

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Cornell Center for Health Equity

A university-wide initiative bridging Cornell's New York City and Ithaca campuses

centerfortheequity.cornell.edu

@CornellCHEQ



WELCOME

It has been an extraordinary year of growth for the Cornell Center for Health Equity. Our new institutional home on the Ithaca campus, the Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy, has opened new avenues of support and partnership. We continue to advance research, education, service, and advocacy through numerous programs across each of Cornell’s campuses. Our academic, student, and community membership is growing. We’ve built strong partnerships with various centers, programs, organizations, and institutes locally, regionally, and nationally.

At the same time, recent events underscore the immense challenges ahead of us. Disproportionate burdens of COVID-19, police violence, and white nationalist rhetoric continue to remind us of ways that structural racism undermines health for us all, but particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Our work has never been more important than now. We invite you to continue to find ways to support our mission.



Monika M. Safford, MD
Co-Director, Cornell Center for Health Equity
Chief, Division of General Internal Medicine
John J. Kuiper Professor of Medicine
Weill Cornell Medicine



Jamila Michener, PhD
Co-Director, Cornell Center for Health Equity
Sr. Associate Dean for Public Engagement, Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy
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Cornell Center for Health Equity

Our Vision

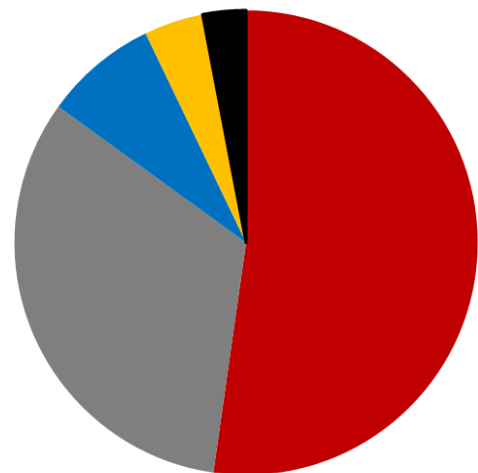
To achieve health equity in local, national, and global communities through partnerships for cross-campus collaborative research, education, service, and advocacy.

Our Mission

The fivefold mission of the Cornell Center for Health Equity is to advance health equity by:

- Generating and sharing new knowledge.
- Training outstanding investigators, with an emphasis on people from underrepresented groups.
- Educating students, trainees, faculty, and communities.
- Engaging with diverse communities in this work.
- Applying knowledge to maximize its impact on practice and policy.

