

ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT **2022**



# ***Cancer Health and Mental Wellness – YOU, Family, Community.***

Join Our Cause through  
Education, Health Care,  
and Research



*Celebrating 7 years!*

## THE FOUNDATION OF OUR WORK



The **Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative (ChicagoCHEC)** is an organization of researchers, faculty, students, and community members working together to reduce cancer rates and improve health outcomes for our communities.

We recognize that Chicagoans who live in neighborhoods that are underserved or who are members of racial and ethnic minoritized 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 2015, ChicagoCHEC has taken great strides in supporting our mission. **We must stress that these successes would not be possible without the guidance, engagement, and continued encouragement from our community partners – the true foundation of our work.**

We recognize the need for inclusive, effective, and innovative approaches to cancer research, training, education, and community engagement. ChicagoCHEC is in a unique and powerful position to bring the fruits of research findings into direct action that can make a difference in Chicago's communities.

As we enter this 7<sup>th</sup> year cycle, we aim to keep our mission and goal of achieving cancer health equity at the front of everything we do. We hope that you can join us for this next phase!

In this 2022 report, we highlight key accomplishments across the three core areas of ChicagoCHEC: *community engagement*, *meaningful research*, and *training and education*.

## SNAPSHOT: ChicagoCHEC in 2022

*An overview of community engagement, research, education, and training events ChicagoCHEC has been part of in 2022.*

### Spring 2022

- ChicagoCHEC cohosted the **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Woman in Science Conference** with multiple speakers through a hybrid format.
- A series called **Mistrust (3 parts)** began, which educated and promoted conversation about diversity in clinical trials.
- ChicagoCHEC cohosted the topic of **Sexuality After Cancer**, where the Blue Hat Foundation & W.O.T. presented **Truth Talking Tour: Women's Sexuality after Cancer**.
- ChicagoCHEC cohosted **Combatiendo el Cáncer en Nuestra Comunidad: Latinx Fighting Cancer**, sponsored by the Health Equity Committee of the NEIU Center of Health, ChicagoCHEC, the Medical Organization for Latino Advancement (MOLA), and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.
- A virtual educational event on the topic of **From the Classroom to the Community** was organized by the Health Equity Committee of the NEIU Center of Health and the Sociology Department at NEIU and sponsored by the NEIU Center of Health and ChicagoCHEC.

### Fall 2022 & Beyond

- ChicagoCHEC will continue their engagement with community events such as **Fiesta Boricua** and the **African Festival of the Arts**.
- The **7<sup>th</sup> Annual ChicagoCHEC Community Forum – Cancer Health and Mental Wellness – YOU, Family, and Community** takes place in a hybrid format.
- ChicagoCHEC will be present at the **Medical Organization for Latino Advancement (MOLA) Conference (October 7 and 8)**, which is scheduled to take place at Northeastern Illinois University as an in-person event and will provide CHEC fellows an opportunity to present their research.

### Winter 2021

- ChicagoCHEC collaborated with the University of Illinois Cancer Center and Connecting for Lung Health in a virtual community discussion about tackling and surviving lung health.
- ChicagoCHEC opened the application for the **2022 ChicagoCHEC Research Fellows Program**.
- ChicagoCHEC continues its fight against COVID-19 with **Dolores Castaneda** in hosting a vaccine event for children and adults at St. Agnes.
- **Dr. Linda Rae Murray and Marcus Murray** hosted discussions on **Racism and Health Outcomes**.
- Northwestern's T37 Trainee, Cordero McCall hosted a virtual discussion of his journey to medical school for students and CHEC fellows.
- ChicagoCHEC hosts a virtual conversation with **Dr. Wilberto Nieves-Neira** about cervical cancer and gynecological care.

### Summer 2022

- ChicagoCHEC selected 27 fellows, the biggest cohort ever! Additionally, this year's summer Fellows Program was a combination of virtual and in-person events.
- ChicagoCHEC cohosted **Sexuality After Cancer: Your Quality and Quantity of Life Matters**, which was held virtually and sponsored by the University of Illinois at Chicago, ChicagoCHEC, and Young and a Survivor.
- The fellow's graduation was held in person at the College of Nursing at UIC and speakers included **Dr. June McKoy, Dr. Nicholas Pearce, and Dr. Paul Grippo**.
- ChicagoCHEC participated in the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fiesta del Sol and Vive tu Vida**, where team members engaged with the community in educating cancer prevention.



