

ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT **2021**



***Working Together for
Better:***

**New Beginnings and New
Normal in the Cancer Support
and Survivorship Community**

Join Our Cause through
Education, Health Care,
and Research

FIGHTING CANCER EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

The Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative (ChicagoCHEC) is a network of researchers, faculty, students, and community members working together to reduce cancer rates and improve health outcomes for those most affected.

We recognize that Chicagoans who live in neighborhoods that are underserved or who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups are more likely to suffer from cancer and less likely to receive the care they need. We want to change that. Our goal is cancer health equity. **All Chicagoans should have access to the best available resources to prevent, diagnose, treat, and manage cancer and to live satisfying lives as cancer survivors.**

Since the inception of ChicagoCHEC in 2015, we have taken great strides in support of our mission. **These successes would not have been possible without the guidance, engagement and continued motivation from our community partners – the true foundation of our work.**

As we celebrate the 5 year renewal of the ChicagoCHEC grant, our commitment to design initiatives that expand community engagement, mobilize resources and build capacity remains strong! At the center of our partnership with Chicago's underserved communities, we continue to seek the guidance of our key community stakeholders in order to fully execute our mission. We aspire to foster and maintain respectful and meaningful collaborations with community partners to make a meaningful and sustainable impact in our communities.

In this 2021 report, we highlight a few of our key accomplishments across the three core areas of ChicagoCHEC: *community engagement, meaningful research, and training and education.*

We hope that you will join us for the next phase of our work!



SNAPSHOT: ChicagoCHEC in 2021

An overview of community engagement, research, education and training events ChicagoCHEC has been part of in 2021.

FEBRUARY 2021 – ChicagoCHEC opens the application for the 2021 ChicagoCHEC **Research Fellows Program**. ChicagoCHEC on-boards ALAS-WINGS, the Blue Hat Foundation, the Resurrection Project, and Wellness House onto the **Community Steering Committee**. A follow up Q&A session with **Dr. Melissa Simon** addresses more facts of the COVID-19 vaccine.

APRIL 2021 – ChicagoCHEC supports the **Mathematical and Statistical Modeling of Complex Systems Workshop** virtually at NEIU. **Dr. Aida Giachello** assists in organizing a virtual Puerto Rican Health Summit Day attended by an estimated 300 people.

JUNE 2021 – ChicagoCHEC begins the 2021 **Research Fellows Program** with 25 fellows selected out of 154 applicants. ChicagoCHEC collaborates with the UI Cancer Survivorship Program on “**Sharing Our Lived Experiences After Cancer: A Virtual Cancer Survivorship Event.**”

FALL 2021 & BEYOND - The **6th Annual ChicagoCHEC Community Forum – Working Together for Better: New Beginnings & New Normal in the Cancer Support and Survivorship Community**, takes place virtually.

JANUARY 2021 – ChicagoCHEC starts the New Year kicking off the grant renewal from the **National Cancer Institute** to continue its efforts for 5 more years. ChicagoCHEC continues with its **Virtual Community Conversations series** and hosts two conversations: one with **Dr. Rachel Caskey** on HPV prevention and cervical cancer and one in collaboration with **NEIU’s Center of Health, Dr. Melissa Simon** and **Dr. Karriem Watson** on myths and facts of the COVID-19 vaccine.

MARCH 2021 – ChicagoCHEC co-hosts the 4th Annual **Women in Science Conference** virtually through NEIU. **Dr. Keith Naylor, Dr. Lisa Tussing-Humphreys** and **Candace Henley** (the Blue Hat Foundation) lead a **Virtual Community Conversation** on colorectal cancer prevention for colorectal cancer awareness month.

