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Project ACCCES: A Collaboration to develop Capacity for Community-Engaged research in Springfield

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Project ACCCES

Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc.
The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts

Baystate Health

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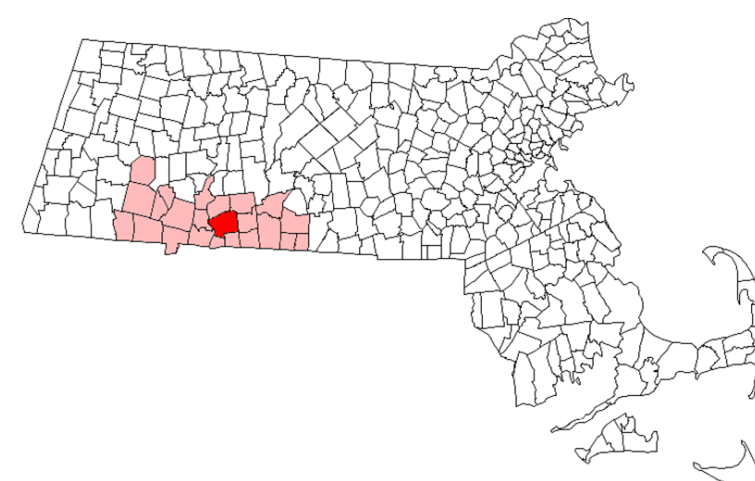
Background

Project ACCCES
❖ *Overall objective* - to develop capacity to conduct community-engaged research (CEnR) in Springfield that:
- is based on patient and community needs
- can be more easily translated
- improves community health

❖ *Advisory Board*
- Comprised of multi-stakeholder group
- Instrumental in designing and implementing project activities

Community Snapshot
❖ Residents of Springfield, Massachusetts (Pop. 153,947) experience disproportionately poorer health compared to the rest of the state.
❖ Springfield's community of color population (42.2% Hispanic/Latino; 18.8% Black, Not Hispanic; 2.1% Asian, Not Hispanic) experience high rates of poverty, unemployment, and low educational attainment leading to large health disparities

Acknowledgements

Project ACCCES Activities

LEARNING FROM PATIENTS, HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, RESEARCHERS, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION LEADERS

Focus groups conducted with patients, community organization leaders, and physicians to better understand the most pressing health needs of the community, past research experiences, and recommendations for doing research.

I want to talk about how to get the information [about research opportunities] out. What is the research going on?
- Community Resident

I think the difficulty I had working with... large populations is trying to get everybody to 100% buy in to what it is we've decided to accomplish and say, "Okay, that might not have been my first priority coming to this table, but I'm going to change it and now it's going to be my first priority"
- Health Care Provider

My research experience has been positive and negative... many times research is done with community members and the information is used to inform the research, but the community does not see the value of the research...some of the individuals [researchers]... are really wonderful persons who do great research, but it troubles me when the community is used for the data and then nothing happens...
- Community Organization Leader

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH WORKSHOP SERIES

Developed and conducted 2 half-day workshops for researchers, community organizations, healthcare providers, and Springfield residents to develop foundation for CEnR community-academic partnerships

Workshop Series Topics

- Developing a **common language**
- CEnR – what it is and how to do it
- Benefits and challenges to conducting CEnR
- **Stakeholder perspectives** about research in Springfield
- How to develop a **research question**

- How to foster **relationship building** among participants
- Elements of successful community-academic research partnerships
- Roles of trust, communication, **bias and power dynamics** in partnerships
- Strategies that can be used to foster partnerships and relationship building

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Convening research partnership action groups that seek to address Springfield residents' health needs through culturally appropriate interventions in the following areas:

1. Perinatal/Maternal-Child Health
2. Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder
3. Chronic Disease/Nutrition
4. Respiratory Health

Highlighted Successes

❖ Strong enthusiasm and positive feedback on workshop series by participants
❖ Generated strong interest across sectors
❖ Excitement about making research partnerships work
❖ Some partnerships really taking off

Challenges

❖ Meeting the needs of researchers, healthcare providers, and community organizations in partnerships
❖ Timing of action (community needs and expectations versus research timeline)
❖ Keeping momentum moving forward
❖ Balancing *action* and *process/partnership development* during partnership meetings

Advisory Board "selfie"

Lessons Learned

❖ Language/messaging is important! Be clear and define broad terms (research, community) within contexts
❖ Building research partnerships is an intense process, taking much time, coordination, and patience
❖ Communication is vital and challenging across sectors