CCTSI Community Engagement and Health Equity

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

ucdenver.edu/research/CCTSI/community-engagement
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Land Acknowledgement

We humbly acknowledge that University of Colorado – Anschutz Medical Campus is located on the traditional and contemporary homelands of Indigenous peoples. Our campus resides on unceded lands of the Arapaho people, established to the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851. We recognize the enduring presence of more than 40,000 Indigenous peoples in the greater Denver area. The sprawling urban American Indian and Alaska Native presence in Denver consists of other tribes native to Colorado such as Apache, Comanche, Shoshone, and Ute community members yet is now home to numerous other Indigenous people from many of the 560 plus federally recognized tribes in this country.

Together, we acknowledge the history of genocide and ongoing systemic inequities while respecting treaties made on this territory as a step towards reconciliation and strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples. We give thanks to the past, present and future stewards of this land and respect all tribal nations’ sovereignty and right to self-determination. We recognize the lessons, including many medical and public health lessons Indigenous communities have offered and continue to teach us.

Funding Acknowledgement

The Vision of the Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI) is to accelerate and catalyze the translation of innovative science into improved, equitable health and patient care for all. The CCTSI is supported in part by NIH/NCATS Colorado CTSI Grant Number UM1TR004399.

PACT Health Equity Statement

Health is a fundamental human right. Health equity requires removing obstacles so that every person has the opportunity to attain their full potential for health and well-being.

The Partnership of Academicians and Communities for Translation (PACT) is working towards health equity by partnering with communities to design, implement, and fund research, education, training and programs that support health for all people, in particular efforts focused on improving health outcomes experienced by people who are marginalized, disadvantaged, or underserved.

- Specifically, PACT is committed to:
  - Research that equitably benefits communities.
  - Mutual learning between community and researchers.
  - Supporting a research infrastructure that fosters equitable, long term community engagement.
  - Community based decision making.
  - The ethical and responsible collection, interpretation, storage, management, and sharing of data.
  - Serving as thought partners and consultants for organizations that are exploring their own commitment to community engaged research and health equity.
  - Continuously evaluating internal processes to sustain efforts and ensure our actions equitably benefit the community.
Letter from the Director

Dear CCTSI Community Engagement and Health Equity friends and partners, I and our staff are excited to present to you this annual report covering 2023 and the first part of 2024. We’ve transitioned to a new main grant cycle for CCTSI starting in September 2024, which secures us for a seven year funding cycle.

I’d like to draw your attention especially to some important work done by the PACT to live into the Health Equity addition to our Core’s name. Last summer a task force convened to develop a specific definition of Health Equity for our work, and this was approved during our Annual Fall Retreat. The resulting Health Equity Statement is included on page 3 of this report. I think this is a wonderful addition to the Core Competencies developed the previous year and both are now on the landing page for our Core on the CCTSI website.

Secondly, the PACT voted at our Fall Retreat to give each of our Community Research Liaisons (CRLs) a full vote on the PACT, culminating a 15 year journey of bringing our CRLs fully to the table. This has resulted in significant revisions to our Rules of Operation, cementing this significant advance in how we work.

2023 Comings and Goings

In 2023, we were thrilled to welcome a number of new folks to our CCTSI-CEHE team and had to say farewell to several as well.

• Elected PACT members have a term of three years, renewable once, and therefore most years we have turnover of PACT members cycling off from their service period. In 2023, we said farewell to Andrea (Anne) Nederveld, Carrie Candrian, and Lilia Cervantes. In filling these empty seats, we received 3 applications/nominations, interviewed 3, and were able to accept these 3 elected positions. Through this process, we were able to welcome onto the PACT Sarah Stella, Meredith Fort, and Don Grant.

• In addition, Vanessa Reeves vacated her role in October 2023, and we welcomed Jennifer (Jen) Greig as our new administrative coordinator in December 2023. Jen holds BA and MA degrees in Religious Studies from Indiana University. Prior to working in the academic setting, she worked as a Medical Assistant in various outpatient clinics and inpatient settings. Her interests include medical ethics, health equity, and disability advocacy. When not working, Jen can usually be found curled up with a good book, enjoying the outdoors, volunteering at animal rescues, or spending time with her family (especially her seven nieces and nephews). Please join us in welcoming Jen to the team!

