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2013 Recipients of UHI Small Grants for Research, Program Development and Education

FACULTY COMMUNITY GRANTS

Dr. Lawrence J. Cheskin, Associate Professor of Health, Behavior and Society; Director of Johns Hopkins Weight Management Center, School of Public Health

Michael Snidal, Director of Community Engagement, Citizens Planning and Housing Association, Inc.

Liquor Store to Healthy Store: a Conversion Guide for Baltimore's Non-Conforming Liquor Outlets

Proposed revisions to Baltimore's City's zoning code require that roughly 105 retail establishments in residential districts discontinue non-conforming liquor sales. Current research suggests a positive correlation between alcohol outlet density, rates of violent crime, and other alcohol related problems. These zoning changes, if passed, will significantly improve neighborhood health. Many of these outlets reside in "food deserts," and nearly all in low income and low access neighborhoods. Yet a dialogue as to what these stores may become is non-existent. To inform and invigorate that much-needed dialogue, we propose conducting liquor store profiles and neighborhood demand analysis, and developing an action plan for non-conforming liquor stores to convert to needed neighborhood retail establishments. Researching conversion has the potential to improve neighborhood health in two critical ways: to increase opportunity for healthy foods in Baltimore's poorest neighborhoods, and to secure passage of alcohol outlet density reduction legislation. The project will be carried out by Dr. Laurence Cheskin, Associate Professor at the Bloomberg School of Public Health and expert in neighborhood nutrition; and Citizens Planning and Housing Association (CPHA), a community catalyst for civic action and the leading community voice to decrease alcohol outlet density in Baltimore.

Phyllis W. Sharps, Associate Dean Community and Global Programs, Professor Dept. of Community Public Health Nursing, School of Nursing

Sarah H. Schlenker, Manager of Resident Services, The Shelter Group at Park View and Ashland Commons

Reducing Cardiovascular Risk Factors in the Urban Environment - WIN (Wellness Initiatives Now)

Heart disease is the leading cause of death and disability in east Baltimore City, as it is in the entire City, and the nation as a whole (BCHD, 2011). The major risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD) include smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, overweight/ obesity, diabetes, and genetics. Other lifestyle factors associated with CVD include stress, excessive drinking, as well as self-reported lack of access to quality medical care (CDC, 2011). Heart disease disproportionately affects communities of color and low-income populations. Developing successful prevention strategies starts with recognizing the complex interplay of social factors that drive chronic disease, including poverty, education, access to care and local community environments.

Wald Community Nursing Center provides a diverse variety of cultural appropriate disease prevention programs that collectively work to address therapeutic lifestyle changes needed to promote wellness and promote health among East

Baltimore residents. Wald, a faculty practice and service learning site of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, provides expertise in cardiac risk assessment and motivational courses designed to promote healthy behaviors, research, evaluation, and leadership development.

Supported by a diverse group of community organizations, Wald offers expertise on prevention and management of risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

Karin E. Tobin, Associate Scientist, School of Public Health

Carlton Smith, Executive Director, MOCHA Exchange Network - Baltimore Black Pride

Collaboration with The MOCHA Exchange Network -Men Like Us to assess the needs of mature Black men who have sex with men: focus on social support, mental health and their community engagement

Baltimore continues to rank highest in HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM) and African American MSM (AA MSM) are disproportionately affected. There is scant research on older and aging (herein referred to as mature) gay and bisexual men who face unique issues such as age, HIV and race-based stigma and discrimination, loss of close friends and romantic partners due to HIV/AIDs and limited opportunities for social activities. There is an unmet need for programs tailored for mature AA MSM that address the social context within which they are embedded. The proposed project aims to address this gap through a collaboration between Men of Color Against HIV/AIDS/Baltimore Black Pride (MOCAH/BBP) and Dr. Karin Tobin (Faculty Partner). The aims of the project are to: 1) conduct a needs assessment with a convenience sample of mature AA MSM in Baltimore, 2) develop a program that reflects the identified needs and 3) assess the relevance and acceptability of the developed program with members from the community. Results from this program will enable MOCHA/BBP to implement an empirically-based program to improve the health and of mature AA MSM in Baltimore and will contribute to the dearth of evidence about this distinct population.

