Highlights
2018
MAYO CLINIC OFFICE OF HEALTH DISPARITIES RESEARCH
Office of Health Disparities Research’s 2018 Successes Rooted in Institution-Wide Support

It is the vision of the Office of Health Disparities Research (OHDR) to support and advance the Mayo Clinic mission of providing the best care every day to patients from all cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. OHDR’s mission is to foster, facilitate, and support meaningful Mayo Clinic research collaborations and programs to identify, develop, and deploy strategies to eliminate health disparities, and to ensure that Mayo Clinic research participants and patients reflect the diverse communities that form the mosaic of our nation.

The Office of Health Disparities Research (OHDR) has had a dynamic and impactful 2018. It was spent directly financing health equity research, supporting health disparity investigators and aiding career development. OHDR’s team worked hard to expand institutional resources for health disparities research and minority recruitment to clinical trials, and advance its mission through education, research partnerships, and community engagement.

In 2018 OHDR advanced its goal of “fostering, facilitating, and supporting meaningful Mayo Clinic research collaborations and programs to identify, develop, and deploy strategies to eliminate health disparities” by:

(1) awarding more than $400,000 in direct funding to support planned and ongoing health disparities research;

(2) supporting the Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) section for the CCSG renewal by providing data on Mayo Clinic health disparities and minority accrual, reports on community outreach efforts across the enterprise, and assistance with the convening of the new Midwest Cancer Research Community Advisory Board; and

(3) coordinating, in connection with the OHDR Annual Retreat, a Stakeholder Dialogue Session, where health disparities researchers dialogue with leadership representatives from IRB, research finance, and the Research Personnel (sub)committee, to discuss policy catalysts and barriers to safe, efficient, culturally-conscious, community engaged health disparities research.

2018 also saw OHDR also advanced its goal of “ensuring that Mayo Clinic research participants and patients reflect the diverse mosaic of the nation” by:

(1) developing a first-of-its-kind, Native American Community Advisory Board including representatives of multiple sovereign tribes, Native health advocates and service providers, and Mayo Clinic physicians and researchers;

(2) fostering women and minority participation in research studies and clinical trials by supporting Mayo partnerships with the minority community, for example by sponsoring community partners’ attendance and Exhibit Booth registration at the 2018 Healthy Churches 2020 Conference, where Mayo researchers presented an Institute on Current Trends in Faith-Based Research; and

(3) supporting Language Translating Certification for OHDR Research Coordinators to support the rapidly increasing need for translation services support within Mayo Clinic.

This publication highlights some of the activities in the health disparities space across Mayo Clinic in 2018. OHDR thanks everyone who has been a part of these exciting accomplishments!
Mr. Bolton: Vice President of Administration and Community Outreach Ambassador

At the close of 2017, Jeff Bolton, Mayo Clinic vice president, Administration, attended a meal and presentations as an invited guest at the conclusion of the "Dakota 38 +2 Wokiksuye Ride and Ceremony," which was held at Reconciliation Park in Mankato, MN. The Ride, centered on healing and reconciliation, commemorates the 1862 execution of 38 native Dakota men with a 16-day, 330-mile horseback trek (from Lower Brule Reservation in South Dakota across the plains to Mankato) involving participants from around the country. Mr. Bolton, speaking to attendees at the ride’s closing event, relayed Mayo Clinic’s commitment to cultural inclusion and the institution’s efforts to support reconciliation in area communities.

Mayo Researcher Conducts Largest Ever Analysis of Socio-Demographic Factors and Stem Cell Transplantation

Sikander Ailawadhi, MD, Mayo Clinic Florida, presented new research at the American Society of Hematology’s 59th Annual Meeting that investigated why—even though stem cell transplantation has become a standard treatment for multiple myeloma and its utilization has increased for all racial/ethnic subgroups over time—certain racial/ethnic minorities remain less likely to receive it.

Governor Dayton Proclaims January Health Equity Month in Minnesota

Based on submissions from the Minnesota Medical Association’s Health Equity Advisory Group aimed at raising awareness of health disparities, Governor Mark Dayton proclaimed January 2018 as Health Equity Month in Minnesota. As part of the Health Equity Group’s education activities during the month, Mayo Clinic pediatrician Sarah Atunah-Jay, MD, participated in a January 17, 2018 Facebook Live-Feed panel discussion on health equity.

Health Disparity Researcher Wins Diversity Champion Award

Narjust Duma, MD, an OHDR-funded clinical fellow in hematology and oncology with a strong interest in health disparities research, was recognized by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion with the 2017 Diversity Champion in Research Individual Award.

Medical School Launches New Awards Acknowledging Achievement in Health Disparities, Diversity, and More

Mayo Clinic School of Graduate Medical Education has launched four new institutional awards to recognize individuals for outstanding achievement in quality improvement, patient safety, health care disparities, and diversity, the first three of which are required for accreditation of graduate medical education, and the fourth of which reflects Mayo Clinic’s ongoing commitment to diversity in the education and training of America’s physician workforce and the healthcare workplace. The awards distinguish residents and fellows for leadership and contributions in these domains, in recognition of the essential role they play in the success of Mayo as an educational and clinical institution.

Research Shield Contributes to Enterprise Diversity, Inclusion

Gregory Gores, MD, and Leon Clark represented the Research Shield at January’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion annual retreat, as part of a roundtable that also included leaders from Practice, Education, and Development. Both discussed the Research shield’s contributions to Mayo’s diversity and inclusion efforts, with Dr. Gores introducing the newly created Office of Research Diversity & Inclusion and discussing the OHDR 2017 Retreat. Mr. Clark described new institutional recruiting efforts, which purposefully reject a “post and pray” approach in favor of the intentional adoption of a strategy focused on minority-serving institutions. Both emphasized diversity and inclusion as “woven into the fabric of the research shield.”
CaHDre Starts 2018 With Translation and Adaptation of Research Surveys
The Cancer Health Disparities Research (CaHDre) group kicked off its 2018 speaker series with a presentation by Kathleen Yost, PhD entitled Best Practices for the Translation and Cultural Adaptation of Surveys for Research Purposes. Dr. Yost is Director of the Mayo Clinic Survey Research Center. Her primary research interest is health literacy and patient-reported outcomes and she has over a decade in outcome measure development and validation. Dr. Yost emphasized the critical importance of both cultural humility and phraseology as well as linguistic accuracy in the translation of research surveys and outcome measures. Her recommended resources have been added to OHDR’s “Minority Inclusion in Research” Resource Webpage.

FEBRUARY

Mayo Researchers Develop Test for Cancer-Predicting Genetic Mutations
Breast and ovarian cancer disparities persist for racial and socioeconomic minorities, so preventive measures (i.e. screening, genetic testing) offer a potential source of women’s health equity. Inheritable genetic mutations in the BRCA2 gene that may predict a woman’s risk for these cancers are considered a “variation of uncertain significance” until it can be determined whether it is predictive of breast or ovarian cancer, or neutral (no increased risk). But to date, the test used for determining the cancer risk of a variation has only been able to identify 13 variations as pathogenic and 21 as neutral. In research published in early 2018, however, Mayo Clinic scientists led by Fergus Couch, PhD, have developed a new test for variations so much more efficient that they have already identified 41 new pathogenic variations and 52 neutral variations.

Mayo Develops Equity-Driven, Universal Questions for Identifying Patients with Disability
A team of Mayo Clinic researchers and clinicians have established six essential point of care questions for health care organizations to ask as a first step in addressing inequities for patients with disabilities. Based on a study led by Joan Griffin, PhD, the questions are intended to determine unmet needs of patients for whom disabilities are not always easily identified. Because the disabled experience health disparities, both in preventive treatment and chronic disease management, the study used a multi-stage process to identify and refine six essential and three recommended questions to help providers understand and address disabled patients’ needs. Mayo has already incorporated the questions into its electronic health record in Epic.