• Jen Ancona retired from her role as a Community Research Liaison at the end of June 2023. During her time with the CCTSI-CEHE and University of Colorado’s Department of Family Medicine, Jen was instrumental in the success of numerous studies and programs that impacted the health of people in southeast Colorado, the delivery of primary care, and researchers’ understanding of life in rural eastern Colorado.

The remainder of this report provides updates on our programs and work. Please let us know if it raises questions. We are committed to constant reflection and improvement, and we welcome your voice.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Nease, Jr., M.D.
Director, Community Engagement & Health Equity, University of Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute
CCTSI Community Engagement and Health Equity Core

Community Engagement and Health Equity (CEHE) is critical to increase the reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance of clinical and translational research. The CEHE core aims to give communities a voice in the research that is important to them, and works by engaging the community in the full continuum of medical and health services research. Integrating these bidirectional partnerships into the research enterprise promotes collaboration, enhances public trust, and increases the University’s capacity to conduct community-relevant science.

The Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI) is a collaborative enterprise between University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Denver, and Boulder, as well as Colorado State University, six affiliated hospitals and health care organizations, and numerous community organizations with a goal to accelerate the translation of research discoveries into improved patient care and public health. The CCTSI was created in 2008 with funding from the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) initiative of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The CCTSI works to transform the way communities and researchers work together to design and conduct research by integrating the needs of the community into the research structure. The goal is to improve the health of the people in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region.

The Partnership of Academicians and Communities for Translation (PACT) is the nexus of the CCTSI Community Engagement and Health Equity Core. The PACT transforms health research to balance power and responsibility between community, clinicians, and researchers to improve the health of the people of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region. Its goal is to reduce health disparities in Colorado and the region through targeted investments in community translational research initiatives and dissemination of evidence-based practices.

The PACT is composed of 14 elected members and Community Research Liaisons. Members include community leaders, health care professionals, and academicians from participating research programs.

The PACT differs from traditional Community Advisory Board models, as it is empowered by the CCTSI’s Principal Investigator to direct the financial and human resources of the CEHE Core through the CEHE staff, and community members are compensated for their time. The PACT has created a robust CEHE program that includes core services and projects designed to connect investigators and communities, teach academic and community research partners how to work together, create relationships, build trust, and make funds available for community engaged research.

PACT Mission

The Partnership of Academicians and Communities for Translation (PACT) transforms health research to balance power and responsibility between community, clinicians, and researchers to improve the health of the people of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region.
PACT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. PACT is guided by agreed upon principles with the ultimate goal of reducing health disparities in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region.

2. Community translation includes bi-directional exchanges of ideas and information through equal research partnerships and mutual respect between communities and researchers.

3. The work of the PACT will build on current health and social science research and best practice.

4. There are new discoveries to be made and best practices to be developed in translation and community based participatory research.

5. The diversity of individuals and of our communities is our strength and should be leveraged to increase health equity and reduce health disparities.

Team & Core Partners

CEHE CORE STAFF

CCTSI
Don Nease, Director
Montelle Taméz, Deputy Director
Kaylee Rivera, Program Manager
Mary Fisher, Project Manager
Jen Greig, Admin Coordinator

Trailhead Institute
Sarah Lampe, Executive Director
Ben Robb, Director of Projects & Partnerships
Yuliza Hernandez, Projects Manager
Gillian Grant, Senior Program Manager

PACT MEMBERS

Community Research Liaisons
Jen Ancona (retired in 2023)
Gordon Duvall
Javier Garcia Arellano
Crystal Loudhawk-Hedgepeth
Marlayna Martinez
Charlene Barrientos Ortiz
Griselda Peña-Jackson
Lorenzo Ramirez
May Tran
Leslie Wright

Elected Community Members
George Autobee
Ricardo Gonzalez-Fisher
Djuana Harvell
Lisa Lucero
Charment Moussata
Antonio Sandoval
Andrew Thang

Elected Academic Members
Matt DeCamp
Meredith Fort
Don Grant
Eric Ishiwata
Carrie Makarewicz
Bruno Sobral
Sarah Stella
Community Research Liaisons (CRLs)

