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I N T R A N S L A T I O N

Volume 2 Issue 2

Seminar Series Features Expert on Health Disparities

The CICATS Community Engagement Seminar Series on December 8 features Brian Smedley, PhD, an expert on health disparities and the social determinants of health.



Brian Smedley, PhD

Smedley oversaw the direction of the Institute of Medicine consensus report *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*. He has also written other reports on diversity in the health professions

and minority health research policy.

Smedley's talk entitled "Building Stronger Communities for Better Health: Moving from Science to Policy and Practice" marks the inaugural lecture in the 2011-2012 CICATS Community Engagement Seminar Series. The seminar is free and starts at 4:00 PM in the UConn Health Center's Low Learning Center. A reception immediately follows. The seminar is sponsored by the Ethel Donaghue TRIPP Center, the Center for Public Health and Health Policy (CPHHP), CICATS, and the Department of Community Medicine at the UConn Health Center, the Institute for Community Research, and the Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention (CHIP) at UConn-Storrs.

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Two-Day Retreat Brings Partners Together

CICATS members were invited to attend an information and planning mini-retreat to explore the future of CICATS and biomedical research at the University and its partner institutions. The Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) was established in 2009 in order to: 1) translate laboratory discoveries into treatments for patients; 2) engage Connecticut communities in clinical research efforts; and 3) train a new generation of clinical and translational researchers.

More than 90 researchers from across all partnering institutions attended the highly successful retreat held on Tuesday evening November 1 & Wednesday, November 2, 2011 at the UConn Cell and Genome Sciences Building.



Gregory Makoul, PhD (right) of Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center participates in the partnership institution small group discussion while Roger Thrall, PhD of UCHC and Hospital for Special Care listens. (Matthew Cook / UConn Health Center Photo)

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Currently, Dr. Smedley is Vice President and Director of the Health Policy Institute of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington, DC. In this position, he oversees the operations of the Health Policy Institute which explores disparities in health and to generate policy recommendations on longstanding health equity concerns.

Prior to joining the Institute, he was co-founder of the Opportunity Agenda, a communications, research, and advocacy organization. He has also worked at the American Psychological Association on a variety of social, health, and education policy topics as Director for Public Interest Policy.

A Detroit native, Smedley holds an undergraduate degree from Harvard University and a doctoral degree in psychology from UCLA.

The event is free but space is limited. It will also be recorded. To register, email csteciak@uchc.edu or call 860-679-7039.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SEMINAR

"Building Stronger Communities for Better Health: Moving from Science to Policy and Practice"

Brian Smedley, PhD
Vice President & Dir. Health Policy Institute

Date: Thursday, December 8, 2011

Time: 4:00-5:00 PM with reception to follow

Location: Henry B. Low Learning Center
UConn Health Center
Farmington, CT

Register: Call 860-679-7039 or email
csteciak@uchc.edu

Spanning the Dissemination & Implementation Gap

In 2010, the Community Engagement Core of CICATS created the position of "boundary spanner" to facilitate the translation of UConn-developed health innovations into clinical and community practice. CICATS' goal was to have a boundary spanner from each the different spheres in the CICATS system (i.e., the University, the community, industry) working with their respective constituencies and with one another to develop collaborative relationships among otherwise disconnected researchers, organizations, and communities.

In accordance with CICATS' mission, boundary spanners were given the task of working to bridge existing disciplinary and organizational boundaries in order to achieve UConn's goal of translating its health-related discoveries into products, practices, and policies designed to improve public health, and to disseminate these innovations into routine health-care practice throughout Connecticut and the region.

Alicia Dugan, PhD is one of three boundary spanners throughout the CICATS system. Others Boundary Spanners are posted at the TRIPP Center and at ICR. Working under the direction of Jeffrey Fisher, PhD, director of the Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention (CHIP), Dr. Dugan is the only boundary spanner located on UConn's Storrs campus.

Dr. Dugan's work is a component of CICATS' mission to advance the science of dissemination and implementation (D&I) at UConn. This effort is based on the recognition that while UConn's health researchers have developed a variety of health promotion and disease prevention innovations, there is a substantial gap in getting these innovations into settings where they can be utilized to improve

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health care quality and service delivery. Thus the need to bridge this research-to-practice gap is critical; moreover, it is an increased priority for government funding.

In her role, Dr. Dugan has conducted outreach with health researchers across the UConn system to identify evidence-based health innovations and assist in planning strategies for their widespread dissemination, to educate researchers about D&I science and community-engaged research, to provide consultation on grants and research studies that have D&I components, and to promote collaboration among UConn faculty across campuses as well as with community organizations.

In the past year, Dr. Dugan has contributed substantially to the development of the CICATS Dissemination and Implementation (D&I) Innovation Laboratory, by providing infrastructure needed to support D&I initiatives across the University system. In particular, an important new white paper entitled the “D&I Measurement Compendium” was written by Dr. Dugan and other CHIP researchers as a resource to provide investigators with a synthesis of validated measurement tools designed to assess D&I-related constructs.

Several web-based D&I-related resources are also available including an “Intervention Resources”



Web-based D&I resources prepared by CHIP.

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The Tuesday evening session included opening remarks by Cato T. Laurencin, MD, PhD, CICATS Chief Executive Officer and welcoming remarks by Mr. Sanford Cloud Jr., Esq., UConn Health Center's Chairman of the Board. Thomas Babor, PhD provided a summary of a qualitative evaluation and Marc Lalonde, PhD presented information about the Jackson Laboratories partnership. Mr. Tom Callahan reviewed the Bioscience Connecticut initiative. A wine and cheese reception followed.



Drs. Ruaño of Hartford Hospital and Laurencin of CICATS talk during the retreat's evening session. (Chris DeFrancesco / UConn Health Center Photo)

On Wednesday, November 2nd speakers included Gualberto Ruaño, MD, PhD, Director of the Genetics Research Center at Hartford Hospital who gave a fascinating lecture on personalized medicine and translational genomics in clinical practice based on his work at Hartford Hospital. Participants then broke into smaller working groups to examine strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for CICATS and regrouped to discuss CICATS' future goals.

Many excellent ideas were generated from the event. CICATS' leadership will continue to work together to ensure CICATS' continued success.

web page that provides fact sheets and ancillary materials to support the dissemination of 13 health innovations created by UConn researchers, and a similar “Measurement Instruments” web page that provides access to measurement instruments, also created by UConn researchers. A third web page, “Dissemination & Implementation Resources,” provides information about relevant websites, funding and training opportunities, literature, archived lectures, and listservs to help Storrs and UCHC researchers and community stakeholders increase their capacity for dissemination and implementation.

As part of her role in educating researchers about D&I science and community-engaged research, Dr. Dugan was instrumental in the planning and promotion of last year’s CICATS Community Engagement seminar series, which featured a variety of well-known speakers. In particular, she organized

the four-hour “Getting to Outcomes” workshop in March, which was facilitated by internationally-known speaker Dr. Abe Wandersman from University of South Carolina. The workshop, attended by 35 participants from community-based organizations and academia including both Storrs and the Health Center, was full to capacity and evaluated very favorably. In the year ahead, Dr. Dugan will assist in the planning of the CHIP Lecture Series, inviting speakers to present on dissemination and implementation-related topics including Dr. Daren Anderson from the Community Health Center, Inc. and Lynn Garner from the Donaghue Foundation.

Currently, she is providing consultation on several Storrs and UCHC grants and research studies, educating researchers regarding relevant D&I frameworks and providing feedback during the writing process. She is also working with other CHIP researchers to prepare two manuscripts for publication and submission to the journal *Implementation Science*.



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