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# Academic Health Centers: Improving the Health of our Communities through Community Engagement

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# Academic Health Centers: Improving the Health of our Communities through Community Engagement

**Abstract**

This conference proceeding was presented at the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement held September 2016.

**Keywords**

academic health centers, community engagement, community

**Disciplines**

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# Academic Health Centers: Improving the Health of our Communities through Community Engagement



IARSCLE

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# Objectives

- Describe AHCs
- Describe unique opportunities for AHC's to address critical contemporary issues in community health
- Describe innovative AHC initiatives that employ their resources to address community health priorities

# What is an academic health center (AHC)?



**Education:** school of medicine & at least one other health professions program



**Research:** broad spectrum of biomedical and health services research



**Patient Care:** comprehensive basic & advanced patient care



**Health System:** affiliated teaching hospital, health system, or organized care services

# Community Engagement in AHCs

Community partnerships have long been part of the education of future health practitioners:

- community-based clinical placements and practicums for health professional students,
- volunteerism of academic practitioners at local clinics, and
- volunteerism of health-centered student departments and organizations.

Growing interest in strategic alignment of resources and community needs

# National Opportunities



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# National Opportunities for Community Engagement in Health Sciences

- National Institutes of Health
- Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute
- Not-for-profit hospital tax exemption
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service
- American Hospital Associations

# National Institutes of Health: Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA)

Mission: accelerating discoveries toward better health

- Launched in 2006; about 60 academic medical institutions across country
- Community Engagement—collaborations to advance translation of research
  - Engaging stakeholder communities to contribute meaningfully across the across the translational sciences spectrum.
  - Enabling team science to become a major academic model.
  - Ensuring that all translational science is performed in the context of collaborative team science and that shared leadership roles are the norm throughout the entire translational science process.

# Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)

Mission: helps people make informed healthcare decisions, and improves healthcare delivery and outcomes, by producing and promoting high-integrity, evidence-based information that comes from research guided by patients, caregivers, and the broader healthcare community.

- Authorized by Congress in 2010
- **Largest single CEnR research funder**
- Funds research that offers patients and caregivers the information they need to make important healthcare decisions

# Not-for-profit Hospital Tax Exemption

With the passage of the 2010 health care reform, require “charitable” hospitals to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) and adopt an implementation strategy which addresses the identified needs.

## CHNA

- Shared ownership for community health
- Defining community – jurisdictional issues
- Data collection and analysis
- Community engagement

## Implementation Strategy

- Shared ownership for community health
- Defining community – jurisdictional issues
- Data collection and analysis
- Community engagement

# Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

- Federal agency that administers Medicare/Medicaid
- A primary payer of hospital care in the U.S.
- Currently changing the way that Medicare pays for hospital care by rewarding hospitals for delivering services of higher quality and higher value
  - **Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program**
  - Hospital Value Based Purchasing
  - Hospital Acquired Infection Reduction Program
  - **Accountable Health Communities**

# Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program

Goal: reduce readmission to hospital within 30 days of discharge for following diagnoses:

- Heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, hip/knee replacement, and COPD
- Reduces Medicare payments for hospitals with excess readmissions (greater than reasonable number of “predicted” admissions for a given hospital)
- Hospital organizational structure is fairly ill-equipped to manage patients **after** discharge
- Great opportunity here for community-engaged research, teaching, learning, and service!

# Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Accountable Health Communities

Goal: address critical gap between clinical care and community services in the current health care delivery system through social determinants of health

- Address unmet health-related social needs (e.g. food insecurity; inadequate housing, etc) to reduce avoidable health care utilization

## Track 1

Screen patients for social determinants + refer to community service providers

## Track 2

Track 1 + “**intensive community service-navigation**”

## Track 3

Track 2 + **continuous quality improvement**

**Researchers, get excited! This is an evaluation project.**

# American Hospital Association (AHA): National Call to Eliminate Health Care Disparities

Goal: frontline caregivers and health care leaders pledge to eliminate health care disparities and promote diversity within health care organizations

- Choose a quality measure to stratify by race, ethnicity or language preference or other sociodemographic variables;
- Determine if a health care disparity exists in this quality measure;
- Implement **interventions** that are reflected in strategic plan and supported by board; and
- Provide quarterly updates on progress to AHA

**Impact evaluators, rejoice!**

# Innovate Initiatives

# Innovative Initiatives: Interprofessional Student Hotspotting Learning Collaborative

National program that trains interdisciplinary teams of students to work with “high-utilizing” patients in their own communities

- Teams participate in online curriculum, monthly case conferencing, mentoring, and a curriculum learning guide
- Each team, 5-6 students, variety of disciplines, engage 3-4 patients over 6 months through **home-based** intervention
- Direct benefit to patients (transportation, referrals, etc.)
- Prepares students to meet complex needs of patients
- Some schools have added components of research

# Innovative Initiatives: VCU Bridging the Gap: Youth Violence Prevention Program

Goal: reduce rate of re-injury and subsequent health care demands (and costs) by providing services to break the cycle of violence

- Hospital-based intervention—review incident, review conflict-resolution strategies, increase awareness of risk factors for recidivism, explore coping skills, develop a safety plan, and connect with community agencies
- Home-based intervention—continued case management
- Research—support the development of evidence based programs for the prevention, intervention, and suppression of injury related mechanisms and risk factors
- Strategic component—utilization of surveillance data to monitor the prevalence of injuries within the VCU healthcare system

# We hope you will ask . . .

What pressing community health need could benefit from a collaboration with your health system?

- Could your work align with any national opportunities mentioned today?
- Could your work directly align with local health systems' performance and financial goals?
- Could your work support the population health efforts of your local health system?
- Could your local health system's data help evaluate your impact?

# Resources & References

- Clinical and Translational Science Awards: [www.ctsacentral.org](http://www.ctsacentral.org)
- Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute: [www.pcori.org](http://www.pcori.org)
- Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services:  
<https://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/linking-quality-to-payment.html>
- Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program:  
<https://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/readmission-reduction-program.html>
- Accountable Health Communities:  
<https://www.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Fact-sheets/2016-Fact-sheets-items/2016-01-05.html>
- AHA: National Call to Action to Eliminate Health Disparities:  
<http://www.equityofcare.org/pledge/index.shtml>
- Interprofessional Student Hotspotting Learning Collaborative:  
<https://www.camdenhealth.org/programs/student-hotspotting/>
- Bridging the Gap Youth Violence Reduction Program:  
<http://www.ivpp.vcu.edu/btg/index.html>