2017 Center for Community Health

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

Catalyzing and supporting meaningful community and academic engagement across the research spectrum to improve health and health equity
The Center for Community Health (CCH) catalyzes and supports meaningful engagement of communities, patients, and stakeholders across the research spectrum. This work takes many forms but is steadily guided by the principles of collaboration, respect, equity, transparency, and impact. Relationships are the foundation for our work, resulting in the rich exchange of expertise spanning science, culture, neighborhoods, environment, practice, and policy. Research skills, pragmatic knowledge, and lived experience combine to inform culturally and community-centered solutions for addressing real-world health and healthcare challenges.

This 2017 Update illustrates the actions and impact of Northwestern University’s (NU) Center for Community Health, organized into four broad areas of support: the “4 Cs”.

1. **Commitment**
   by NU and its partners to a culture of engaged research and problem solving

2. **Capacity**
   of individuals and organizations to effectively partner and prepare for impactful research

3. **4 Cs**

4. **Closing the Loop**
   by sharing research findings with all partners in more usable and actionable ways

5. **Conduct**
   of engaged research across the full scientific spectrum
CCH and Community-Engaged Research in Chicago

Community-engaged Research: An approach for conducting research in a collaborative way that involves the bidirectional exchange of expertise between academics (scientific experts) and communities/stakeholders (local, cultural, practice experts) that results in informed decision-making about the design, conduct, and use of research.

Positioned at the intersection of NU’s Institute for Public Health and Medicine (IPHAM) and the Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (NUCATS), CCH provides a physical home for community-engaged research teams on NU’s downtown Chicago campus and also offers educational, consultative, and seed grant resources to a much broader community of stakeholders.

Teams housed within the Center’s main offices focus on maternal depression, food allergy in children and adolescents, asthma, cardiovascular health, and community resources for diabetes prevention. Collaborations among the broader membership span faith communities, neighborhoods, ethnic groups, gender issues, people living with disabilities, specific health conditions, and ways to improve community health care.

CCH resources are administered largely by two strategic programs supported by the Center:

- **The Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC)** focuses on community-engaged research with a broad range of community- and faith-based organizations, public agencies, and patient advocacy groups. With an engaged governance approach, ARCC is directed by a 25 member community-academic Steering Committee.

- **The Practice-based Research Program (PBRP)** focuses on community engaged research that addresses issues in the provision of health care in the community, involving practice-based research conducted with 2 practice networks: Research, Education and Academic Achievement (REACH) and the Pediatric Practice Research Group (PPRG).

Since its formation 10 years ago, CCH has assisted in 334 projects involving over 300 community partners, 92 healthcare practice locations throughout the Chicagoland area, and 100 faculty members from 22 different NU departments and schools.
A culture of engagement is essential before collaborative research and problem solving can yield lasting improvements in population health and health equity. Committing to such a culture means that NU, its clinical affiliates, and its partners adopt policies and actions that help further CCH’s principles of engagement: collaboration, respect, equity, transparency, and impact.

Supporting Northwestern’s Institutional Commitment to Community Engagement: Consistent with its mission, CCH has helped NU make progress toward its strategic goal to engage locally, nationally, and internationally to heighten impact at home and abroad. CCH also supports strategic goals of Northwestern Medicine, including: assessing and responding to community health needs; strengthening diversity of people, culture, and resources; and engaging patients, consumers, and communities in efforts to deliver exceptional healthcare and to advance science and knowledge through research discovery, translation, and dissemination.

In 2014, NU’s Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (NUCATS) reaffirmed its own mission: “Speeding transformative research discoveries to patients and the community,” which underscores a commitment to engaged research and dissemination. NUCATS relies on CCH’s principles of community engagement, as well as policies for fair compensation of community and other stakeholders in different forms of research governance and collaboration. CCH is working actively with NUCATS to develop and implement new institutional approaches for increasing community and stakeholder engagement in 1) the training and mentorship of research trainees and junior faculty members; 2) the design and conduct of clinical trials; 3) the development and support of research teams; and 4) the dissemination of research results in ways that are more usable by communities and stakeholders. Additionally, NUCATS recently added a community stakeholder to the NUCATS leadership team comprised of Center Directors and other senior leaders.