Chidinma A. Ibe, Assistant Scientist, School of Public Health

Debra Hickman, President/CEO, Sisters Together And Reaching

“One Block at a Time:” A Qualitative Evaluation of a Feasibility Pilot of a Novel Multi-Level Community Health Workforce Initiative

Throughout 2012 and 2013, nearly 30 organizations in East Baltimore came together as the East Baltimore Health Enterprise Zone Collaborative (EBHEZ) to develop a “block-by-block” strategy for local health improvement spanning a novel, resident-led community workforce, wellness initiatives, and clinical screening activities. In early 2013, two EBHEZ partners, Sisters Together and Reaching (STAR) and the Men and Families Center (MFC), partnered with the Johns Hopkins Community Health Partnership (J-CHIP) to develop a pilot of the EBHEZ community health workforce strategies within neighborhoods in the 21202, 21205, and 21213 zip codes. These efforts are and will be firmly linked with resident-led organizing initiatives to improve health and wellbeing. We propose to conduct a community-based qualitative evaluation of this pilot program with the goal of identifying and understanding the factors most important for providing effective, evidence-based community health worker support to low-income residents of East Baltimore and for scaling such efforts in partnership with East Baltimore residents, to advance their vision of how health and social services should be provided to neighbors. In so doing, we will develop a community “genogram” to understand how neighborhood history can inform the development of community health worker programs in East Baltimore.

Nanlesta Pilgrim, Assistant Scientist, School of Public Health

Gina Baez, Program Coordinator, Mi Espacio After-School Program at Casa de Maryland

Developing a Latino Youth Advisory Committee in the Mi Espacio Program

The proposed project seeks to build and strengthen the partnership between Mi Espacio and the Johns Hopkins Center for Adolescent Health. The goal of the current application is to create a Latino Youth Advisory Committee (LYAC) within Mi Espacio whose members will serve as resources, advisors and members of the Center and the Mi Espacio program. They will also serve as research advisors for Johns Hopkins Institutions’ (JHI) faculty members. To achieve this goal, we

will recruit adolescents, ages 12-19, from within the Latino community to serve as LYAC members and conduct trainings with LYAC members focused on understanding the purpose of research and defining their role in the research process. Second, we will equip LYAC members with the necessary skills to serve as research advisors. Third, we will guide and assist the LYAC in defining and addressing a community concern to benefit their community. Fourth, we will evaluate and document the effectiveness of the LYAC. Ultimately, we hope, the project will develop a cohort of Latino youth who has the skills and competencies to take an integral leadership role and authentically participate in the research process.

Keshia Pollack, Associate Professor, School of Public Health
Chris Merriam, Executive Director, Bikemore

Promoting Active Transportation: A Needs Assessment of the Baltimore Bicycle Community

Support for active transport in urban settings is growing, largely due to increasing prevalence of chronic disease and environmental concerns over automobile transportation. Baltimore is a city of approximately 600,000 people, and roughly 1/3 of adults are obese. Active transport, such as biking, has been proposed as a potential intervention to reduce sedentary lifestyles, decrease air pollution, and promote sustainable communities. Bikemore, a bicycling advocacy organization was created in 2012 to improve bicycling safety, awareness, policy, and infrastructure with Baltimore. Bikemore is building on an existing relationship with Bloomberg School of Public Health faculty Dr. Keshia Pollack and partnering to conduct research that addresses the UHI priority area of community engagement. The project is guided by the following aims: 1) assess the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards bicycling in Baltimore, among both riders and non-riders; 2) explore the dominant safety concerns for bicyclists; and 3) understand if and how bicycles can serve and empower a more diverse community of riders within Baltimore. Both Dr. Pollack and Bikemore will participate in data collection, which will incorporate multiple methods. Bikemore will draw on its existing networks to ensure widespread dissemination of study findings to community members, policymakers, and other key stakeholders.