CCHEq Snapshot



139 Academic Members

103 Weill Medical College Affiliates
32 Cornell University Affiliates
4 Cornell Tech Affiliates

87 Student, Trainee, and Staff Members

8 Affiliate Members

21 Community Members

11 Partner Organizations

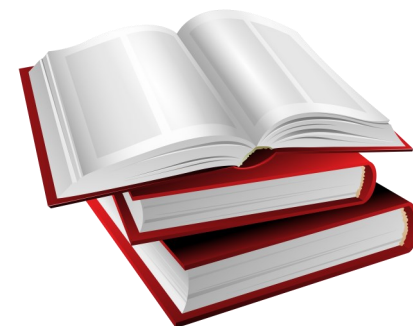


6 Health Equity Research Seminars



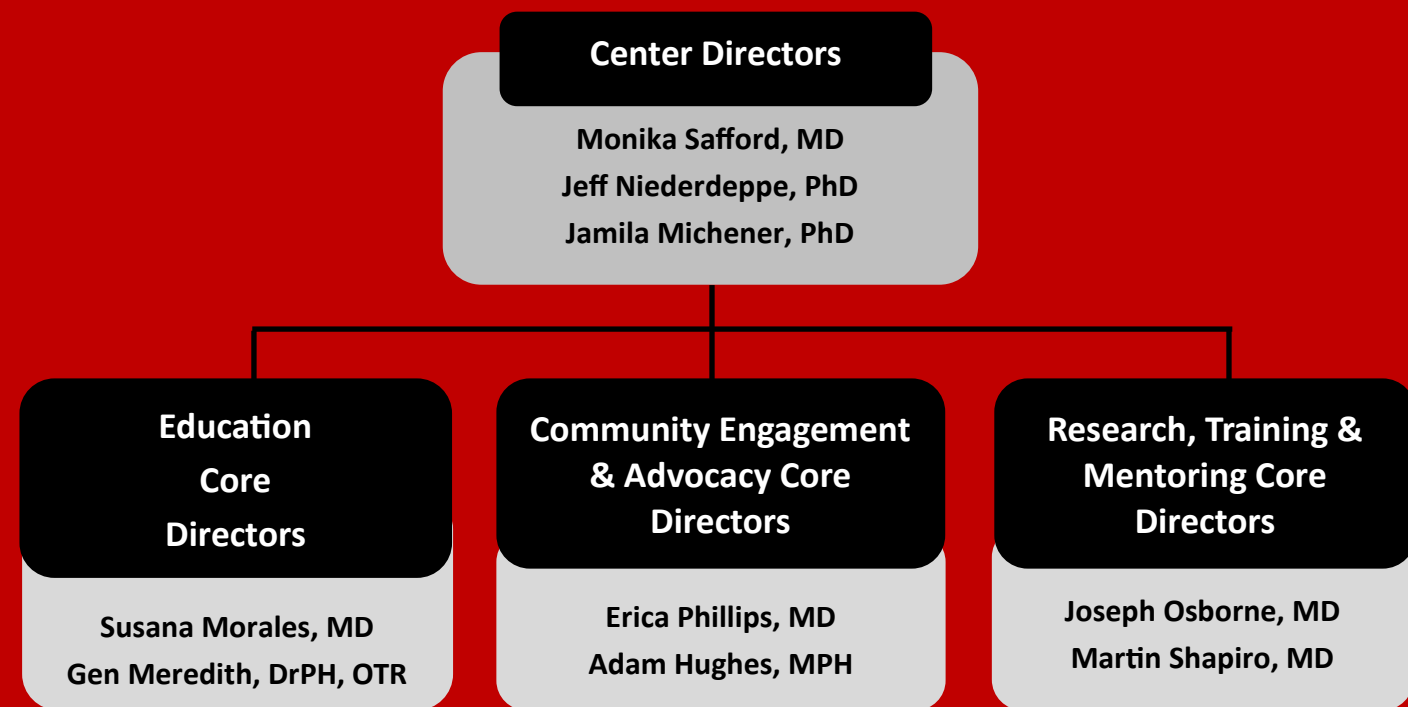
9 Funded Projects

6 Research Pilot Projects
3 Community Partnership Building Grants



78 Membership Peer-reviewed Articles, Publications, and Book Chapters

Organizational Structure



About Us

The Cornell Center for Health Equity (CCHEq) was proposed as the Weill Cornell Center in 2016, reflecting the core values of Cornell University. Former Interim President Hunter Rawlings requested the Center's university-wide expansion, and in January 2018 CCHEq was launched as a collaborative vision to achieve health equity through rigorous research in partnership with the communities that Cornell University engages. In late 2021, the Ithaca campus branch was brought into the Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy, offering CCHEq a strong institutional home and new opportunities for our members and partners to collaborate in policy-related research, education, service, and advocacy that are central to the center's vision and mission. This report summarizes the efforts of the Center and its partners during the 2021-2022 fiscal year to research and achieve health equity.



The **Education Core** promotes health equity-related education and educational programming with a focus on engaging traditionally underrepresented populations in medicine to pursue health-related professions. Efforts include supporting medical and public health student exploration of health inequities, graduate student pursuit of advanced research and degrees that impact health equity, and clinician and community capacity to understand and address racism, structural inequality, and social determinants of health.

The **Community Engagement & Advocacy Core** focuses on partnerships with community-based organizations to address health outcome inequities among vulnerable populations. We foster relationships characterized by mutuality, equality, clearly defined goals, and effective communication to integrate key stakeholders in collaborative research and outreach.

The **Research, Training & Mentoring Core** generates research findings and translates evidence into practical, understandable information for ethnically diverse populations. This core includes a pilot research program to seed larger research projects, and an annual Health Equity Symposium to showcase CCHEq's work and forge new connections for future collaborations.



"I attended City College for my undergrad, and Dining with Doctors was my first WCM contact. It was the first time I felt seen in terms of my cultural identity and potential to find a place in medicine. I have your team to thank for me being here and sparking much of my interest in, and passion for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in health."