NU’s Institute for Public Health & Medicine (IPHAM) embraces a goal to “actively engage communities to design better research, to pose the right questions, collect the right information, interpret findings, and apply new knowledge in ways that benefit the health of all segments of society.” CCH plays a central role in helping IPHAM develop policies and procedures that ensure appropriate forms of engagement are considered and applied in all research and educational activities of the Institute.

Institutional Recognition of Strong Community Partnerships: In 2013, CCH’s ARCC Program worked with the Dean’s Office at NU’s Feinberg School of Medicine (FSM) to establish an annual Community-Engaged Research Partnership Award to recognize engaged research partnerships that exemplify strong collaborative community research principles and have made an impact on the health of their community.

Awards are presented annually at FSM’s Research Day. The 2017 award went to Pastors4PCOR (Patient Centered Outcomes Research) (P4P): Engaging faith-based communities in health research.

Supporting Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Commitment to Community Engagement: Since 2012, CCH’s leadership team has assisted Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH) to engage stakeholders from healthcare, social service, public health, and policy organizations in developing a multi-year plan to address priority areas identified by its Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). CCH leadership serve on the NMH CHNA External Steering Committee, helping to prioritize the highest health needs, and assisting in the formation of a collaborative plan to address them. As part of the implementation plan, CCH is working with NMH to implement a small grant program to support community-academic partnerships focused on the hospital’s FY2016 Priority Health Needs.
Supporting the Commitment of Partner Organizations to Community Engagement:

In 2016, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and 130 other groups, including CCH, launched Healthy Chicago 2.0, a new 4-year strategic plan to improve health and well-being throughout Chicago communities. Healthy Chicago 2.0 provides 230 actionable strategies focusing on communities and neighborhoods facing the greatest health disparities. CCH is actively involved in efforts to ensure Chicago’s public health research is coordinated and disseminated widely for community impact, and that high quality health data are accessible. CCH’s ARCC Director, Jen Brown, was a contributing author of the report and is Co-Chair of the Data & Research Priority Area, which paves the way for greater engagement of CDPH with regional academic institutions, health centers, and other stakeholders in collaborative research activities that provide stronger evidence to inform practice and policy.

Since 2009, the Chicago Consortium for Community Engagement (C3) has existed to maximize the impact of community-engaged research to improve population health and health equity throughout greater Chicago. CCH was a founding partner of C3 and continues to be an active participant. C3 is working to align partners and funding sources at CDPH and Chicago’s three Clinical and Translational Science Institutes (CTSAs) at NU, University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. CDPH recently formed a new Office for Research, which will serve to enhance collaborative C3 research and demonstration opportunities that align with Healthy Chicago 2.0. With funding commitments by all 3 CTSAs, the leader of this new Office will serve as a liaison between CDPH and the 3 CTSAs, coordinating community and stakeholder engagement regionally.

Demoiselle 2 Femme (D2F) is a non-profit community organization that supports community-based programs for girls on the far south side of Chicago as well as the south suburbs. D2F is currently an ARCC Steering Committee member but has been a strong partner since 2010, receiving 2 ARCC-funded seed grants that helped it establish a part-time research position imbedded within the organization. Today, this position continues to be instrumental in supporting internal and partnered research activities that advance the mission of D2F.

The Endeleo Institute (Endeleo) is a community-based organization focused on creating a culture of health in the Washington Heights community on Chicago’s Southside. With an ARCC seed grant, Endeleo developed a partnership with Darby Morhardt in Northwestern’s Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease Center (CNADC) and called REACH to Faith (Research and Education for African American Caregiver Health), which includes seven African American Christian churches on Chicago’s far south side and is focused on the growing number of African American older adults with Alzheimer’s disease and their caregivers. Based on their involvement with ARCC and CCH, Endeleo has now formally incorporated research into their organization and included research as one of three pillars serving the organization’s mission. They also currently serve as an ARCC Steering Committee member. In addition, Endeleo has recently received a NIH National Network of Libraries of Medicine grant to develop a health information hub at the Chicago Public Library Woodson Regional branch to increase community member access to evidence-based health information and local data.
For individuals and organizations to effectively engage in collaborative research and action, they must first have knowledge, skills, and resources to prepare them. CCH provides partnership brokering, training, consultation, funding, and other resources to strengthen the capacities of academic and community partners to engage in research.

**Preparing Organizations:** The Office for Human Research Protections requires entities that conduct research in humans to have an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or to document their commitment to the protection of human subjects via a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA). For a community organization, having a FWA implies a strong commitment to research collaboration. Since 2008, CCH’s PBRP has aided 42 community healthcare practices to execute FWAs.

