



## What are thematic research networks?

Thematic research networks are a type of special interest project (SIP) in which several Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) are simultaneously funded to collaborate on a specific health issue or research in a specific population group. One PRC in the network is selected and funded as the coordinating center. The coordinating center manages the multisite initiative, and its responsibilities may include establishing formal working agreements with additional partners external to the network, documenting results, and coordinating meetings at which network members share research findings. A division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or another Health and Human Services agency sponsors the network and appoints a technical advisor from the agency to collaborate with the network members. The current thematic research networks are described below. Past networks have addressed oral health, obesity, tobacco, school health, and women's health.

### Healthy Aging Network (HAN)

CDC's Healthy Aging Program in the Division of Adult and Community Health funds the HAN, which comprises nine PRCs. The members are developing a prevention research agenda to increase understanding of the determinants of healthy aging, to identify interventions that promote healthy aging, and to translate research into sustainable community-based programs. HAN members conducted an in-depth, evidence-based review of the role of public health in addressing physical activity for older adults. The network now has two national demonstration projects that focus on physical activity in this age group. HAN members also designed a survey of physical activity opportunities for older adults and implemented it in seven distinct and widely diverse sites. The HAN then collaborated with national organizations to identify best practices for physical activity programming for older adults. HAN members consult with federal and state

organizations that work to establish local-level infrastructure for healthy aging.

#### Members:

Texas A&M University System  
Health Science Center  
University of California at Berkeley  
University of Colorado  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of South Carolina  
University of Washington  
West Virginia University

*Additional information is available at <http://depts.washington.edu/harn>.*

### Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CPCRN)

The CPCRN is funded by CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control and the National Institutes of Health's Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences. CPCRN members conduct research on community-based interventions in cancer prevention addressed by



The Prevention Research Centers are a network of academic health centers, partner communities, and public health practitioners that conduct community-based participatory research to prevent disease and disability.

the *Guide to Community Preventive Services*. The network formed four workgroups. The Evidence-Based Approaches Workgroup determined the nature and extent of community training needed to find, choose, and adapt evidence-based approaches to cancer prevention; determined gaps in training materials on evidence-based approaches; obtained funding for developing training materials; and identified other opportunities for collaboration and training. The Standardized Database Workgroup prepared a report on development of a database for documenting the partners, processes, and products of the network's activities for use by its members. The Developing and Testing Decision Aids Workgroup inventoried studies of decision aids for cancer screening and measures for assessing the effectiveness of such aids. The workgroup also wrote proposals for dissemination research to evaluate decision aids in untested populations. The workgroup for Testing Evidence-Based Interventions with Multiple Ethnic Groups explored interventions designed to be effective across and within several ethnic groups. New projects continue to be undertaken.

#### **Members:**

Emory University  
Harvard University  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
Saint Louis University  
University of California at Los Angeles  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston  
University of Washington

*Additional information is available at [www.cpcrn.org](http://www.cpcrn.org).*

#### **Physical Activity Policy Research Network (PAPRN)**

CDC's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity funds this network to identify environmental, social, and individual correlates of participation in physical activity. The PRCs in the network conduct policy research across disciplines by identifying physical activity policies and their determinants, describing the process of implementing the policies, and determining the outcomes of the policies. The network aims to foster understanding of health policies that effectively increase physical activity in communities. The network is developing a physical activity policy research agenda through a concept-mapping process based on input from professionals across disciplines and from practitioners. Previously, researchers in the network have studied the effects of policies for active transport to and from school and have explored the policy process in the development of community trails through the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

#### **Members:**

Harvard University  
Saint Louis University  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
University of South Carolina  
University of Washington

#### **Affiliate members:**

University of South Florida  
West Virginia University  
San Diego State University and University of California at San Diego  
Colorado State University  
University of Hawaii

*Additional information is available at <http://prc.slu.edu/paprn.htm>.*

#### **Cardiovascular Health Intervention Research and Translation Network (CVHIRTN)**

This network is funded by CDC's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention to develop and implement a research and translation agenda, by conducting and translating prevention research that promotes cardiovascular health (CVH). The network's six PRCs synthesize scientific research results, identify gaps in CVH knowledge and practice, conduct research to fill gaps, translate effective interventions, and disseminate proven interventions to promote CVH in communities nationwide. The network is engaging in a demonstration research project called A Qualitative Assessment of CVH Perceptions in Underserved Populations.

Researchers in the network will study perceptions of heart disease, its risk factors, and barriers to prevention to understand how CVH interventions should be designed for and implemented in underserved populations. Network members work with local and state partners on individual projects, such as West Virginia University's CARDIAC Project, a risk surveillance and intervention initiative recognized by the American Public Health Association in 2004 as the best rural public health program in the nation.

#### **Members:**

University of Colorado  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
University of Rochester  
University of Washington  
West Virginia University

Winter 2007

**For more information, please contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, MS K-45, 4770 Buford Highway NE, Atlanta GA 30341-3717 • (770) 488-5395 • <http://www.cdc.gov/prc>**