



Immigrant Health & Cancer Disparities

Towards Equity in Health

What's New at the IHCD?

We are pleased to announce that **Francesca Gany, MD, MS**, IHCD Service Chief, was appointed Professor of Public Health and Professor of Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College.

Congratulations to **Lisa Diamond, MD, MPH**, Assistant Attending, for receiving "The Distinguished Professor of Cancer Research Program Presentation Award," for her poster presentation at the Society of General Internal Medicine Annual Meeting held in Orlando, FL.

Presentations & Speakers

The Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service sponsored a series of talks this quarter: J. Michael Underwood, PhD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, presented, "**Bridging the Gap: Facilitating Partnerships in Translational Research and the Cancer**"; and Zhiyuan "Jason" Zheng, PhD, Department of Pharmaceutical Health Services Research, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, presented, "**Second Line Chemotherapy/Biologics Treatment among Elderly Metastatic Colon Cancer Patients: Predictors, Survival Benefits and Associated Costs**".

The immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service hosted Electra Paskett, PhD, Marion N. Rowley Professor of Cancer Research and Director, Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, Ohio State University, to present a workshop, "**Recruiting Diverse Populations into Cancer Studies**," during her Dukoff Visiting Professorship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

Funding Updates

We are pleased to share that we received a grant from the Greater New York City Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Inc. to fund **Arab American Breast Cancer Education and Referral Program (AMBER)**. AMBER, funded through the Community Breast Health Grants Program for the past seven years, increases the utilization of early-detection services, and facilitates treatment completion among Arab American women in Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island.

We have received additional funding from the Robin Hood Foundation to support the **Program for Medical Interpreting Services and Education (PROMISE)** for a third year. With their support, PROMISE will continue to train unemployed and underemployed individuals, in medical interpreting and job skills, and to assist them in finding jobs.

We received generous funding from the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund for the continued growth of the **Food to Overcome Outcomes Disparities Program**, which alleviates food insecurity in economically disadvantaged cancer patients in New York City.

Staff Updates

We are pleased to introduce our newest staff members: Victoria Mills, Administrative Coordinator and Gabriela Maniscalco, Community Outreach Assistant for the Ventanilla de Salud (Health Windows). Welcome to the IHCD team!

We would like to extend a big thank-you to our winter interns for their hard work and contributions: Andres David Calvache, BS; Anto Ayinikal, MPH/MSN candidate at Hunter College; Christopher Shin, BS; Dalia Chehayeb Makarem, MPH candidate at Columbia University; Fresa Estevez, BA candidate at Hunter College; George Ng, BA candidate at Hunter College; Girish Ramrattan, BA candidate at Hunter College; Harry Chen, BA candidate at Lehman College; Henrietta Lewis, BS; Kamrun Nahar, BA candidate at NYU; Kenya Townsend, BS; Luis Saavedra BA candidate at Lehman College; Nardin El-Shammaa, BA, MA, Post baccalaureate in Premedical Sciences at City College; Nina Schneider, MPH candidate at NYU; Pamela Icochea, MPH Candidate at Stonybrook University; Shulai Zhou, MS candidate at Columbia University; Umaira Khatun, BA; Yamina Kezadri, BA; Yamlika Mena, BS; and Youngjin Jung, MPH.

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Above: Sahar Farah, AHI Coordinator and Maha Allawh, AMBER patient and recent PROMISE graduate.



Integrated Cancer Care Access Network (ICCAN)

ICCAN addresses the social and economic barriers to cancer treatment experienced by underserved cancer patients, and aims to improve health outcomes. We have increased capacity building to support community-based services for immigrant cancer patients through the delivery of ongoing training. We continue to host quarterly Integrated Cancer Care Access Network meetings to train cancer service providers and engage CBOs, cancer service providers, social workers, and immigrant advocacy organizations to brainstorm effective advocacy measures. For more information, contact Julia Ramirez at ramirej1@mskcc.org.

Language and Cultural Responsiveness Initiatives

Language Initiatives continues to help equip researchers with the tools to enroll and serve diverse populations in a culturally and linguistically competent manner. Jennifer Leng, MD, MPH, Assistant Attending, and Program Manager Javier Gonzalez, conducted religio-cultural trainings for faculty, residents and staff at the Brooklyn Hospital Center and four of its satellite clinics as part of a project to enhance communications between patients and providers. Other training news includes the planning of Phase 2 of a medical interpreter training project at Rochester General Medical Group, which will be implemented this summer. Lastly, PROMISE just completed its 11th cycle of training, and will commence its third year of training in May. For more information, contact Javier González at gonzalc3@mskcc.org.