MAY 2021 – ChicagoCHEC collaborates with NEIU on a virtual event called “**Black Health Matters: NEIU Community Cancer Survivors Speak Out.**” ChicagoCHEC teams up with UIC’s Department of Dermatology for a virtual conversation called “**Summer, Sun, & Skin: A Conversation on Skin Cancer Prevention.**”

JULY & AUGUST 2021 – ChicagoCHEC hosts a **Virtual Community Conversation** called “**Toolkit to Quit: Effective Tools to Quit Smoking After a Cancer Diagnosis**”



A FEW WORDS FROM OUR LEADERS



"What a difference a day makes. Just imagine how the 365+ days have changed most of our lives. Having stability, a trusted source and the ability to receive quality care and resources is a sign of tenacity, commitment and determination. Against all odds, including the pandemic, new stressors and less access, CHEC has provided flexible, innovative and accommodating resources, programs and services to continue to address the communities' need. The Zoom platform, surveys, and increased community collaborations and partnership have addressed barriers to care and social determinants. I am delighted to be a part of this winning team. As we continue to face more challenges, we won't give up. Follow the science and CHEC as we continue to support our populations in need," - Joanne Glenn, ChicagoCHEC CSC Co-Chair and founder of the W.O.T. Foundation, Inc. and Melanated in Medicine, NFP

"Cancer doesn't stop during COVID-19," "It keeps hiding, attacking, growing in our bodies. We have to keep up on cancer health for our mothers, fathers, children, tías, tíos y abuelos and arm ourselves with information and resources that speaks our languages and helps us fight cancer when it strikes." - Henrietta Barcelo, ChicagoCHEC CSC Co-Chair



"Como Latina inmigrante, me siento feliz de ser parte de este comite y representar a mi comunidad y sus necesidades. "Unidos, trabajando como uno solo, para crear una solucion para ayudar a los pacientes con Cancer y otras enfermedades." - Araceli Lucio, ChicagoCHEC CSC Member and Health Advocate at the Resurrection Project

"CHEC opens the door for the community to have a voice, to connect the dots where many times the scientists, academic does not see or have the same experience a community member hasbe it physical or emotional pain. The scientist who willingly listens and becomes a partner, makes a significant difference in reaching health equity as it relates to any disease, especially cancer. - Carmen Velasquez, ChicagoCHEC CSC member and founder of Alivio Medical Center



"COVID-19 has continued to ravage our communities and has continued to worsen all types of health inequities but especially those in cancer. This year, our annual Community Forum is going to continue to tackle the intersection of inequities, cancer and COVID-19 in the hopes that we can help amplify the needs of our communities and find on-the-ground solutions to respond." - Melissa Simon, MD, Co-Principal Investigator of ChicagoCHEC, George H. Gardner Professor of Clinical Gynecology of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center at Northwestern University

"The cancer health disparities we see in Chicago stand as a clear call to action. Only by working together and through authentic engagement can we create meaningful change and reduce the unequal share of the cancer burden experienced by our underserved communities." - Marian Fitzgibbon, PhD, Co-Principal Investigator of ChicagoCHEC and Associate Director of Cancer Prevention and Control at the University of Illinois Cancer Center



"ChicagoCHEC has made great strides in reducing cancer health inequities by creating new educational and research opportunities for students from across the City of Chicago." - Christina Ciecierski, PhD, Co-Principal Investigator of ChicagoCHEC and Professor of Economics at Northeastern Illinois University

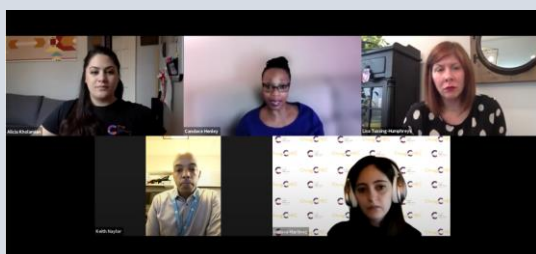
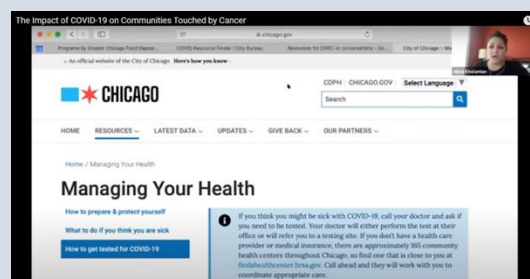
"Only through partnership and engagement with our City's underserved can we foster meaningful cancer research, education and training that appropriately addresses health equity issues. By serving the most diverse populations of students, NEIU is well-positioned to reach out to these communities and encourage them to actively participate and engage in this partnership." - Lidia Filus, Co-Principal Investigator of ChicagoCHEC and Professor and Chair of Mathematics of Northeastern Illinois University



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Community Conversations

ChicagoCHEC is committed to working alongside communities to identify and address their cancer health needs. This year COVID-19 has continued to present challenges in engaging in in-person community gatherings and events, but together, we continue to overcome challenges. Following the model we established in May of 2020, we have focused our efforts in continuing to engage with our communities virtually.