-Weill Cornell Medicine MS1 Student, Class of 2025

Diversity Initiatives

The Weill Cornell Medicine Diversity Center of Excellence (DCOE) in New York City (NYC) hosted over 25 events, mostly virtual. Topics included career paths for high school students, mentoring and training for pre-medical students, residency preparation for medical students from underrepresented in medicine (URM) backgrounds, a new pre-medical pipeline program, and fellowship information for URM residents.

Pre-medical diversity efforts included programs with our key partner linkage colleges CUNY-Hunter College, CUNY-City College, Fordham University, St. John's University, Cornell University, and Columbia University.

- **Summer Health Career Conferences** led by Fordham University's Dr. Andrea Card, included social determinants of health, COVID-19 vaccines, and health careers from nursing, social work, and medical professionals of Weill Cornell/NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital for 19 Science and Technology Entry Program students.
- **Dialogues in Health** engaged faculty and medical students to share experiences with 54 pre-medical linkage school students in small group sessions.



EDUCATION CORE



Susana Morales, MD

Co-Associate Director, Cornell Center for Health Equity
Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, General Internal Medicine
Vice Chair of Diversity, Weill Department of Medicine
Weill Cornell Medicine



Gen Meredith, DrPH, OTR

Co-Associate Director, Cornell Center for Health Equity
Associate Director and Core Faculty, Cornell's Master of Public Health (MPH) Program
Academic Lead of External Public Health Education, Cornell Provost's Office of Education
Cornell University

- The **3rd annual Premedical Health Equity Symposium**, held in March 2022, highlighted "Building a Workforce for Health Equity and Health Justice" for 70 undergraduate and gap year students. Held virtually, speakers included keynote Dr. Laura Riley, PI/Director Dr. Susana Morales, and faculty lead Dr. Andrea Card. Workshops covered admissions, financial aid, and a panel discussion with current Weill Cornell Medicine students.
- The **Careers in Medicine Enhancement Program**, led by Dr. Andrea Card, included "Doctoring and Caring for the Vulnerable" with Dr. Ruslin Garcia, "Advocacy and Public Health in Medicine and Research in Medicine" with Dr. Christopher Gonzalez, and "Maternal Health Disparities" with Dr. J. L. Stewart. The 8-week program reached 26 pre-medical students from linkage schools, ending with capstone presentations reviewed by Drs. Susana Morales, Andrea Card, and Martin Shapiro.





- In early 2022, DCOE staff supported a new **Weill Cornell Surgery Pipeline Program** for undergraduate students from URM backgrounds and a **Peer 2 Peer Tiered Mentorship Program** for Hunter College first-generation students.

COVID-19 Community Education and Empowerment Internship

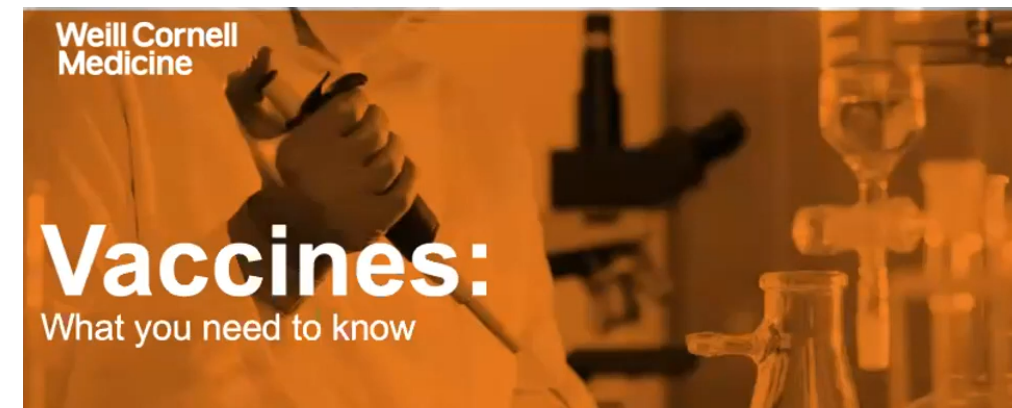
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DCOE partnered with NYC-area medical schools and Mentoring in Medicine to pilot a virtual **COVID-19 Community Education and Empowerment Internship** program for first-generation, disadvantaged, URM background, and gap year students interested in medical and health careers. Participants learned about COVID-19, disparities, the roles of medicine and public health, and strategies for community education and empowerment. Over 500 participants joined the third cohort in July 2021, and a fourth cohort in October 2021.

