We hope everyone is settling into the fall semester and enjoying the energy that the students, staff, and faculty bring to the campus. Our summer was very busy again with the CHE-CTSI Undergraduate and Advanced Research Programs and the Introduction to Urban Health Equity (IUHE) program that we host along with medical students. This edition of the CHE newsletter features photos and details about all three summer programs including the recent CTSI poster session that showcased the work of the Undergraduate and Advanced Research Program Scholars’ summer projects. You may also notice we have changed the header to the newsletter to reflect our home – the Clinical and Translational Science Institute. This newsletter also features an update on Body and Soul, a program that we have been working with Stairstep Foundation for the past two years and are on track to complete by next May.

In other news, I would also like to thank Dr. Selwyn Vickers for all of his unwavering commitment and contributions to the Center. Selwyn directed the Center’s Research Training program and provided vision and leadership as part of the CHE executive team. We will sorely miss Selwyn, but wish him the best as he and his family move back home to Alabama and he takes the helm as Senior Vice President and Medical School Dean at University of Alabama at Birmingham.

We will be co-hosting the Write Winning Grant Proposals seminar on January 22nd by Grant Writers’ Seminars & Workshops LLC. Write Winning Grant Proposals is a widely acclaimed full-day seminar that addresses both practical and conceptual aspects that are important to the proposal writing process. Although there will be a strong NIH focus, it is helpful for other grant applications as well. If you are interested in registering for the seminar or if you have questions, please contact Megan Hoffman at hoff0511@umn.edu.

Another exciting update is that our newly formed Community Health Advisory Council (CHAC), which serves for the CTSI and CHE had its first meeting in September and plans to meet again in November. We are thrilled to have eight outstanding community leaders from a variety of organizations who have a strong commitment to health equity work. Our hope is to continue to build upon current initiatives and develops new ones by working with CHAC members to produce programs that meet the needs of the Twin Cities communities and align with the Center’s and CTSI’s missions.
We hope that you will join in our work to reach health equity. If you would like to become more involved, get more information, or join our listserv, e-mail us at umn-che@umn.edu.

Warmly,

2013 CTSI Poster Session

October 1st, more than 70 researchers showcased their work at the annual CTSI Poster Session demonstrating how they are moving their discoveries along the translational path into practice. There was a record attendance of over 150 attendees. Researchers ranged from the Center’s Undergraduate Research Program (URP) Scholars to mid-level faculty. Congratulations to the URP, ARP and Melendy Scholars whose outstanding posters were awarded travel awards to present their research at national conferences.

Travel Award Recipients

- Sudip Bhandari  
  **Mentor:** Iris Borowsky, MD, PhD  
  Undergraduate Research Program (URP)

- Mnwabisi Mbangata  
  **Mentor:** James Cloyd, PharmD  
  Undergraduate Research Program (URP)

- Malek Okour  
  **Mentor:** Pamala Jacobson, PharmD  
  Advanced Research Program (ARP)

- Joyce Trost  
  **Mentor:** Teresa Kimberley, PT, PhD  
  Advanced Research Program (ARP)

- Jenny Xiong  
  **Mentor:** Robert Straka, BSc, PharmD, FCCP  
  Melendy Scholar
Over the past two years, the Center for Health Equity has been working with the Stairstep Foundation to promote healthy living in 23 African American churches in the Twin Cities. Specifically, the program seeks to increase fruit and vegetable intake among parishioners, while measuring changes in health biometrics such as blood pressure, body mass index, cholesterol, and triglyceride levels. The Center for Health Equity has been directly involved in the implementation of the program by measuring participants’ biometric numbers and offering support to church members looking to improve their health. The program was initially developed 10 years ago by the American Cancer Society for African American Churches and focuses on the connection between physical and spiritual health. While the goal is to increase healthy food intake among parishioners, creating a sustainable environment encouraging healthy living in the church community is equally important. Sylvia Amos, director of health programs for the Stairstep Foundation, explains that “in church we are taught, when you know better, you do better. It is about education.” Amos further emphasizes the importance of Body & Soul to the community. “Because of a history of unhealthy eating, out of necessity, African Americans are at greater risks for many serious and fatal diseases, such as strokes and heart attacks, resulting in higher death rates than most other communities. People we know and trust, who look like us and who care about us, are teaching us how to increase our intake of fruit and vegetables, to become more physically active, and to properly prepare meals, so that we can turn this trend around.” The Body & Soul program allows for one-on-one peer counseling sessions to assist parishioners with reaching their fruit and vegetable intake goals. Additionally, churches hold cooking classes to teach participants recipes and cooking techniques so that they can cook healthier options on their own. So far, 13 churches have completed this program and participants have shown significant increases in their self-reported intake of fruits and vegetables. In addition to the realized health benefits to the community, participants seem to enjoy the program and the opportunity to interact with each other. The Center for Health Equity will introduce the program to new churches this fall and looks forward to the opportunity to promote healthy living in the community.
2013 Introduction to Urban Health Equity
August 1-3, 2013

48 first year medical students attended this year’s Introduction to Urban Health Equity (IUHE) program from August 1st to August 3rd. The program featured a poverty simulation experience, community clinic tours, a health equity performance at the Hippocrates Café, and a social justice poetry slam. This year, IUHE will be a launching platform for the newly established student club, Advancing Urban Health Equity (AUHE). AUHE will kick off the 2013-2014 academic year with a networking dinner event on November 11th. The Center for Health Equity is a partner of AUHE and Dr. Ahluwalia serves as the AUHE faculty advisor.

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