Native American Interest Group: Talking Donations
OHDR’s February Native American Interest Group (NAIG) featured Lindsey Williams, Community Education Liaison for Life Source, as its February speaker. Ms. Williams’ presentation focused on her work with the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan American Indian community on education and dialogue about organ donation. She specifically addressed her community engagement process, which emphasizes listening before speaking and, when dialogue is appropriate, talking to people, rather than talking at people. The NAIG monthly speaker series is part of OHDR’s Native American Research Outreach program.

OHDR-Supported Researcher Increases African American Women’s Awareness of Heart Disease
The Office of Health Disparities Research and the Office of Women’s Health co-sponsored two Red Dress/Red Tie Sundays at St. Paul African American faith communities to bring awareness to African American women that heart disease is the #1 cause of death for women in the United States—killing more African American women each year than breast cancer, lung cancer, and stroke combined. Leading these efforts was OHDR-funded health disparities researcher, LaPrincess Brewer, MD, who appeared on WCCO television to discuss heart health and to promote the events.
**Mayo Graduate School Awarded $2.2M NIH Grant to Train Underrepresented Students**

Mayo Clinic’s Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences has received a $2.2M, five-year renewal of its NIH grant to train students traditionally underrepresented in science and engineering, which includes women, people with disabilities, blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. Mayo will continue to use these funds for its successful “Initiative for Maximizing Student Development” program, which provides a two-year fellowship to selected students at the onset of their PhD training, focusing on professional development, communication skills, lab studies, and personalized mentorship and counseling.

**Grant Will Support Research on Alzheimer’s Disease in African Americans**

John Lucas, PhD, a neuropsychologist at Mayo Clinic Florida, will be using part of $842,000 in grant funding awarded Mayo Clinic scientists from the Ed and Ethel Moore Alzheimer’s Disease Research Program to conduct community engaged research with Jacksonville’s African American community. African Americans have twice the risk of whites for developing Alzheimer’s, and tend to undergo evaluations for memory loss at a later stage in the disease process than other ethnic groups. Dr. Lucas will work in New Town, a Jacksonville area in which OHDR has several long-standing community partnerships, to explore a model for raising awareness and providing sustained education and support for patients (and their family caregivers) with dementia.

**OHDR Journal Club: Disparities in Pharmacogenetics in Native American Populations**

The Office of Health Disparities Research’s February 26 Journal Club featured Susanna Basappa, MD/PhD student, whose presentation centered on the featured article *P450 Pharmacogenetics in Indigenous North American Populations*. Pharmacogenetics addresses predictors of drug response and clearance due to variant alleles (genetic variation), which can differ by race and ethnicity. Ms. Basappa discussed specific alleles disproportionately represented in minority populations that differentially impact metabolism and the clearance of drugs such as antidepressants, cancer chemotherapy agents, sleep aids, etc.

**Research Director for National Indian Child Welfare Association is Featured Speaker at OHDR’s Native American Interest Group**

Puneet Sahota, MD, Research Director for the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), was the featured presenter at the March Native American Interest Group Presentation. NICWA works to support the safety, health, and spiritual strength of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) children along the broad continuum of their lives and is the most comprehensive source of information on AI/AN child welfare in the country. Dr. Sahota spoke on NICWA’s ongoing missions, its collaborative approach to Native child welfare, and some of the regional and national research projects currently underway aimed at improving Native Child wellness and health disparities.

**OHDR Pilot Grantee Awarded 5-Year NIH Grant to Study Prenatal Genetic Services Among Women in Underserved Populations**

OHDR 2018 Pilot Project Awardee Megan Allyse, PhD, was awarded a 5-year, $850,000 NIH K01 Grant to examine *Factors Influencing Access and Utilization of Prenatal Care Services Among Women from Underserved Populations*. Specifically, the funding will allow Dr. Allyse to conduct research with African American and Latina women to better understand their views about prenatal genetic testing and its role in reducing health disparities.
Mayo Commitment to Diversity Manifested in March

Mayo Clinic’s commitment to build the research workforce of the future was manifest in a myriad of ways in March, when three significant announcements were made concerning the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. The first was news that Mayo Clinic had received a $2.2M, five-year NIH grant renewal to support the School’s diversity mission by providing financial support to groups traditionally underrepresented in science (women, persons with disabilities, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and American Indians/Alaska Natives). The second was the naming of the School’s first Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Luis Lujan, PhD, who will work with faculty and students at all three Mayo campuses to formulate and implement diversity and inclusion strategies. Third, Research Administration announced that Mayo Clinic’s Undergraduate Research Employment Program (UREP) and other summer internship programs, would be made more robust by including a stronger academic requirement, a more competitive compensation program, and a specific effort to increase the diversity of enrolling students through direct collaborations with colleges, universities, and other initiatives.

Familiar Faces at National Latino Cancer Conference

Latinos will face a 142% rise in cancer in coming years. The inaugural Advancing the Science of Cancer in Latinos conference tackled Latino cancer with health researchers, oncologists, professionals, leaders and students from across the world. The keynote speakers included Edith Perez, MD, Mayo Clinic Professor of Medicine, and Eliseo Pérez-Stable, MD, Director of the NIMHD and 2016 OHDR Retreat keynote speaker. OHDR Steering Committee members Gerardo Colon-Otero, MD, and Carmen Radecki Breitkopf, PhD, also made significant contributions. Dr. Radecki Breitkopf presented a poster, The LLEAD Study (Latinas Learning About Density): A 3-Arm RCT to Examine Psychological and Behavioral Effects of Density Inform Legislation in a U.S. Federally-Qualified Health Center, and Dr. Colon-Otero participated in a panel, presenting The Biology of Breast Cancer Disparities in Hispanics: Current Knowledge, Gaps, and Research Opportunities. OHDR-funded researcher Narjust Duma, MD, was also in attendance. Her work on disparities in clinical trial enrollment was cited in Dr. Pérez-Stable’s Keynote Address.

Study of Health Disparities in Myeloma Care Received National Attention

A study led by Mayo clinician and health disparities researcher Sikander Ailawadhi, MD, which determined that ethnicity and race are predicting different treatment patterns and outcomes for multiple myeloma patients, was featured in Cancer Therapy Advisory, along with comments by Dr. Ailawadhi that may help guide future research into the causes of these disparities.

Mayo Research Presented at National Nicotine and Tobacco Conference

An important, three-phase study on tobacco use in underrepresented populations is ongoing at Mayo Clinic, led by health disparities researcher Christi Patten, PhD. In March, two presentations related to that investigation were given by study personnel at the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco conference in Baltimore, MD. Martha Bock, Mayo Clinic Behavioral Health Clinical Assistant Researcher, presented Feasibility of a Support Person Intervention to Promote Quitline Services Among Low Income Smokers. Christie Flanagan, study collaborator and Tobacco Research Program Manager at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium in Anchorage, AK, presented Biomarker Feedback Intervention for Smoking Cessation Among Pregnant Alaska Native Women.
OHDR-Funded Fellow is 2018 AACR Minority Scholar in Cancer Research

Narjust Duma, MD, a clinical fellow in Hematology/Oncology, received the 2018 AACR Minority Scholar in Cancer Research award from the American Association of Cancer Research’s Minorities in Cancer Research membership group. This highly competitive award recognizes an eligible minority fellow submitting a meritorious abstract, and provides financial support for the awardee to attend the relevant Conference/Meeting. As a result, Dr. Duma’s abstract, Influence of Sociodemographic Factors on Treatment Decisions in Lung Cancer, was Poster 1 at the Section 11, April 17 Poster Session at the AACR’s Annual Meeting, held April 14-19, 2018 in Chicago, IL. Dr. Duma’s study was funded by an OHDR Special Projects grant.

Mayo Clinic Named 2018 LGBTQ Healthcare Equity Leader from Human Rights Campaign Foundation

The Human Rights Campaign is an LGBTQ advocacy and education organization that annually surveys health care facilities across the United States to assess the institutions’ inclusion and equitable treatment of LGBTQ patients and staff. Just some of the factors measured include: staff training, patient and community engagement; nondiscrimination towards patients and staff; support for LGBTQ patients and staff; staff benefits and policies; and equal visitation policies. With its perfect survey score of 100%, the Mayo Clinic was one of only 4 Minnesota institutions named as an “Equity Leader” by the resulting 2018 Healthcare Quality Index, issued in April.