The curriculum covered virology, pandemics, COVID-19 biology and prevention, and how vaccines work. Students presented projects to raise public awareness of COVID-19 safety measures and vaccines.



Vaccination Conversations (VaCs)

The **Vaccine Ambassador Training** held over 95 sessions to increase confidence in COVID-19 vaccination and address community questions and concerns. In-person and virtual sessions reached over 5,695 community members of Weill Cornell Environmental Services, faith-based organizations, colleges, nonprofits, libraries, and schools. Faculty and trainees from Weill Cornell Medicine, Cornell University, and the Cornell Center for Health Equity participated.



Diversity Mentoring Cascade

Since November 2018 the Diversity Mentoring Cascade has grown to over 35 medical students, 4 graduate students, 17 residents and fellows, and 19 faculty. Three sessions were held this year, encouraging intergenerational learning and sharing of values, knowledge, and practice. Teams of underrepresented minority faculty, medical school and residency alumni, fellows, residents, and medical students focus on mentorship and sharing their professional journeys.

"The experiences shared by the M4s made me realize I probably missed and will miss many of the microaggressions I receive. I appreciate the efforts of students and faculty to make WCMC more comfortable and equitable for me."

-Diversity Mentoring Cascade student

Graduate Medical Education Diversity Initiatives

- The second annual **Fellowship Diversity Open House**, hosted by the Weill Cornell Department of Medicine and DCOE in July 2021 for 44 trainees, included Cardiology, Endocrinology, General/Hospital Medicine, Global Health, Health Equity, Gastroenterology/Hepatology, Geriatric Medicine, Hematology/Medical Oncology, Infectious Disease, Nephrology, Pulmonary/Critical Care Medicine, and Rheumatology subspecialty fellowship programs.
- The **Make Your Match: Residency Diversity Open House** was held in September 2021, hosted by the Minority Housestaff Committee, Weill Cornell Department of Medicine, DCOE, and Weill Cornell/NewYork-Presbyterian residency programs. This year's welcoming remarks came from Minority Housestaff Committee Co-Chairs Drs. Ugochukwu Akpara, Ashley Dixon, and Choumika Simonis, PI/Director Dr. Susana Morales, Vice Chair for Diversity in Pediatrics Dr. Joy Howell, Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion Dr. Linnie Golightly, and the Associate Designated Institutional Official from NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Graduate Medical Education Dr. Alyson Fox. We had the largest attendance to date, with 366 participants.



- The **Diversity Welcome Back** was held virtually in January 2022 for over 100 residency applicants, with program leadership and faculty from Internal Medicine and eight additional departments.



Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Health Equity Fellowship

The first health equity fellow, Dr. Christopher Gonzalez, completed his fellowship in June 2021, joining the faculty and DCOE Leadership Team as Assistant Director of Medical Student Research. In July a second fellow, Dr. Asia Gobourne, began her training and joined the DCOE team. Dr. Gobourne completed her Internal Medicine Residency training at Weill Cornell/NewYork-Presbyterian.



Faculty Development

- The **Research Scholars in Health Equity** program, led by Dr. Monika Safford, supports the development and refinement of novel and innovative ideas into fundable research projects in health or healthcare disparities. The program pairs faculty researchers and mentors with expertise in health equity research to help participants prepare competitive pilot project funding proposals. Participants selected for the 2021 cohort include:
 - Minerva Romero Arenas, MD (Surgery): Identifying the facilitators and barriers to success in surgical trainees who identify as underrepresented in medicine.
 - Caitlin Hoffman, MD, Heidi Bender, PhD, and Jessica Spat-Lemus, PhD (Neurosurgery): Impact of health disparities on outcomes for craniosynostosis in an era of multimodal care.

 **Weill Cornell Medicine**
Diversity Center
of Excellence

Cornell Center
for Health Equity

Research Scholars in Health Equity

A faculty development program to increase expertise in health equity research



EDUCATION CORE

- The **Education Scholars in Health Equity** training program, led by Drs. Erica Phillips and Jeffrey Ring, expands faculty skills in curricula development, implementation, and evaluation to improve health equity and cultural competence training integration across the spectrum of medical education at Weill Cornell Medicine. The cohort includes faculty involved in pre-medical, clinical, and postgraduate level education throughout the NewYork-Presbyterian enterprise.





