

## **Abstract**

**Project Title:** **The Cornell Center for Health Equity: creating a model for university-wide collaborative science**

**Topic Category:** Research

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**Collaborators and Mentors:** Avery August, PhD, Cornell University co-director of the Center; Michael Kotlikoff, PhD, Provost of Cornell University; Gary Koretsky, MD, PhD, Dean for Intercampus Relations, Weill Cornell Medical College

**Background/Significance of the project:** In April 2016, I proposed a Center for Health Equity and was asked by the President of Cornell University to make the Center university-wide to reflect the Cornell's commitment to improving health disparities in both urban and rural New York.

**Purpose/Objectives:** To create a structure for a university-wide Center that encourages cross-campus collaboration between faculty, students, and community members to conduct rigorous research to eliminate health disparities.

**Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy:** The Center was launched in January 2018 using a bi-campus leadership structure including two Center co-directors and community engagement, investigator development, and education cores with a co-director at each campus. Annual symposia rotate between each campus, with travel and hotel paid by Center funds for up to 30 faculty and staff from the other campus to attend. A pilot grant opportunity requires faculty from both campuses and a community partner. Monthly works-in-progress seminars use zoom to allow faculty at either campus to participate. A searchable Center web site facilitates collaboration.

**Outcomes/Results:** The Center currently has 65 members and received \$400,000 in support for the 2018-19 academic year from Weill Cornell and Central administration. The first symposium was held in March 2018 in NYC and the second will be held in April 2019 in Ithaca. Two pilots were selected of 6 submitted in 2018. The monthly works in progress seminar series is operating. The NYC arm of the Education Core received a 4-year \$2.7 million Diversity Center of Excellence (DCOE) grant from HRSA in 2018 to engage underrepresented minorities (URM) to pursue health-related professions. As a result of our efforts, our Internal Medicine residency matched 25% URM and the psychiatry residency matched 50% in 2019. The NYC Community Engagement Core has partnered with the Meyer Cancer Center to build a community-based infrastructure to support community-partnered research in Brooklyn, supported by \$650,000 from NewYork/Presbyterian Health System. One new R01, a Diversity Supplement, and various internal pilot projects (in addition to the Center's pilots) have been funded as a result of Center support, and we have created a Health Equity fellowship program with the first fellow starting in July 2019.

**Discussion:** The Center is off to a good start in NYC with a slower start upstate. A major focus in 2019 will be to turn pilot grants into extramurally funded R or U-series grants, and to continue to build collaborations between the two campuses.

**Conclusion/Impact:** The Cornell Center for Health Equity has been established and has met with early success through grants to build the education and community engagement infrastructure of the NYC arm of the Center, and several extramurally funded grants. A major focus for 2019 will be on creating new collaborations between the campuses.