

Community Connections Newsletter

Department of Family Medicine and Community Health

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Talking about Race, Power and Privilege in the Clinic

On a sunny Saturday in May, a dozen faculty members in family medicine and community health gathered in a circle to begin a conversation on racism, power and privilege as experienced in their lives as physicians and as educators. They explored important questions: Where do they see the greatest opportunity for growth among their learners and among their peers? How and when do we make space for explicit conversations about our biases and how they have been proven to influence

Issue 9.1

Focus on Clinical Care

Spring/Summer 2015

Innovative initiatives in action

A message from Warren Ferguson MD, Vice Chair for Community Health

This issue features a snapshot of innovative community health initiatives which touch on a critical societal problem contributing to health disparities; systematic population health interventions; and medical student service learning. With respect to health disparities, we bear witness to yet another debate about racism and institutional oppression nationally and locally, a topic that is often uncomfortable for people. In a conversation at a recent department retreat, faculty reflected on our own contributions to bias and racism at the same time that the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine's Minority and Multicultural Group is challenging leaders to prioritize active engagement on racism when this may not be seen as a priority. Many health equity scholars believe that it will be difficult to eliminate health disparities without addressing racism as a root cause influencing social determinants of health.

Population health interventions based at Family Health Center of Worcester, one of the first teaching community health centers in the country, are featured. The article on school based health centers provides an example for extension of broader community care initiatives outside the four walls of a health care facility into schools and homes, systematically tackling chronic pediatric asthma not just with controller medications but also examining potential environmental triggers leading to poor outcomes and integrating behavioral health into school-based care systems. The focus on children extends to the expansion of ADHD services based at the health center, with more systematic population management. These focused programs on child health are complemented with a feature on the Centering Pregnancy program, which research demonstrates improves pregnancy outcomes via nurturing peer support supplemented by community health worker case management. This approach addresses again some of the social determinants that serve as barriers to care such as transportation and low health literacy.

Finally, with respect to service-learning, among the many student programs this summer, I've been fortunate to observe two soon-to-be second year medical students interviewing patients to evaluate food insecurity while qualifying patients for free vegetables and fruits from the Farmer's Market at the Family Health Center weekly during the summer months.

Racism, environmentally-induced asthma, systematic care for a chronic behavioral health condition with integrate team-based care, holistic care for at risk pregnant women and students tackling food



patient care?

This group is part of a growing movement toward shining a light on systemic racism, implicit bias in every area of our lives. Read more in this newsletter for related action items!

Making the Most of Summer



Several of our most community-engaged students, upon completion of their first challenging year of medical school, chose to spend their "last summer of freedom" building relationships with community partners and providing valuable service to residents across the state.

Fourteen students are participating in this year's Summer Community Service-Learning Assistantship, working in a range of settings including at the Worcester Division of Public Health, the Edward M Kennedy Health Center and Family Health Center Worcester. Placement sites include Barre, Holyoke and Amherst, though the

insecurity: at a time when resources are very tight and the physician's role is being evaluated, some might reflect that we can't tackle the problems of the community in academic family medicine. I would ask, if our goal is to truly improve the health of our community, can we afford not to?

School-based health improvement

by Valerie Pietry MD MS and Margret Chang MD

It is an exciting time of growth for the Family Health Center of Worcester's School Based Health Centers (SBHC) Program. Family Health operates six SBHCs in partnership with the Worcester Public Schools (WPS), working as an extension of the medical home, offering access to preventive and episodic care, chronic disease management, vaccinations, sports physicals, health education and care coordination to enrolled students across the school age span. In the past year we have **expanded our services in three important areas**. Always part of the community-based team providing care for pediatric asthma, we have enhanced our participation in **coordinated asthma care**, thanks to grant funding provided by the Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund. New resources for this year include direct involvement of community health workers with the families of children who have poorly controlled asthma, and standardized collaboration with school nurses, primary care physicians and pediatric pulmonology.

This academic year, our ADHD Clinic, started over 10 years ago by SBHC Medical Director, Val Pietry, MD, MS, has expanded with the addition of Margret Chang, MD, who has taken on the growing number of school-based ADHD visits and added more consultation access at Family Health. With the help of Dr. Chang we are actively **re-engineering our ADHD services** to enhance population management for this group of kids across our medical home. Second year medical residents continue to participate in ADHD Clinic as part of their Developmental/Behavioral Pediatrics rotation. Finally, in January our SBHC program entered the realm of behavioral health integration, receiving grant funding from the MA Department of Public Health to add behavioral health clinicians to four of our sites. The clinicians will work in partnership with the SBHC and WPS teams to **enhance access to behavioral health services for students** in and out of the school setting, with the common goal of reducing barriers to learning.