As part of the CEHE Core, the PACT directs resources to a team of CRLs who work in diverse urban and rural communities throughout the state; their work is guided by community as well as the overarching CEHE Program and the PACT. The CRLs build bridges between health research, clinical practice, and community health initiatives while educating others about the purpose and value of equitable and participatory research partnerships. They engage local community organizations, community partners, patients, and health providers to identify community health priorities and can assist research investigators in designing locally relevant research studies that address real community, partner, patient and health provider needs. CRLs are connected to the communities they serve and have an insider’s understanding of their community’s assets and challenges. Ultimately, the nature of their work stems from the community’s needs. There is considerable trust between a liaison and his/her community, which allows access to local residents and leaders on a more meaningful level. This infrastructure is critical to the success of the CEHE core and has created a model for sustainable community engagement.

The State Networks of Colorado Ambulatory Practices & Partners (SNOCAP)

SNOCAP is an umbrella network of Practice Based Research Networks (PBRNs) affiliated with the University of Colorado Denver. The Adult and Child Center for Research on Delivery Systems (ACCORDS) and the Department of Family Medicine provide central support for the consortium. SNOCAP member networks are housed within the Department of Family Medicine and the Division of General Pediatrics. SNOCAP member networks collaborate on projects and studies, share resources, and jointly sponsor an annual meeting of member practices and clinicians. SNOCAP works closely with practices across the state to develop and answer research questions that are relevant to primary care clinicians in the communities across the entire state.

Trailhead Institute

While academic-community partnerships offer new opportunities for generating and exchanging knowledge and performing research, they also raise new social, ethical and administrative challenges. The CEHE Program has developed a unique solution to these obstacles, involving an innovative partnership with the Trailhead Institute. Trailhead has established administrative systems that allow meaningful community representation and participation in research while eliminating the “red tape” that exists in institutional bureaucracies. Trailhead serves as an administrative liaison between the University and Community to create efficiencies in the distribution of funding and other resources to community-based partners and to improve responsiveness to community administrative needs.

Adult & Child Center for Outcomes Research & Delivery Science (ACCORDS)

ACCORDS is a unique environment supporting innovative and interdisciplinary research across the CU Anschutz campus. ACCORDS brings together a large group of investigators from multiple disciplines, some who have their primary office at ACCORDS, and others who collaborate with ACCORDS personnel, programs and cores, while maintaining an off-site research home. Our methodologic cores provide support for the development of new projects, grant proposals for faculty, consultative support to investigators, as well as support our programmatic areas.

ECHO Colorado

ECHO is a nonprofit dedicated to increasing everyone’s capacity to manage complex health issues by using technology to bring professionals from all disciplines together to share knowledge, experiences and viewpoints with one another.
The mHealth Impact Laboratory is an incubator for innovative, health technology and disease management initiatives based in the Colorado School of Public Health.

Institute for Research in the Social Sciences (IRISS)
IRISS aims to connect and support social scientists with other researchers, as well as university, community, and industry partners. They ethically empower research teams and partners to address complex challenges through applied social science. At their core, they:

- Enhance social science research capacity
- Improve grant competitiveness campus-wide
- Promote interdisciplinary research networking opportunities
- Provide and support research methods training

Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center (RMPRC)
The Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center (RMPRC) is housed in the Colorado School of Public Health on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. The RMPRC is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded Prevention Research Center (PRC). As a PRC, we work to identify public health problems and focus on the development, testing and evaluation of public health interventions that can be applied widely, particularly in underserved communities.
2023 CEHE Program Results

Colorado Immersion Training in Community Engagement

The Colorado Immersion Training (CIT) in Community Engagement is a unique community-campus educational initiative that aims to introduce an expanded pool of researchers to community-based participatory research (CBPR) and community engagement. CIT supports a change in the research trajectory of academic health researchers, program developers, and graduate students towards community engagement. The program occurs on campus and in various community settings: urban African American, urban Asian Refugee, urban Latino, urban American Indian/Alaska Native, rural northeast Colorado, and rural San Luis Valley. Components include a four-week online curriculum, a half-day seminar related to CBPR, five-day immersion experience in the target community, structured mentoring, and follow-up. CIT is offered once per year and typically includes 2-3 community "tracks".