Since 2008, CCH has hosted over 100 workshops covering topics such as research design 101, how to develop research questions, how to disseminate research findings to community audiences or policymakers, among others. Workshops also include quarterly CCH writing retreats and customized workshops requested by community partners, research teams, and academic departments. The ARCC Online Resource Directory also provides access to materials and resources that help interested community organizations and academic partners prepare for and conduct engaged research.

**Training Individuals:** IRBs and funding organizations require all individuals who conduct human subjects research to be trained in human subjects protections, which ensures the ethical protections of research participants. CCH worked with C3 and the IRBs of several academic centers to create CIRTification, an approach to human subjects research training specifically for community partners and clinicians. CCH and the NU IRB have hosted 10 training events and helped 178 community partners complete human subjects training in both English and Spanish languages.

CCH and the NU IRB have hosted 10 training events and helped 178 community partners complete human subjects training in both English and Spanish languages.
Educational Coursework & Career Development: CCH collaborates with IPHAM to provide educational coursework to medical and public health students. Darius Tandon, Associate Director of CCH, is Director of the Community Health Research Concentration for students in NU’s Master of Public Health (MPH) Program. CCH also works with NU’s Program in Public Health to support the Community Scholars Program, which allows community partners to take selected public health classes free of charge. Participants receive a certificate documenting successful completion at the end of the course.

CCH works collaboratively with NUCAT’s Center for Education and Career Development to ensure that pre- and post-doctoral trainees develop fundamental knowledge for engaging communities and stakeholders in their research. The Center also provides education and technical assistance in areas of patient and other stakeholder engagement to post-doctoral trainees of NU’s Patient Centered Intervention and Engagement Training (NU-PATIENT) Program. These training activities support a new generation of research scholars across the scientific spectrum to develop expertise in stakeholder and community engagement.

ARCC Seed Grant Builds Research Engagement Among Faith-Based Organizations

Pastors4PCOR (P4P) collaborated with Rebecca Johnson (Medical Social Sciences/ARCC Steering Committee member), to support the development of trained and IRB certified research health ambassadors at local faith-based entities and congregations. The P4P partnership development was initially supported by an ARCC seed grant, and went on to successfully secure program development funding from two Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Eugene Washington Engagement Awards. The first supported the development and implementation of a training program for faith-based community facilitators and a network of research ministries in these settings. The entities in turn are able to identify faith-based health assets and increase the likelihood of engaging directly with health researchers. P4P is now facilitating engagement in multiple research projects. The second award is supporting Research Ministry Facilitator train-the-trainer program and toolkit for faith-based community trainers across the U.S. The P4P team was also the 2017 recipient of the ARCC Community-Engaged Research Partnership Award.
CCH provides an array of consultative, technical, and fiscal resources to identify and support appropriate forms of engagement, across the full scientific spectrum. As the research enterprise continues to grow, CCH aims to ensure that the breadth and depth of engagement grow as well.

Consultation Services: CCH convenes and connects experienced faculty, professional staff, and community partners to provide advice and guidance related to the opportunities and challenges of community-engaged research. Consultations are offered individually or in a group format known as a Stakeholder-Academic Resource Panel (ShARP). For each ShARP, CCH facilitates feedback about aspects of research design, conduct, or dissemination from a customized panel of 8-10 primarily community stakeholders.

Seed and Pilot Funding: CCH works through ARCC and PBRP to offer seed grants for investigators and community-based collaborators who wish to study issues important to communities and primary care clinicians. Seed grants aim to lay the groundwork for drafting research proposals to federal or private funders that require or encourage community, patient, or stakeholder engagement.

Supporting Diverse Participation in Research: Clinical research is weakened by difficulties in enrolling representative and diverse participants into studies. CCH has been working with NU’s Center for Clinical Research (CCR) and community stakeholders to develop an assessment tool to evaluate whether components of the research protocol are culturally salient and appropriate for individuals with low health literacy. When completed in 2017, the tool will help researchers make practical changes to a project’s design or implementation approach that improves engagement and recruitment of diverse populations.
Shyam Prabhakaran (Neurology) approached CCH for guidance on community-engaged research and preparing an application to PCORI. ARCC engaged a group of diverse stakeholders to give feedback on the developing proposal, and some of these stakeholders continued to serve as members of a community advisory board to guide the research. Strengthened by these partnership-building activities, the collaborators submitted a PCORI grant titled *Community Engagement for Early Recognition and Immediate Actions in Stroke (CEERIAS)*, which was funded in 2014. This research now gathers feedback from community residents and leaders on Chicago’s south side to shape the evaluation of an intervention that will work through community leaders to prevent stroke among high-risk minority populations in Chicago.

