

Department of Family Medicine & Public Health Sciences and Center for Urban Studies

Public Health Partnership and Community Health Outreach

Public health partnerships with community partners are a vibrant tradition at WSU, with faculty engaging and mentoring interdisciplinary teams of students as well as training community health workers. For example, research with Community Health Awareness Group (CHAG), funded in 2003 by the Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation, to study the effects of changing HIV testing protocols and assimilating advances in rapid testing technology in the Detroit epicenter, concluded brief client-centered risk reduction counseling was effective. Expansion of this model of client-centered community health screening and disease risk reduction is exemplified by the 2014 community health intervention “Reducing Heart Disease in Detroit: Using Family History and Risk Assessment in Community Outreach,” also known as the “Detroit HeartBeat” project. Funded by the Detroit Medical Center Foundation, implemented by CHAG and evaluated by WSU, “Detroit HeartBeat” is an innovative and award-winning heart health outreach initiative to Detroit residents, who have significantly higher risk for heart disease than Michigan and national averages. The primary objective is outreach and

cardiovascular risk reduction to Detroit residents in non-clinical community settings by community health workers. A favorite feature is the “Letter to Myself” crafted by participants when they enroll in the “HeartBeat,” which is then mailed to them at the three month follow-up as a reminder of personal health goals they hoped to accomplish. In these and other initiatives, the Department of Family Medicine & Public Health Sciences, in collaboration with the Center for Urban Studies, mentors undergraduate and graduate students from disciplines including public health, urban studies, medicine, nursing, education, social work and computer science to conduct community health education and outreach.



Detroit HeartBeat Interviews

Cheryl – CHAG Community Health Worker

“We enrolled some people at church. They were more up in age, and we ended up going to their homes because they weren’t able to get out, and they really appreciated us taking the time to come out and think of them at their three and six month follow-up. They appreciated they weren’t just a number; it showed we really cared. Some were bedridden and already had high blood pressure and other health issues. They weren’t able to go out to their doctor to get their blood pressure taken, so we took it in their home.”

My name is Scott – I am 26 years old, an African-American Masters in Public Health student, currently living in the City of Detroit. The reason I came to Detroit to study public health was to get an accurate look at the challenges and solutions to health disparities in metropolitan areas for people of color. My experience with the program has shown me the wide array of key players necessary in improving health outcomes. The opportunity to see multiple phases of public health initiatives, from inception through evaluation, has shown me how many organizations go into effective health impacts. I now realize that hospitals are not a panacea for health disparity, but organizations like Community Health Awareness Group (CHAG) are the key to true holistic health improvement; because real people don't spend their lives in hospitals. The advantage of community-based health organizations is their ability to meet people where they are and render personalized health service tailored to the clients' unique needs.

Public Health Outreach Photo (Left to right): Community Health Awareness Group (CHAG) and Wayne State University (WSU) *Detroit HeartBeat* Partnership

Victor Harrell, CHAG; Cindy Bolden Calhoun, CHAG; Kristina Davis, CHAG; Cheryl Martin, CHAG; Noor Sabagha, WSU, Julie Gleason-Comstock, WSU, Scott McPherson-Moncrief, WSU; Craig Miller, CHAG

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