Throughout much of 2023, a small team met to work on drafting an academic paper titled: "Colorado Immersion Training in Community Engagement: Ten Years of Learning and Doing." Manuscript submitted March 2024. In April 2023, Lorenzo Ramirez and Javier Garcia presented about the CIT program at the Association for Clinical and Translational Science conference in Washington DC.

2023 CIT Track: The Intersection of Colorado Communities

This was a new experience to engage multiple communities across Colorado to understand and work through the intersections that are being addressed in their respective communities. This year, CIT worked to explore the meaning of intersectionality, one definition being: the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Many communities have overlapping concerns such as housing, the economy and education. This training offers participants the opportunity to learn directly from the community about these topics and explore the link to health and health care.

2023 Track Leads: Javier Garcia and May Tran, with specific intersectionalities from: Leslie Wright, Gordon Duvall, Crystal LoudHawk Hedgepeth, Charlene Barrientos Ortiz, and Lorenzo Ramirez.
Application and Acceptance Process

In 2023, 18 individuals applied for this new track and 7 researchers embarked on this journey together. They participated in two months of prep work including introductory meetings and readings about the community and CBPR, had a one-week immersive experience in community, and finished the experience with 3 debrief and work in progress meetings.

Past Track Evaluations

The Evaluation Center conducted follow up interviews with CIT alumni to learn how the program impacted their approach to community-based research and how their learnings were applied. Evaluators conducted one-on-one semi structured interviews with academicians who participated in the 2021 and 2022 CIT cohorts.

The CIT alumni interview protocol explored progress in achieving 6-month goals (established at the conclusion of the program), the degree to which CBPR characterized current research endeavors and/or how CBPR principles influenced current approaches to research, the quality of post-program support, and suggestions for program improvement.

BY THE NUMBERS

14
CIT Alumni were interviewed (of 19 total)

12
CIT Community Partners were interviewed (of 39 total)

CRL track leads provided the contact information for community partners who had supported the immersion week in various ways. These interviews were conducted in English and Spanish, and partners were compensated for their time by the CEHE Core. The community partner interview protocol primarily explored perspectives on how the CIT program has engaged with partners, any ongoing collaboration with researchers, and overall program feedback. Interviews were audio recorded with permission, transcribed, and thematically coded.

Interview Highlights

Alumni Feedback

- CIT alumni shared a variety of research related outcomes, including successful grant applications, new partnerships, and support for community health initiatives.
- Similar to previous years, alumni expressed having meaningful experiences that shifted their perspectives and values related to how research is conducted.
- Alumni offered several suggestions for program improvement including providing more networking and mentoring opportunities to connect with other CBPR researchers, ways to stay connected with others who had participated in CIT, and successful examples of CBPR grants.

Community Partner Feedback

- Overall, community partners widely reported positive experiences and interactions with the CIT program.
- Many partners reported that collaboration with the CIT has led to increased trust in research, specifically increased trust for the University of Colorado.
- Community partners requested more opportunities to learn about program outcomes and to engage in community/academic networking.

Number of interviews by CIT Track Community and year

2021:
- 4 - Rural Southeast Colorado
- 2 - Urban Denver/Aurora
- 1 - Urban Latino/a/x

2022:
- 3 - Rural Southeast Colorado
- 4 - Urban Denver/Aurora

TOTAL: 14 interviews

Number of interviews by CIT Track Community and Year

2021:
- 4 - Rural Southeast Colorado
- 3 - Urban Denver/Aurora
- 5 - Urban Latino/a/x

2022:
- The community partners supported both the 2021 and the 2022 program year.

Total: 12 interviews
Research Productivity

Research productivity resulting from a program like CIT can often take considerable time to be fully realized. As evaluators check in with alumni between six to 18 months after their immersion week, research outcomes are often in beginning stages of development. Alumni, however, did describe key milestones they had achieved with CBPR since their experience or other plans in development.

