KEEPING CANCER IN CHEC
Bridging Communities through Education, Health Care, and Research
It has been an active and exciting year for the Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative (ChicagoCHEC). ChicagoCHEC is an initiative funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) across the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University (NU), the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), and Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU).

The goal of ChicagoCHEC is to establish the infrastructure in order to:

1) Create strong connections that will build long-lasting bridges across the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, the University of Illinois at Chicago and Northeastern Illinois University.

2) Establish community partnerships that will develop an innovative community-driven foundation to support meaningful cancer research, education, training and community engagement across the Metropolitan Chicagoland area.

At the end of our first year, we can report that we have met our goal of establishing the infrastructure that now allows us to launch a number of programs and support community activities that will help reduce the burden of cancer in low-income, racial/ethnic minority, and underserved communities.

We are indebted to our institutional leaders, faculty members, research and administrative staff, students/trainees and our community partners for their active participation and support.

In this report, we will highlight a few of our key accomplishments across the four core areas of this partnership: community engagement, research, training and education, and policy and advocacy.
We are committed to supporting cancer research with a health equity lens that integrates community organizations as equal partners in addressing research questions.

On a yearly basis, ChicagoCHEC will fund three projects through the ChicagoCHEC Incubator and Catalyst Grant Program. These grants are intended to foster cross-institutional collaborations among investigator teams from NU, UIC, NEIU, and community partner organization(s).

In our first round of funding, we received a total 8 proposals, initiated from our three institutions and ten partner organizations. These projects included early-stage investigators from a broad range of academic disciplines.

Six research projects have been funded in the first year:

- **Cycle 1: Choose to Change, WeCanConnect, MiGuía**
- **Cycle 2: Prostate Cancer Disparity in African American Men, Colorectal Cancer Disparities on Chicago’s South Side, Obesity Intervention Development for Puerto Rican & Mexican Men**

- These projects include collaborators at Near North Health Services Corporation, ALAS-WINGS, Project Brotherhood, Access Living, The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and ACCESS Community Health Network
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to engaging, mobilizing, and supporting community capacity building efforts to improve health outcomes among Chicago’s underserved communities.

At the center of this partnership, we have convened a diverse Community Steering Committee (CSC), composed of key community members and leaders, to guide our strategic efforts to foster respectful and meaningful collaboration across the four core areas associated with the partnership.

We have identified, recruited and trained experienced Community Health Educators (CHEs) to work closely with local community organizations in cancer prevention, awareness and outreach, and to provide meaningful input about cancer reducing strategies implemented in Chicago to the National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) National Outreach Network.

COMMUNITY STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Henrietta Barcelo (Co-Chair), Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy
Joanne Glenn (Co-Chair), W.O.T. Foundation Inc.
Emily Cambry Jr, BLUE1647
Dolores Castañeda, Community Member
Luisa Echevarria, Univision Chicago
Marcus Evans, Illinois State of Illinois, Legislative District 33
Kristina Hamilton, American Lung Association In Greater Chicago
LauraJane Hyde, Gilda’s Club Chicago
Stephanie Logan, Patient Advocate
Jose López, Puerto Rican Cultural Center
David Ernesto Munar, Howard Brown Health Center
Linda Rae Murray, former Chief Medical Officer, Cook County Health & Hospital System
Kirsten Peachey, The Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation
Fred Rachman, Alliance of Chicago Community Health Services, L3C
Judy Panko Reis, Access Living
Brian Richardson, Chicago Department of Public Health
RoseMarie Rogers, Patient Advocate
Regine Rucker, Chicago Public Schools
Joanna Rudnicka, Amber Coalition, Polish-American Breast Cancer Program
Esther Sciammarella, Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition
Juan Salgado, Instituto del Progreso Latino & Instituto Health Sciences Academy
Esther Wong, Chinese American Service League
Carmen Velásquez, Founder and former Executive Director of Alivio Medical Center
Kyle Westbrook, City of Chicago, Office of Mayor Rahm Emanuel
Tom Wilson, Access Living
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

JANUARY 2016
First ChicagoCHEC Community Steering Committee meeting

APRIL 2016
Ms. Henrietta Barcelo, Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy and Ms. Joanne Glenn, W.O.T. Foundation, Inc. selected as CSC Co-Chairs

JUNE 2016
CSC partner Tom Wilson from Access Living presented at the National Academies of Medicine

