



Fact Sheet

NIAMS Health Partnership Program

Reducing Health Disparities in Rheumatic Diseases

BACKGROUND

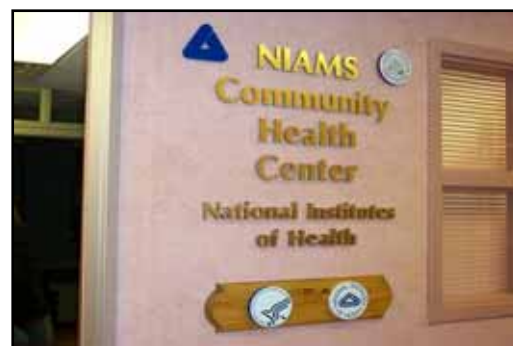
The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Institutes of Health, established the Health Partnership Program (HPP) in February 2000 as part of its efforts to address health disparities in arthritis and other rheumatic diseases. The program responds to the Department's Race and Health Initiative to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities and the Healthy People 2010 national objectives to reduce health disparities, as well as the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The HPP consists of an ongoing collaborative effort between staff and researchers at the NIAMS and a wide variety of individuals and organizations in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area minority communities.

Rheumatic diseases are a diverse set of disorders, many of which are characterized by arthritis and autoimmunity (a condition in which the immune system attacks healthy cells). Conditions such as systemic lupus erythematosus (or lupus), an autoimmune disease whose symptoms can range from a mild skin rash to major organ failure, have shown

marked differences in the incidence, prevalence, severity, and disease outcomes for minority populations, particularly African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos. Although much is known about susceptibility, onset, and progression of diseases like lupus, many questions remain. The HPP begins to address these questions, as well as those looking at the nature and causes of disease and prevention and treatment measures.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The HPP is a community-based medical research program operating as a collaborative effort between NIAMS and Washington, DC-area community leaders and representatives. Through biomedical and behavioral research with underrepresented patients affected by arthritis and other rheumatic diseases, the HPP aims (1) to enhance our understanding of health disparities and their causes, and (2) to provide direction for improving the health status and health outcomes of the minority communities affected.



NIAMS Community Health Center

The NIAMS Community Health Center, which opened in July 2001, provides the platform for the HPP's research, education, and training activities. Located in the heart of a multicultural community in Washington, DC, the Health Center provides the community with access to specialized care and scientifically based health information, and NIAMS researchers with access to patients most affected by rheumatic diseases. All patients at the Health Center are enrolled in the Natural History Study of Rheumatic Diseases in Minorities, which is designed to gather information on incidence, prevalence, severity, and outcomes of disease.

Community Partners

The HPP community partners include individuals and organizations representing the local African American and Hispanic/Latino communities, including local government agencies, schools and universities, faith-based organizations, civic and community groups, voluntary and professional organizations, and private businesses. Community partners provide planning and promotion support for the HPP's research, training, and education activities.

Focus Areas

The HPP takes a multifaceted approach to address the many factors contributing to health disparities in arthritis and other rheumatic diseases. The five focus areas include:

- **Public Health Education**, which aims to increase awareness and knowledge about disease, treatment, and prevention
- **Patient Care**, which aims to improve access, quality, and monitoring of specialized medical care to patients from minority communities
- **Health Disparities Research**, which aims to increase scientific information about the disproportionate burden of disease among affected racial and ethnic groups

- **Recruitment to Research Careers**, which seeks to increase the number of underrepresented researchers, physicians, and allied health professionals
- **Community Relations**, which aims to increase involvement of people from minority communities in the medical research process

List of Community Partners

Advocates for Justice and Education
American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Public Health Association
Arthritis Foundation, National
Arthritis Foundation,
Metropolitan Washington Chapter
Baltimore Health Care Access, Inc.
Barney Neighborhood House
Centro de Recursos Centroamericanos (CARECEN)
Centro de Rehabilitacion Salomon Zelaya
Change, Inc.
City of Baltimore, Hispanic Community Liaison
Columbia Road Health Services
Comite Hispano de Virginia
Congress of National Black Churches, Inc.
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, Inc.
Council of Latino Agencies
D.C. Baptist Convention
D.C. Department of Health
D.C. Family and Child Services
D.C. Office on Aging
D.C. Office on Latino Affairs
Educational Organization for United Latin
Americans (EOFULA)
Friendship House Association
Greater Washington Urban League
Hermanas Unidas
Hispanic CREO
Howard University
IQ Solutions
La Clinica Del Pueblo, Inc.
Latin American Youth Center
Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Life Skills Center
Links Media
Lupus Foundation of America
Lupus Foundation of Greater Washington
MANA - A National Latina Organization
Marshall Heights Community Development
Organization

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care
Michaux Senior Center
Montgomery County Department of Health and
Human Services, Maryland
Montgomery County African American Health
Initiative, Maryland
Montgomery County Latino Services, Maryland
Multicultural Community Services
My Sister's Place
National Alliance for Hispanic Health
National Association of Hispanic Journalists
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Community for Latino Leadership, Inc.
National Council of La Raza
National Fibromyalgia Partnership, Inc.
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Office of Concerned Black Men

NIH Office of Equal Opportunity
NIH Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases~
National Resource Center
Office of Minority Health Resource Center, U.S.
Department of Health and Human Services
Planned Parenthood, Marjorie Shumacher Center
Self Reliance Foundation
Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee
United Planning Organization, Head Start Program
United Planning Organization, Project Keen
United Planning Organization, Senior Services
Program
Unity Health Care, Inc.
University of the District of Columbia
USA Latino
Whitman-Walker Clinic

For more information on the HPP, visit this Web site <http://www.niams.nih.gov>.

NIAMS Mission

The mission of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Institutes of Health (NIH), is to support research into the causes, treatment, and prevention of arthritis and musculoskeletal and skin diseases, the training of basic and clinical scientists to carry out this research, and the dissemination of information on the progress of research in these diseases.