

Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities (ARCC) Honors 3rd Annual Community-Engaged Research Partnership Award Recipient: Collaboration to Improve Chronic Disease Outcomes for Chicago Public School Students



ARCC, a community engaged research program of the Center for Community Health (CCH) part of 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 2014 award acknowledges the efforts of a **Collaboration to Improve Chronic Disease Outcomes for Chicago Public School Students**, the long-standing partnership between Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Student Health and Wellness (OSHW) and Dr. Ruchi Gupta's team at Northwestern University has generated many successful projects and is leading to improved chronic disease reporting and verification for CPS students on asthma, food allergy, and other health issues.

Dr. Gupta, Associate Professor in Pediatrics, began collaborating with CPS Student Health Specialist Lilliana DeSantiago-Cardenas in 2009. During this time, Ms. DeSantiago-Cardenas and Dr. Gupta have served as each other's consultants and partners in their respective pediatric asthma and food allergy work in Chicago. While Ms. DeSantiago-Cardenas provided the Northwestern team with insight into successfully working with schools, Dr. Gupta and her team assisted the OSHW with grant writing, research, and dissemination efforts. Through this partnership, Dr. Gupta's team has had internal CPS support when creating and running asthma education programs in schools, and the OSHW received expert advice and resources for the groundbreaking District-Issued Epinephrine Initiative to reduce anaphylaxis-related morbidity and mortality. Both have served together on steering committees for ARCC and the Chicago Asthma Consortium, and a member of Dr. Gupta's team has sat on the CPS Materials Review Committee. Recently, both groups worked together to host a workshop at Northwestern University for Chicago academic and community researchers interested in working in schools.

Currently, Ms. DeSantiago-Cardenas and Dr. Gupta are completing their most recent collaborative effort, the *Improving Chronic Disease Verification and Medication Access in Chicago Public Schools* research initiative, partially funded by a seed grant from ARCC. This initiative has led to the implementation of parent education strategies in the ten participating schools (presentations at Local School Council meetings, print materials to the council and schools, and an online Parent Toolkit on school websites). CPS will soon be rolling out these tools for use by families and schools across the entire district.



The partnership has contributed to collaborative proposal submissions to the National Institutes of Health, Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute, and private funders including Mylan, Inc. and multiple collaborative manuscript submissions.

Through an effective and respectful community-academic partnership, this collaboration is leading to improved chronic disease reporting and verification for Chicago Public School students. CPS and Northwestern University are working together to accomplish mutually beneficial goals for their respective communities and the Chicagoland community at large.

Further information about the partnership and the award are available at www.ARCOnline.net