Notable research outcomes that alumni shared with evaluators included:

- Two alumni successfully secured grant funding to move forward with projects.
- One alumnus described helping to forge a partnership between the College of Nursing and the Asia Pacific Development Center.
- One researcher completed conducting a needs assessment with a network of behavioral health providers in the community to inform potential future initiatives. They also joined a task force to support behavioral health care in the community based on connections they made during CIT.
- One alumnus described developing an exciting new community relationship. Additionally, their experience with CIT led them to develop a service-learning program for medical residents to promote the value of community integrated projects and to support medical residents pursuing non-research related service projects for the community.
- One alumnus was excited about the prospects of supporting rural health screening initiatives based on their research background and connections made during the CIT program.
- Other alumni described that, while they had not yet engaged in new work specifically related to CBPR, they had begun to integrate the values and learnings they gained from the CIT into their established research endeavors.

“I think differently about my research, and about my interactions with my patients as a clinician, and about my place in the community in general after that experience. It has influenced the overall direction of my research. ... It has really helped me understand how I can make my research more equitable by using community engagement. I have changed the direction of some of the ways I’ve interacted with the community during my current research project.” -CIT Alumni

“It felt like there was never a wasted moment. Everything we did was very high yield and very educational for me. I was just really impressed.” -CIT Alumni

“I’m very careful with what I allow myself to be involved with. I’m very glad I did [get involved with CIT] because we have these individuals from academia coming down, being immersed in the communities, and learning about what goes on on-the-ground. I think that’s incredibly important. That helps bridge the gap between academia and practice. If they’re going to talk about public health in the classroom, ... it’s good that they’re down here in the trenches learning what’s going on.” -CIT Community Partner

“I think that the program does a great job at making those connections and trying to build that relationship, and that’s wonderful. That’s why we jump into this stuff because of those connections it gives us and the opportunity to reach out to additional resources. I think the program does a great job.” -CIT Community Partner

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Pilot Grant Program: Improving Research Through Community-Academic Partnerships

One of the CEHE Core’s key functions is to build capacity in community-academic partnerships in order to transform the existing community research infrastructure using community-based participatory research (CBPR) principles to translate established efficacy into effective implementation at the community or clinic level. The CEHE Core Pilot Grant Program is intended to support community-academic partnerships to perform pilot studies that will strengthen relationships and produce preliminary data for future competitive grant applications. Funded projects encompass partnership development, project planning, capacity building (i.e., data collection and management, recruitment and outreach, etc.) as well as implementation of research projects. The development of innovative interventions or the adaptation and implementation of existing advances within the community setting is the expected long-term outcome. We fund two cohorts per year (one partnership development; one joint pilot).

Technical Assistance and Coaching for Pilot Awardees

Community Engagement Pilot Grantees complete 8 hours of training in Community Engaged Research. This training is separated into two components: 1) The first four hours of training is a workshop focused on partnership development and the principles of both community engaged research and community-based participatory research, and 2) Grantees then complete an additional 4 hours of coaching specific to their project needs and partnership development with a person who has lived experience, skills, and knowledge about community engagement and research.

- **Let’s Get Started Training:** A hands-on interactive training for community and academic partners awarded the partnership development pilot grant to jumpstart the relationship and development of their partnership. Awardees dive deep into the principles of community-based participatory research, including community engagement and translational research, and lay out the resources and tools available to them for the duration of their grant.

- **Let’s Keep it Going Training:** Awardees of the Joint Pilot Project Pilot Grant are given the opportunity to refresh their understanding of Community-Based Participatory Research, as well as, set the focus and intention of their project with guided support through the logistics of their research, including Institutional Review Board Submission and approval, Capacity Building, and dissemination of results. Training includes hands-on utilization of tools and resources available to them for the duration of their grant.

- **Pilot Grants Coaching:** Coaches provide up to 4 hours of coaching meetings to discuss partnership development and Community Engaged Research, as well as discussions about the Community Capacity Building Tool (CCBT) and CBPR in general.

- **Community Capacity Building Tool (CCBT):** The CCBT is used by The Evaluation Center of the University of Colorado Denver, external evaluator partner of the CCTSI, to assess the degree to which pilot awardees integrate CBPR principles into their projects. The tool is also used as a guide to understand the degree in which an effective partnership is developed between an academic and a community partner. Since the tool is designed to be filled out by both partners collaboratively, it also fosters crucial conversations among partners related to the primary CBPR principles. Results from the CCBT have been used to elucidate common challenges and inform grantee coaching and training.

