



Advancing Women's Health

December 2000

**OFFICE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES**

National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health: Advancing Women's Health

The 15 National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health (CoEs), seek to improve the health of all women across the lifespan through the integration of comprehensive clinical health care, research, medical training, community outreach and public education, and medical school faculty leadership development. Located in leading academic health centers across the U.S. and Puerto Rico, these Centers are developing new models for women's health care that are setting standards beyond what is traditionally offered at hospital-sponsored women's clinical health centers. The CoEs are reaching a more diverse population of women, including more women of color and women beyond their reproductive years. The CoEs also have a stronger commitment to integrating research, education, and clinical care than do most traditional women's health centers. The Centers of Excellence Program has been funded by the DHHS Office on Women's Health since 1996.

In addition, the CoEs have leveraged considerable funding to improve women's health. With OWH's investment of approximately \$12 million through 2000, the CoEs have leveraged more than \$129 million in additional funds. Nearly 71% of these funds are from external sources.

Expanding the Knowledge Base on Women's Health

The CoEs are contributing to the knowledge base on women's health by enhancing women's health research; increasing opportunities to translate research into clinical practice; and expanding resources and strategies to recruit all women into clinical studies. Examples include:

Success in obtaining additional funding for women's research and training.

Increase in activities to promote women's participation in clinical trials including surveys to determine why women do or do not participate in clinical research, manuals to help women evaluate the benefits and risks of participation, and databases of women interested in participation.

Development of the first Report Card to track the status of women's health, health care and health policy.

Increasing the Capacity of Academic Health Centers to Improve Women's Health

The CoEs are expanding academic health centers capacity to improve women's health status by integrating women's health into medical school curricula; coordinating women's health teaching, practice, and research; and ensuring sustainability of women's health programs. Examples include:

Development of a 4-year concentration in women's health for medical students and replication of the CoE curriculum.

Preparation of a cadre of women leaders sensitive to women's health for leadership positions in academic health centers.

Receipt of funds to hire new faculty and establish new centers for women's health research to ensure the visibility and sustainability of women's health programs.

Increasing Women's Involvement in Their Health and Health Care

The CoEs are enabling women to take a more active role in promoting their own health by developing women's health information and resource centers, developing culturally sensitive programs and information, and establishing partnerships with community-based organizations. Examples include:

The Health Tip Card project, that includes the Depression Tip Card recognized by Tipper Gore as part of the Vice President's Mental Health Campaign, was designed with the help of women in the community.

Partnership efforts to increase breast cancer awareness and early detection among Haitian women.

Establishment of comprehensive women's health education and resource centers.

Annual award of mini-grants to state organizations to promote women's health.

Empowerment of community women's organizations to conduct community-based health research.

Expanding, Improving and Assessing Health Services for Women

The CoEs are improving health services for women by assessing women's needs for services, expanding the comprehensiveness of services, improving the coordination of health services for women, improving the cultural competency of health care providers, and conducting quality assessments in women's health care. Examples include:

Use of women's health advisory councils to provide advice on what is needed to improve health services to women from the consumer, the provider, and the researcher perspective.

Integrate mental health services into women's primary care.

Establishment of an Integrative Pain Center to provide pain relief and to improve patient self-care and quality of life.

Documentation, through a multi-site study of women's health centers, that low-income, minority, and underinsured women benefited most from a comprehensive health care model.

Use of focus groups to develop the first tool to measure women's satisfaction with their primary care.

These highlighted activities demonstrate that the National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health, through their partnerships with state and local governments, community organizations, and other academic institutions are actively involved in national efforts to improve the health status of U.S. women.

NATIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

Boston University Medical Center,
Boston, MA

University of California at Los Angeles,
Los Angeles, CA

University of California, San Francisco,
San Francisco, CA

Harvard University, Boston, MA

University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL

Indiana University School of Medicine,
Indianapolis, IN

Magee-Womens Hospital, Pittsburgh, PA

MCP Hahnemann University, Philadelphia, PA

University of Michigan Health System,
Ann Arbor, MI

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

University of Puerto Rico, San Juan, PR

Tulane and Xavier Universities of Louisiana,
New Orleans, LA

Wake Forest University Baptist Medical
Center, Winston-Salem, NC

University of Washington, Seattle, Seattle, WA

University of Wisconsin-Madison,
Madison, WI

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