Adil Haider, Associate Professor of Surgery, Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine and Health Policy Management ,
School of Medicine
Steve Bountress, Vice President, Living Classrooms Foundation

A TWELVE STEP VIOLENCE PREVENTION INTERVENTION FOR EAST BALTIMORE

Racial, ethnic, and gender disparities have been well described throughout the United States health care system, including the field of trauma care. Disproportionate levels of interpersonal violence propel African American males into the health care system. The cycle of violence in urban, minority environments obscures opportunities and emphasizes retaliatory behaviors. Additionally, a subsistence that is devoid of the knowledge, skills, and behavior conducive to financial independence compounds the environmental influences. This study will pilot a follow up, outpatient program for patients treated with injuries resulting from interpersonal violence at an inner city level I adult trauma center. The 12 step modular program will 1) identify gaps in education and employment opportunities, 2) recommend enhancements for skills, education, and training, 3) and focus on life skills development. The study will assist us with identification of critical themes that contribute to the cycle of violence in predominantly African American, urban communities in Baltimore. This study will evaluate the outcomes of a 12 step modular pilot program delivered in the outpatient setting that is designed to promote education, employment, and life skills attainment. Furthermore, findings will help inform and fund city-wide implementation in the future.

GRADUATE STUDENT-COMMUNITY GRANTS

Emma Stillman, MSN Candidate, School of Nursing

Katrina Foster, Principal, Elmer A. Henderson: A Johns Hopkins Partnership School

The Henderson-Hopkins Pedometer Project

Over the last 30 years, the number of obese children has more than doubled. Data shows that 12% of children in Baltimore receiving public assistance are overweight and on average, the prevalence of overweight students in Baltimore is 26% higher than national data. Childhood obesity has the potential to negatively impact a child's life course and overweight and obese children are more likely to become obese adults. The Henderson Hopkins Pedometer Project (HHPP) is a pilot program to test the feasibility of integrating health messaging into the new Common Core education curriculum with an overarching goal of reducing obesity and promoting wellness. HHPP will provide students in grades 5, 6 and 8 at The Elmer A. Henderson: A Johns Hopkins Partnership School with a pedometer specifically programmed to track his or her individual activity. With the help of consultants we will create a practical math lesson plan that incorporates pedometer data and throughout the program will conduct a process and outcome evaluation to measure the success of the HHPP. The HHPP strives to increase the knowledge of children on the importance of physical activity and its impact on healthy lifestyle habits while increasing the everyday relevancy of the math curriculum.

Namrita Singh, PhD Candidate, School of Public Health

Deborah Agus, Executive Director, Behavioral Health Leadership Institute

“Qualitative evaluation of buprenorphine induction in a recovery program setting”

Opioid dependence is a considerable public health problem in the United States. Estimated lifetime prevalence of opioid abuse and dependence is 4.7% and 1.7%. One approach to treating opiate addiction is through buprenorphine maintenance treatment programs. Studies have pointed both to the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of such programs. There is a need to understand how to more effectively deliver buprenorphine treatment programs in community settings, particularly within low-resource urban settings. Community based recovery centers provide a unique opportunity for service delivery. This study will evaluate an integrated buprenorphine program located in a community recovery center in East Baltimore. This assessment will utilize two forms of longitudinal qualitative assessment, as well as several modalities of data collection, including observations, in-depth interviews, and community asset mapping exercises. The recommendations generated by this evaluation will be important for the development of coordinated and integrated community based services for all behavioral health issues.

Kate Miele, Medical Student, School of Medicine

Jennie Choi, Executive Director, Charm City Clinic

Health Care Access Program (H-CAP): Implementing the ACA

As future healthcare providers, we recognize the potential of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) to create sustainable improvements in the country's healthcare system. However, we are also aware of the complexities of the ACA and believe that its successful implementation will depend in large part on collaboration between groups of stakeholders. Therefore, we developed the Health Care Access Program (H-CAP) as a joint initiative between three distinct but complementary non-profit organizations, with the overarching mission of supporting the implementation of the ACA over the course of the next few years.

H-CAP will leverage Doctors for America's capacity to advocate and deliver health policy education, Health Leads' drive to engage emergency room patients in applying for insurance and attaining sustainable care, and Charm City Clinic's knowledge base of urban community health needs and available resources. Through our combined efforts, we hope to ameliorate any confusion that Baltimore residents and students may have over the details of the ACA, and to help streamline the insurance registration process for affected residents by educating and tangibly assisting them as they navigate the 2014 Health Benefits Exchange.