2023 Pilot Grant Funding Summary

Cycle 14 (5/1/2022-4/30-2023)

| 24 Letters of Intent: 11 Joint Pilot / 13 Partnership Development | 21 Applications: 9 Joint Pilot / 12 Partnership Development | 10 Funded Pilot Grants: 4 Joint Pilot / 6 Partnership Development | For a total of $128,000 in funded work |
**CYCLE 14 HIGHLIGHTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Equity</th>
<th>Partnerships in Cohort 14 addressed three domains of health equity</th>
<th>Grantees focused on 1) healthy living conditions and community space, 2) reliable public services and safety, and 3) fair opportunities in education, jobs and economic development.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Productivity</td>
<td>Cohort 14 demonstrated research productivity</td>
<td>Grantees contributed to the development of five manuscripts and nine grant proposals, culminating in $283,000 of external funds secured to continue their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy-Related Impacts</td>
<td>Three partnerships reported having practice and service policy impacts</td>
<td>These projects have the potential to influence how services are delivered and inform how services and resources should be made available.</td>
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**Cycle 15 (5/1/2023-4/30-2024)**

One Joint Pilot and three Partnership Development grants comprise the 2023 cohort. Pilot Grant funding began May 1, 2023, and the LGS training session was held on May 5th, 2023 with 7 trainees in attendance. Due to only one Joint Pilot award being included in the 2023 cohort, an informal information session was held with the two grantees and their coach. Evaluators sent the training evaluation to nine project partners, and responses were received from four of the grantees for a response rate of 44.4%. The survey was sent out on May 11th, 2023 and was closed on May 30th, 2023. Seventy-five percent (n=3) of survey respondents were academic partners, while 25% (n=1) of respondents were community-based partners. Partnership Development grantees represented 100% (n=4) of survey respondents. No Joint Pilot awardees responded to the survey. Partnership Development grantees who attended the Let’s Get Started training reported overall high levels of satisfaction with the training. 75% (n=3) agreed or strongly agree that they were satisfied with the training and that the training was a good use of their time. Additionally, all grantees felt the training offered an opportunity to grow their partnership with their co-grantee. Results on the CCBT showed statistically significant growth (p>.05) from pre to post for all items. Historically, grantees have consistently demonstrated the most growth on items relating to the domains of participation, leadership, and skills, knowledge, and learning.

**Cycle 16 (August 1, 2024–July 31, 2025)**

While Cycle 16 doesn’t officially begin until 2024, work was started in 2023 to: 1) host the applicant webinar for Cycle 16; 2) update the Request for Applications (RFA) to be more inclusive to community and incorporate some health equity components; and 3) revamp the application questions, scoring rubrics (to align with NIH), and reviewer training.
Community Consults

CEHE Community Engagement Consults

Consultation services for academic researchers and study team members regarding ethical issues that arise in preparation for and/or in the process of doing research with and in community. Community Engagement Consults are intended to supplement the traditional Institutional Review Board approval process, especially when concerns regarding working in partnership with communities arise.

There are four types of consultation services offered through the CEHE Core:

1. Consultation regarding a Plan for Community Consultation for Emergency Research Exception from Informed Consent.
2. Community Engagement Consult with the CEHE Consult team and relevant community and/or academic experts.
3. Individual consultations on community engagement in research activities with members of the PACT, CEHE Staff and/or Community Research Liaisons.
4. Community Clinical Trials Advisory Board (CCTAB) consultations.

Community Clinical Trials Advisory Board (CCTAB)

The Community Clinical Trials Advisory Board (CCTAB) is composed of researchers and community members, who, through authentic, equitable, and informed engagement, strive to create an experience between communities and researchers that increases the diversity of participants in clinical research with the ultimate goal of improving research relevance for all communities. The CCTAB is working to build a research community that is inclusive of diverse participants, staff, investigators and partners that reflect the needs and disparities of the State of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region.

CCTAB Objectives

To advance health literacy related to community participation in clinical trials by providing education to community and cultural competence to researchers.

