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"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

January 19, 2015

Our Inaugural Issue

Welcome to the first issue of Connect, a monthly e-newsletter published by the UMMC Myrlie Evers-Williams Institute for the Elimination of Health Disparities. The mission of the Evers-Williams Institute is to decrease health disparities and improve the health and well-being of Mississippians. The Evers-Williams Institute is charged with the active implementation of research, education, and health and health care initiatives to decrease health disparities. Our focus areas include: research training, child health disparities, cancer health disparities, HIV/AIDS health disparities, and the health of minority males. We are committed to collaborating with internal and external partners interested in decreasing health disparities.

Dedication of the Myrlie Evers-Williams Institute for the Elimination of Health Disparities

Dr. Myrlie Evers-Williams, widow of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers, helped dedicate the UMMC Myrlie Evers-Williams Institute for the Elimination of Health Disparities during a ceremony June 13, 2014 at the Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center. “I am so honored to lend my name to this wonderful, motivational group of programs we have here that will move Mississippi from the bottom of the list to the top,” Dr. Evers-Williams said.


Dr. Myrlie Evers-Williams Honored for her Contributions to Civil Rights

Dr. Myrlie Evers-Williams, whose name graces a UMMC institution battling health-care inequality, will be honored for her civil rights contributions during a television event airing at 8 p.m. Sunday on the Oprah Winfrey Network.

“Oprah Winfrey Presents: Legends Who Paved the Way” is part of a month-long salute to men and women who made history in the arts and entertainment industry and in the civil rights movement.
The segment featuring Dr. Evers-Williams, scheduled for broadcast on the eve of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, will also pay tribute to Ambassador Andrew Young, Berry Gordy, Rev. C.T. Vivian, Diane Nash, Dick Gregory, Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr., U.S. Congressman John Lewis, the Rev. Joseph Lowery, Juanita Jones Abernathy, Julian Bond, Marian Wright Edelman, Quincy Jones, Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte.

This month, in recognition of the approaching 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery marches led by King, OWN has been airing a series of related programs that will continue through Jan. 25. A complete schedule is available at www.oprah.com/selma50/OWN-Announces-a-Month-Long-Celebration-Honoring-Civil-Rights-Legends.

A former NAACP leader, Dr. Evers-Williams helped dedicate the Myrlie Evers-Williams Institute for the Elimination of Health Disparities during a June 13 ceremony at the Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center, where it is housed.

Dr. Bettina Beech, UMMC associate vice chancellor for population health, serves as executive director of the institute, which also collaborates with Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center’s Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity, where Beech once served as codirector.

The institute’s leaders announced in June that they also plan to collaborate with the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute in Jackson, established to sustain Medgar Evers’ legacy.

Pettus, G. (2015). Dr. Evers-Williams one of those celebrated by OWN. University of Mississippi Medical Center, Office of Public Affairs.

Research Training

The Programs to Increase Diversity in Health-Related Research (PRIDE) are sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). The University of Mississippi Medical Center is one of seven PRIDE research training centers nationally. HBCU PRIDE is an evidence-based, culturally- and environmentally-relevant research training and mentoring program specifically designed for underrepresented minority (URM) early career faculty employed at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

As a two-year program focused on obesity research training, HBCU PRIDE consists of four phases including an initial 10-day intensive face-to-face summer program, online learning communities conducted throughout the academic year, a second face-to-face summer program held in conjunction with a national obesity research conference, and alumni network training and research support. Eight early career faculty members with a strong interest in obesity research will be selected to attend training at the University of Mississippi Medical Center June 21 - July 1, 2015.

Selected faculty will receive research training and mentoring by nationally known researchers from the Gramercy Research Group, Harvard University School of Medicine, Jackson State University, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Chicago at Illinois, University of Mississippi Medical Center, Vanderbilt University, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, and Wake Forest School of Medicine.

For more information on HBCU Pride, please contact program assistant, Elizabeth Bell.
Child Health Disparities

**Race, Ethnicity, and Socioeconomic Status in Research on Child Health**

Disparities experienced during childhood can result in a wide variety of health and health care outcomes, including adult morbidity and mortality, indicating that it is crucial to examine the influence of disparities across the life course. Scientists who study child and adolescent health and development should understand the multiple measures used to assess race, ethnicity, and SES, including their validity and shortcomings and potential confounding of race and ethnicity with SES.

