



Project Descriptions

Health-Related Community-Engaged Project Funding



Project: Diversity in Clinical Trials

Community Partner Organization: Clinical Research Center, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Description:

Despite efforts from the federal agencies and the biopharmaceutical industry, clinical trial participant demographics often remain unrepresentative of the populations that new medicines are intended to treat. Clinical trials represent opportunities to benefit from the leading edge of biomedical innovation, and so unrepresentative participant populations equate to inequitable access to potentially life-saving therapeutics. A current lack of granular data that identify the greatest opportunities for improved outreach has impeded progress towards more equitable clinical trials. As a result, this project represents a unique effort to discover precisely which communities would benefit from more effective outreach to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate in the latest of biomedical innovation.

The [Clinical Research Center](#) manages adult and pediatric clinical trials at five locations in New Jersey. Research staff have recently started collecting baseline data on race and ethnicity for all currently open studies using the clinical trials management system, ONCORE. Studies vary from vaccine trials to new drug trials (Phases I-IV) and longitudinal cohort studies. The goal of this effort is to get a snapshot of the racial/ethnic make-up of clinical trial participants over the last 3-5 years using local, actionable data. The results of this project may help identify opportunities to improve recruitment of diverse participants, including but not limited to community engagement strategies.

This Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance project would involve traveling to the Clinical Research Units and using enrollment logs onsite in New Brunswick to collect and enter de-identified diversity data from all open and recently closed studies into a database. Once completed, the student could analyze the data, for example making correlations with race/ethnicity data and the type of study, disease, type of sponsor and method of recruitment. Data analysis can be conducted remotely. Applicants interested in **both** the data collection and analysis components of this project should *indicate so in their application and will need to dedicate up to 4 weeks of their time to the micro-internship*. Experience with statistical analyses is required (e.g., R, Stata, MATLAB). For students interested only in the data collection component, a 2-week project timeframe is acceptable and statistics experience is not required. The final, brief report should include findings and recommendations.



Project: Ecological Health in Trenton

Community Partner Organization: UrbanPromise Trenton

urbanpromisetrenton.org

Equal protection under the law is a constant theme in the ongoing American experiment. The very foundation of the nation was born out of a desire for there to be equal protection under the law. Less than a century later, the Emancipation Proclamation, along with the 13th and 14th Amendments, breathed new life into this promise. Shortly thereafter, several groups returned to it including the Suffragettes at Seneca Falls, Mamie Till Mobley at Roberts Temple Church of Christ, and the rioters at Stonewall. Time and time again, those eager for equal protection under the law advocate for a lasting solution to fulfill the promise of it. Those disinterested often retaliate with violence, staging assaults on education and economics. They work to erode local, state, and federal services, including ecological health.

When any element of an ecosystem is not adequately functioning, the health of the entire system is at risk. Presently, the ecological health of the City of Trenton is at risk. The wellbeing of Trenton-area residents, notably the most vulnerable amongst them- children, suffer high rates of asthma and lead poisoning.

In January 2023, UrbanPromise Trenton is offering an internship opportunity to a student invested in ecological health. While there are a variety of issues that can be explored, high rates of asthma among children in Trenton, and higher doses of lead in the drinking water are our immediate focus. Some questions to explore are as follows:

- What are the rates of asthma in each Mercer County community? What are they in each community within State of New Jersey? If more children are asthmatic in Trenton than elsewhere, what are the contributing factors? How did these factors come to be? What can be done to diminish them? And how does it affect quality of life?
- What are the levels of lead in the drinking water in each Mercer County community? What are they in each community in the State of New Jersey? What are the consequences to health and brain chemistry to those who consume lead? If there is a higher dosage of lead in the drinking water within the City of Trenton than other Mercer County communities, what are the contributing factors? How did these factors come to be? What can be done to diminish them? How does consuming lead affect quality of life?

Project deliverables could include furnishing data and creating a report of findings for UrbanPromise Trenton. This project will be conducted remotely.



Project: Healthcare Roadmap for Transgender Youth

Community Partner Organization: Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice
rustincenter.org

The [Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice \(BRCSJ\)](http://BayardRustinCenterforSocialJustice.org) on Stockton Street in Princeton is a community activist center, educational bridge, and safe-space for LGBTQIA youth, intersectional families, and “all of our beautifully diverse communities.” BRCSJ offers a range of services to individuals and groups and engages in advocacy, community outreach, and many other activities, including public health initiatives.

What information can BRCSJ provide to transgender youth— especially those accessing the center’s monthly HIV testing service—about treatment options for trans youth? As part of this project, you could create a roadmap or checklist for youth to use as they consider treatment,

and providers. What are youth's rights to access treatment including hormone replacement therapy? What do youth need to know about how HRT intersects with their health and development, and impacts physiological changes? What do medical providers need to know to offer culturally competent care to transgender youth? How can partnerships like with BRCSJ bridge those gaps around competent care for trans youth and medical providers? What are common misconceptions about HRT and gender affirming healthcare that BRCSJ can myth-bust for trans youth, their families, and the general public?

This project can be conducted in-person and/or remotely.



Project: Expanding Parents' Understanding of Early Childhood Development and Health

Community Partner Organization: Instituto Nueva Escuela

www.inepr.com

Instituto Nueva Escuela (INE), a 501c3 non-profit organization, works to implement the Montessori philosophy and methodology in the public schools of Puerto Rico. INE trains and certifies guides (teachers) and assistants in Montessori pedagogy and provides leadership, support and technical assistance to public schools and sister communities. Before 2004, the Montessori method was only accessible to high-income families and in private schools. In only its first 10 years, INE accompanied more than 52 schools and communities in their educational and social transformation: cultivating a culture of peace, developing a model of participatory governance of parents and community leaders, and showing good academic and social results for enrolled children and youth.

INE wants to develop more teacher- or staff-led workshops with the aim of increasing family involvement in their children's education and the school community. Currently, INE has 49 schools in its network, 10 of which have infant and toddler classrooms. INE wants to develop a series of workshops to assist parents in learning about the development topics for 0-3-year-old children. Understanding the "ages and stages" and milestones of a child's first 36 months is no small feat. Expectant and new parents have enormous and sometimes intimidating amounts of information to absorb and decisions to make that can impact health. INE wants to reduce their parents' stress by guiding them to trusted and up-to-date sources of information and present the main points in language that is easy to understand and in a welcoming setting. Your work could

involve developing main points in a series of PowerPoint slide presentations with accompanying materials on early childhood development and health. If time allows, you could expand upon this by addressing subtopics, such as nutrition or the impact of technology use on development. Ideally, the presentation will have interactive components to involve the parents and encourage discussion. Each teacher or staff member who has led workshops in the past adapts the materials INE provides to make it most relevant to parents in their specific community.

No Spanish language proficiency required; translation of English materials can be coordinated by ProCES. This is a remote project.