outreach to community leadership, and Dr. Payne-Sturgess and her team present insights from these community engagement efforts, including how the grants helped to build or enhance the capacity of community organizations in addition to contributing to the research projects. Of the research, Dr. Payne-Sturgess remarked, “Community engagement is particularly important for research on cumulative environmental risks because communities have unique knowledge about exposures experienced by residents.” The article, entitled *Engaging Communities in Research on Cumulative Risk and Social Stress-Environment Interactions: Lessons Learned from EPA’s STAR Program*, appeared in the December 2015 edition of *Environmental Justice*. Dr. Thomas serves as her primary mentor. For more on the study, click [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

7th Annual Health Equity Leadership Institute (HELI): June 12-17, 2016, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

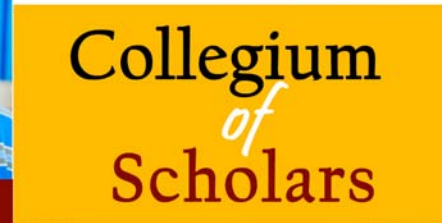
[Now accepting applications!](#)

Collegium of Scholars, an M-CHE forum that engages scholars in the discussions on the impacts of race, racism, ethnicity, gender, class, and discrimination on health and wellness. Second Wednesday of each month of the academic year, September through May, from noon to 1:30pm. Upcoming dates: **February 9, March 9, April 13, May 11**. Click [here](#) for more details.



Join Us!

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.



Save the Dates!

FEBRUARY 10
MARCH 9
APRIL 13
MAY 11

Time:
12-1:30PM

Location:
Maryland Center for Health Equity
Conference Room, Suite # 3302, 3rd Floor, School of Public Health

<http://sph.umd.edu/center/che> / 301-405-8859



IN THE NEWS

In Rural Alabama, a Longtime Mistrust of Medicine Fuels a Tuberculosis Outbreak

The New York Times, By Alan Blinder

January 17, 2016

MARION, Ala. — When Patricia Church, a 41-year-old warehouse worker, felt sick recently, she suspected that she had a cold. But she also feared something more deadly that has been going around this small, impoverished city: tuberculosis...[more>>>](#)

The striking power of poverty to turn young boys into jobless men

The Washington Post, By [Emily Badger](#) and [Christopher Ingraham](#)

January 29, 2016

Men are more likely to work than women with one exception: when men grow up poor...[more>>>](#)

There are too many Flints

MSNBC, By Hillary Clinton

01/30/16 09:23 AM—Updated 01/31/16 12:58 PM

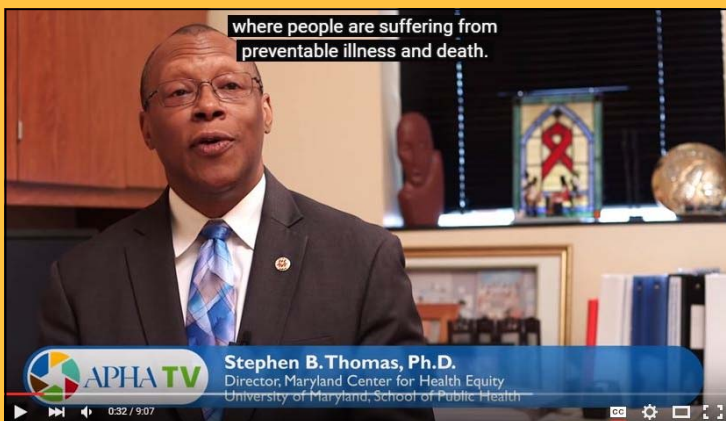
What's happening in Flint, Michigan, is unconscionable. A city of 99,000 people — 56 percent African-American, 40 percent living below the poverty line — has spent nearly two years with poisoned water...[more>>>](#)

Could Hospital ERs Provide Missing Data On Police Shootings?

NPR Health Shots, by Vanessa Rancano

Updated February 5, 2016 5:08 PM ET Published February 4, 2016 4:36 PM ET

For the past two years, Joseph Richardson has been trying to figure out how to keep young black men with knife and gunshot wounds from turning up again with similar injuries at Prince George's Hospital Trauma Center outside Washington, D.C...[more>>>](#)



The M-CHE was featured on APHA TV during the 2015 Annual Meeting and Exposition in a short film produced by WebsEdge. The film, titled *Join the Health Equity Movement*, describes the mission of the Center and highlights two of its community-based initiatives, the Mission of Mercy & Health Equity Festival and the Health Advocates In-Reach and Research (HAIR) program.

View the video [here](#).