Cornell Health Education and Research Program (CHERP) is a NYC-based peer health education program engaging trained volunteers to address the shared risks and biology of cardiovascular disease and cancer. Peer educators from partnering faith-based and social service organizations reside in neighborhoods with a disproportionate burden of premature death from cardiovascular disease and cancer, which are highly serviced by Weill Cornell physicians. Peer educators plan and promote cancer screening activities and events in their communities.

2	4	6
Breast Cancer Screening Events	Cooperative Extension EFNEP Nutrition Workshops	Cancer Awareness Education Workshops

Starting March 2022, our health education curriculum “BWELL4Life” was taught virtually by health educators at five partnering organizations. Participants are assessed for shared heart disease and cancer risk factors, health literacy, food insecurity, and disease risk perception. Our partners host three on-site breast cancer screening events. The BWELL4Life Program is led by Francesse Antoine, MPH, and funded by the Meyer Cancer Center.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY CORE



Erica Phillips, MD, MS
Co-Associate Director, Cornell Center for Health Equity
Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, General Internal Medicine
Weill Cornell Medicine



Adam Hughes, MPH
Co-Associate Director, Cornell Center for Health Equity
Extension Support Specialist IV, Cooperative Extension Administration
Cornell University

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) has a new **Community & Public Health Program Work Team (PWT)** with representatives from nearly every Extension Association across New York State. PWT builds CCE county office capacity to partner in community and public health activities, and is funded through an Engaged Opportunity Grant from the David Einhorn Center for Community Engagement to develop an engagement guide for community health issues and evidence-based interventions. The PWT shares information about community partnerships, fostering awareness of, and communicating CCE’s value. The group is also helping to develop a statewide “Health and Wellbeing - Social Determinants of Health” plan to improve reporting program outcomes and success stories, and enable systemwide monitoring and evaluation of community public health activities and outcomes.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
& ADVOCACY CORE



THE REACH PROJECT, INC.

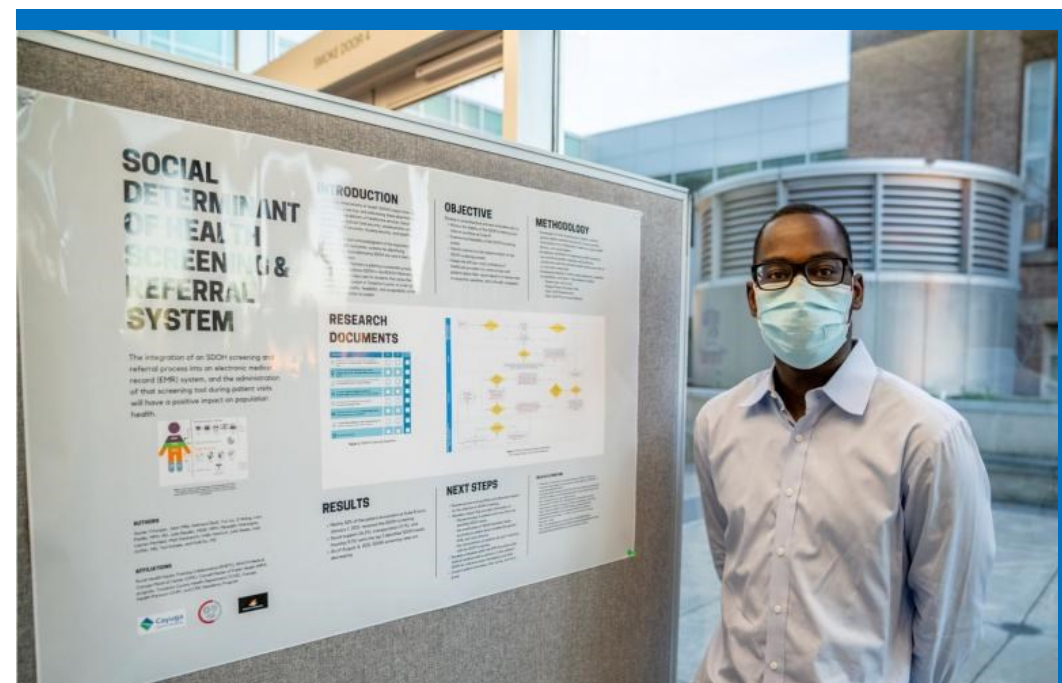
We meet you where you are.