The AAP recommends more research, both in the United States and internationally, on measures of race, ethnicity, and SES and how these complex constructs affect health care and health outcomes throughout the life course. **READ MORE**


**Racial and Ethnic Differences in the Home Food Environment Explain Disparities in Dietary Practices of Middle School Children in Texas**

Given the importance of the home food environment, there is little research examining the prevalence and consequences of systematic differences in the home food environment by race and ethnicity, although it is known that such environments are socioeconomically patterned. In the research reported here, the authors sought to address this gap in the literature by examining differences in home food environments of middle school students by race and ethnicity and by exploring the role of home food environment in diet and obesity disparities. **READ MORE**


Cancer Health Disparities

**Racial Differences in Breast Cancer Outcomes are Partly Biological**

Some of the differences in breast cancer outcomes between white and black women in the U.S. can be attributed to biology, suggests a new study. Compared to black women, non-Hispanic white women were more likely to be diagnosed when their breast cancer was at an early stage, the research showed. And black women had a higher risk of dying from their breast cancer, compared to white women. **READ MORE**


**20,000 Cancer Deaths Every Year Could be Avoided: Old and Poor 'Get Worse Outcomes'**

Tens of thousands of people a year are dying unnecessarily of cancer simply because they are elderly or poor, according to a report by the National Audit Office, which analyzed the latest NHS figures. Significant variations and inequalities in outcomes and access to services persist, the report stated. Outcomes and access to services are generally poorer for older patients. **READ MORE**

Martin, D. 2015. 20,000 cancer deaths every year could be avoided: Old and poor 'get worse outcomes'. Daily Mail.
Center for HIV/AIDS Research, Education, and Policy

Dr. Leandro Mena Introduces New Center to Address the Needs of Individuals Living with HIV/AIDS

The Center for HIV/AIDS Research, Education, and Policy will provide a unique multidisciplinary environment to promote research, education and policies aimed to address critical issues related to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment in Mississippi. The Center partnered this winter with the Fenway Institute in Boston, Massachusetts, the Mississippi State Department of Health, the Mississippi Primary Health Care Association, the Mississippi Delta AIDS Education and Training Center to form the Mississippi Collaborative for Inclusive Health Care to ensure meaningful access and engagement in care for many who have been invisible to the health care system and experienced stigma and discrimination when seeking or receiving care and services across the state. The particular focus will be on the health needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT), a group which has been shown to experience significant health disparities. Notable among these disparities are high rates of HIV and AIDS, tobacco use, sexually transmitted infections, alcohol and substance abuse, depression and low rates of routine recommended preventive care. Despite advances in acceptance, for many, simple access to routine primary care is difficult in light of a lack of culturally responsive and affirmative providers.

The collaborative is an extension of programs which have already been initiated by a number of groups in the state. We are bringing together our unique strengths to build a strong continuum of care for all. Initial projects will work with core groups of interested health centers and county health clinics that recognize that the health of many depends on the outcomes of this effort. For example, if people at risk for HIV, or in need of support for other health issues feel they are not welcome, they will not seek preventive or care services in community health centers or county health clinics. We will also be working with clinicians in practice across the state. Ultimately, it will also be important to do more community education in parallel with our work with health care organizations and individual working in health care so that educated consumers will be more aware of issues of concern and advocate for their needs.

