The Cornell Center for Health Equity

Founded in January 2018 by Monika Safford, MD, Chief of General Internal Medicine at Weill Medical College and Avery August, PhD, Vice-Provost of Cornell University and Professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine, the Cornell Center for Health Equity is a university-wide initiative bridging Cornell’s New York City and Ithaca campuses. Its vision is to achieve health equity in local, national, and global communities through partnerships for cross-campus collaborative research, education, service, and advocacy. Its fivefold mission is to advance health equity by 1) generating and sharing new knowledge; 2) training outstanding investigators, with an emphasis on people from underrepresented groups; 3) educating students, trainees, faculty, and communities; 4) engaging with diverse communities in this work; 5) applying knowledge to maximize its impact on practice and policy.

Drawing on resources and expertise at Weill Medical College and on Cornell University’s Ithaca campus, the Center advances Cornell’s efforts to discover, preserve and disseminate knowledge and to enhance lives in New York State and beyond. The Center includes over 100 faculty with expertise in health communication, behavioral sciences, nutrition sciences, sociology, psychology, agriculture, law, business, economics, and policy.

The Center is organized into dual cores, one for the New York City and a second for the Ithaca campuses: Community Engagement Cores, Education Cores, Investigator Development Cores, and the Administrative Core. The Education Core in New York City is supported by a HRSA grant for a Diversity Center of Excellence for the training and retention of underrepresented minorities in health care, assuring access to a diverse group of students, trainees, and faculty. The Community Engagement Cores have established relationships with area primary care practices, health systems, and community-based organizations, aiding in practice and participant recruitment and engagement of community organizations. These relationships are strategically designed to engage underrepresented minorities, assuring access to minority populations for study recruitment.

The proposed project will have full access to additional resources available through the Center. These include the monthly Health Equity seminar that serves as a multi-disciplinary forum for input on ongoing research; and the annual Symposium that draws over 100 participants who share their work and engage in numerous opportunities designed to facilitate networking and the formation of new collaborations. The Center also offers annual pilot opportunities for projects to generate pilot data for larger grants, and a separate opportunity to develop relationships with community organizations for future collaborative research. The Center has an undergraduate student chapter and engages medical and graduate students, offering additional resources for training and expanding the reach of the proposed project.