Cornell's Master of Public Health Program, Cayuga Health Partners, and Cayuga Medical Center's Internal Medicine Residency Program support an electronic health record-based screening and referral system addressing unmet **social determinants of health** in the Internal Medicine Resident Clinic patient population. With support from the HRSA-funded Rural Health Equity Training Collaborative, the residency program embedded a community health worker in the REACH Medical clinic to support patients requesting social needs assistance.

Of the 72% of clinic patients screened, 29% indicated one or more unmet social need. The five highest unmet needs were social isolation, transportation, financial, housing, and food insecurity.

As a result of these findings, second year residents are collaborating with CCE of Tompkins County and the YMCA of Ithaca and Tompkins County to pilot a group medical visit rotation with a free 8-week group nutrition education program and fitness center passes for patients with diabetes or pre-diabetes and food insecurity. Cayuga Health Partners will continue a working group of community-based organizations, expand screening to additional outpatient clinics, and refer to a growing network of community health workers, health advocates, and student resource navigators.

An **Engaged Research Grant** project from the David M. Einhorn Center for Community Engagement, “Developing a framework for clinic-community-public health collaborations to support population health and integrative learning,” supports 13 undergraduate research assistants from various majors in expanded work from a 2022 CCHEq Community Partnership Building Grant awarded to faculty in the Department of Public & Ecosystem Health, Cornell Master of Public Health Program (*see page 26*). During the Spring 2022 semester, students shadowed and interviewed frontline staff from Cayuga Health Partners, Foodnet Meals on Wheels, and Visiting Nurse Services of Ithaca and Tompkins County. Qualitative data collection continued into the summer with semi-structured leadership interviews at each partner organization, led by Grace Marshall and Kally Wang. Over the summer, three students were trained in qualitative data analysis to assist in coding and presenting data. Cornell researchers will engage the project team in grounded data interpretation to yield recommendations that address social determinants of health, enhance collaboration, and suggest research approaches. To date, most implementation research on cross-sector collaborations has emphasized partnerships in urban areas, while this work supports future research to fill an important gap in knowledge regarding less populated areas.



Xavier Tchoujan,
second-year MPH
student and Cayuga
Health Partners intern
with the Engaged
Cornell Research
Grant. Photo: Darcy
Rose/CVM



In response to the outcry against racism ignited by the tragic killing of George Floyd, CCHEq Co-Director Dr. Monika Safford assembled a group of students, faculty, staff, and community partners to identify resources to learn how to be anti-racist allies in their personal and professional lives. The lack of material prompted members to develop an **Allyship Training Course**. Students from the Master of Public Health program joined the team to build training content in collaboration with a diverse group of stakeholders including staff from CCHEq and both Cornell campuses, the US Vote Foundation, Cayuga Health Partners, NYC Civilian Complaint Review Board, and NYC Police Department.

The students developed an engaging four-module program that includes rethinking race and racism and its effects on society, fundamental attribution error, building and practicing allyship skills, and creating an anti-racism action plan. With support from a Curriculum Enhancement Grant from Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) in collaboration with City University of Hong Kong, the Allyship Team is working with CVM's Educational Support Services Team to enhance learner experience with storyline scenarios, animation, illustration, and videos. Various groups are pilot testing the content and providing feedback.



With support from the Tompkins County Legislature and the Childhood Nutrition Collaborative, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County and Cayuga Health Partners are launching a pilot **Student Resource Navigator Program** to build capacity for addressing patients' social needs in health care practices without a community health worker. Undergraduate student navigators initiate and track referrals to community resources, many of which are underutilized. The project aims to connect patients to appropriate resources, identify factors affecting access to Tompkins County services, and determine policy and program changes that could improve accessibility.