The SBHC Program welcomes learners interested in

majority were placed in the city of Worcester.

Posters detailing the work done in previous summers are available [on the website.](#)

Witnessing Whiteness



The Witnessing Whiteness series is a nationally-recognized series of 11 sessions designed to:

- * Build a community with a shared understanding of privilege, whiteness, and racism
- * Increase your group's ability to support and implement diversity and racial justice initiatives
- * Develop leadership capacity around issues of diversity and race

Join us once a month as we read and explore together the ideas and exercises included within Shelley Tochluk's book [Witnessing Whiteness](#). The full workshop curriculum is free and available online, so people who can't attend one session can easily follow along at home.

Session 1: Why pay attention to race?
Monday, August 17,
2015, 6-8:30 pm @
YWCA of Central MA

community health and pediatric care. For more information, contact Margret.Chang@umassmed.edu.

Centering pregnancy

by Sara Shields MD MS FAAFP and Jennifer Moffitt CNM

[Centering Pregnancy](#) is a multifaceted model of group care that integrates the three major components of care, including health assessments, education and support. This is a 10 session group care model, where mothers of the same gestational age receive care together. Here at the [Family Health Center](#), we are in our 8th year of this program. We earned our accreditation again in June 2014. Our OB advocates assisted providers with 9 groups in 2014, including 3 Vietnamese language groups, 2 Spanish language groups, and 4 English groups. 49 patients participated in these groups, some of which are continuing into 2015. One Vietnamese group has continued as a Centering Parenting group.

We use grant funding from community organizations to help with the additional expenses of this program. Some grant funds help compensate for part of our prenatal advocates' time; we also purchase Centering Pregnancy notebooks for all mothers, snacks and water for each session, and bus passes in an effort to alleviate transportation costs and encourage them to come to classes. In addition, grants help to offset the costs for Centering Training for Family Health Center medical providers to increase the number of trained Centering facilitators on our staff.

In the research, Centering Pregnancy has been shown to reduce the preterm birth rate in a statistically significant way. At Family Health Center, where we run the largest Centering Pregnancy Program in Central MA, the average preterm birth rate from 2007-2013 was 6.2%, compared to 10.0% for Massachusetts, and 10.9% for the United States. Patient satisfaction is high with the Centering program at FHCW; over 90% of women who complete this survey indicate that they are satisfied with the program. Some recent quotes include: "I love that I get to tell my story and exchange thoughts and ideas. I learned from other women and felt comfortable sharing," and "I felt like I was taking responsibility [for] my care." Also, "I had a lot of fun meeting other women going through the same thing," and "I learned a lot about pregnancy to help me be a good mother for my baby. I had all my questions answered."

We have several plans for the future of this program. We would like to offer an evening group for mothers who are working or in school. We need to improve our evaluation of other outcomes in our Centering programs, by using other measures besides the evaluation questionnaire that we give our patients. We would like to evaluate more than the satisfaction of all our mothers and compare that to Centering. We run a successful [Baby Caf ](#) breastfeeding group and would like to continue to have a lactation consultant from Baby Caf  as a guest to a Centering session. Additionally, we would like to implement more mom/baby

[Click here](#) to register or to request more info.

Sponsored by the [Worcester Partnership for Racial and Ethnic Health Equity](#)

Centering Parenting groups. We also hope to make Centering a requirement for our residents in the future.

Article Headline



Impact of Racism on the Health and Well-Being of the Nation



The American Public Health Association is sponsoring a series of webinars about racism and health this summer. We invite you to join us in Family Medicine and Community Health for viewing and to stay for discussion following the screenings. Local screening to be held at University Campus, Benedict third floor library, Room A3-179.

Naming and Addressing Racism: A Primer

July 21, 2015 | 2 p.m. EDT

Shiriki Kumanyika, PhD, MPH, and Camara P. Jones, MD, MPH, PhD

Community Violence and Well-Being

August 4, 2015, 2 p.m. EDT

Unequal Treatment: Disparities in Access, Quality and Care

August 18, 2015, 2 p.m. EDT

Racism: The Silent Partner in High School Dropout and Health Disparities

September 1, 2015, 2 p.m. EDT