4th Annual ARCC Community-Engaged Research Partnership Award Recipient: Partnership to Advance LGBT Health and Wellness

The Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC), a community engaged research program of the Center for Community Health serving the Northwestern University’s Institute for Public Health and Medicine and Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute, developed the Community Engaged Research Partnership Award to recognize research partnerships that exemplify strong collaborative community research principles and have made an impact on the health of their community.

The 2015 award acknowledges the efforts of the Partnership to Advance LGBT Health and Wellness, the exemplary partnership between with the Center on Halsted and the IMPACT LGBT Health & Wellness Development Program at Northwestern University.

The partners have been collaborating on community-engaged research projects aimed at improving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) health for 5 years. Informed through needs assessments and community advisory committees, cornerstones of this model include a shared value for implementing community-based participatory research approaches and a translational research perspective. The Partnership collaborates on research projects focused on youth, mental health, and evidence-based interventions utilizing innovative technology. The five year collaboration has grown into a synergistic partnership, whereby and IMPACT Program staff are embedded in the community and valued as a critical component of the Center’s programming. With the Keep It Up! (KIU!) intervention, an interactive online HIV prevention program tailored to ethnically diverse young men who have sex with men (YMSM), staff conducted HIV testing and counseling with 1,976 YMSM who tested negative, and a total of 551 YMSM completed the KIU! intervention. The intervention proved to be effective, with statistically significant reductions in HIV risk behaviors. The launch of IMPACT’s largest study to date, RADAR, has marked a new level of integration within the Center, with the build out of a co-branded research space. Integrating studies into the Center better serves participants by ensuring immediate linkage to HIV services and creates a more seamless experience for LGBT youth, many of whom access programs from both the Center and IMPACT. Embedding research in the community space also strengthens this partnership by providing staff of both organizations with daily opportunities to share resources and improve research and community programming. The partnership has catalyzed new initiatives, such as a ground-breaking LGBT psychology training program and an annual research conference that leveraged community input to inform NIH’s expansion of their LGBT health agenda.

In making their decision, reviewers cited the partnership’s efforts to “embed researchers in a community-based agency to increase trust and communication between academic and community partners.” And called the partnership “a model of community engaged research.”

Further info about the partnership and award at www.ARCConline.net