Brian Hitsman and Amanda Mathew (Behavioral Medicine) were working on a study titled *Behavioral Activation and Varenicline (Chantix) for Smoking Cessation in Depressed Smokers*, and they requested assistance from CCH to engage a diverse group of mental health and substance abuse providers using the ShARP mechanism. Incorporating feedback from these stakeholders resulted in a more pragmatic research protocol and sustainable intervention design.

ShARP Panel Feedback Leads to Improved Research Design

---

**Stakeholder Engagement Results in Successful PCORI Application to Address Stroke Disparities**

From 2008–2016, PBRP offered **7 rounds of funding**, inviting **38 applications** and awarding **16 grants** totaling **$427,854**

- Awards were given to diverse community-based clinical practices working with NU affiliated investigators
- Since 2008, **70 different practices have been involved in 65 studies**, with approximately half of awards involving Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Research topics range from hand washing to health literacy to obesity, and have targeted improved use of technology
- Awards have led to **3 external grants**, one career development award, and **6 collaboratively written publications**
Research cannot serve to improve health and health equity if new knowledge is not shared with all partners in formats that are understandable and actionable. CCH is committed to the dissemination of research in ways that can be implemented by communities and stakeholders to lead to lasting impacts on health.

Education & Training: Since 2008, CCH has provided various forms of consultation, technical assistance, workshops, seminars, and writing retreats to help academic and community partners collaborate in activities that range from the development of new research that is designed from the beginning for future dissemination and implementation, to the successful publication of community-engaged research reports.

Dissemination and Implementation Grants: CCH has been working with NUCATS to fund new forms of pilot grants to improve research dissemination and implementation. In parallel, CCH is also working with community and academic stakeholders with expertise in dissemination and implementation to develop training resources to support awardees and future applicants.

Matthew O’Brien (General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics/ARCC Steering Committee member) and Maria Molina of Alivio Medical Center were granted a pilot award to implement a culturally-tailored evidence-based diabetes program in two Latino communities in Chicago, South Lawndale and Pilsen. As of Spring 2017, the team has trained 21 community health workers, or promotoras de salud, from key stakeholder organizations (Universidad Popular, Alivio Medical Center, Enlace Chicago, and Erie Family Health) to deliver and disseminate 12 core sessions of the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)—a structured, intensive lifestyle intervention meant to reduce the risk of developing diabetes among adults.

Closing the Loop

Partnership Results in Improved Research Policies

AllianceChicago is a large federally qualified health center integrated service network committed to advancing health in underserved populations through innovations in community health care provision. AllianceChicago serves as an innovation hub for over 30 health center networks operating over 200 practice sites in 14 states. It has been a key partner of CCH’s PBRP and recipient of several seed grant awards focusing on innovative practice-based research. Since 2015, CCH has been working more closely with Alliance leadership to develop policies and procedures that can improve the alignment of research with clinical practice priorities, as well as dissemination of research to address those priorities. This work has resulted in NU policies recognizing a consistent indirect cost rate for all NU research sub-contracts with AllianceChicago, as well as increased engagement of NU researchers with Alliance-member providers via a semi-annual AllianceChicago Research Symposium.

CCH Findings Lead to Changes in Illinois Law

With the support of an ARCC seed grant, the Chicago Public School (CPS) Office of Student Health and Wellness collaborated with Ruchi Gupta (Pediatrics) and her research team to evaluate CPS procedures for verifying the diagnosis and treatment of chronic conditions reported by students or their families. Findings from this work were disseminated to communities and stakeholders, which promoted the expansion of Illinois’ stock epinephrine law, permitting people other than nurses to administer epinephrine to children experiencing an allergic reaction. The findings also provided the CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness with guidance on how to measure more accurately the number of students with suspected chronic health conditions such as food allergies, asthma, and diabetes.
Though federal sources of funding for research do not represent the full body of community engaged research at Northwestern, it is relatively simple to measure and serves as a litmus test for the trajectory of funded research activities for the entire institution. Fueled in large part by CCH’s growing member base, Northwestern has experienced a 222% increase in community and practice-based research over this same period.