ChicagoCHEC's Virtual Community Conversations provide an online platform for community members to speak about COVID-19 and cancer. Working with our Community Steering Committee, we identify topics and community members and invite them to meet with experts to answer questions and have a discussion about how the pandemic has impacted cancer patients. Our goal is to provide a safe space to learn from each other and share experiences with COVID-19 and cancer so that together we can help improve cancer prevention and care. Below are a few conversations we had this year!



Conversation on Colorectal Cancer Prevention: featuring Dr. Keith Naylor and Dr. Lisa Tussing-Humphreys (UIC) and Candace Henley (the Blue Hat Foundation). The goal was to provide an avenue to chat with experts regarding the role of screening and nutrition on preventing colorectal cancer. Click [here](#) for the recording.

Myths and Facts about the COVID-19 Vaccine: A Community Conversation: featuring Dr. Melissa Simon and Dr. Karriem Watson, its goal was to provide a discussion and Q&A session on the COVID-19 vaccine. Click [here](#) for the recording and [here](#) for the Spanish interpretation.



Toolkit to Quit: Effective Tools to Quit Smoking after a Cancer Diagnosis: A Community Conversation: featuring Sarah V. Clark, Tobacco Treatment Specialist and Behavior Counselor. Its goal was to provide a space for sharing on tips and tools for reducing or quitting tobacco use. Click [here](#) for the recording.



SkinnyTrees: Lifting Health for All Podcast - Special Series: COVID-19 in Chicago Communities. This spring, we had a chat with Greg Trotter, Senior Public Relations Manager of the Greater Chicago Food Depository on SNAP benefits and inequities in access to food in our communities. [Listen here.](#)



RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

We are committed to supporting cancer research with a health equity lens that integrates community organizations as equal partners in addressing research questions.

Since its inception, ChicagoCHEC has funded **eleven** research teams through the **ChicagoCHEC Incubator, Catalyst Grant Program, and NCI supplement funding**. Such grants are intended to encourage collaborations among diverse teams of investigators (including students and trainees) across our three institutions. **They are** also designed to be inclusive of community partners and organizations; therefore, each research team consists of one or more community stakeholders as an integral member of the research team.

Using Smartphones to Advance Cancer Screening, Treatment, and Survivorship Support

WeCanManage

(Community Partner: Survivor Scientists)

In this project we are developing an innovative mHealth app called WeCanManage (WCM) to empower cancer survivors with disabilities to proactively manage cancer and its consequences as a chronic condition. This rigorous development and evaluation process will lay the foundation for future clinical trial research. People with disabilities are an unrecognized health disparities population and are often excluded from the cancer health equity agenda. Indeed, cancer survivors indicate that their long-term disability needs are inadequately addressed across the cancer care and survivorship continuum. The WCM research project is an opportunity to enhance the cancer community's understandings of this population and to develop evidence-informed interventions to better meet the needs of people with the 'double whammy' of cancer and disability.

Engaging Community Members to Participate in Lung Cancer Screening

The SHARED Project

(Community Partner: Project Brotherhood)

We propose an innovative outreach intervention research project engaging African American men (AAM) as Citizen Scientists to improve uptake of lung cancer screening. Citizen Scientists have proven valuable in increasing communities' knowledge and awareness of research, building trust in scientific research, and informing areas of research design and ethics. We focus our Citizen Scientists efforts in this study on leveraging their social networks to engage AAM and supporting and enhancing an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) evidence-based Decision Aid (DA) that promotes shared decision making and subsequent lung cancer screening. Engaging AAM as Citizen Scientists is expected to improve outreach and respond to the needs communities that may traditionally be "unengaged" in the research process and provides an opportunity for the group at the most increased risk for lung cancer, AAM, to directly drive uptake of evidence based screening.