- To strengthen the protection of, respect for, and empowerment of participants in clinical trials
- To improve the relevance and quality of clinical research and its usefulness to communities
- To ensure that research questions reflect a major concern of community members as well as offering realistic solutions to these questions
- To enhance the relevance and application of research data by all participants
- To value the different skills, knowledge and experience of community members and researchers to address complex problems

In 2023, the CCTAB met regularly to develop materials to educate community members about clinical trials. The materials were designed to help readers:

- Make an informed decision about participating in a research study
- Understand why clinical research is important (and relevant) to individuals and their community
- Understand the circumstances under which research is conducted in a “patient-centered manner” (what to expect if research
Education and Training

In addition to our pilot grant trainings and coaching in-service activities, the CEHE core designs and implements tailored trainings and educational opportunities for various audiences by request. Education and training activities from 2023 are described below.

Facilitation Principles Training – San Luis Valley

Overview and Purpose: Pilot test for a Facilitation Principles training. In 2023 was the first time the CCTSI-CEHE team offered this specific training, and the goal is to learn from this training process and in the future offer this training free of charge to communities who would like more skills in facilitation.

Training details: A group of 12 community partners from across the San Luis Valley gathered on Saturday, March 18, 2023 to participate in this training conducted by Charlene Barrientos Ortiz, Montelle Tamez, and Mary Fisher. Overall, those trained shared that they are really interested in facilitation and toward the end of the day even began pointing out facilitation techniques that they’ve seen uses in other contexts. The group being trained had varied backgrounds in previous facilitation skills, personal backgrounds, and personality typed. The group shared the sentiment that this training really had a ripple effect and they wished that more people were present!

Quarterly Community Engagement Forum

Overview and Purpose: The CEHE Core develops education and training programs for multiple different audiences. The CCTSI Community Engagement and Health Equity Core and the ACCORDS Education Program are partnering to offer a forum for investigators and study teams conducting community/stakeholder-engaged research. The Community Engagement Forum runs quarterly and includes brief seminars from leading engagement scholars and community research partners. Additionally, this serves as a learning community for sharing best practices and lessons learned. The forum is geared towards supporting investigators and study teams throughout design, conduct and dissemination of engaged research. Each forum is recorded and posted on our website under the Community Engagement and Health Equity Services section.

Evaluations show us that respondents want to consider the following as topics or presenters in the future:

• More Black and/or indigenous CBPR researchers in the field who can add their perspectives to the topic of community engagement.

• Community-based as it applies to Pride or disabled communities, standalone or intersectionally.

Research Readiness

The CCTSI Community Engagement and Health Equity Core (CEHE) has developed a series of trainings,
educational activities, and funding opportunities to build capacity in community-academic research partnerships. These trainings are now combined into a comprehensive “Research Readiness” training program to equip Community Based Organizations (CBOs) with the knowledge and tools to design their own organizational strategies and policies related to research and to effectively and equitably partner with researchers in all phases of the research process. Research Readiness for CBOs includes but goes beyond research fundamentals and is personalized to meet the needs of the CBO. Research Readiness will guide community-based organizations in establishing internal guidelines and processes for ensuring that research partnerships are strategic, effective, financially viable and beneficial to the organization and the communities it serves. Development and formalization of the Research Readiness program is ongoing and a pilot is scheduled to begin in 2024 with the Village Exchange Center.

Special Projects

Special projects are projects that are intermittent or associated with specific funding streams that are in addition to the core programs described in this document. The CEHE Core participates in a number of special projects each year. Special projects may occur in partnership with other academic or community organizations and must be aligned with the mission of the PACT.

Colorado Community Engagement Alliance Against Health Disparities (CO-CEAL)

The Colorado Community Engagement Alliance Against Health Disparities Team (CO-CEAL) is a partnership between the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus (namely the CCTSI-CEHE), Servicios de la Raza, the Trailhead Institute, and dozens of trusted local community members. The mission of CO-CEAL is to empower communities through trustworthy information, active community engagement and outreach to the people most impacted by health disparities while building long-lasting community partnerships to improve diversity and inclusion in health research. Work is ongoing with the following communities: Urban Latina/o/x community in Pueblo and Metro Denver, Rural Latina/o/x community in the San Luis Valley, Urban Black/African American community in Metro Denver, Rural African Immigrant community in Ft. Morgan and Greeley, and the American Indian/Alaska Native community in Metro Denver. Funding for CO-CEAL comes from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

CO-CEAL Project Activities Include:

- Cohort study with community-level interventions and a repeated cross-sectional survey at the individual level to evaluate the impact of messaging, including questions from the NIH CEAL Common Survey.
- Intervene with proven Boot Camp Translation methods to translate information about topics of high community importance into culturally sensitive messaging and materials, using trusted community partners as communication channels for these messages and materials.
- In September 2023, CO-CEAL BCT Leadership led a BCT Facilitation training for 14 community member facilitators interested in becoming trained in the BCT facilitation process.
- Assess the reach of efforts into target communities using Social Network Analysis.
- Create a Community Clinical Trials Advisory Board to establish linkages between those conducting trials and communities, providing ready access to partnerships with community members who can inform recruitment methods and materials.