The Childhood Nutrition Collaborative worked with Cornell University and other community partners to finalize program workflow, develop student trainings, and engage a network of service providers to receive program referrals for a summer pilot at OBGYN & Midwifery Associates of Ithaca. Cornell's Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives supports student navigator stipends, and the David M. Einhorn Center for Community Engagement sponsors an internship position to assist with program support, sustainability planning, and pilot evaluation.





RESEARCH, TRAINING & MENTORING CORE



Martin Shapiro, MD, PhD, MPH

Co-Associate Director, Cornell Center for Health Equity
Professor of Medicine, General Internal Medicine
Weill Cornell Medicine



Joseph Osborne, MD

Co-Associate Director, Cornell Center for Health Equity
Associate Professor of Radiology, Radiology
Weill Cornell Medicine

NIH Grant Writing Program

CCHEq partnered with the Cornell Center for Social Sciences (CCSS) and the Cornell Population Center (CPC) to host four online workshops for any Cornell faculty, postdoc, graduate student, or researcher to learn about the NIH grants process and strategies for competitive proposals. The program also includes select pilot grants and grant development fellowships.

In late spring, participants applied for one of two grant tracks: a preliminary data collection or research development pilot, or a larger grant writing and development fellowship with additional mentor and review support. Participants in the grant writing track are expected to submit an R01, R21 or K application within 12 months. In 2021, eight center members participated in the program. Six center members are participating in the 2022 program.

CORNELL CENTER for
SOCIAL SCIENCES

Cornell Center
for Health Equity

CPC CORNELL POPULATION CENTER
Cornell University

The Cornell – Hunter Health Equity Research Fellowship

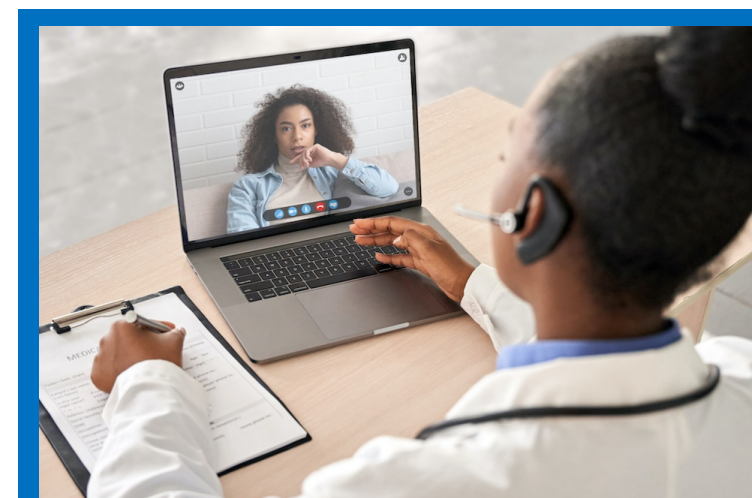
This collaboration between Weill Cornell Medicine and CUNY-Hunter College, developed and led by Dr. Monika Safford and Dr. Martin Shapiro of Weill Cornell Medicine, and Dr. Elizabeth Cohn of CUNY-Hunter College, provides postdoctoral training for health equity-focused researchers in primary care, inpatient care, and health services. The program deepens trainees' understanding of health care, local and international healthcare delivery systems, epidemiology of disease, and interventions to improve health outcomes. The first cohort has four health equity research fellows who will continue their second and third years in the fall of 2022 with a second cohort of five incoming fellows.

Collaborative Research Pilot Projects Grants

Annually, CCHEq supports one-year pilot project grants up to \$50,000 for center members who propose research projects to generate pilot data for future extramurally funded health equity research, or scholarly work that advances health equity thinking and/or practice.

2021 Grant Awards included:

“Use of a web-based platform (Patient Activated Learning System) to promote knowledge, uptake and completion of HPV Vaccination in the Era of COVID” led by Dr. Eloise Chapman-Davis of Weill Cornell Medicine. This project will develop and test patient education materials through a web-based platform geared toward underserved populations to address HPV vaccine questions and concerns.





