



SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
CENTER FOR HEALTH EQUITY

# Maryland Center for Health Equity

# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2016

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

As we move into the summer season, our work at the M-CHE continues at its usual hectic pace. One of our major new endeavors is an agreement with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC to create and operate The Susan D. Mona Center, a planned community-based health and human services center addressing the needs of residents in Prince George’s County and Southern Maryland. This two-story, 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup> facility will bring much needed services to the neighborhood in the county where the University resides. It is a prime example of how UMD College Park is fulfilling the new charge issued by the state legislature to implement community outreach and economic development activities in “our own backyard”. The Mona Center will be a place where people at risk for chronic disease obtain the skills and advocacy needed to take charge of their own health. This goal is possible only when we work together in a partnership with mutual respect and leverage the influence of UMD and Catholic Charities to secure essential financial and human resources needed to improve the health and well-being of our closest neigh-



bors. Read more about this exciting development, as well as our continued engagement with our Black Barbershop Health HAIR Network and the Al-Huda Muslim School in the Community Engagement section of this newsletter.

As the semester ends and students begin their summer break, we are already looking ahead to the 2016-2017 academic year. This fall, we are pleased to be able to offer a Fearless Ideas course through the Department of Health Services Administration. This course is one of a series across campus in which students can exercise their innovation muscles and come up with unexpected solutions to tough problems in a variety of different fields & disciplines. Our course is the first for the School of Public Health, and is open to students from all majors and disciplines. More details about this course are included in the Education and Training section.

In other education news, you may be aware that the Maryland State legislature recently passed the University of Maryland Strategic Partnership Act of 2016. This bill formalizes a strategic partnership between University of Maryland institutions, namely The College Park and Baltimore campuses and is designed to promote collaboration between the universities. See our Education section for information about how the M-CHE was involved with the passage of this important bill.

Research remains a cornerstone of our Center, and we have many local and state and regional level research projects, including an FDA pilot study on understanding how information during emergency situations are perceived and preferred by different racial and ethnic groups. The pilot study is currently recruiting English speaking Latino participants in our Black Barbershop Health Network, Health Advocates in-Reach and Research. We also have global partnerships. In research news, we share updates on our partnership with the University of Ulster in the United Kingdom and how Dr. Quinn's vaccine research led to her being asked to participate in a World Health Organization report.

With all our busyness, we needed extra help on our team, and we are excited to announce that we have two new members of our group. Meet Ms. Teri Smith and Ms. Nanette Rode in our Faculty, Staff, and Student news section, where we also share some fantastic accomplishments of our students.

More on these and other activities from the past few months are included in this issue of our newsletter. Read on and enjoy the summer!

## RESEARCH NEWS

### *Public Health Research @ Maryland*

From COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT to POPULATION HEALTH



**PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH @ MARYLAND | April 5, 2016**

Adele H. Stamp Student Union | University of Maryland, College Park, MD

Presentations and panel discussions from PHRM 2016 are available at <http://go.umd.edu/phrm16live>

Mark your calendar for the 5th Annual Public Health Research@Maryland, April 6, 2017!

On April 5, the School of Public Health hosted more than 550 attendees at the fourth annual [Public Health Research @ Maryland day](#), held at the Stamp Student Union. At this year's event, where the theme was *From Community Engagement to Population Health*, our poster presentation on *Utilizing Black barbershops and salons to conduct a family health history intervention to promote colorectal cancer screening among African Americans* received an honorable mention award. Mary Garza was the lead author of the poster, with co-authors Shawnta Jackson and Stephen Thomas, along with additional SPH co-authors. Amelia Jamison and Sandra Quinn also created



a poster for the event titled, *H1N1 and Vulnerability: Applying Intersectionality in a Pandemic Context*. This poster featured Amelia's thesis, which utilized Dr. Quinn's 2009-2010 dataset to examine the critical issue of whether people who are in fact at most risk or most vulnerable perceive their risk and seek out the flu vaccine. Amelia's interest in this topic grew from her experience as the research assistant on our current Vaccine study. Finally, Norah Aljohani, doctoral candidate in Nutrition and M-CHE research assistant, presented a poster on our Produce of the Month Program titled, *An example from the field: The effectiveness of a school-based intervention in a Muslim school to promote fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity*. Well done to all the presenters and we thank them for their efforts to raise the visibility of our research!