April NAIG Presenter: American Indian Cancer Foundation

The Native American Interest Group (NAIG), sponsored by OHDR’s Native American Research Outreach (NARO) Program, hosted two representatives of the American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF) as its featured presenters in April. Amber Ruffin, MPH, Cancer Equity Manager, and Lois Brown, RN, Nurse Educator, spoke on Effective Strategies for American Indian and Alaska Native Health Equity. AICAF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established to address the tremendous cancer disparities faced by American Indian and Alaska Native communities by reducing health disparities through hard work, culturally appropriate, community-based programs, and policy change that affords Native people access to the best prevention and treatment strategies. OHDR has long been a supporter of AICAF, and has been a Sponsor of the Powwow for Hope, AICAF’s largest annual fundraiser, every year since 2013.

Increasing Patient Diversity Begins with Understanding Diverse Patients

In a number of leadership presentations, including “Morning Rounds with John & Jeff” and OHDR’s Steering Committee Meeting, Sharad Rathnam and Tommy Hillman from Public Affairs shared the results from 16 focus groups conducted with Hispanic and African Americans. At the Steering Committee presentation, the need to address payer mix and suggestions for bilingual focus groups were also discussed. Reaching out to diverse populations, Mayo is working to understand the nuances of how they make decisions about where they receive health care and will use those focus group findings (pertaining to physician reputation, travel cost/logistics, workforce diversity, and inclusive climate) to shape Mayo Clinic messaging and patient communication, and provide input on staffing, training, and practice.

Mayo Clinic Joins Rural Cancer Clinical Trials Network, MnDRIVE

In April a new state-funded partnership was announced involving Mayo Clinic, Hormel Institute, the University of Minnesota, and several of the state’s major health systems (MnDRIVE) that will provide greater access to cancer trials. In Minnesota, cancer clinical trials originate from only three places, the Hormel Institute (Austin) or one of the states’ two NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers: the Masonic Cancer Center (Minneapolis) or the Mayo Clinic Cancer Center (Rochester). 56% of the state’s residents live 30+ miles from a hospital or clinic that offers access to such trials. In the first year alone, MnDRIVE will bring cancer clinical trials to 18 new locations across the state, adding more locations in subsequent years so it’s faster and more convenient for rural patients to participate in trial therapies.
Mayo Clinic Well Represented at Behavioral Health Medicine Annual Meeting

Twenty eight Mayo Clinic personnel participated in the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Society of Behavioral Medicine, April 11-14 in New Orleans, by submitting abstracts, presenting posters, or giving presentations. Mayo also had a booth at the conference (sponsored by the Center for the Science of Health Care Delivery) where in-depth information about Mayo Clinic’s research and job opportunities was provided. Posters presented by Mayo Clinic researchers were:

- Evolving Recommendations and Trends over Time in Pap Screening with HPV Co-testing (Lila Finney Rutten, PhD)
- Challenges and Barriers to Caring for a Person with Heart Failure (Lauren Bangerter, PhD)
- Longitudinal Trajectories of Subjective Stress Among Dementia Caregivers (Lauren Bangerter, PhD)
- Engaging Family Caregivers into Healthcare Delivery: Barriers, Facilitators, and Best Practices (Joan Griffin, PhD)
- Weight Stigma & Provider Communication with Patients with Obesity (Sean Phelan, PhD, OHDR Steering Committee)
- Treatment of Chronic Pain & Comorbid PTSD within a Pain Rehabilitation Program: Examining Functional Outcomes and PTSD Symptoms (Matthew Schumann, PhD)

Paper Session presentations were made by:

- Xuan Zhu, PhD (research fellow): Can Self-Affirmation Improve Acceptance of Health Messages? The Role of Internal versus External Threat to the Self
- Carmen Radecki Breitkopf, PhD (OHDR Steering Committee): A Qualitative Examination of Attitudes Toward Return of Genetic Research Results Among African and Latino/Hispanic Americans (with Kwesi Adjei, 2017 Summer Intern)

The event was attended by 2,300 behavioral and biomedical researchersclinicians.

Culturally Relevant Social Media Intervention to Curb Smoking in Alaska Natives Funded by NIH

In May it was announced that Christi Patten, PhD, OHDR Steering Committee member, Chair CCaTS-OCER, and health disparities researcher, was awarded a three-year NIH grant to develop and pilot test a culturally relevant, Facebook-delivered intervention to promote smoking treatment uptake and cessation among Alaska Native smokers. With geographic remoteness, climate, and travel costs all key barriers to smoking treatment delivery for Alaska Natives, social media may provide a promising scalable intervention strategy. Dr. Patten’s team will use a digital storytelling approach for the Facebook content and will promote the use of evidence-based treatment (state quitline; tribal-based cessation programs), while using cultural variance and surface/deep structure frameworks to address the influence of culture in designing health messages.

Mayo Clinic Celebrates Women in Science with Guest Presentation

Mayo Clinic’s Celebration of Women in Science Lecture was held May 1st, featuring keynote Jennifer Pietenpol, PhD, executive vice president for Research at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and director of the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center. Dr. Pietenpol is the Benjamin F. Boyd, Jr. Professor of Molecular Oncology, and her research focuses on breast cancer and the p53 family signaling network—the most frequently targeted network for mutation in human tumors. She has served as a board member for the American Association of Cancer Research, the National Cancer Advisory Board for the National Cancer Institute, and the Blue Ribbon Panel to advise the Vice President’s National Cancer Moonshot Initiative. She has long served as a chief scientific advisor for Susan G. Komen and is a founding member of the national advisory committee for the Pew-Stewart Scholars for Cancer Research.
OHDR Supports AICAF Cancer Awareness POWWOW

**Powwow for Hope**, the nation’s only known cancer awareness Native American powwow, is a community event honoring loved ones who have faced or are currently facing cancer by creating a space for healing. Proceeds benefit the American Indian Cancer Research Foundation’s (AICAF) work to eliminate cancer burdens on Native American families throughout Indian country. AICAF has signed an MOU with OHDR’s NARO program to facilitate and further research between Mayo Clinic investigators and Native American tribes regarding health disparities in Native communities. AICAF’s 2018 Powwow for Hope was held Saturday, May 5 at the Base Camp Facility in Minneapolis, MN, and included a Pink Shawl Ceremony, Dance Competitions, a Jingle-Dress Healing Ceremony, and a Healthy Feast.

Mayo Supports Cancer Research Education Program at Native American College

In early spring of 2018, Diné College, the higher education institution of the Navajo People, and Mayo Clinic invited AICAF and several other partners—Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute, Partnership for Native American Cancer Prevention, and San Carlos Apache Tribal College—to plan the development of a new and exciting Cancer Research Education Program at Diné College. (Established in 1968, Diné College is the first tribally-controlled community college in the United States, with its main location in Shiprock, NM).

Mayo Clinic, Home of Initiative’s Biorepository, Celebrates Launch of NIH’s All of Us Research Program

Enrollment officially opened May 6th for the NIH’s monumental All of Us Research Program, a nation-wide initiative to enroll at least 1 million participants (oversampling communities traditionally underrepresented in research) to create the largest, most diverse resource of its kind. The size and variety of the sample population will be unprecedented, with at least 35 million biospecimens truly representative of the population’s demographics. Storage of the biospecimens will be at the All of Us Research Program Biobank at Mayo Clinic, which received a 5-year, $142 million grant from the NIH to serve as the Program biorepository.

