Overview
The Center for Community Health (CCH) provides a research home for a diverse array of academic investigators, community partners, and staff members, who are all dedicated to promoting population health through the conduct and dissemination of community-engaged research. By supporting research at the nexus of community health priorities, academic and community research expertise, and closely-aligned supportive infrastructures such as NUCATS Population Health and Dissemination Operations Team, the Center for Community Health is strongly positioned to ensure rapid and meaningful growth in the depth and breadth of engaged research that involves Northwestern University and its many community and academic partners.

CCH has supported over 130 investigators across 22 academic departments and divisions, involving more than 55 different community organizations and 100 community healthcare practice sites. CCH supports several innovative programs of interdisciplinary and community-engaged research. These dynamic programs build upon the strengths of existing academic-community partnerships to address health-related issues that are of utmost importance to community and public health partners. In addition to supporting the development and implementation of community-engaged research, the CCH will also serve as a vehicle for collecting, integrating, and disseminating data, research findings, and special reports to inform policy, community activities, and additional research.

CCH provides resources and services that support the full spectrum of research, and include:

- Partnership Brokering & Development, for faculty and community-based investigators
- Workshops, seminars, and career development training
- Fiscal support (including seed grants offered through the ARCC and PBR programs, described in detail below)
- Consultations and technical assistance, for research proposal development and implementation issues

Examples of these and other resources are described below, as offered through the Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities and the Practice-Based Research Program:

The Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC) was launched within NUCATS in 2008, and now has existing relationships with a broad range of community- and faith-based organizations and public agencies throughout the greater Chicago area. ARCC is directed by a community-academic Steering Committee representing diverse communities, as well as the Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Department of Public Health. ARCC sustains a variety of services and resources that support investigators conducting community-engaged research. They include: community campus coordinators who continually engage new community partners, build relationships, and work to define organizational priorities and interests in research; community capacity building activities funded locally to help 19
community organizations identify and address institutional challenges to partnering in research; education and training to prepare investigators for careers in community-engaged research; seed grants to build new partnerships and implement pilot research; and technical assistance to partnerships.

The Practice-based Research (PBR) Program includes direct partnership and support of two large practice networks (REACH and PPRG), as well as collaboration with the Chicago Information Technology Regional Extension Center (CHITREC) and the Chicago Practice-Based Research Collaborative (CPBRC). The Research and Education for Academic Achievement (REACH) practice-based research network launched in 2008, and is comprised of 17 adult primary care sites including private practices and federally qualified health centers with more than 200 member physicians and over 200,000 patients. The Pediatric Practice Research Group (PPRG) includes over 60 community pediatric practices and was founded in 1984 as a partnership of the Department of Pediatrics at the Lurie Children’s Hospital. PPRG was aligned under CCH with other PBR programs and research activities at NU. Over the past 5 years, REACH and PPRG have collaborated with NU research teams in 26 research protocols that have involved 49,864 patients.

CCH has also led regional efforts to develop the Chicago Practice-Based Research Collaborative (CPBRC), with the aim of aligning PBRNs regionally to enable large-scale observational research, pragmatic clinical trials, and other comparative effectiveness studies. CPBRC includes PBRN partners from University of Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Rush University Medical Center; as well as two federally qualified health center networks (the Alliance of Chicago Community Health Services and Access Community Health Network), Rosalyn Franklin Medical School, and the NorthShore University Health System. CCH will continue to strengthen and leverage CPBRC to provide a platform for bidirectional exchanges with healthcare practitioners throughout Chicago to enhance opportunities for clinical and translational research.

CCH led the development of the Chicago Consortium for Community Engagement (C3), a strategic partnership with the two other Chicago CTSIs and the Chicago Department of Public Health, and C3’s continuous funding since 2010 by the Chicago-based Sprague Foundation and other supplemental NIH awards.

Office
The Center for Community Health retains 850 sq ft of office space for 7 employees.

For more information, please see:
http://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/sites/ipham/centers/community-health.html