SUMMER 2016
CSC mentorship and training of Research Fellows Engagement in community events: the Chicago Community Trust’s On the Table conversations, Lurie Cancer Survivors’ Celebration Walk & 5K, HopeFest 2016, African Festival of the Arts, The Importance of Diversity in Clinical Trials 2.0

OCTOBER 2015
Northeastern Illinois University, Northwestern University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago awarded $17.4 million National Cancer Institute U54 collaborative grant to launch the Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative (ChicagoCHEC)

FEBRUARY 2016
8 ChicagoCHEC Incubator & Catalyst Grants applications received for research and partnership development proposals, with 10 new community partners

SPRING 2016
CSC members participated in activities across the partnership: hired project staff; reviewed ChicagoCHEC proposals for funding; interviewed and selected candidates for the ChicagoCHEC Research Fellows Program

SEPTEMBER 2016
First Annual ChicagoCHEC Symposium & Community Report

2017 AND BEYOND
Ongoing community conversations, capacity building, community resource mapping, cancer education and outreach
We are committed to training, educating, mentoring and supporting a diverse workforce that includes students (undergraduates and graduates), early stage investigators, junior faculty members, researchers, and health care professionals.

These groups can bring varied perspectives and experiences to advance the nation’s goal of reaching cancer health equity.

We have developed programs that will support and coach individuals along their career trajectory, providing opportunities to successfully launch and advance their careers.

This past year, our efforts focused on establishing the following program.

The ChicagoCHEC Research Fellows Program

This program is a comprehensive, learning experience for students from Northwestern, Northeastern Illinois University, University of Illinois at Chicago, and City Colleges of Chicago (CCC). This program is focused on the development of academic, technical and professional skills in preparation for careers in social, behavioral and biomedical research, and health care. Immersive basic science and applied research experiences, interactive group projects, journal clubs and mentoring helped the Research Fellows on their journey to become researchers and health care professionals.

RESEARCH FELLOWS PROGRAM KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 69 students applied to this program (February 2016)
- Students attended a pre-interview workshop covering topics such as interview etiquette, “what to expect” from the interview process, preparation for interview questions
- Trained reviewers utilized a holistic application review process for diversity and inclusion (March 2016)
- 23 students invited for in-person interviews (April 2016)
- Representatives from each institution & community partners reviewed applications utilizing holistic scoring rubrics (February-April 2016)
- 12 students selected to participate in the first year of the program
- CSC members participated on the review of the applications, interviewing and final selection of candidates (February-April 2016)
- Cohort of 3 post-baccalaureate senior fellows supported coordination of program activities (June-August 2016)
- Several students joined ChicagoCHEC research project teams
Smoke-free NEIU

As of July 1, 2015, smoking is prohibited on all Northeastern Illinois University locations, to include all areas, both indoors and outdoors, in University-owned vehicles and in privately owned vehicles while parked on University property.

ChicagoCHEC-associated professors supported this legislative change by utilizing data from several key documents that provided evidence on the negative health and environmental effects of tobacco smoking on campus. This data revealed that over 70% of NEIU students reported being bothered by smoking on the NEIU campus. Additional supporting evidence indicated that 87% of all litter found on the main campus was tobacco-related.

Lung cancer screening policy

Karriem S. Watson, DHSc, MS, MPH, of University of Illinois at Chicago, provided leadership to a recently published policy position paper to encourage lung cancer screening in high risk populations. Dr. Watson and colleagues recommend “a shared decision making model and integration of evidence-based tobacco treatment in the context of LDCT-based lung cancer screening for eligible, informed adults.”

PREVIEW OF CHICAGO CHEC
2017 KEY ACTIVITIES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

– Establish a ChicagoCHEC Policy Council that will be tasked to develop and implement a cancer policy agenda. It will be aimed at impacting, administrative, regulatory, and legislative policies at the local, state and national levels.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

– Ongoing community conversations, capacity building, community resource mapping, cancer education and outreach

NEWLY FUNDED PROJECTS

– Smoking Cessation among LGBT Patients: Reduction program tailored for LGBT patients
– Cross Cultural Comparative Effectiveness Partnership Model - Lung Cancer: Partnership to address training, research and community engagement to examine lung cancer outcomes in Cuba
– A Health Policy Initiative: Development of two-course core sequence in Cancer Health Policy Studies to establish the foundation for a Minor in Health Policy Studies at NEIU.
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We welcome questions and comments from our readers. Please direct correspondence to info@chicagochec.org.

Further information can be found at http://chicagochec.org/ Twitter @ChicagoChec