

ARCC Seed Grants

Community-Academic Partnerships to Improve Community Health:

A Community-Academic Partnership for Asthma Control in Humboldt Park

Juana Ballesteros, Humboldt Park Community of Wellness, and Ruchi Gupta, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine

Asthma is one of the most common childhood conditions, affecting over 9 million children in the US. In Chicago, the childhood asthma rate has been reported to be on average 13%; however, the burden is unequally distributed, with 20% of Black children compared to 10% of White children affected. Puerto Rican children have also been found to have high asthma rates, at approximately 20%.

Chicago's Humboldt Park, which has the city's largest Puerto Rican community and a high percentage of African American families, has identified asthma as a significant problem. In response to its impact, the community has expressed a strong desire to build partnerships to address childhood asthma. True asthma prevalence in Humboldt Park is not known, nor is the severity of asthma in affected children. Further, there is no understanding of mediating community factors or the availability of asthma resources to children and families.

A partnership to address these issues has been created between Juana Ballesteros, Executive Director of the Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness and Dr. Ruchi Gupta, pediatrician and researcher at Children's Memorial Hospital, Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine. Additional assistance will be provided by Maureen Damitz, Senior Director of Programs for Respiratory Health Association of Chicago and Dr. Molly Martin, pediatrician and researcher at Rush University Medical Center.

Together, we will survey parents from three Humboldt Park elementary schools to 1) determine asthma prevalence and control; 2) understand community factors potentially contributing to asthma including issues of safety, pollution, and access to care; and 3) assess the degree of trust parents have in the ability of schools to manage asthma. At the completion of this study, we will have valuable pilot data for use to design proposals and secure funding for further investigations and interventions to improve childhood asthma in Humboldt Park.