**2016 Global Report on Urban Health: WHO**



The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) have just released The [2016 Global report on urban health: equitable, healthier cities for sustainable development](http://sph.umd.edu/center/che/news-item/who-un-habitat-releases-global-report-urban-health-equitable-healthier-cities-sustainable). Sandra Crouse Quinn was one of the invited collaborators who contributed expertise and data to the report. Dr. Quinn utilized her expertise in vaccine acceptance in routine and emergency situations and risk communication in emergencies, pandemics and disasters to prepare contributions on who is most at risk from infectious disease outbreaks in today's cities and fostering trust in communication during public health emergencies. For more, click [here](http://sph.umd.edu/center/che/news-item/who-un-habitat-releases-global-report-urban-health-equitable-healthier-cities-sustainable). (<http://sph.umd.edu/center/che/news-item/who-un-habitat-releases-global-report-urban-health-equitable-healthier-cities-sustainable>)

**M-CHE Collaboration with Ireland: The UMD and Ulster University**



*Dr. Stephen Thomas, Dr. Patrick O'Shae, Dr. Ross Levin, Dr. David Backer*

We are thrilled to be among the three winners of the 2015 Ulster-UMD Joint Research Workshop, a program of The University of Maryland and Ulster University in Belfast, Northern Ireland to support joint research collaboration. Proposals had to be submitted jointly, by at least one member of the faculty from each institution, and involve several Ulster and UMD scholars as well as post-doctoral fellows and/or graduate students. Stephen Thomas worked with Vivien Coates of the School of Nursing at Ulster University, and they will launch their Workshop: *Beyond Affordable Medical Care and Universal Insurance Coverage: Addressing the Social Determinants of Health to Eliminate Health Inequalities*. Sandra Quinn and Devon Corcia Payne-Sturges, an Assistant Professor in the Maryland Institute on Applied Environmental Health, are collaborators.

### *From Building Trust to Building Trustworthiness*

In late March, Dr. Thomas participated in the [National Patient-Centered Clinical Research Network's \(PCORnet\)](#) Building Trustworthiness Workshop. PCORnet is an initiative of the [Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute \(PCORI\)](#), a non-governmental research funding agency created by the Affordable Care Act. The goal of PCORnet is to improve the nation's capacity to effectively conduct comparative clinical effectiveness research by creating a large, highly representative network for conducting clinical outcomes research that directly involves patients in the development and execution of the research. On March 28-29, PCORnet hosted the [Public Workshop on Building Trustworthiness](#) to work on advancing a new model of research that is rooted in trust, honesty, and true partnerships between researchers and patients. Dr. Thomas was invited to be a part of the workshop, leading a break-out session on "Being Trustworthy and the Public Good". Throughout the workshop, Dr. Thomas noted that many of the ideas aligned with the message we promote through our own [Building Trust Initiative](#), which strives to enhance the capacity of researchers to engage with minority communities by recognizing the importance of trust and trustworthiness in recruitment and retention efforts.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### *Susan D. Mona Center*

With the ink barely dry on our signed MOU with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC to collaborate on the development of the Susan D. Mona Center, we are already planning for this innovative enterprise. The building in Temple Hills, MD was donated to Catholic Charities and will be transformed into a primary care facility, health and wellness center, and social services center. Dental services are also planned. The M-CHE has committed to providing the health and wellness services on the second floor of the building. We plan to provide evidence-based lifestyle and behavior change interventions that will increase health literacy, promote healthier lifestyles and nutritional habits and train residents in disease prevention and chronic disease management strategies. There is no such facility operating in the state or region, and this partnership will allow us to bring a full complement of health and social services to residents falling through our national safety net.