Food to Overcome Outcomes Disparities (FOOD)

The FOOD Program continues to expand its food assistance services, now helping cancer patients in Queens, the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. Five hospital-based FOOD pantries at cancer centers throughout the City provide more than 3,600 meals per month to cancer patients in need. In addition, the program has commenced recruitment at Queens Cancer Center and The Ralph Lauren Center for a randomized control trial to assess the impact of the FOOD program. The FOOD Program also educates cancer care providers about issues of food security and their impact on cancer treatment outcomes, and about speaking with patients about food. We are excited to report the FOOD program provider module is online as of January 2013, <http://www.mskcc.org/research/immigrant-health-disparities-service/food-overcome-outcome-disparities>. For more information, contact Julia Ramirez at ramirej1@mskcc.org.

Ventanilla de Salud (Health Windows)

Ventanillas de Salud (VDS) is a partnership between the Mexican Consulate and IHCD to provide disease prevention services for Mexican families in New York City. IHCD hosted a meeting with the NYC Mexican Consulate and Ventanillas de Salud partner organizations to initiate dialogue around a recently released policy brief, "**Young Mexican-Americans in New York City: Working More, Learning and Earning Less**" by Lazar Treschan and Apurva Mehrotra of the Community Service Society. Released in March 2013, the report highlights New Yorkers of Mexican origin as one of the fastest growing groups in the city, having increased nearly five-fold over the past 20 years. The report underscores high levels of poverty among this population. During the meeting at IHCD, VDS community partners discussed the challenges faced by this community, and explored possible solutions to address these issues. For more information, contact Julia Ramirez at ramirej1@mskcc.org.

South Asian Health Initiative (SAHI)

SAHI is a multidisciplinary community-academic partnership that focuses on community-engaged research, education, and service to reduce health disparities faced by the South Asian community. In partnership with the South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS) and the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, SAHI is hosting *South Asian Health: From Research to Practice to Policy*. This innovative year-long initiative is bringing together a diverse group of researchers, community members, and practitioners from across the U.S. in a series of thematic working group and town hall meetings to: a) identify health and research priorities among US-based South Asians, and b) develop a blueprint for future research and action to reduce health disparities faced by this population. The initiative includes a one-day long invitational convening at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center on September 20, 2013. Over the last few months, SAHI has been working closely with SACSS to identify health and research priorities among South Asian community members across various community organizations. For more information, contact Lakshmi Prasad at prasadl@mskcc.org.

Arab Health Initiative (AHI)

AHI focuses on education and services to reduce health disparities experienced by local and international Arab communities. AHI was recently featured in various media venues, highlighting our local and international initiatives. AHI Co-Director Claudia Ayash was interviewed by WFUV, an NPR affiliate station in New York City addressing barriers facing Arab Americans when accessing cancer screening services. The interview can be heard at this link: <http://www.wfuv.org/news/science-health/130111/issues-tank-breast-cancer-nycs-arab-community>. Claudia Ayash and Maha Allawh talked about breast cancer on Alhurra, a United States-based Arabic-language satellite TV channel that broadcasts news and current affairs programming to audiences in the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe. The segment can be viewed at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLkvEhQjGYk>. Noonelneswa Magazine for Arab American women featured the AHI staff in its April edition. We continue to expand our breast health outreach with new project partners. We implemented our first workshop in the Bronx with the Bronx Muslim Center. We are now working with our partner hospitals and the Cancer Services Programs in that borough to assist the participants with their screenings. For more information, contact Sahar Farah at farahs@mskcc.org.

Taxi Network

The Taxi Network is a National Institutes of Health funded community-based participatory research program to improve the health of taxi cab drivers in New York City. In close partnership with SACSS and the Taxi Community Advisory Board (CAB), the Taxi Network uses research methods to investigate and highlight the health needs and priorities of this vulnerable community. In early 2013, the Taxi Network launched a community needs assessment survey that profiles and assesses the health and occupational needs and experiences of 300 NYC taxi drivers. Findings from our studies will be used to develop tailored driver-centric health interventions. For more information, contact Lakshmi Prasad at prasadl@mskcc.org.