



Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities

Towards Equity in Health



What's New at the IHCD?

We are located at 300 East 66th Street, on the 15th floor of the Evelyn H. Lauder Breast Center. Please refer to the side bar for our program contact numbers.

Presentations & Speakers

The Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service sponsored a series of talks in the first quarter, including the following:

Carlos Javier Gonzalez, MFA, Director of Linguistic and Cultural Responsiveness for IHCD, presented *What Did My Doctor Say? Interpreting and Medical Outcomes* as part of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Grand Rounds in January.

Rosette Chakkalakal, MD, Postdoctoral Fellow, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program, Yale University, gave a talk titled *Bringing Visibility to Immigrants in Disparities Research* at the Evelyn H. Lauder Breast Center in February.

Joseph J. Salvo, PhD, Director, Population Division, New York City Department of City Planning, presented *A Demographic Flyover of NYC* as part of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Grand Rounds.

IHCD member, Jennifer Leng, MD, MPH, presented *Assessing Dependence Among Users of Heterogeneous South Asian Smokeless Tobacco Products* at the 2012 National Cancer Institute Smokeless Tobacco Research Meeting in March in Houston, Texas.

Funding Updates

We are pleased to share that we received two grants from the Greater New York City Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Inc. to fund AMBER (Arab American Breast Cancer Education and Referral Program) and PRIME (Promoting Immigrant Minority Equity in Cancer Research). AMBER, funded through the Community Breast Health Grants Program for the past five years, increases the utilization of breast cancer risk reduction strategies, early-detection services, and treatment completion among Arab American women in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. PRIME, funded through the Clinical Research Enrollment Grants Program, will increase enrollment of minorities in cancer observational studies and clinical research.

Health Fair

On February 19, IHCD partnered with the Fouta Union and Med Guinea to bring free health screenings, health information, and referrals to the Fulani-speaking community of New York. Because of the efforts of several volunteers and organizers, 95 participants were seen that day. Since the event, we have been following up with participants to help them access the healthcare system.

Staff Updates

A big thank-you to our winter interns who are helping us with various IHCD service projects: Anto Ayinikal, an MPH/MSN candidate at Hunter College; Frederique Jean Baptiste, an MPH candidate at SUNY Downstate School of Public Health; Hala Borno, a Doctorate of Medicine candidate at the University of North Carolina; Mateo Eckstat, a Doctorate of Medicine candidate at the Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University; Aaron Kung, a New York University undergraduate; Rachel Meislin, a Doctorate of Medicine Candidate at NYU School of Medicine; Lisbeth Nunez, a Master of Biology candidate at CUNY-Queens College; Yogita Patel, a volunteer who works for Dow Jones Newswires; Anmol Singh, MPA, from New York University; Rosalind Thomas, from RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program); Priya Wad, a volunteer who works for Citibank; and Rawan Yasmin, an MPH candidate at Columbia University.



Above: Volunteer medical students and residents provide free health screenings to participants at the health fair hosted by IHCD in partnership with the Fouta Union and Med Guinea.

Contact Information

Address:

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Cancer Portal Project

Phone: 646-888-4600

PROMISE

Phone: 646-888-4277

SAHI

Phone: 646-888-4550

AMBER

Phone: 646-888-4200

Cancer Portal Project

The Cancer Portal Project addresses the social and economic barriers to cancer treatment experienced by underserved cancer patients to improve outcomes. It continues to make a significant difference in the lives of the patients it directly assists, and in the lives of countless others, through its information sharing and training activities. Our next Immigrant Cancer Care Access Network (ICCAN) meeting will be on April 20, 9:00 to 11:00 AM, on the 9 floor (Conference Room 917B) of the Evelyn H. Lauder Breast Center. These meetings provide an opportunity to bring together community-based organizations, cancer advocacy groups, and cancer service providers to collectively problem solve around cancer health disparities. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting. Kindly RSVP to Julia Ramirez at ramirej1@mskcc.org.

South Asian Health Initiative (SAHI)

SAHI is a multidisciplinary community-academic partnership that focuses on community-based research, education, and service to reduce health disparities faced by the South Asian community. Over the winter, SAHI became a new partner, providing health expertise, in the establishment of the first Community Center in Jackson Heights for South Asians. Other partners include Chhaya CDC, South Asian Council for Social Services, SAYA!, Adhikaar, and India Home. In February, SAHI hosted a health fair in concert with South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!). We look forward to working with the community this Spring to deliver additional free health screenings.

If you are interested in learning more about SAHI, please e-mail us at sahi@mskcc.org.

Food to Overcome Outcomes Disparities (FOOD)

The FOOD program is expanding its hospital-based pantry project to identify and address food insecurity among patients with cancer.

Our newest pantry is at the Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care and Prevention (RLCCCP). RLCCCP is a community-based center for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer. It uses new models of patient care, research, education, and outreach designed to address the unique needs of the community. The work of RLCCCP, a MSKCC partner, is made possible by generous support from the Ralph Lauren Corporation. RLCCCP recently welcomed a new CEO, Gina Villani, MD, MPH, a board-certified medical oncologist, hematologist, and internist. Dr. Villani has a long history of working with underserved communities and addressing health disparities.

The FOOD program will soon be expanding to additional hospitals in Queens and Brooklyn. The FOOD program has benefited greatly from the dedication of the interns and the volunteers who help connect patients with much-needed food during cancer treatment. For more information, please contact Josh Wessler at wesslerj@mskcc.org.

VENTANILLA DE SALUD (HEALTH WINDOWS)

CIHCD works closely with the Ventanilla de Salud (Health Windows) program at the Mexican Consulate. The Ventanilla

was designed to improve the health of, and strengthen disease prevention activities with, Mexican families living in the United States. MSK's CIHCD and the Mexican Consulate run joint health fairs at the Consulate and throughout NYC. Participants receive free blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose screenings. In addition, targeted counseling, information about health care services, and linkages to primary care providers are offered. For more information, please contact Julia Ramirez at ramirej1@mskcc.org.

Program for Medical Interpreting Services and Education (PROMISE)

PROMISE, funded by the Robin Hood Foundation, trains unemployed or underemployed individuals, including veterans and the disabled, in medical interpreting and job skills, and assists them to find jobs. To date we have conducted six cycles of training and will soon complete cycles 7 and 8. We have placed, in part- or full-time jobs, over 80 percent of those from cycles 1, 2, and 3 and we are now in the process of placing graduates from cycles 4, 5, and 6. Our students are trained to provide Spanish, Mandarin, and Russian medical interpreting.

The first program of its kind in New York City, PROMISE seeks to alleviate poverty and contribute to diminishing ethnic and racial disparities in health through training in medical interpreting. For further information, please contact us at max@mskcc.org.

Arab Health Initiatives

AMBER (Arab American Breast Cancer Education and Referral program)

The AMBER program is continuing to expand. In the spring we will be starting a formal monthly Arabic language support group for women diagnosed with breast cancer, which will consist of both education and psychosocial support to help women and their families cope with a cancer diagnosis.

In addition to our ongoing workshops, AMBER staff have been working hard to help women get screening mammograms in the face of New York State budget cuts in limiting free screening mammograms. We have partnered with the Breast Examination Center of Harlem and are working closely with our partner hospitals to bring these necessary services to the Arab American community.

AMBER is supported by a grant from the Greater NYC Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Inc.

Colorectal Cancer Screening

We are partnering with the Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care and Prevention to offer colonoscopies for the community. Financial assessment is available for uninsured patients. If you are interested in learning more about this initiative, please contact Sahar Farah at 646-888-4469 or at farahs@mskcc.org.