Global Charity Funds Fight against HIV

The Elton John AIDS Foundation is providing a grant to the Myrlie Evers-Williams Institute for the Elimination of Health Disparities as part of both group's efforts to fight HIV in the state. This is the second consecutive year the Foundation has awarded funds to Dr. Leandro Mena, director of the Center for HIV/AIDS Research Education and Policy at the Institute. The goal is to eradicate HIV in Mississippi. READ MORE


Family Matters: How Gay and Bisexual Youth and Their Parents Discuss HIV

Gay and bisexual men are estimated to comprise 2% of the U.S. population, yet account for an estimated 61% of recent new HIV infections. Despite ongoing prevention efforts, gay and bisexual youth continue to engage in sexual behaviors that place them at disproportionately high risk. A recent study examines the types of parent-child interactions that may relate to lower incidents of unsafe sexual behavior among gay and bisexual youth. READ MORE

What’s in a Label? Differentiating Sociodemographic, Psychosocial, and Sexual Behavior Characteristics Among Black MSM By Sexual Identity

Sexual identity is not a consistent predictor of unprotected sex or number of sex partners in the literature, but some studies indicate gay identity is generally related to more risky behavior than other categories of MSM. A recent study explored differences among BMSM in sociodemographic, psychosocial, and sex behavior with men and women by sexual identity (gay, bisexual, straight, down low). Psychosocial characteristics included beliefs about ethnicity, sexuality, and masculinity that are postulated to influence sexual self-identity and risk behavior.


Center for the Health of Minority Males

Dr. Marino A. Bruce Introduces New Center to Address the Needs of Minority Males

The Center for the Health of Minority Males (C-HMM) was established with a three-fold purpose of: 1) conducting scientifically rigorous research for the enhanced understanding of the intersection of social, economic, psychological, and behavioral factors as they relate to the risks for the initiation and progression of cardiometabolic diseases in minority males, 2) developing contextually relevant and culturally respectful lifestyle and behavioral interventions design to enhance health and wellness, and 3) identifying and academically supporting a cadre of minority men to vigorously pursue careers in population, clinical, and behavioral health sciences.

Minority males have contributed greatly to all areas of American life including education, science, the military, business, and politics. Yet, African American and other disadvantaged males have elevated risks for illness, disease, and premature death during all phases of the life course. Many of the health challenges faced by these populations are often linked to behaviors that are frequently influenced by the interaction of multiple cultural, economic, psychological, political, and social factors. The Center for the Health of Minority Males (C-HMM) is founded on this premise and draws upon the expertise and wisdom from a diverse group of prominent scholars, clinicians, and practitioners to conduct studies that elucidate and intervene upon factors that adversely impact the health and wellbeing of underserved boys and men. C-HMM research projects and associated interventions are designed to leverage assets from faith- and family-based institutions to help boys and men of color, regardless of their life circumstances, to make decisions and engage in behaviors that can significantly improve their prospects for healthy future.

Geography, Race/Ethnicity, and Obesity Among Men in the United States

The prevalence of obesity in the United States has increased significantly and is a particular concern for minority men. Studies focused at the community and national levels have reported that geography can play a substantial role in contributing to obesity, but little is known about how regional influences contribute to obesity among men. This study examines the association between geographic region and obesity among men in the United States and to determine if there are racial/ethnic differences in obesity within these geographic regions.

Health Disparities Trainings and Opportunities

Translational Health Disparities Course
The National Institute for Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) Translational Health Disparities Course is a two-week intensive course which provides an introduction to the principles and practice of health disparities research. Focusing on concepts, methods, key issues, and applications, the course aims to provide the knowledge and research tools needed to conduct and develop translational and transdisciplinary research and interventions to eliminate health disparities. The application period for the 2015 Translational Health Disparities Course will open in spring 2015. The course is free, but admission is competitive and daily attendance is mandatory. Participants are responsible for transportation, room and board. LEARN MORE

Medical Research Scholars Program
The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Medical Research Scholars Program (MRSP) is a year-long research enrichment program designed to attract the most creative, research-oriented medical, dental, and veterinary students to the intramural campus of the NIH in Bethesda, MD. Student scholars engage in a mentored basic, clinical, or translational research project. Students in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th year of medical, dental and veterinary programs with a strong interest in biomedical research are encouraged to apply. Deadline is January 31, 2015. LEARN MORE

Recent Publications, Awards, and Honors


Justice Commission Taps UMMC CHO for Service
Michael L. Jones, chief community health officer, has been appointed to the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission for a two-year term through June 30, 2016.

Created by the Mississippi Supreme Court on June 28, 2006, the commission brings together various providers of civil legal services to improve access to the civil courts for the poor.