Exploring Geographical Location and Microbiome Diversity

Microbiome Pilot Project

(Community Partner: Gilda's Club)

This pilot study was designed to lay the groundwork for an ecological analysis of variation in microbiome diversity. A large, diverse, and segregated city like Chicago has known disparate outcomes in various malignancies and is an ideal urban center to explore the role of geographic variation in gut microbiome diversity. We propose an innovative, multi-institutional study evaluating serial changes in intestinal and oral gut microbiota amongst 50 hematopoietic stem cell transplant patients selected from widely diverse areas characteristic of large populations in the Chicago metropolitan area. The study will demonstrate the feasibility of analyzing the association of microbiome diversity with early clinical outcomes amongst stem cell transplant patients residing in the Chicago area. These findings are expected to better elucidate the role that area characteristics, as reflected by diet and the socioeconomic characteristics of geographic location, may play in intestinal gut microbiome diversity.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We are committed to engaging, mobilizing, and supporting community capacity building efforts to improve health outcomes among Chicago's underserved communities. ChicagoCHEC's Community Steering Committee, a board of over 25 community leaders, guides the direction of ChicagoCHEC along with trained Community Health Educators (CHEs). Meet our Community Steering Committee and Leaders!

OUR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Henrietta Barcelo (Co-Chair), INSTITUTO Health Sciences Career Academy & Instituto del Progreso Latino
Joanne Glenn (Co-Chair), W.O.T. Foundation Inc.
Eriika Etshokin, Howard Brown Health
Patricia Canessa, Illinois Public Health Association
Dolores Castañeda, Community Activist
Kristina Hamilton, American Lung Association in Greater Chicago
LauraJane Hyde, Gilda's Club Chicago
Jose López & Daniel Mendez, Puerto Rican Cultural Center
Linda Rae Murray, former Chief Medical Officer, Cook County Health & Hospital System
Kirsten Peachey, The Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation
Jered Pruitt & Amy Wong, Chinese American Service League
Fred Rachman, Alliance Chicago Community Health Services, LLC

Tom Wilson, Former Community Organizer, AccessLiving
RoseMarie Rogers, Patient Advocate
Joanna Rudnicka, Amber Coalition, Polish-American Breast Cancer Program
Berenice Tow, Chicago Department of Public Health
Esther Sciammarella, Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition
Carmen Velásquez, Founder and former Executive Director of Alivio Medical Center
Esther Corpuz, Executive Director of Alivio Medical Center
Judith Guitelman, Executive Director, ALAS-WINGS
Candace Henley, Chief Surviving Officer, the Blue Hat Foundation
Araceli Lucio, Health Advocate, The Resurrection Project
Lisa Kolavennu, Senior Director of Programs, Wellness House
Marcus Murray, Executive Director, Project Brotherhood



Project Brotherhood

projectbrotherhood.net/



THE RESURRECTION PROJECT
Building Relationships. Creating Healthy Communities.

resurrectionproject.org/



thebluehatfoundation.org/



alas-wings.org/



ALIVIO MEDICAL CENTER
An Active Presence for a Strong Community

aliviomedicalcenter.org



alliancechicago.org/



Amber Coalition
ambercoalition.org/



lung.org/about-us/local-associations/illinois.html



faithhealthtransformation.org/



nearnorthhealth.org/



Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition
chicagohispanichealthcoalition.org/