### ALL PUBLICATIONS INVOLVING A CCH MEMBER AUTHOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th># PUBLICATIONS</th>
<th># CITATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>3,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>5,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>7,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>8,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>10,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>11,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>11,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,908</strong></td>
<td><strong>60,683</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The “H-Index” for these publications is 93, meaning 93 of them have been cited 93 or more times.

The South Asian Healthy Lifestyles Initiative (SAHELI) partnership, Metropolitan Asian Family Services (MAFS) and the research team of Namratha Kandula (General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics), used findings from a 2013 ARCC seed grant to successfully develop an community action grant application, funded by the Illinois Heart Rescue. A priority focus of this project was to use research knowledge to strengthen the capacity of MAFS and the West Rogers Park South Asian community to work together to increase knowledge and awareness about sudden cardiac arrest and improve South Asians’ capabilities to evaluate and act in the setting of cardiac emergencies. The SAHELI partnership went on to receive additional R21 and R01 funding from NIH to continue this important research.

### PBRP Seed Grantee Increases Colorectal Cancer Screening

Funded by a CCH Practice-based Research Program seed grant, a community-academic team involving Heartland Health Outreach, a health service provider for minority and immigrant patients in urban Chicago, found that mailing information and fecal occult blood test kits directly to patients was a successful way to increase completion of recommended colorectal cancer screening tests. Study findings were instrumental in securing additional grant funding from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality for a “Research Center of Excellence in Clinical Preventive Services,” which worked to expand implementation of this intervention to three additional community health centers.

Although federal research funding overall has increased by only 5% since 2007, awards for community and practice-based research nationally have increased by a remarkable 66%, creating a growth opportunity for community and stakeholder-engaged research.

Though federal sources of funding for research do not represent the full body of community engaged research at Northwestern, it is relatively simple to measure and serves as a litmus test for the trajectory of funded research activities for the entire institution. Fueled in large part by CCH’s growing member base, Northwestern has experienced a 222% increase in community and practice-based research over this same period.

### TOTAL “COMMUNITY” RESEARCH AWARD DOLLARS BY YEAR, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL DOLLARS (IN MILLIONS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* NIH funding overall has increased 5% and funding to all institutions for community research has increased 66% over the same period.

### Future Directions

Through its commitment to engaging communities and other stakeholders in all phases and forms of research, CCH is positioned to respond to growing demands among policy makers, public health officials, health systems, community leaders, and patients, who seek solutions for individual and population health and health equity. By embracing the principles of collaboration, respect, equity, transparency, and impact, we look forward to continuing to elevate the conduct and impact of community engaged research for Northwestern, for Chicago, and for the nation.
CCH leadership provides strategic direction and oversight to guide growth and outcomes, as well as operational direction, guiding the development, implementation, and evolution of new and existing CCH resources and services.

Ronald Ackermann, MD, MPH  
CCH Director

Darius Tandon, PhD  
CCH Associate Director

Jen Brown, MPH  
Director, Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities

Susan LeBailly, PhD  
Director of the Practice-based Research Program

Grisel M. Robles-Schrader, MPA  
Research Portfolio Manager for Community & Stakeholder Engagement

Gina Curry  
Community Campus Coordinator

Josefina Serrato  
ShARP Program Assistant

Jillian Guetzov  
Center Administrator

Patricia Jakobic  
Program Assistant

CCH operates with an organizational structure that aligns with partners to maximize efficiency and impact. CCH work and outcomes are made possible only with the direction and leadership of our community, practice, and academic partners from across the Chicagoland area, as well as community clinicians who serve in advisory roles.

Pediatric Practice Research Group (PPRG)  
Adolfo Ariza, MD, Director  
Helen Binns, MD, MPH, Associate Director

Research Education and Academic Achievement (REACH) Network  
Erik Orelind, MD, MPH, Director

CONTACTS
For more information about CCH or to view an electronic version of this report, visit cch.northwestern.edu or email cch@northwestern.edu

To learn about making a gift, please contact:
David G. McCreery  
Director, Major Gifts  
Development & Alumni Relations  
david.mccreery@northwestern.edu  
(312) 503-6099  
http://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/giving

Center for Community Health  
750 N. LakeShore Drive  
Rubloff Building, Suite 680  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
312-503-2580

Photo above courtesy of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.