Emily Gao, MEd student, School of Education

Molly McCullagh, Education Coordinator, Real Food Farm

Farm Lab: Urban Biology and Health Literacy Project at REACH! Partnership and Real Food Farm

Farm Lab: Urban Biology and Health Literacy Project is an innovative academic program that brings together biology, health, and agricultural concepts in twice-monthly exploratory sessions held on a farm. Farm Lab pilot year participants will include all 100 9th grade students at REACH! Partnership, a Baltimore City Public School. Participants will learn about and discuss issues related to their health, the food system, the environment, and their culture, all through a biological lens. The labs will feature activities focused on critical consciousness of scientific methods, genetics, body systems, healthy food, ecology, media awareness, food justice, and environmental sustainability and will take place at Real Food Farm, a sustainable agriculture farm located in Clifton Park, adjacent to REACH!. Each semester's skill building and knowledge development will be celebrated with a family and community culminating event with student-prepared healthy snacks. Labs will be co-planned and facilitated by the REACH! biology teacher and Real Food Farm's Education Coordinator.

Jeremy C. Kane, PhD Student, School of Public Health

Dipti D. Shah, Chief, Office of Immigrant Health, State Refugee Health Coordinator, Office of Immigrant Health, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Process Evaluation of a Mental Health Screening and Referral Program for Resettled Refugees in Baltimore

Refugee populations have experienced a number of stressful and traumatic events and are at an increased risk for mental health problems. The student and community partner applicants propose a process evaluation of an on-going mental health screening and service referral program for refugees in Baltimore and the surrounding areas. A process evaluation of the program will assess client perceptions of the screening program, as well as acceptance of and barriers to accessing mental health care. The evaluation will utilize operations research and formative research methodologies, including workshops with clinic and program management staff, focus groups and in-depth interviews with refugee populations involved in the program, direct observation, and additional workshops to discuss lessons learned and pathways forward. These methods will facilitate the discovery of program challenges, but also aid in the generation of solutions to ensure the program is meeting the needs of its clients. Dissemination will include communication of results to other state health departments, publication of manuscripts, and presentation at scientific conferences. The findings will be relevant for refugee communities in Baltimore and other urban refugee communities around the country where similar mental health screening programs may be established.

Nicole Lunardi, Graduate Student, School of Public Health
Lori Toscano, Director, Safe Streets Baltimore

Safe Streets Baltimore: Technical Assistance for the Transition to a Cost-Effective Violence Prevention Program Model

Nicole Lunardi and Safe Streets Baltimore request \$5,000 to implement a project that focuses on workforce development and community engagement. Safe Streets Baltimore is a community based youth violence prevention program. Since homicide is one of the leading causes of death among adolescents both in Baltimore City and nationally, youth violence is an important public health concern. The goal of this project is to reduce homicide rates, therefore increasing community health and wellbeing at two Safe Street sites: McElderry Park and Cherry Hill. As a result of a 2012 evaluation completed by a Johns Hopkins research team, Safe Streets is currently transitioning these sites to a new program model exclusively focused on conflict mediation. Lunardi will work as a technical assistant to both of the Safe Streets sites in order to provide continual training and support. As a result of this project, Lunardi will write a summary report, finalize training materials for future transitions, and present at the 2014 National Cure Violence Cluster Meeting. The longest running program of its kind, Safe Streets Baltimore is considered a leader in the youth violence prevention field. This project is therefore of local, national, and international importance for effective violence prevention programs.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT-COMMUNITY GRANTS

Cristina Viguera, Student, School of Arts Sciences
Ms. Gina Baez, Program Director, Mi Espacio

Mi Ayuda: The Mental Health of Young Latinos

Upon arrival in the United States, Latino immigrants are often forced to confront stressful circumstances and hardships, such as poverty and violence, that can adversely affect their mental health and promote risk behaviors. This is the case in East Baltimore, where Latinos underutilize needed services due to misinformation of mental health and a lack of knowledge of available resources. In collaboration with Mi Espacio, a tutoring program in East Baltimore for Latino adolescents, our proposal aims to accomplish two goals: 1) obtain mental health screening information of Latino adolescents (through questionnaires) and thematic issues that worry the Latino families in East Baltimore (through focus groups), and 2) provide psychoeducation sessions that address their expressed concerns as a form of prevention for mental health conditions and risk behaviors. Sessions will be led by MenteSana, a Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine group, and by SALUD, a Johns Hopkins University undergraduate group, both of which will be under the supervision of Dr. Marco Grados, the Clinical Director of the Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry of the Johns Hopkins Hospital. If an adolescent is in need of professional help, he/she and their family will be provided information on appropriate mental health resources.