Department of Family Medicine and Community Health

TRANSFORMING THE HEALTH OF INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

The department advances Penn’s local and global impact by promoting health in Southeastern Pennsylvania through innovative and nationally recognized primary care, research and educational programs. Parts of West Philadelphia are designated by the US government as a Promise Zone due to deep and persistent poverty in the community. Low economic resources lead to food and housing insecurity and other social needs, making it difficult and sometimes impossible for people to manage their health and wellbeing. This underlies persistent health disparities. At the same time, our research has shown that health disparities can be eliminated by assuring equitable access to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of health conditions. We couple our health programs with efforts to address unmet social and behavioral health needs by fostering strong and enduring community partnerships with Penn.

Integrated Programs to Eliminate Health Disparities

Our primary mission is to eliminate disparities in premature deaths. We have a strong pipeline of programs to address the root causes and effects of disparities. Based on the results of Penn Medicine’s community health needs assessment, we are placing an initial emphasis on cancer, heart disease, behavioral health, and infant mortality.

- **Consortium for Community Health Innovation in West Philadelphia**: Together with our community partners, we initiated planning to transform care delivery in the community. Our vision is to create a free-standing trans-disciplinary urban institute in West and Southwest Philadelphia to foster partnership among all social service and health care providers. The Consortium will serve as the hub for collective efforts to provide affordable care and support health-related social needs of people in the community. The Consortium aims to mitigate the effects of social disadvantage on health by creating cohesion and shared goals, developing personalized plans for patients, navigating patients with needs to service providers, and sharing data to maximize our impact. On an ongoing basis, the group will also assess the gaps in the capacity to provide services.

- **Philadelphia Health Leadership Institute**: This initiative, funded by the CDC, trains community leaders in the Promise Zone who are in positions to influence improvements in community health. They are tackling childhood lead exposure, chronic pain treatment, and postpartum depression.

Center for Community and Population Health

The Center serves as our academic hub for groundbreaking research and community engagement to accelerate health care transformation and lead national efforts to eliminate disparities.

- **The Mixed Methods Research Lab** provides expertise in novel research methods that are central to community-focused and patient-centered research as well as implementation science. Utilizing conceptual models that draw from the social sciences as well as the life sciences, the Lab uses a trans-disciplinary approach to address correlates of health that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups.

- **Organized Screening Outreach and Navigation**: This innovative program provides patients and providers the tools they need to optimize health during face-to-face visits and in communities. Colon cancer is an excellent disease model for our work. It is a leading cause of cancer death in our...
communities and disproportionally affects African Americans, but disparities can be eliminated by providing **equitable access to colorectal cancer screening and treatment**. We have shown that over 60% of colon cancer deaths are due to lack of screening and optimizing screening uptake could avert 20% or more of such deaths. We developed a program that makes screening convenient, accessible and affordable by providing **immunochemical screening tests** that can be done in the comfort of home. We also navigate patients to colonoscopy appointments. We are poised to scale this model to the community and globally and expand to other strategies such as lung cancer screening and diabetes care.

- **National Center for Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care**: This federally funded center is a collaboration with the department of Psychiatry and Penn Nursing Science, to serve as a unique national resource to advance innovative models to improve access to care for mental health conditions and substance use disorders. The Center develops, disseminates, and enables adoption of best practices of integrated behavioral health in primary care nationally.

- **Advanced Family Medicine Services**: The department is at the forefront of population health with programs to identify people with gaps in their care or unmet social and medical needs to enable them to receive the right care at the right time. Our advanced primary care practices provide equitable access to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment for all individuals across the lifespan including women’s health services. We use innovative tools to engage and empower people to manage their own health and wellbeing.

- **Priority Access Program**: This program was established to address the high rates of potentially preventable hospitalizations in our community. **Priority Access** provides personalized services tailored to the needs of patients using a **concierge model of care**. The program uses interviews and state-of-the-art computer algorithms to identify those exposed to low-value care, their social needs, and the approaches needed to provide the right care at the right time. It enables patients to gain access to their doctors along with weekly follow-up calls to provide support and navigation. It then empowers them to regularly access care and advocate for the health care they need. This approach has increased connectivity of patients to primary care providers and reduced visits to the emergency department.

- **Educational and training programs**: We prepare primary care and community health leaders of the future with inter-professional educational programs to help extend the reach of Penn’s programs. Our residency program is one of the highest-ranked nationally and our fellowship programs train leaders in sports medicine, global health, population health, and research.

**Select Giving Opportunities**

- Creating an endowed chair in the department.................................................................$3 million
- Naming/establishing a research and education program...........................................$2-4 million
- Naming/establishing a pilot research grant program..................................................$1 million
- Scholarships and fellowships on health disparities.......................................................$500,000
- Naming/sponsoring seminar series or symposium, lectureships....................................$100,000-400,000
- Supporting other community health programs...............................................................$25,000 and up

**Specialty Giving Opportunities**

Specialty giving opportunities are a unique way to make a lasting impact and help further strategic initiatives. The department offers opportunities to help create centers, such as the free-standing **Consortium for Community Health Innovation in West Philadelphia**, and community-focused initiatives such as cancer screening, integrated behavioral health, and the Priority Access Program. We invite you to explore and learn more.

Your support enables us to seize unexpected opportunities and bring new hope to countless patients and families.
To learn more or to make a gift, please contact Lauren Mallik Ryan at 215-898-8643 or lmallik@upenn.edu.