The Mona Center will provide a physical location in the heart of one of the most socially and economically disadvantaged zip codes in the county. Stephen Thomas remarked, "What better place to meet the people where they live, work, play and worship. This will also be our location to deliver follow-up dental care for those patients we engage at the Mission of Mercy and Health Equity Festival, people from our Black

Barbershop HAIR network in need of a medical home and local residents who will now have a trusted place to go for advancing a better state of health.”

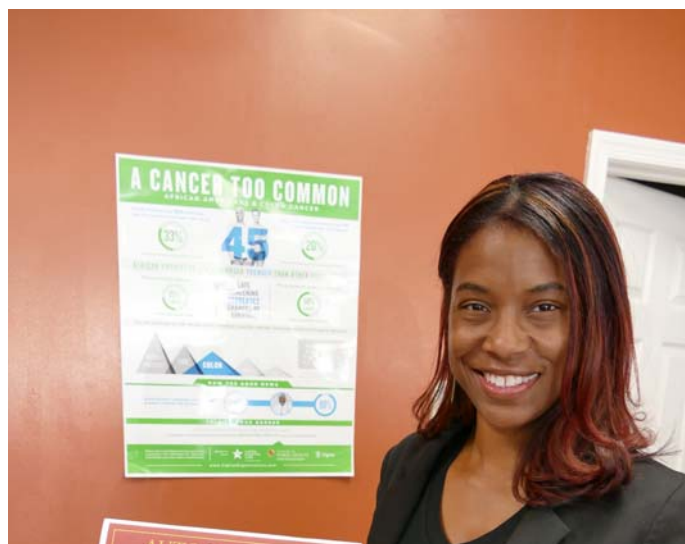
Our vision of the Mona Center is a “Health and Wellness Greenhouse” to address not only individual factors but also the social determinants of health that far too often present barriers for people doing their best to act on our health promotion message.

### *Produce of the Month*

This month we concluded our Produce of the Month program at the Al-Huda School. Since February, we have conducted this educational research intervention with the students in the school to teach them about different fruits and vegetables along with promoting physical activity. Approximately 200 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls participated in the program. Pre- and post-assessment tests were administered to determine the impact of the curriculum. Each month featured a different fruit or vegetable with lesson plans including such topics as fruit and vegetable color groups, difference between fruits and vegetables, different sections of the supermarket, and how to make healthy snack choices. Shawnta Jackson led this program with co-facilitator Norah Aljohani. In speaking about the program, Shawnta said “The Produce of the Month intervention is an example of a true collaborative approach. Al-Huda leadership and teachers were involved and invested from the very beginning. Without them, there would be no Produce of the Month at Al-Huda School.”

### *Colon Cancer Awareness Month*

March was Colon Cancer Awareness month. We have been busy promoting awareness of CRC in our HAIR network of barbershops. In addition to our regular efforts in the shops, Dr. Thomas worked with The Cigna foundation to produce a podcast as part of the national effort to promote awareness of this disease. In the podcast, Dr. Thomas discussed how African-Americans have a higher death rate from colon cancer but lower screening rates and shared information about the collaboration between University of Maryland and Cigna Foundation to promote cancer screening through our HAIR network of barbershops. View the full podcast [here](http://a-qa.cigna.com/colon-cancer-podcast). (<http://a-qa.cigna.com/colon-cancer-podcast>)





## TRAINING & EDUCATION

### *Fearless Ideas: Redesigning Health Care*

We are pleased to be offering a Fearless Ideas course through the SPH's Health Services Administration Department titled *Redesigning Health Care – Developing a Clinic to Meet Community Needs*. Open to all majors, this course is one of a set of Fearless Ideas classes designed for students to embrace their innovative creativity and propose unexpected and unique solutions to tough problems. In the Redesigning Health Care course, students will be challenged to re-think how we deliver health care to underserved, vulnerable communities and bring health care into the 21st century through the development of proposals that will shape the future of the Mona Center. They will receive real, hands-on experience and get to work on exciting issues that will actually help people improve their health and get high quality health care. Dr. Thomas and two colleagues, Drs. Luisa Franzini and Dylan Roby, created and will lead the course.

