Each year community leaders and university faculty, students, and staff come together at the CHE annual dinner meeting to celebrate great partnerships and health equity work. The end of the year causes us to reflect on the past year’s accomplishments. Some of the biggest accomplishments of 2013 were the second annual Community Research Institute, the second annual Introduction to Urban Health Equity, and another successful summer with the Undergraduate and Advanced Research Programs. We could not accomplish these programs without our dedicated staff and wonderful partners at the University and across the community, and I am deeply appreciative of everyone’s hard work and contributions to the Center.

As we reflect on the past year, we also begin to anticipate what the next year will bring. The Center has been working on projects with WellShare International and the Stairstep Foundation for the past four years, and both projects are on track to be completed in May. Page three of this newsletter covers the work we are doing with WellShare. The Body and Soul project with Stairstep Foundation, as highlighted in the fall edition of the newsletter, is in high gear as we anticipate completing the program in the 20 churches by this spring.

2014 also brings upon our third summer with the CHE-CTSI Undergraduate and Advanced Research Program. Both programs provide training through a structured core curriculum, mentored research projects, weekly seminars, and a final presentation of research at the annual CTSI Poster Session with all CTSI-Ed scholars. Both requests for applications are released and available on the CTSI website: http://www.ctsi.umn.edu/education/.

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**DIRECTOR’S UPDATE, CONTINUED**

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,

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**2013 COMMUNITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

From October 10th—November 14th, 17 community members from 10 organizations came together as part of the second annual Clinical and Translational Science Institute, Program in Health Disparities Research, and the Center for Health Equity’s 2013 Community Research Institute (CRI). The six week workshop is aimed at enhancing the capacity of community organization leaders and staff in health-related methodology to be able to take the lead and/or increase their partnership capability in developing and conducting grant-fundable research projects. This year’s CRI participants represented a diverse group of participants, with representatives from Arubah Emotional Health Services, East Philips Park Sports Association, Junior League of St. Paul, Little Earth of United Tribes, Minneapolis Urban League, Native American Community Clinic, New American Alliance for Development, Open Cities Health Center, Rainbow Health Initiative, and SEWA-AIFW (Asian Indian Family Wellness).

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*Participants from the 2013 Community Research Institute.*
The Center for Health Equity has been partnering with WellShare International for the past four years with the last year and a half dedicated to promoting tobacco prevention among Somali youth in the Twin Cities as part of the Somali Youth Tobacco Prevention Project. Specifically this project aims to develop culturally tailored tobacco use prevention messaging for Somali youth utilizing social media.

In the first phase of this project the Center for Health Equity and WellShare International conducted three focus groups with Somali youth to explore factors that influence tobacco use initiation among Somali youth and potential channels of distribution and content of prevention messages. These focus groups were conducted with youth between the ages of 13 and 17 at Lighthouse Academy, a charter school in the Seward neighborhood of Minneapolis, which serves mostly East African immigrant and refugee students, and in WellShare International’s Young Achievers program at Riverside Plaza, an after-school program that is focused on healthy living and has a large number of Somali participants.

Based on the insights from the focus groups, tobacco prevention messaging was developed as part of the second phase of the project. The messaging consisted of three videos that were developed by youth in the Young Achievers program at Franklin Library who wrote the scripts for the videos and acted in them. The first video aimed to improve knowledge surrounding the harms of hookah use. The second video centered on the harms of cigarette use and resisting peer pressure to smoke. The third video focused on youth opinions about tobacco use in general.

Following the creation of the videos, the Center for Health Equity and WellShare International conducted an assessment of the videos by performing one-on-one interviews with 20 Somali youth in the Young Achievers program at Franklin Library and Riverside Plaza who were not involved in the development of the videos. Overall, youth found the videos to be informative on the harms of tobacco use and indicated that watching the videos would make them change their minds about using tobacco, if they were thinking about using tobacco or already used tobacco. Median ratings for the videos were 81, 85, and 94, respectively on a scale of 0-100.

In the next stages of this project, the Center for Health Equity and WellShare International will post the videos on Facebook and Twitter and will conduct a larger evaluation of the three videos through gathering online feedback from Somali viewers.
ADVANCING URBAN HEALTH EQUITY KICK-OFF EVENT

Fifty medical students and seven health equity researchers, clinicians, and educators including: Paul Erickson, MD; Deborah Powell, MD; Christopher Reif, MD, MPH; Sue Everson-Rose, PhD, MPH; David Power, MD, MPH; Kola Okuyemi, MD, MPH; and Jasjit S. Ahluwalia, MD, MPH joined together this fall for a large Advancing Urban Health Equity (AUHE) Kick-off event at Coffman Memorial Union. This event provided an opportunity for small round-table discussions with experts in health equity to talk about potential career opportunities, lessons learned, and current health equity topics. Following the round table dinner, the students heard from all of the experts about why they became involved in health equity and a little bit about how they contribute to achieving health equity. The AUHE Kick-off event will lead to more health equity events throughout the year such as weekend seminars and lunch lectures.

AUHE Panel of health equity researchers, clinicians, and educators.

Round-table dinner discussions with medical students and health equity leaders.

Acknowledgement
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