Journal Club Features “Disparities in Skin Cancer” Presentation

Aaron Mangold, MD, Dermatology, Mayo Clinic Arizona, was the featured presenter at Mayo’s OHDR Journal Club. Dr. Mangold, a 2017 OHDR Pilot Awardee for his study **Perception and Reality—The Characterization of Skin Lesions, Attitudes Towards Malignancy, and Body Awareness in Hispanics**, discussed how ethnic minorities with melanoma are 2-3 times more likely to die of melanoma relative to whites, and attributed disparities in melanoma outcomes in minorities to (1) poor characterization of benign v. malignant cutaneous neoplasms in ethnic minorities, (2) biological differences, such as lack of driver mutations in known oncogenes, structural variation, and location, and (3) lack of self skin examinations and limited access to healthcare/preventive care. Dr. Mangold gears his efforts toward creating targeted, ethnocentric educational interventions for Hispanics. His project fits with larger efforts to develop community health volunteering at Mayo-Arizona and will allow for at least 500 free skin examinations in an underserved population. It will culminate with the pilot data needed for a second study to examine effects of a targeted vs. traditional education of Hispanics in community health clinics.

NIH Funds Mayo Research to Focus on Kidney Transplantation in Minority Populations

A research study launched in 2017 at Mayo Clinic Arizona is reaching out to Hispanic communities to discuss the potential for kidney transplantation for those experiencing end-stage renal disease. Funded by the NIH and modeled after the Northwestern Hispanic Transplant Program, Mayo Clinic’s Hispanic Transplant Program, featured in May’s **Sharing Mayo Clinic** blog, provides education about the transplant process and the role of the patient and patient’s family, while being mindful of delivering culturally competent care. Part of those efforts include “Lobby Days,” hosted by Mayo Clinic Arizona social worker, Jeffrey Welch, where Spanish-speaking Mayo personnel visit dialysis centers in Phoenix and Tucson to provide direct information on the transplant process. Another Mayo Clinic Arizona effort—a study, funded by OHDR and led by Mira Keddis, MD—is investigating barriers to kidney transplantation and kidney transplant outcomes in Native Americans, who have the lowest rates of kidney transplantation compared to whites and other racial/ethnic minorities.
OHDR Co-Sponsors Visit of NIH’s Native Voices Exhibit to Mayo Clinic

Native Voices: Native Peoples’ Concepts of Health and Illness is a traveling exhibition, prepared by the National Library of Medicine and the NIH, that explores the interconnectedness of wellness, illness, and cultural life for Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Visitors discover how Native concepts of health and illness are closely tied to the concepts of community, spirit, and the land. With the sponsorship of OHDR, the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI), the Celebrate Dakota! MERG, and the Mayo Clinic Libraries, the exhibition visited Mayo Clinic from June 4—July 5, 2018 in Hage Atrium. In the spirit of unity with the Dakota and all Native tribes, Mayo Clinic hosted an Opening Celebration on Annenberg Plaza at the Rochester Downtown campus on June 4th, with a Welcome by Sharonne Hayes, MD, (ODI), a Traditional Native Ceremony with Mr. Jerry Dearly, a performance by the Ain-Dah-Yung Singers drum group, and a Closing by Lor Lee (ODI).

Mayo Clinic Commits to Health Equity As Important Component of Quality

Mayo Clinic’s 2018 Quality Report was issued in June, and many aspects of quality patient care specifically address health disparities/health equity issues. For example, to Deliver an Excellent Outcome, Mayo commits to better understanding the patient’s access to outpatient care/services and to the availability of community support (both of which are significant factors for readmission and are less available to patients from rural or lower SES communities). In another example, to Deliver an Extraordinary Experience, Mayo has established providing “empathic training for providers, nurses, health care teams and front line staff” as a top priority, which can help significantly lower implicit bias and increase cultural humility.

Mayo Clinic Seeks Increased Screening for HPV Related Cancers

In June, Mayo Clinic Cancer Center was one of 70 National Cancer Institute-designated cancer centers to issue a joint statement calling for increased HPV vaccination and screening to eliminate HPV-related cancers. Nearly 1 in every 4 Americans are infected with HPV, and more than 31,000 of these will be diagnosed with an HPV-related cancer this year, despite the availability of a vaccine to prevent the infection that causes these cancers. The CDC reports that black and Hispanic women have higher rates of HPV-associated cervical and vaginal/vulvar cancers than white women, and that black and Hispanic men have higher rates of HPV-associated penile cancer and anal/rectal cancers, meaning increased screening could reduce cancer disparities as well.

Mayo-Developed Liver Cancer Test May Help End Deadly Disparity

Liver cancer is highly fatal and death rates in the U.S. are increasing faster than any other cancer, doubling since the mid-1980’s with only 1 in 5 patients surviving 5 years after diagnosis. Moreover, there is substantial disparity in liver cancer incidence and death rates for racial and ethnic minorities (e.g., compared to non-Hispanic whites, whose incidence rate is 6.3/100,000, the liver cancer incidence rate for American Indian/Alaska Natives is 15.2/100,000). But in June, a Mayo Clinic research team announced completion of a study confirming a DNA marker test that was able to detect more than 90% of patients with curable-stage tumors, suggesting the feasibility of an easy-access, early-detection blood test that could help reduce the racial disparities in liver cancer incidence and mortality.

IMCR Features 13-Year OHDR Collaboration With Volunteers in Medicine

Racial/ethnic minorities make up 36% of the US population, but just 19% of clinical trial participants. The June 20 issue of Inside Mayo Clinic Research featured Mayo Clinic’s efforts to bridge this gap by highlighting Mayo’s collaboration with minority-serving institutions. This included the OHDR-facilitated, 13-year collaboration with Jacksonville’s Volunteer’s in Medicine Clinic, which works with low-income, uninsured patients, 50% of whom are African American, 10% of whom are Hispanic American, and all of whom are given the opportunity to participate in Mayo Clinic research studies and cancer clinical trials.
Native American Interest Group Hosts June “Double Header”

The Native American Interest Group (NAIG), sponsored by OHDR’s Native American Research Outreach (NARO) Program, hosted two speakers in the same week in June to close out the 2017-2018 NAIG series. On Tuesday, June 12, Dean S. Seneca, MPH, MCURP, Director of the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center (GLITEC) presented Health Disparities in the Great Lakes Area, in which he discussed focusing on health disparities to frame public health priorities and policy decisions, which in turn should inform political choices that determine budgets, eliminate barriers, and promote administrative remedies amenable to tribal communities. Then, on Thursday, June 14, Dr. Brenda Child, Professor and Chair, Department of American Studies, and former Chair, American Indian Studies, University of Minnesota, presented Nurses and Jingle Dress Dancers in the Modern World, in which she explored the history of the Ojibwe Jingle Dance tradition, which arose simultaneously in both U.S. and Canadian Ojibwe communities during the Great Influenza Epidemic of 1918-1919.

OHDR Florida Engages Community to Improve Hispanic Health

As part of its Hispanic Outreach Program en Español (HOPE) initiative, OHDR Florida implemented a three-part community outreach and education series on mental health, a subject specifically requested by the Hispanic community. The sessions were held on the topics of (1) Depression and Anxiety, (2) Teen Bullying and Suicide; and (3) Drugs and Alcohol. The June session on teen bullying and suicide (photo) was presented by school psychologist Magalys Págan. HOPE, a collaboration between OHDR-Florida and 19 Jacksonville-area, Spanish-speaking faith communities, is led by Mayo Clinic health disparities researcher Richard White, MD. Dr. White, who is also a member of OHDR’s Steering Committee, was recognized in June by the Jacksonville Mayor’s Hispanic American Advisory Board for outstanding contributions to the Jacksonville Hispanic/Latino community.

OHDR Represents Mayo Clinic at No. American Refugee Health Conference

Farhia Omar, MPH, Senior Research Coordinator, OHDR-Arizona (photo, far left), represented OHDR and Mayo Clinic at the 2018 North American Refugee Health Conference, held this year in Portland, OR. The three day conference, designed for those at the frontline in addressing refugee health needs, had 700 participants and provided participants with access to the most recent research, best practices in refugee health as well as a great opportunity for networking. The target audience included: Allied Health Workers, Dentists, Family Physicians, Mental Health Workers, Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, Policy and Public Health Specialists, Primary Care Practitioners, Refugees, Specialists, settlement workers or other professionals interested in refugee health.