CASCHEW – Collaborating Across Sectors for Colorado’s Health Equity and Wellness

CO-CEAL hosted their first state-wide conference, called Convening Across Sectors for Colorado’s Health Equity and Wellness (CASCHEW) in the fall of 2022. Since then, in 2023 the CO-CEAL team worked to debrief from work that came out of that conference and planned the 2024 CASCHEW conference to be held in March 2024. Additionally in 2023, the CO-CEAL team secured funding to continue working with four of the five focus Colorado Communities from years 1 and 2. The 3rd year of funding came in early 2023 and extends through March 2024. The focus of year 3 shifts from COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccinations to instead highlight and explore community-specific health disparities.
iHeard
As part of CO-CEAL, the iHeard team is working to understand and address the spread of health information in communities by conducting weekly surveys of community members in participating regions. This initiative helps to build knowledge in communities about the health-related topics being surveyed. Community members take weekly surveys about the health information they are hearing in their communities and receive a gift card for each completed survey. Responses about health topics in the surveys are sent back to the community each week.

Community Engagement Research Exchange and Networking Forum
The annual Research Exchange and Networking Forum is an event, hosted in either a community or academic setting, which is designed to: share information about flourishing partnerships between community-based organizations and academic researchers from across the state; provide a platform to learn about programs designed to improve relationships and build trust between academicians and communities and how you can get involved; and showcase work in translational and community-engaged research through a poster session.

The Research Exchange and Networking Forum is held in partnership with various groups over the years. In its current form, the forum is held along with the CO-CEAL project team at their Convening Across Sectors for Colorado’s Health Equity and Wellness (CASCHEW) conference. In 2023, there was no CASCHEW, therefore the CCTSI-CEHE team worked to plan for the Research Exchange and Networking Forum that will be part of the 2024 CASCHEW conference, which will switch names to Collaborating Across Sectors for Colorado’s Health Equity and Wellness. As additional context, since there was no 2023 CASCHEW, in 2022 the Research Exchange and Networking Forum hosted a total of 14 poster presenters.

Research, Engagement and Action on COVID-19 (REACH-OUT)
A project aimed to better understand the barriers to testing as well as the factors that increase community risk of COVID-19. They hoped to ultimately improve the COVID-19 testing rates among five underserved or socially or medically vulnerable populations in Denver, Colorado. The REACH-OUT project partnered with Colorado Community Engagement Alliance (CO-CEAL) and Trailhead Institute to reach Black and African American communities, Spanish-speaking populations, and communities in the San Luis Valley.

Older Adult Research Specialist Program (OARS)
Description: OARS is an innovative solution to the problem of a lack of participant diversity in clinical trials; the OARS team is working to help educate and recruit adults over 50 who want to be innovators and change agents, educators, community engagement specialists, communication specialists, and important roles working with research faculty. Multiple CRLs have gone through the OARS program, while other CRLs are part of the OARS training team.

Dissemination
Presentations and Publications
- Sarah E. Brewer, Mary Fisher, Linda Zittleman, Meredith K. Warman, Meredith Fort, Emma Gilchrist, Jameel Mallory, Rebecca Mullen, Jose Barron, Amanda Skendadore, Farduus Y. Ahmed, Crystal LoudHawk-Hedgepeth, Montelle Tamez, Bethany M. Kwan, and Donald E. Nease, 2024: Rapid Community Translation in the Colorado CEAL (CO-CEAL) Program: Transcreating Messaging


• Throughout much of 2023, a small team met to work on drafting an academic paper titled: "Colorado Immersion Training in Community Engagement: Ten Years of Learning and Doing." Manuscript submitted March 2024.