Chinese American Service League
caslservice.org/



gildasclubchicago.org/



howardbrown.org/



institutochicago.org/



prcc-chgo.org



wellnesshouse.org



wotfoundation.com/

**For more information on our community partners
please check out our Community Resource Guide!**

<https://chicagohec.org/resources/resource-guide/>

OUR FUTURE LEADERS

2021 ChicagoCHEC Research Fellows



Jesús Alfaro



Angel Xavier Arroyo



Elizabeth Haku
Blaisdell



Elvia Camargo-Soto



Kenny Cantave



Sebastian Gonzalo
Cortes



Jason Kwaku Asiamah
Duncan



Dalin Eap



Brenda Haitham
Haddad



Angel Antonio Jimenez



Aasia Khan



Jorge Neira



Vanessa Eyrum
Nutakor



Tayo Omoniye



Veronica Payton



Darby Avelar Pena



Isabella Pizarro



Raphaella Anne S.
Ramos



Francesca Cejtin Rosen



Nancy Sahagun



Suleman Shaikh



Temiloluwa Sodipe



Victoria Soliz



Kaylee Zilinger



Jonathan Banks
Senior Fellow



Ana Hernandez
Senior Fellow



Everardo Tafolla III
Senior Fellow

2021 ChicagoCHEC LEaP Fellows



Djeneba Diakite



Rebekah Monroe

Former ChicagoCHEC Fellows are encouraged to apply to our postfellowship program, Learning Experiences and Programs (ChicagoCHEC LEaP), which offers a more traditional one-on-one mentoring experience. Through LEaP, fellows are matched with a mentor and provided an immersion experience in cancer research.



Jocelyn Ocampo



Chidubem Ogbuefi



Katherine Reyes



Selena Roque



Richies Tiv

Every summer, ChicagoCHEC hosts its Summer Research Fellows Program. This eight-week training program provides Chicago university students from underrepresented groups with the opportunity to learn about cancer health equity from doctors, researchers, professors, and community organizers. Our goal is to both inform and inspire these Fellows as the next generation of physicians and cancer researchers who will carry ChicagoCHEC's mission forward.

YOUR VOICE, YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR HEALTH

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Stay Involved with ChicagoCHEC

The ChicagoCHEC's website is jam-packed with information and resources, along with information on the many ChicagoCHEC-sponsored community events throughout the city. Visit www.chicagochechec.org for more information.

Be a Partner with ChicagoCHEC

We want to hear from you and your community organizations! We work with organizations like yours by collaborating to provide education and outreach events, training opportunities, and other cancer health initiatives. Help us tailor programming to meet the needs of your community.

Be a Connector

Network with other organizations, listen to the voices of residents, and serve as a connector for resources and linkages to reduce health disparities!

Help us Empower Our Future

Are you or your organization working with underrepresented minorities who are interested in science and medicine? Link them to ChicagoCHEC! We have an annual CHEC Fellows Program and more! We have opportunities for undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students.



ChicagoCHEC Summer Fellows met with Senator Dick Durbin to discuss the importance of pursuing health equity research careers.



NEIU President, Gloria Gibson, gives remarks at the ChicagoCHEC Community Forum.



Community Resource Fair at the ChicagoCHEC Community Forum.



Joanne Glenn, CSC Co-chair moderates a panel discussion at the ChicagoCHEC Community Forum.



CHEC-in community conversation at Instituto del Progreso Latino.

ChicagoCHEC Leadership



Melissa Simon, MD, MPH
Robert H. Lurie
Comprehensive Cancer
Center of Northwestern
University



John Stewart IV, MD, MBA
University of Illinois Cancer
Center Chicago



Marian Fitzgibbon, PhD
University of Illinois Chicago



Christina Ciecierski, PhD
Northeastern Illinois
University



Lidia Filus, PhD
Northeastern Illinois
University



Joseph Feinglass, PhD
Northwestern University

We are indebted to our community leaders and partners, faculty members, research and administrative staff, and students/trainees for their engaged participation and continued support.

We look forward to seeing you at next year's 2022 Annual Community Forum!

Funding support for ChicagoCHEC is provided by the National Cancer Institute (grants U54CA202995, U54CA202997, and U54CA203000).

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

We welcome questions and comments from our readers. Please direct correspondence to info@chicagohec.org.

Further information can be found at <http://chicagohec.org/>

Twitter: @ChicagoChec

Facebook: ChicagoCHEC

Instagram: @teamchicagohec

YouTube: ChicagoCHEC

Copyright © 2021 ChicagoCHEC



**THE
UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS
AT
CHICAGO**