JULY

Education-to-Action Program Increases Minority Participation in Research

A study conducted by Mayo Clinic in partnership with The Links, Incorporated, a national service organization of professional African American women, was published in July by the Journal of Women’s Health. The study, authored by Carmen Radecki Breitkopf, PhD, et al, researched minorities’ attitudes toward participating in chart review (CR), genetic/biobanking studies (GEN), and clinical trials (CT), both before and after completing an education-to-action program. Those who indicated they “definitely” or intend to participate in research increased from 36.5% to 69.3% (pre/post-program) and agreement with the statement “research in the U.S. is ethical” increased from 52.9% to 74.4%. Additionally, few pre-program were “very positive” about the study types (14.3% GEN, 15.0% CR, 28.6% CT), but rates increased post-program (42.8% GEN, 43% CR, 42.5% CT).
Factual Messaging Key to Tobacco Cessation in Pregnant Alaska Native Women

Despite the high prevalence of tobacco use during pregnancy among Alaska Native and American Indian (AI/AN) women, few efforts have focused on developing tobacco cessation interventions specific to this population. In a July-published study by Mayo Clinic health disparities researcher Christi Patten, PhD, investigators developed messaging for a social media campaign targeting the entire Alaska Native community in order to reduce tobacco use in its pregnant women. Target products included commercial cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and iqmik—a homemade tobacco product. The preliminary study findings suggested that campaign messages to reduce tobacco use in pregnant women that targeted the entire community should include factual messaging for being tobacco-free, as well as a focus on reducing stress and other healthy pregnancy targets. The study adds to long-standing work by Dr. Patten with Alaska Natives toward improving health outcomes, especially those compromised by tobacco use.

Mayo Researchers and OHDR Funding Combine to Assess Minority Health with Leaders of Faith Based Health Ministries

Faith-based public health conferences offer a potential opportunity to improve health literacy, change health behaviors, and reduce health disparities. This was the conclusion of a study by a team of Mayo Clinic researchers, supported by funding from OHDR, led by Mayo Clinic health disparities clinician researchers LaPrincess Brewer, MD, and Christopher Pullins, MD, and published July 11th in the Journal of Religion and Health. The study examined the self-reported health behaviors and preventive healthcare utilization patterns of 77 participants at a predominantly African-American faith-based public health conference, Healthy Churches 2020. The results indicated that the attendees, primarily from African-American faith communities, reported adequate preventive healthcare utilization, but suboptimal healthy behaviors, indicating a continued need for ongoing health-promotion activities, with an emphasis on diet and physical activity.

NIH Chief Officer for Scientific Work Force Diversity Visits Mayo Clinic

Dr. Hannah A. Valantine, NIH Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity, presented NIH’s Scientific Approach to Achieving Inclusive Excellence at the Elizabeth Blackwell Mayo Medical Grand Rounds on Wednesday July 11, 2018. Her presentation introduced a new Scientific Workforce Diversity Toolkit, designed to (1) advance scholarship of the science of diversity and inclusion, (2) use a data-driven, scientific approach to understand the drivers and outcomes of inclusive excellence, (3) study and mitigate the role of sociocultural factors in recruitment, retention, and career advancement, and (4) sustain future workforce inclusive excellence.

OHEI Announces Resources for Increasing Cultural Humility

In July, the Office of Health Equity and Inclusion (John Knudsen, MD, medical director) introduced two new resources to empower and prepare providers to meet the needs of Mayo’s culturally diverse patients. First, EPIC, as it launches across the institution, will include previously uncollected information to help providers better understand patient needs: sexual orientation, gender identity, sex assigned at birth, country of origin, American Indian/Alaska Native subcategories, military experience, disability, and preferred name will all be available. Second, Mayo personnel now have access to CultureVision, a web-based tool providing immediate access to cultural information about 44 ethnicities, 14 religions, and 12 additional populations.
OHDR Team Supports Diversity Dialogue on Culturally Congruent Healthcare

Mayo Clinic in Arizona was the site of an August 2nd Diversity Dialogue entitled *The Significance of Culturally Congruent Healthcare*, presented by researcher Kenneth Poole, MD, consultant, Internal Medicine, and Kelly Vorseth, director, Patient Experience-Arizona. The presentation centered around meeting the individual needs of the patient by taking into account cultural background, environmental context, language proficiency, culturally-influenced attitudes toward health, disease, healing, and wellness, culturally-influenced verbal and nonverbal communication styles, and other cultural dynamics.

Mayo Team Identifies Genes Associated With Triple Negative Breast Cancer

Triple negative breast cancer (TNBC), which tends to be more aggressive, harder to treat, and more likely to recur than other types of breast cancer, occurs in African American women at rates 3 times that of white women. While germ line genetic testing has helped identify women at increased risk of certain breast cancers, it was not helpful in targeting risk for TNBC because the only known inherited mutation associated with TNBC was in BRCA1. But a Mayo research team led by Fergus Couch, PhD, published the results of a study on August 7th in which they found seven inherited alterations associated with an elevated risk of TNBC: BARD1, BRCA1, BRCA2, PALB2 and RAD51D (high risk); and BRIP1 and RAD51C (moderate risk). Dr. Couch believes these findings will enable expanded genetic testing to identify women at risk for TNBC and may potentially lead to better prevention strategies.

“Walk by FAITH!” Event Celebrates Successful Intervention’s First Decade

What started as a class project for LaPrincess Brewer, MD’s Public Health course in Baltimore ten years ago, “Fostering African-American Improvement in Total Health” (FAITH!), has become a proven cardiovascular intervention for African-American faith communities that is now active in six churches across Rochester and the Twin Cities. For FAITH’s 10-year Anniversary, a celebration—including a heart fair, a presentation by Dr. Brewer, and 2-mile “Walk by FAITH!” walk around Rochester—was held August 25, 2018. Dignitaries in attendance included City Councilwoman Sandra Means, Mayor Ardell Brede, MN State Senator David Senjem, MN State Representatives Duane Sauke and Tina Liebling, and MN Department of Health’s Helen Jackson Lockett-El from the DOH’s Center for Health Equity.
More than 175 Mayo personnel affiliated with over 50 work areas from all three campuses and the MCHS attended the Office of Health Disparities Research Retreat August 7 and 8, 2018 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Rochester.

Dr. Kimberly Arriola, Keynote Speaker, addressed racism—both acute and institutionalized—as a social determinant of health and the impact of experienced racism on immediate physical and mental health and on physiological and emotional wellness over time. Dr. Arriola also specifically discussed her research and ongoing efforts to isolate race-related stress as a factor in chronic kidney disease.

Attendees also enjoyed a special guest presentation, sponsored by CCaTS, by Dr. Pernessa Seele, founder of ‘The Balm in Gilead,’ who discussed faith-based institutions as an alternative delivery mechanism for health and wellness education and interventions.

In addition to these featured presenters, the retreat included scientific presentations by OHDR’s 2017 Pilot Project Awardees and a luncheon poster session highlighting past and current health disparities research by Mayo Clinic scientists.

Audience engagement opportunities included panel discussions and informational sessions on a variety of topics, aimed to both inform attendees of cutting edge scientific developments in the field of health disparities research and provide attendees with information on research best practices and methodology on topics including: Community Engagement; Minority Recruitment; Institutional Tools for Health Disparities Research; Enterprise-Wide Health Equity Efforts; and Reducing Health Disparities via Diverse Modes of Healthcare Delivery.