“Addressing Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Disparities Among Low-Income Households with Adolescents Using a Novel Telehealth Lifestyle Intervention” led by Dr. Tashara M. Leak of Cornell University, and Dr. Marisa Censani of Weill Cornell Medicine. This project will examine the feasibility of engaging caregivers in a telehealth lifestyle intervention and the effect on caregivers’ health behaviors and body composition. *This project was awarded an R21 from NIMHD.*

“Supporting Community Health Workers in Fighting COVID-19 Misinformation in Low-Resource Environments” led by Dr. Aditya Vashistha of Cornell University, and Dr. David Scales and Antonio P. DeRosa, MDSc of Weill Cornell Medicine. This project will examine the technological, human, and societal dimensions of work by underserved community health workers, identify threats to their efforts, and address the risks of health misinformation.



2022 Grant Awards included:

“Engaging food retailers to improve nutrient-dense food access and food sustainability capacity for marginalized groups in residential urban food environments” led by Dr. Roger Figueroa and Katherine Baker, MS, MPH of Cornell University. This study will work with NYC food store owners and managers on improving nutritious food offerings and food sustainability practices in their stores. The study aims to improve food store capacity to meet environmental and individual needs concurrently.

“Expanding Understanding of Black Experiences of Gynecologic Cancer: A Nationwide Qualitative Research Project with Survivors and Oncologists” led by Dr. Amelia Greiner Safi of Cornell University and Dr. Onyinye Balogun of Weill Cornell Medicine. This study aims to better understand racism and bias factors contributing to poorer outcomes, and identify strategies to improve gynecologic cancer patient experiences. *A related study received a Community Partnership Building Award in 2021 (see p. 26).*

“The Acceptability, Feasibility, and Usability of The Home Optimum Medication Education and Smart Storage (HOPES) Program Medication Safety Training Module” led by Dr. Rana Zadeh of Cornell University. This project will develop a medication safety and storage training module to improve adherence and reduce errors among community dwelling, cognitively impaired older adults and their caregivers, as well as reduce the burden of addressing non-adherence by health care workers and the health care system. *A related study received a Community Partnership Building Award in 2021 (see p. 26).*



2021 Community Partnership Building Grants

The center supports collaborative partnerships and meaningful community involvement in health equity research. This year there was particular interest in the roles of public health and racial justice in achieving health equity. (\$5,000)

“Centering the Marginalized Voices of Black Patients with Gynecological Cancer as a First Step in Healthcare Curriculum Development” led by Dr. Onyinye D. Balogun of Weill Cornell Medicine and Dr. Amelia Greiner Safi of Cornell University. This study examines racial inequity through the voices of Black patients with gynecologic cancer.

“Home Opioid Prescription Education and Smart Storage (HOPES) Program in Tompkins and Cortland Counties: Design Meets Medicine to Improve Health and Independence for Older Adults with Dementia at Home” led by Dr. Rana Zadeh of Cornell University. The HOPES Program uses an assistive device and training materials to optimize medication adherence for community dwelling older adults with early to moderate levels of dementia.

“Collaboration among Health Care, Visiting Nurse, and Meal Delivery Services to Support Population Health and Position the Team to Conduct Implementation Research in Rural Areas” led by Dr. Karla L. Hanson of Cornell University. This project aims to better support the needs of homebound residents of Tompkins County by strengthening the partnerships between several local organizations.

Looking Ahead

The Cornell Center for Health Equity has continued to grow its presence at Cornell University in Ithaca and Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City to pursue its vision of achieving health equity through collaborative, cross-campus research, education, service, and advocacy. We are successfully engaging scholars of color to pursue health-related careers and advanced degrees, supporting the development and successful acquisition of health equity-related research and community partnership grants, and partnering with community organizations to improve population health by addressing and reducing factors that contribute to health disparity.

Moving forward, our goals are to continue promoting robust professional development opportunities for students and faculty, increase and collaboratively engage our membership and community partners, and contribute to the body of research and knowledge that impacts health equity policy and practice. Our unique cross-campus structure with its integrated support through the Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy and Weill Cornell Medicine, diverse membership, and strong community partnerships position us well to further expand and explore initiatives that capitalize on the collaborative expertise of medical and social scientists who are committed to achieving health equity.

Giving

The Cornell Center for Health Equity relies on your generosity to advance our work. With your support, we can achieve health equity through community and cross-campus collaborative research, education, service, and advocacy. Your fully tax-deductible donation will help us serve our communities more effectively. We welcome gifts of all amounts, and thank you for your support!

If you wish to make a gift, please contact:

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Cornell Center for Health Equity



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Diversity and inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.
centerforthequity.cornell.edu