## STUDENT AND STAFF NEWS

**Dr. Devlon Jackson** presented a poster on Promoting Primary and Secondary Prevention: A New Approach to Identify At-Risk African Americans for Cardiometabolic Syndrome at the [2016 Society for Behavioral Medicine 37th Annual Meeting](#). Upon reflecting on the meeting, Dr. Jackson remarked it was “a great scientific meeting to engage with other scholars in the field of public health who are conducting innovative research that addresses the needs of the community.”

Congratulations to **John Hart**, a doctoral candidate in Family Science and a long-time Research Assistant in M-CHE, on two great accomplishments.

John's proposal entitled “Fathering after incarceration: Navigating the return of young, Black men to families, jobs, & communities” was selected for the Qualitative Research Interest Group's (QRIG) inaugu-



May 16<sup>th</sup> end of semester celebration for Advancing Faculty Diversity, hosted by President Wallace Loh at the University House.

### *Strategic Partnership*

On March 1, 2016, Stephen Thomas testified before the Maryland State Senate in support of Senate Bill SB1052, the University of Maryland Strategic Partnership Act of 2016. In addition to Dr. Thomas, presenters included members of the Board of Regents, two Chancellors, two university Presidents (including UMD College Park president Wallace Loh) and senior faculty. During his remarks, President Loh made specific reference to the significance of working in public health and the barbershops. President Loh's comments nicely set up Dr. Thomas to expand on the HAIR initiative and opportunity we have to promote health through barbershops. The bill was passed by both the Senate and the House and has been enacted into law, effective October 2016. Video of the testimonies of Dr. Loh and Thomas can be viewed [here](http://mgahouse.maryland.gov/mga/play/871f7955-9bbf-45a9-9f73-d28171b4db8b?catalog/03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bdaa4e). (<http://mgahouse.maryland.gov/mga/play/871f7955-9bbf-45a9-9f73-d28171b4db8b?catalog/03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bdaa4e>)

(President Loh @ time = 18:35, Dr. Thomas @ time = 50:20).



ral dissertation seed grant in the amount of \$2,200! In addition, the Graduate School awarded John one of sixteen Graduate School All-S.T.A.R. Fellowships for academic year 2016-17. One or two fellows are selected to represent each college, and John was chosen to represent the School of Public Health. The Graduate School All-S.T.A.R. Fellowships support and honor graduate students who are *both* outstanding scholars *and* outstanding graduate assistants. This Graduate School supplemental fellowship carries a \$10,000 stipend. Well done, John!

We also congratulate **Amelia Jamison**, who was one of two students in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics to receive a \$5,000 2016 Leidos Research Fellowship for her thesis research, **Vulnerability and H1N1 Risk: Applying Intersectionality in a Pandemic Context.**” In addition to this award, Amelia successfully defended her thesis in April and will be graduating with her MPH in epidemiology this May. Congratulations, Amelia!

We extend our warmest welcome to two new members of our team! Ms. Teri Smith is our new Program Manager, and joins us from another department at UMD. Teri is also currently pursuing a Master's degree in Health Administration. Ms. Nanette Rode joins us as our Executive Administrative Assistant. Welcome Teri and Nanette!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Health Equity and Prosperity Assembly, August 4-5, 2015—College Park, MD.*