A panel discussion on diversity and equity across the Shields, moderated (at podium) by OHDR Co-Director, Gloria Petersen, PhD. Panelists (L to R) were: Barbara Jordan (Office of Diversity-College of Medicine), John Knudsen, MD, (Office of Health Equity and Inclusion), Sharonne Hayes, MD, (Office of Diversity and Inclusion), and Jennifer Westendorf, PhD (Office of Research Diversity and Inclusion).
Mayo Researchers Awarded NCI Grant to Address Cancer Burden of Native Americans in Rural Areas

The Mayo Clinic Cancer Center was notified in September that it had been awarded a Rural Health supplement grant for a unique study focused on addressing disparities in the cancer burden faced by American Indian/Alaska Native populations. The PI on the grant, Robert Diasio, MD, and the Program Lead, Carmen Radecki Breitkopf, PhD, will leverage a community-engaged approach, which honors cultural nuances and strong, existing platforms with Native populations, to develop a collaborative cancer control plan with two tribes in rural Minnesota. The team will collaborate with tribal leadership to develop, implement and sustain a cancer control strategy and research program, based on shared knowledge of the needs expressed, risk factors identified, and the uptake of cancer screening and HPV vaccination. Understanding efforts and priorities may differ between tribes, the project will also assess behavioral risk factors for cancer, screening rates, and attitudes toward change/maintenance of cancer risk/prevention behaviors, and will determine HPV vaccination rates among age-eligible children and characterize attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding HPV vaccination as a cancer prevention behavior. NARO Director Wes Petersen, PhD, and Spirit of Eagles Director Jonathan Baines, MD, are collaborators on the grant.

Mayo Study Shows Positive Contextual Factors Help Offset Adverse Family Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences (ACE’s) are becoming widely recognized as a social determinant of health, and there is increasing evidence linking adverse family experiences (AFEs) with poor health and chronic disease in adulthood, including obesity. Mayo scientists Drs. Lila Rutten, Sean Phelan and others published a study in September that specifically examined whether positive contextual factors—e.g., child resiliency, maternal mental health, parental engagement, neighborhood safety—could offset the risk of obesity in children who experience AFEs. The study found, inter alia, that the presence of positive contextual factors (PCF) is associated with lower risk of obesity, that PCF are protective against the influence of AFEs on obesity, and that PCF act independently from AFEs on childhood obesity risk. The researchers concluded that optimizing the early childhood living environment can impact the epidemic of obesity.

Pediatric Cancer Researcher Awarded $1.1M Quantum Grant

In a September ceremony, the “Hyundai Hope on Wheels” cancer research program awarded Richard Vile, PhD, a $1.1M Quantum Grant. These funds are specifically awarded to support research on pediatric cancers with low survival rates. Dr. Vile and his research team, who generally work to develop experimental cancer therapies based on stimulating antitumor immune responses, will use the Hope on Wheels grant to focus on new treatments for aggressive pediatric brain tumors, particularly tumors of the brainstem, which currently have a dismal prognosis because their anatomical location is an area susceptible to toxicities associated with reactions of tumors to treatment.

In attendance at the event was Connor Johnson, a 16-year old survivor of medulloblastoma, and Connor’s father, Curt Johnson. Connor received his cancer treatment at Mayo Clinic’s pediatric oncology practice, first having brain surgery to remove his tumor, then undergoing 30 proton beam radiation treatments, then a year of chemotherapy. As of this writing, Connor has been cancer free for over 18 months and his father, Curt, now volunteers as a member of Mayo Clinic’s Cancer Center Midwest Community Research Advisory Board, which was newly formed in 2018 through a collaboration of the Office of Health Disparities Research and the Mayo Clinic Cancer Center.
September Symposium Highlights Wide Range of Sex Differences Research Happening Across Mayo Clinic Enterprise

The 2nd Annual Celebration of Women’s Health Research, held at Mayo Clinic on September 14, 2018 in conjunction with the Individualizing Medicine Conference, was a showcase of the research into sex and gender differences that is being conducted across Mayo Clinic in areas from pharmacogenomics to immunotherapy to individualized medicine.

The event’s Keynote speakers discussed cutting edge sex differences research happening across the country: Mark Goodarzi, MD, PhD, Director of the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, presented Genetics of Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome.

Sabra Klein, PhD, Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and President-elect for the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences (the only scientific society dedicated to uncovering how males and females differ in health and disease), presented XXpect Greater Immunity in Females, addressing the fact that women are more likely to develop autoimmune diseases than men.

Finally, Kent Thornburg, PhD, the Lowell Edwards Chair of Cardiovascular Research, director of the Center for Developmental Health in the Knight Cardiovascular Institute, director of the Bob and Charlee Moore Institute for Nutrition & Wellness, and co-director of the Epigenetics Consortium, all at Oregon Health & Science University, presented Fetal Programming: Sex Matters, which addressed differences that fetal sex can have on an individual’s very earliest environmental determinants of health.

In addition to the keynotes and scientific updates, there was a round tables breakfast, panel sessions included lively Q&A, and conference posters were available for viewing throughout the event. Dr. Laughlin-Tommaso served as a round table expert on Women’s Health & Individualized Medicine and helped moderate many of the Q&A’s. The program was co-directed by Dr. Virginia Miller, Director, Women’s Health Research Center, and by Drs. Stacey Winham and Shannon Laughlin-Tommaso. The Symposium represented a collaboration among the Women’s Health Research Center, the Center for Women’s Health, the BIRCWH Scholar program, and the Mayo Clinic Specialized Center of Research Excellence on Sex Differences.

OHDR-Arizona Again A Planner, Sponsor of Arizona Health Equity Conference

The 5th Annual Arizona Health Equity Conference was held October 11th, 2018 and was a great success with 320 attendees. The inaugural conference, for which Mayo Clinic was the original founder and lead planner, was held in 2014 to high acclaim, and has grown each year since. The purpose of the event is to build bridges between communities by bringing health equity professionals together around the areas of research, practice, prevention, and policy. This year’s theme was Equitable Access to Care for All, highlighting current health equity research, outreach, and policies taking place within Arizona. In order to ensure equitable access to care for populations facing social and/or cultural barriers, health equity/public health professionals are encouraged to use this conference as an opportunity to share their efforts and successes in addressing access to care and health equity in the work that they do in their respective communities. While the Conference is a one-day event, it leaves a lasting impact by raising awareness of health equity and disparities and, with meaningful networking opportunities, by providing attendees clear outcomes, new partnerships, new ideas for research, and new, clearly identified paths to the improvement of community health and systems change.
NARO Follows Up On 2017 Tribal Health Symposium by Organizing Mayo-Tribal Advisory Board in 2018

As a lasting outcome of the Native American Research Outreach (NARO) program’s 2017 Tribal Health Symposium, NARO’s Director, Wesley Petersen, PhD, spent 2018 developing a panel of Native American health providers, Tribal leaders and members, and Mayo Clinic researchers and personnel, to work collaboratively on developing a Mayo-Tribal Advisory Board. These efforts culminated in October, when NARO staff, Mayo representatives, and tribal health directors met at Breezy Point Resort for an Advisory Board organizational meeting. The Bemidji Area Indian Health Service (which provides service and support to 34 Federally-recognized tribes and 4 urban Indian health programs), seven tribal communities, and 20 Mayo Clinic representatives participated in the two-day conference. Tribes in attendance were the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Band of Chippewa, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Lower Sioux Indian Community, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Red Lake Nation, and White Earth Nation. Mayo Clinic participants included scientists Robin Lloyd, MD, Christi Patten, PhD, Gloria Petersen, PhD, Carmen Radecki Breitkopf, PhD, and Jon Tilburt, MD. Organizers envision the Advisory Board providing guidance to Mayo investigators, educators and providers on the appropriateness and approaches of proposed and ongoing projects with tribal and urban Indians and on projects requested by tribal and urban Indian Health. The Board will likely impact research design, patient care, cultural competence, health equity, and other significant topics across the Mayo Enterprise.

OHDR Participates in Mayo Clinic’s Annual Festival of Cultures

OHDR emphasized diversity in Research at Mayo Clinic’s Festival of Cultures, celebrated October 16 in Siebens Hall. OHDR participated side by side with other shield Equity Offices—Office of Diversity and Inclusion; Office of Health Equity and Inclusion; Office for Diversity, College of Medicine; and Office of Research Diversity and Inclusion—and all the employee MERGS.