## A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS



“The time has come to focus on another lens as I continue to serve the Community and transition out of the role of CHEC Co-chair, however; addressing real issues that continue to be a concern including health disparities, unsolicited bias, and access to equality in the health care systems will continue through partnerships and collaboration. It has not been business as usual, but a chance to speak out, and use my voice and expertise for those that have not been heard, or had the opportunity, strength or will to speak out for themselves regarding choice in the delivery of health care. The ongoing and growing partnership with CHEC, community and my team representing the W.O.T Foundation have added value to the mission of inclusion without prejudice to care. I continue to listen not just hear the voices of the communities and will not sway away from “Good Trouble” for the best outcomes.”

—Joanne Glenn, RN, MBA, ChicagoCHEC CSC Co-Chair,  
Founder of W.O.T. Foundation, Inc. and Melanated in Medicine, NFP

“It has been an honor to work and learn from committed and enthusiastic leaders of the Lurie and UIC Cancer Centers and Northeastern Illinois University in their collective works in the Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative (CHEC). I am appreciative beyond measure to community leaders and advocates of the CHEC Community Steering Committee (CSC) for enriching my efforts with their voices as a founding committee co-chair since 2015.



I am also grateful for the wise counsel, supportive leadership, and talent of the CHEC Outreach Core whose members are medical and social scientists from Northeastern Illinois University, Northwestern University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago who shared their expertise and insight so openly, transparently, and generously. Each has been an inspirational ally in upholding the vision, particularly Dr. Richard Warnecke, whose balanced perspective, and experienced, sage voice served to bridge community, academic, and institutional points-of-views.

Everyone deserves equitable access to cancer health education, prevention, and medical treatment along with the needed mental health and social resources – regardless of their financial circumstance, zip code, cognitive or physical abilities, gender, or immigration status.

There have been successes but more to come, and each part of the CHEC collaborative is still called to remain agents of change that continue to impact fairness, access, and equal opportunities. Only then, will the face of the data change.

As my term comes to a close, this is a turning-point moment that calls for everyone’s — community — voice to drive the direction and next steps of the CHEC Community Steering Committee.

Along with our new co-chairs, we will collaborate to set the stage to improve messaging, and pivot to elevate infrastructure and responsiveness to impact systems that compel a change in the data, transparency, and accountability that leads its part of the collective to CHEC 3.0.

It has been a privilege and honor to serve with this body of community leader-activists and the Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative Staff, Outreach Core, and MPs of NEIU, NU, and UIC on its mission and vision for cancer health equity.”

—Henrietta Barceló, ChicagoCHEC CSC Co-Chair



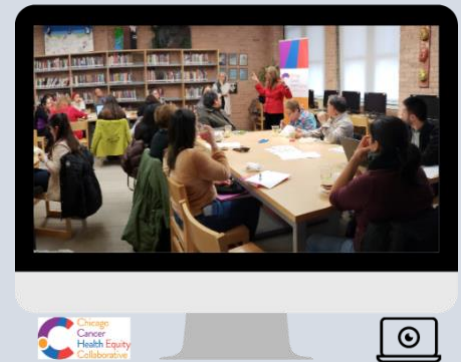
Joanne Glenn (left) and Henrietta Barceló (right)



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Community Conversations

ChicagoCHEC is committed to working alongside communities to identify and address their cancer health needs. We continue to follow COVID-19 guidelines and requirements for in-person gatherings. Following the model we established in 2020, we have focused our efforts in continuing to engage with our communities using virtual and hybrid formats.

**ChicagoCHEC's Virtual Community Conversations** provide an online platform for community members to speak about cancer and health concerns. Working with our Community Steering Committee, we identify topics and community members and invite them to meet with experts to answer questions and have meaningful discussions. Our goal is to provide a safe space to learn from each other and share experiences around cancer prevention and care. Below are conversations we had this year!

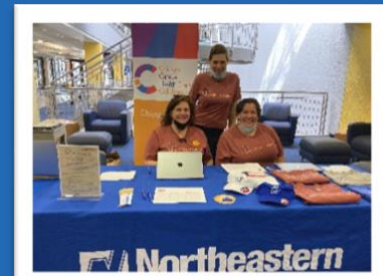


***The Discussions of Mistrust Series:*** this 3-part series centered on having open conversations about academic research distrust in communities of color. The wrongful acts of harm done by academic entities will serve as the framework for the discussion of distrust within marginalized communities and the importance of diversity in clinical trials. Click [here](#) for the recordings.