Funding Opportunities

Interventions for Health Promotion and Disease prevention in Native American Populations (R01)
Open Date: April 12, 2015
Letter of Intent Due Date: 30 days before the application due date
Application Due Date: May 12, 2015
The purpose of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to develop, adapt, and test the effectiveness of health promotion and disease prevention interventions in Native American (NA) populations. NA populations are exposed to considerable risk factors that significantly increase their likelihood of chronic disease, substance abuse, mental illness, oral diseases, and HIV-infection. The intervention program should be culturally appropriate and promote the adoption of healthy lifestyles, improve behaviors and social conditions and/or improve environmental conditions related to chronic disease, the consumption of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, mental illness, oral diseases, and HIV-infection. LEARN MORE

Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) Planning Funds Program
The American Academy of Pediatrics CATCH Planning Funds program supports pediatricians in the initial and/or pilot stage of implementing a community-based child health initiative. The program is designed to help increase children’s access to a medical home or specific health services not otherwise available. Planning grants are given for planning activities such as coalition/collaboration meetings, focus groups, needs assessments, community asset mapping, and grant proposal development. Award Ceiling: $10,000. Deadline is January 30, 2015. Applicants will receive notice of funding decisions by May 15, 2015. LEARN MORE

Upcoming Conferences

From Cataloging Health Disparities to Creating Health Equity: Effective Models to Equalize Outcomes
Xavier University of Louisiana College of Pharmacy’s Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities, Research and Education will host its Eighth Health Disparities Conference March 12–14, 2015 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Standard Registration Rate Deadline: February 12, 2015. LEARN MORE

Effective Strategies to Improve Health Care for Hispanics in Our Local Communities
The National Hispanic Medical Association celebrates its 19th Annual Conference March 27-29, 2015 in Washington, D.C. bringing together experts from across the nation to share their multi-disciplinary experiences in improving health care delivery for Hispanic populations. Regular Registration ends March 17, 2015. LEARN MORE
Interested in Being a Part of the Exciting Opportunities at the Evers-Williams Institute?

One of our objectives at the Evers-Williams Institute is to collaborate with faculty, students, and other members of the internal and external community who are interested in interdisciplinary approaches to eliminate health disparities. Individuals interested in collaborative opportunities with the Institute are invited to apply for formal affiliation.

Three types of affiliations include:

- **Associate member** – UMMC faculty members
- **External members** – Collaborators from neighboring academic institutions and community-based organizations
- **Student/trainee members** – Students attending UMMC or other academic institutions

Affiliate members of the Institute will have access to individuals with: 1) content expertise in health disparities, social determinants of health, and program evaluation; 2) space for anthropometric and survey data collection; staff trained in qualitative methods (i.e., group facilitation, key informant interviews, focus groups); and 3) opportunities for student research and training experience.

If you are interested in membership affiliation, please submit your Curriculum Vitae (CV) to Deputy Director Michael L. Jones. He can also be reached at (601) 815-9693 or by email should you have further questions.

The Evers-Williams Institute is pleased to introduce our new affiliates:

**Alexander Auchus, M.D.**  
Professor and McCarty Chair of Neurology  
Chairman, Department of Neurology

**Felice O. Gray**  
Research Specialist, School of Medicine Geriatric Residency  
Arthrosclerosis Risk in Communities

**Monte E. Luehlfling, MSSM, PMP**  
Assistant Professor, School of Health Related Professions  
Senior IT Project Manager, DIS

**Joyce Olutade, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor, Family Medicine  
Medical Director for Student/Employee Health

**Jennifer C. Robinson, Ph.D., RN, FAHA**  
Associate Professor, School of Nursing  
Cancer Epidemiology Program

**Crystal Stack-Lim, Ph.D.**  
Director, Child Obesity and Family Health Research  
Assistant Professor, Division of Psychology, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior

**Lori Ward, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor, Pharmacy Administration  
University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy
Do you have a great idea that you would like to share?

Email us to submit content for our newsletter.

Myrlie Evers-Williams Institute for the Elimination of Health Disparities

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