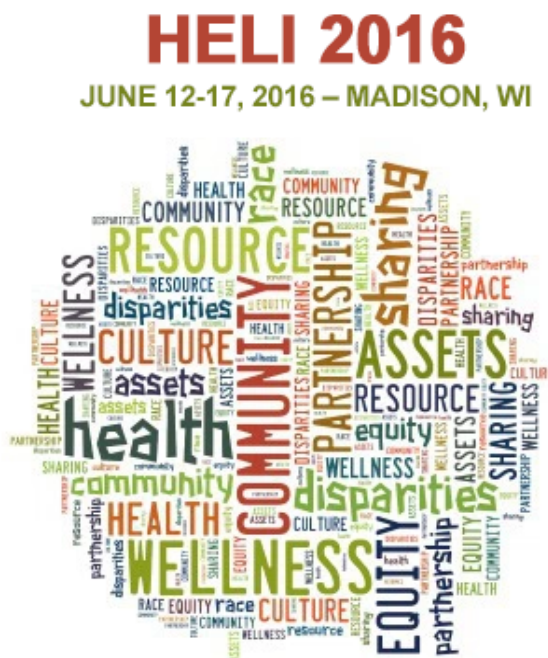
Where hundreds of leaders from different sectors and communities will develop strategies for systems change and devise action plans for activating health equity networks in specific action areas, including health care, education, employment, housing, and community development.

<http://www.altfutures.org/projects/health-equity-and-prosperity/>

**Health Equity Leadership Institute (HELI) 2016:  
June 12-17, 2016 – Madison, WI**

An intensive weeklong “research boot camp” focused on increasing the number of researchers, particularly minority investigators, engaged in health disparities/health equity research and competing successfully for tenure track and leadership positions.

<https://uwheli.com/>



*Southern Maryland Mission of Mercy: July 29-30, 2016—North Point High School, Waldorf, MD*

Southern Maryland Mission of Mercy (SMMOM) performs dental services for adult patients (ages 19 and above) that includes: preventive dentistry and cleaning, nutritional counseling, restorative fillings, and extractions. All dental services are provided by licensed dentists and hygienists, mostly from Maryland.

<http://www.southernmmdmom.org/>

## IN THE NEWS

### **Global economic crisis tied to thousands of cancer deaths**

By Ashley Welch, CBS News, May 26, 2016

The global economic downturn of 2008 to 2010 -- along with the rise in unemployment that came with it -- was associated with more than 260,000 excess cancer-related deaths, many of which were considered treatable, according to new research.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/global-economic-crisis-tied-to-thousands-of-excess-cancer-deaths/>

### **Tales of African-American History Found in DNA**

By Carl Zimmer, The New York Times, May 27, 2016

The history of African-Americans has been shaped in part by two great journeys.

The first brought hundreds of thousands of Africans to the southern United States as slaves. The second, the Great Migration, began around 1910 and sent six million African-Americans from the South to New York, Chicago and other cities across the country.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/28/science/african-american-dna.html?smid=tw-share&\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/28/science/african-american-dna.html?smid=tw-share&_r=2)

### **TED Talk: Dr. Joseph Ravenell on *How Barbershops can keep men healthy***

Filmed Feb 2016, posted May 2016

The barbershop can be a safe haven for black men, a place for honest conversation and trust — and, as physician Joseph Ravenell suggests, a good place to bring up tough topics about health.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/joseph\\_ravenell\\_how\\_barbershops\\_can\\_keep\\_men\\_healthy?utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=tedspread](http://www.ted.com/talks/joseph_ravenell_how_barbershops_can_keep_men_healthy?utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=tedspread)

### **Black Americans See Gains in Life Expectancy**

By Sabrina Tavernise, The New York Times, May 8, 2016

It is a bitter but basic fact in health research: Black Americans die at higher rates than whites from most causes, including AIDS, heart disease, cancer and homicide. But a recent trove of federal data offered some good news. <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/09/health/blacks-see-gains-in-life-expectancy.html>

### **Two-Thirds of Americans Report Daily Discrimination in Poll**

By Robert Preidt, HealthDay News, March 10, 2016

Nearly seven in 10 Americans experience some form of discrimination, and that discrimination can contribute 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>