Mayo Clinic SCOREs: $7M for Sex-Specific Effects of Endocrine Disruption on Aging and Alzheimer’s Disease

The Office of Research on Women’s Health (ORWH) and the National Institute on Aging (NIA) have awarded Mayo Clinic a $7 million grant to fund a Specialized Center of Research Excellence (SCORE) on sex differences. The overarching theme of the project, entitled Sex-Specific Effects of Endocrine Disruption on Aging and Alzheimer’s Disease, will be to investigate how abrupt loss of ovarian hormones, caused by bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy (BSO) prior to natural menopause, affects overall aging, physical and cognitive function, and risk for AD pathophysiology. The SCORE will be led by PI’s Michelle M. Mielke, PhD, and Virginia M. Miller, PhD. Dr. Mielke discussed the SCORE at the Women’s Health Grand Rounds on October 18, 2018.

Project 1, Effects of Bilateral Oophorectomy on Physical and Cognitive Aging, will assess effects of premenopausal BSO on accelerated aging, as measured by declines in physical and cognitive function and plasma levels of senescence and other biomarkers of accelerated aging. (PIs: Michelle Mielke, PhD, Walter Rocca, MD). Project 2, Bilateral Oophorectomy on Imaging Biomarkers of Alzheimer’s and Cerebrovascular Diseases, will assess effects of premenopausal BSO on neuroimaging measures of Alzheimer’s disease and cerebrovascular pathology, and determine whether APOE ε4 modifies these effects (PI: Kejal Kantarci, MD). Project 3, Effects of Ovariectomy on the Biology of Physical and Cognitive Aging in Mice, adds a mechanistic complement to the human projects, and will determine effects of ovariectomy in mice on cellular senescence, will measure physical and cognitive function, and will determine the temporal sequence and tissue-specific effects of estrogen replacement therapy on cellular senescence (PI: Nathan LeBrasseur, PhD).
**State-Sponsored Community Health Worker Video has Mayo Connection**

Minnesota’s Cancer Health Equity Network (CHEN), in cooperation with Minnesota Public Television, released a video in October on the efforts of Community Health workers. OHDR Program Manager, Sumedha Penheiter, PhD, a member of CHEN’s Board of Directors, describes the video as “an effort to show the collective impact of Community Health workers on cancer disparities and their reach into otherwise underserved populations.” The two-minute video, funded by the MN Department of Health and the Masonic Cancer Center, will run as a PSA on broadcast and cable television across the region.

**Mayo Clinic Celebrates a Valued Community Partner and Successful Research Collaboration**

In October, OHDR-Arizona and Mayo Clinic Arizona proudly shared a milestone 10-year anniversary with valued partner Phoenix Indian Medical Center (PIMC). The collaboration, initiated in 2006 by Dr. Tom Fitch during his tenure as chair of the division of Hematology and Medical Oncology, now involves a team of five Mayo oncologists: Donald Northfelt (Site Director, OHDR-Arizona), Harshita Paripati, Mahesh Seetharam, Parminder Singh, and Daniel Ahn). A recently renewed contract with Indian Health Service provides a Mayo hematologist/oncologist on-site at PIMC, serving as staff physician in PIMC’s “Oncology Center of Excellence” seeing 100—200 tribal members annually with new diagnoses of cancer or blood disorders. As an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Mayo Clinic embraces the responsibility to ensure that its cancer care reaches a diverse patient population, and its relationship with PIMC is a key component of that commitment.

By embedding the cancer provider in the community, Mayo Clinic physicians are able to build trust with the underserved community and create a direct pathway to quality care and clinical research. Prior to the partnership, no Native American patients were referred to Mayo clinical trials from PIMC. Particularly in the past two years, since becoming OHDR Site Director in Arizona, Donald Northfelt, MD, has concentrated on streamlining the process of Oncology care for Native Americans through PIMC, especially their participation in cancer clinical trials, and has worked with the OHDR Arizona staff and others to improve access for Native Americans via Indian Health insurance coverage. For his work, Dr. Northfelt was selected to receive a Diversity Champion Award.

**Florida Researcher of the Year Studies Alzheimer’s in African Americans**

Nilufer Ertekin-Taner, MD, PhD, was selected by her peers as Mayo Clinic Florida’s Investigator of the Year. Dr. Ertekin-Taner, a professor of neurology and neuroscience leads the Neurogenetics Research Laboratory working on uncovering the mechanisms that lead to Alzheimer’s and other neurodegenerative diseases, and was selected in recognition of her significant contributions to the field. One focus of her research has been the study of Alzheimer’s in African-Americans, and her team discovered a gene mutation that could be identified as a risk factor for late-onset Alzheimer’s in that population. Her laboratory is federally supported by a newly funded $5.7M grant to study “Alzheimer’s resilience” and a renewed $8M grant for a big-data project researching pathways in the immune system that contribute to Alzheimer’s.

**Research on Stigma, Stereotyping and Health Equity**

Health disparities researcher and OHDR Steering Committee member Sean Phelan, PhD, presented Research on Stigma, Stereotyping and Health Equity at the HSR Grand Rounds on October 29. Dr. Phelan, an OHDR 2016 Pilot Awardee, spoke on how stigma, bias, stereotyping and related factors can affect our work lives, well-being, and quality of health care. He also discussed his recent, ongoing, and planned research into the implications of these things for health care communication quality, decision-making, medical education, and organizational diversity climate.
Mayo Clinic Well Represented at 2018 AACR Science of Health Disparities Conference

The 11th AACR Conference on The Science of Cancer Health Disparities in Racial/Ethnic Minorities and the Medically Underserved was held November 2nd-5th in New Orleans. OHDR Pilot Awardee Lewis Roberts, MB, ChB, PhD, chaired an Education Session entitled Progress in Liver Cancer-From Screening to Survivorship, with Chee-Chee Stucky, MD, serving on that panel presenting Surgical Resection in Liver and Biliary Cancers. Native American Research Outreach program director Wesley Petersen, PhD, presented his poster, Impact of a Multi-Theory Community-Based Intervention to Increase Mammographic Screening in a Midwest American Indian Tribe. Finally, OHDR-funded early career investigator Narjust Duma, MD, presented two posters: the first, Sex Differences In Tolerability and Response to Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Patients, and the second, Assessing Vitamin D and Mammographic Breast Density in a Population of Alaskan Native Women, for which Dr. Duma was selected to receive the AACR Scholar-in-Training Award, supported by the NCI-Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities.

NAIG’s November Speaker from the Center for the Ethics of Indigenous Genomic Research

OHDR’s Native American Interest Group (NAIG) featured Dr. Jessica Blanchard as its November speaker. Dr. Blanchard is a research scientist at the University of Oklahoma’s Center for Applied Research and its Center for the Ethics of Indigenous Genomic Research. She presented Beyond Ancestry: The Production and Consumption of Genetic Knowledge on Tuesday, November 13, 2018, which broadly addressed the reduction of health disparities in American Indian/Alaska Native and other underrepresented communities, with a particular emphasis on issues related to cancer, the ethical and social implications of genomic research, and building capacity and community partnerships in health research.

OHDR Sponsors Community Partners and Mayo Staff Attendance at Healthy Churches 2020

For the third straight year, OHDR sponsored the November attendance of faith-community partners from Florida, Arizona, and Minnesota to attend Healthy Churches 2020 (HC2020).

HC2020 is a capacity-building national conference for pastors, leaders, nurses, volunteers, and congregants of predominantly African-American churches and faith-communities that have (or desire to create) health ministries for their members or greater neighborhoods. LaPrincess Brewer, MD, and her co-PI's Floyd Willis, MD, and Christopher Pullins, MD, presented Institutes and conducted on-site research at HC2020.

OHDR Research Coordinators attend the HC2020 Conference. (L to R) Erika Martinez (AZ), Corrina Sabaque (MN), and Elizabeth Pantoja (FL).

The Reverend Wesley Relf, senior pastor at Rehoboth Saints Center, Church of God in Christ, is a partner in health education and health disparities research initiatives with Mayo Clinic in Arizona. This year, HC2020 awarded Rev. Relf a 2018 Best Practice Health Ministry Award, recognizing him for his work in the community, much of which was inspired by his attendance at previous Conferences.