***5th Annual Women in Science Conference:*** this year focused on women in Biological Anthropology and was hosted by ChicagoCHEC, NEIU Center of Health, the NEIU Department of Anthropology, and the NEIU College of Arts and Sciences. Click [here](#) to find the recordings.



***Sexuality After Cancer: Your Quality and Quantity of Life Matter:*** was held virtually and sponsored by the University of Illinois at Chicago, ChicagoCHEC, and Young and a Survivor. They discussed understanding sexuality and the impact of cancer, as well as discussing sexual health with providers. Click [here](#) to find the recording.



# 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 and interactive mobile Health application 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 these populations, especially underrepresented minority groups, 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: To be identified)*

We propose an innovative outreach intervention research project engaging high-risk African American men (AAM) as Citizen Scientists to improve uptake of lung cancer screening. Citizen Scientists have proven valuable for a myriad of reasons, including 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 as well as 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. They also provide an opportunity for the group at the most increased risk for lung cancer, AAM, to directly drive uptake of evidence-based screening. This is imperative in ensuring that community-driven AAM are advocates and guides for fellow AAM engaged in lung-cancer screenings.

## 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.

**Howard Brown Health**

**Patricia Canessa**, Illinois Public Health Association

**Dolores Castañeda**, Community Activist

**Katherine Veiga**, American Lung Association in Greater Chicago

**LauraJane Hyde**, Gilda's Club Chicago

**Jose López**, 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

**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

**Maigenete Mengesha**, Director of Programs, Wellness House

**Marcus Murray**, Executive Director, Project Brotherhood



**Project Brotherhood**

[projectbrotherhood.net/](http://projectbrotherhood.net/)



THE RESURRECTION PROJECT  
*Building Relationships. Creating Healthy Communities.*

[resurrectionproject.org/](http://resurrectionproject.org/)



[thebluehatfoundation.org/](http://thebluehatfoundation.org/)



Asociación Latina de Asistencia y  
Prevención del Cáncer de Mama  
Latina Association for Breast Cancer

[alas-wings.org/](http://alas-wings.org/)



ALIVIO MEDICAL CENTER  
*An Active Presence for a Strong Community*

[aliviomedicalcenter.org](http://aliviomedicalcenter.org)



[alliancechicago.org/](http://alliancechicago.org/)



**Amber Coalition**  
[ambercoalition.org/](http://ambercoalition.org/)



[lung.org/about-us/local-associations/illinois.html](http://lung.org/about-us/local-associations/illinois.html)



[faithhealthtransformation.org/](http://faithhealthtransformation.org/)



[nearnorthhealth.org/](http://nearnorthhealth.org/)



**Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition**  
[chicagohispanichealthcoalition.org/](http://chicagohispanichealthcoalition.org/)



**Chinese American Service League**  
[caslservice.org/](http://caslservice.org/)



[gildasclubchicago.org/](http://gildasclubchicago.org/)



[howardbrown.org/](http://howardbrown.org/)



[institutochicago.org/](http://institutochicago.org/)



[prcc-chgo.org](http://prcc-chgo.org)



[wellnesshouse.org](http://wellnesshouse.org)



[wotfoundation.com/](http://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

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.

## 2022 ChicagoCHEC Research Fellows



Abdalla Mohammed



Abdinasir Shekhabdi



Alondra Perez



Anelly Cardenas



Christina Basourakos



Citlalli Santiago



Eyitomilayo Anako



Gabriella Ballestas



Grace Doakes



Jesus Rivera



Jordon Shaw



Jorge Heneche

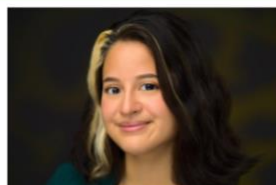


Kamyra Jennings



Kimberly Nu-Tall

## SENIOR FELLOWS



Victoria Soliz



Rebekah Monroe



Djeneba Diakite

## INTERNS



Chisom Chima



Summer Alzawawi

# OUR FUTURE LEADERS



Leslie Diaz



Melania Anton



Mina Seals



Monserratt Jasso



Mykee Vives



Norma Marshall



Oluwatosin Okoh



Pacifique Uwiringiyimana



Patrick Ryczek



Rabia Ghanimah

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.



