December 2014

Happy Holidays to all! We want to take the opportunity to provide updates from the Center, and to announce a bold initiative being launched at IUPUI that touches directly on the Center for Urban Health. With Earth a dominantly urban planet, it has become more critical than ever to focus on those factors of Environment, Community, and Health that interact and are inter-related, crossing disciplinary and academic-community-clinical boundaries for better health outcomes and for health sustainability in Indianapolis and beyond.

**Center for Urban Health Director back in Indy**

Gabriel Filippelli is back at IUPUI after spending a year as a Senior Science Advisor at the U.S. Department of State. His main activities focused on climate change policy, but he also actively participated in the Inter-Agency Urban Health Working Group, sharing ideas and action with stakeholders from a host US government agencies (HUD, NIH, EPA, NSF, USAID) as well as international partners at UNEP and WHO. Many opportunities exist for international urban health research, and Filippelli will be actively pursuing a global agenda to include with Center activities. Input from Investigators on this issue is welcomed.
Welcome New Investigators
Join us in welcoming talented New Investigators who joined the Center this year.

Katharine J. Head, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Communication Studies
Work addresses health communication strategies in the cancer prevention context, including health message design, community intervention design and evaluation, mHealth and eHealth technologies, and interpersonal influences in health decision-making.

Kenzie Latham, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Health and aging with an emphasis on functional health as well as chronic illness in later life. Recent research investigates whether neighborhood disorder shapes recovery and social participation outcomes among older adults with disability.

Yi Wang, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Sciences
Research focus on how air pollution and built environment affects health in urban population, including effects and mechanisms of ambient air pollution on cardiovascular and central nervous systems, aging-related morbidity such as cognitive decline, and Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Shahid Parvez, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Sciences
Exposure assessment methods, environmental toxicology, and human health risk assessment of environmental mixtures. He focuses on urban and emerging drinking water contaminants that are endocrine disruptors in nature and elevate risk of reproductive and developmental health effects.

Maria Brann, Ph.D., MPH
Associate Professor of Communication Studies
Work focuses on the promotion of healthy lifestyle behaviors at individual and community levels, such as preventive screenings, physical activity, and safety education, and researching and educating about ethical issues in health communication contexts.
Community and Urban Health Project Development Team

The Community and Urban Health Project Development Team (CUH PDT), created in May 2011 with support from the Center for Urban Health and the Indiana CTSI, seeks to increase academic participation and successful partnerships in translational research endeavors in order to improve health outcomes and promote sustainability in urban and community environments. The PDT has facilitated research by working with 20 groups of researchers from 10 different departments and three campuses with proposals in varying stages; from initial concept to pilot study and then external grant submission review. The 20 research teams who interacted with our PDT received, as part of their project recommendations, over 50 connections for interdisciplinary, community, and national partnerships to strengthen their applications. Nine projects have been funded, totaling over $150,000. These projects span areas, including oral health e-info for Latinos, expanding access to HIV testing through pharmacies, linguistic cues and blacks’ access to care, social norms and weight management among adolescent girls, an enhanced consent process to increase children’s participation in dental outreach services, evaluation of a summer academy for urban Latino youth, and implementation science efforts in youth residential settings. These funded projects have resulted in 9 journal articles and 6 external funding submissions to date. We are excited to promote and enhance community and urban health research in Indiana and beyond.

Urban Health and Wellness Grand Challenge

Urban Health and Wellbeing (UHW) has been identified as IUPUI’s first Grand Challenge Initiative. Grand Challenge Initiatives are long-term “Big and Bold” research programs that address critical national and international quality of life issues by establishing transdisciplinary teams of faculty and students who work in collaboration with Indianapolis and Indiana communities and citizens. The vision of this grand challenge is to serve humanity through betterment of health and wellbeing of urban communities in Indiana and beyond. Its mission is to enhance through innovative and coordinated research, education, and strategic partnerships the health and wellbeing of the Indianapolis community, establishing a national model to holistically address major challenges faced by urban communities in Indiana and beyond.

Center for Urban Health Investigators and leadership team are well represented in the Planning Committee for this Grand Challenge, but we welcome input from our broader Investigator pool as we move forward. We anticipate substantial and rapid activities related to this initiative, and applaud the IUPUI community for identifying this as one of the key areas where IUPUI and community expertise intersect.
2014 Urban Health Conference Wrap-up

We held our New Dimensions in Urban Health Research and Action conference at the Indianapolis Central Library on April 1, 2014, in partnership with a community conference conducted by CHEP. This half-day event drew over 70 participants, including community members, IUPUI researchers and students, and faculty from Notre Dame, West Lafayette, Indiana State, and IUB. The event was led off by an introduction to public health from Dean Paul Halverson of the Fairbanks Indiana University School of Public Health, followed by a Keynote presentation by visionary health leader and practitioner Dr. Lisa Harris of Eskenazi-Wishard Health, who presented the health innovation and creativity incorporated into the design and practice of the new Eskenazi-Wishard Health Campus. We then enjoyed 25 cutting-edge talks and posters from participants. The conference was engaging and interactive, with many calls for us hosting another one in 2015. Suggestions for topics or themes would be greatly appreciated.

Happy Holidays from Your Center for Urban Health Leadership Team!

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