OHDR Research Coordinators attend the HC2020 Conference. (L to R) Erika Martinez (AZ), Corrina Sabaque (MN), and Elizabeth Pantoja (FL).

LaPrincess Brewer, MD (L), and Christopher Pullins, MD present at the Conference.

LaPrincess Brewer, MD (R), and Christopher Pullins, MD participate in the Best Practices Awards Dinner.

LaPrincess Brewer, MD (L), and Christopher Pullins, MD present at the Conference.
OHDR Journal Club: Church-Based Health Disparities Interventions

Community-based, participatory research (CBPR) that engages neighborhood institutions with a particularly high concentration of racial/ethnic minorities—such as churches with African American or Hispanic congregations—can be a very successful means of addressing health disparities. The article A Community-Partnered Approach to Developing Church-Based Interventions to Reduce Health Disparities Among African-Americans and Latinos, presented by Chandrika Manjunath at OHDR’s Journal Club on November 29, gives an example: an obesity intervention developed in partnership with 66 African-American/Latino churches in South Los Angeles.

OHDR Among Mayo Clinic Representatives at APHA Annual Meeting

The 2018 APHA Meeting was held in San Diego, CA, November 10-16. This year’s conference focused on achieving health equity, an important priority for the nation and a core value of the Association. Mayo Clinic was well represented at the conference with over 25 attendees representing research, practice, education and administration at Mayo Clinic. OHDR staff from AZ, FL, and MN hosted an exhibitor’s booth at the event, as did many academic medical centers, federal agencies, non-profits and private industries.

Representation from Mayo Clinic also included attendance by community members from Mayo-Community partnerships such as the Rochester Healthy Community Partnership (RHCP). Mayo Clinic was also represented in some of the research talks and poster presentations. Andre Watkins (operations manager, research) discussed his (and Alan Bryce, MD, AZ) work with the AZ Men’s Health and Wellness Expo, a collaboration between Mayo Clinic, a network of African American (AA) Men and community-based organizations, designed to enhance AA men’s awareness of health resources and encourage health conversations at the venue and afterwards, with a goal to promote healthy lifestyle in AA men.

The keynote speaker for the conference, Dr. David Williams, described as one of the most influential scientific minds, and keynote at the OHDR 2017 annual retreat, called to action, complete elimination of health disparities in our nation, especially with roots in violence and discrimination.

Other speakers at the opening session included Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. Jerome Adams, who stressed the importance of integrating community health with economic health to minimize health inequities. He shared his personal experience with health disparities that led to his chronic Asthma, his brother’s incarceration, and his family’s battles with Cancer. Dr. Richard Besser, former director of CDC and CEO, RWJF, emphasized that health equity should be at the core of all initiatives related to general health of the citizens of this world.

The staff at the OHDR exhibit fielded questions on Mayo Clinic’s work in the Health Equity space from hundreds of students, researchers, and clinicians from various academic, medical, and industrial organizations across the world.

Housing-Based SES Measure Predicts Advance Care Planning, Nursing Home Use

A team of Mayo Clinic researchers has published a study in the American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine that examined associations between socioeconomic status (SES) and differences in end-of-life care and decision-making. The team used a validated SES measuring tool derived from home addresses, the HOUsing-based SocioEconomic Status index (HOUSES), which was developed/validated in part with funding from a 2012 Pilot Project Grant awarded to Young Juhn, MD. Using HOUSES, they determined that the lower a patient’s SES, the lower the rate of advance directives and the lower the likelihood of discharge to home. Authors of the article, “An Individual Housing-Based Socioeconomic Status Measure Predicts Advance Care Planning and Nursing Home Utilization,” are Amelia Barwise, MC, BCh, BAO, MS, Young Juhn, MD, MPH, Chung-Il Wi, MD, Paul Novotny, MS, Carolina Jaramillo, BA, Ognjen Gajic, MD, MSc, and Michael Wilson, MD.
Dr. Richard White Awarded PCORI Grant for Hispanic Church Engagement

Richard White, MD (FL), an OHDR’s Steering Committee member, was awarded an Eugene Washington Engagement Award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) for his project Building Capacity for PCOR among Hispanic Faith-Leaders: Access, Communication, and Trust of PCOR. As part of Dr. White’s ongoing “Health Outreach Program en Espanol (HOPE)” Initiative, the project will develop and deploy an Advisory Panel, adapt a plain-language PCOR training workshop for an expanded stake-holder core, then plan and execute a community-wide event (Jax Saludable) to provide hands-on experience for the trained stakeholders and to inform best practices for PCOR dissemination in underserved communities.

NAIG In December: Forming, Working With Community Advisory Boards

Allen W. Brown, MD, Medical and Project Director of Mayo’s Traumatic Brain Injury Model System Center since 1997, has worked with an Upper Midwest advisory board for 25 years. He presented Mayo Clinic’s Traumatic Brain Injury Regional Advisory Council: 25 Years of Partnership and Collaboration at OHDR’s Native American Interest Group meeting on December 11th, outlining how and why the Council developed, its structure and role in clinical practice and research, and how the collaboration has operated during its 25 years. Providing background and sharing challenges/successes, Dr. Brown demonstrated how the TBI Council may be relevant to the Mayo-Tribal Health Advisory Board (see October).

Research on Limited English Proficiency Patients Published

A study of over 27,000 adult patients admitted to 7 ICU’s over the course of 3 years has determined that, for patients with limited English proficiency (LEP), important differences exist in both end-of-life care and decision-making. The research was originally funded by a 2016 OHDR Pilot Project Award, initially conducted by Michael E. Wilson, MD, and Amanda Barwise, MB, BCH, BAO, MS, (lead author), and additionally funded by the Mayo Clinic Foundation and the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences.

OHDR Announces 2019 Pilot Project Award Recipients

On December 7, OHDR announced the recipients of its 2019 Pilot Project awards, selected from a very competitive pool of applicants. The award-winning projects and investigators are:

Clinical Response to Metformin in Diverse Populations—Suzette J. Bielinski, PhD, MEd, is a genetic epidemiologist in the Department of Epidemiology whose research focuses on identifying molecular biomarkers of cardiovascular disease and associated risk factors, as well as understanding the role of genetic variants in drug response. Janet E. Olson, PhD, studies the causes of breast cancer in women in the Department of Epidemiology-Cancer Research. The long-term goal of her research is to understand the molecular and genetic underpinnings of breast cancer etiology and survival.

Cost Conversation with Racial/Ethnic Minority Patients—Juan P. Brito Campana, MBBS, is an endocrinologist, health care researcher, medical director of the Mayo Clinic Shared Decision Making National Resource Center, and principal investigator in the Knowledge and Evaluation Research Unit (KER). Dr. Brito Campana is interested in ways to improve conversations with patients to support care that reflects the best available evidence and what matters to the patients, and he has focused on shared decision making (SDM) as a process to support meaningful conversations.

Creating, Implementing and Evaluating a Culturally Safe, Trauma-Informed Resiliency and Yoga Curriculum for At-Risk Visible Minority Youth—Tejinder K. Khalsa MD has completed a fellowship in the Department of General Internal Medicine, with advanced training in mind body medicine and is independently licensed to teach the Mayo Clinic Stress Management and Resiliency program (SMART). Dr. Khalsa’s background also includes fifteen years experience as a certified yoga teacher. She has expertise in ethnographic and survey research as well as advanced education in gender and race theory.

Locating Breast Cancer Treatment and Outcome Deficiencies of Native American Women in Arizona through Spatial Disease Mapping—David M. Zahrieh, PhD, joined the Cancer Center Statistics group at Mayo Clinic in 2017 as a PhD-level statistician. Prior to that, he worked 13 years in collaborative research as a Masters-level biostatistician at the Dana-Farber/ Harvard Cancer Center and at Shire (midsize pharma company). His collaborative research has included analysis of patient-reported outcomes in large multinational breast cancer clinical trials coordinated by the International Breast Cancer Study Group and he has several years experience in applied spatial statistics for public health data.
Office of Health Disparities Research
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Gerardo Colon-Otero, MD
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