Safiy Khan



Sana Murtaza Bhalli



Alexis Chappel



Magdelene Thebaud



Djeneba Diakite



Kalyn Whitehead



Jocelyn Ocampo



Selena Roque



Stephanie Maynez



Suleman Shaikh



Angel Jimenez



# YOUR VOICE, YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR HEALTH

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

### Stay Involved with ChicagoCHEC

The ChicagoCHEC's website is full of information and resources, along with information on the many ChicagoCHEC-sponsored community events throughout the city. Visit [www.chicagochec.org](http://www.chicagochec.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

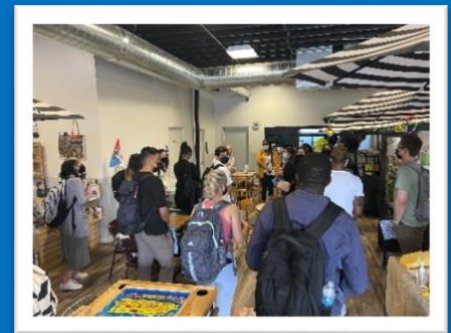
Network with other organizations, listen to the voices of residents, and serve as a connector for resources and linkages to reduce health disparities!

### 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.



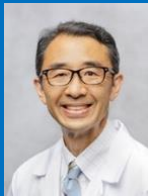
ChicagoCHEC Summer Fellows met with Senator Dick Durbin to discuss the importance of pursuing health equity research careers.



## ChicagoCHEC Leadership



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



Masahito Jimbo, MD, PhD,  
MPH, FAAFP  
University of Illinois 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 2023 Annual Community  
Forum!**

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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](mailto:info@chicagohec.org).

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

Twitter: @ChicagoChec

Facebook: ChicagoCHEC

Instagram: @teamchicagohec

YouTube: ChicagoCHEC

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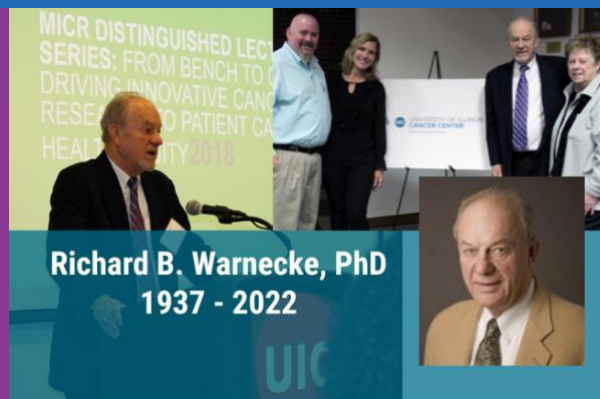


# In The Loving Memory of Richard Warnecke

Dr. Richard Warnecke, a dedicated member of ChicagoCHEC and a National leader in cancer control research died on August 19, 2022.

Dr. Warnecke devoted more than 48 years of his career primarily to cancer prevention and control and was a leader in population health.

We will remember him for his generous and kind spirit and the immense impact he had on our grant and mission.



"Neither ChicagoCHEC nor I would not be where we are today without Dr. Warnecke. He will be deeply missed. However, we commit to carrying on his legacy of ensuring genuine community partnership and engagement in research."

—Melissa Simon

"Thank you, Dick, for your research collaboration, activism and great conversations, rest in peace my brother."

—Joe Feinglass

"I have known Dick for just a year, but have appreciated the perspectives he brought to our discussions regarding the overall ChicagoCHEC goals and directions, goals of community engagement, and specific community/academic institution collaborations such as the CAPriCORN project. He will be greatly missed."

—Masahito Jimbo

"Dr. Warnecke devoted more than 48 years of his career primarily to cancer prevention and control and was a leader in population health. His primary research interest was to understand, develop, and evaluate strategies that address the underlying issues that affect cancer risk and outcome in underserved communities. Over the course of his career, he was funded primarily through the National Cancer Institute and led the Center for Population Health and Health Disparities at UIC for many years. In addition to his own groundbreaking research, Dr. Warnecke was also an incredible mentor. He led the NCI-funded T32 Cancer Education and Career Development Program, where he nurtured the careers of many faculty at UIC and the successful academic careers of many across the country.

Dr. Warnecke was truly in a class by himself as a leader in the field, a researcher, a mentor, and an advocate for underrepresented communities. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him and were touched by his work."

—Marian Fitzgibbon



