

## **Vision of the Center**

To become a nationally-recognized Center of Excellence for promoting health equity through quality research, education, and community engagement.

## **Mission of the Center**

To promote equity and social justice in health and health care by leading collaborative efforts to generate and disseminate evidence-based, policy-relevant solutions.

## **Opportunities and Challenges**

The Center has a number of advantages including strong internal support from UNMC, solid infrastructure, extensive community partnerships, and a team of staff who have the experience and expertise in engaging minority and underserved populations in community-based health promotion activities. Currently, a pressing task for the Center is to leverage the resources at disposal to ensure a strong and balanced portfolio of research, education and service with a focus on health disparities. The Center needs to steadily build up its research capacity to make the necessary transitions and preparations for the Center to become a NIMHD Center of Excellence in minority health and health disparities in the near future.

## **Goals**

***Goal #1: Enhance the role of UNMC in addressing disparities in health outcomes among Nebraskans through consistent community engagement, partnerships, and advocacy.***

### **A. Significance**

- (1) Community engagement and service is an integral part of the mission of UNMC.
- (2) The Center has already established extensive partnerships with a significant number of community leaders and stakeholders.
- (3) A strong community engagement component will place the Center at an advantageous position when it applies for a NIMHD grant on Center of Excellence in minority health and health disparities in the near future.

### **B. Major Outcome Measures**

- (1) Number of new community partnerships the Center has established each year
- (2) Number of Nebraskans who have benefited from the Center's community-based health promotion programs each year
- (3) Effectiveness of the Center's community-based health promotion programs as indicated by the program evaluation data collected by the Center
- (4) Satisfaction by the Center's partners and collaborators in the communities based on feedback from the Center's Community Advisory Board
- (5) Number of interviews and media reports regarding the Center's community-based health promotion programs each year

### **C. Strategic plan and Milestones to Success**

- (1) Review the current community-based health promotion programs at the Center and prioritize those that have proven cost effective in reducing health disparities as well as those that would contribute the most to the Center's research agenda.
- (2) Establish a CRHD Community Advisory Board and host regular meetings to improve the quality of the Center's community outreach programs.
- (3) Engage stakeholders including government agencies in the Center's community outreach programs and create synergies that would benefit both sides.
- (4) Explore the options for the Center's health promotion programs to reach and benefit rural residents in Nebraska.
- (5) Pitch stories to the media to increase awareness of health disparities and promote health literacy.

**Goal #2: Promote translational research that would help reduce disparities in health status and health care at the local, state, national, and global levels.**

**A. Significance**

- (1) The reputation as well as the influence of an academic center is usually determined by its research capacity and performance.
- (2) Improved research capacity at the Center will increase the chance of securing external funding support for the Center and eventually pave the way for the Center to submit a solid proposal for a NIMHD grant on Center of Excellence (P20 or P60).

**B. Major Outcome Measures**

- (1) Number of peer-reviewed publications by Center faculty and staff each year
- (2) Number of conference presentations by Center faculty and staff each year
- (3) Number of surveys and program evaluations conducted by the Center each year
- (4) Number of new partnerships established for research purposes each year

**C. Strategic Plan and Milestones to Success**

- (1) Identify at least three focus areas in health disparities research based on the strength of the Center as well as the significance of these areas to public health in Nebraska. Potential focus areas could include but are not limited to: obesity, diabetes, cancer-related disparities, rural health, maternal and child health, mental health and so forth.
- (2) Integrate and streamline the Center's resources to focus on the identified research areas and steadily build up the Center's research capacity in these areas as indicated by peer-reviewed publications and grant applications.
- (3) Provide cost-effective training in research methodology, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, and grant writing skills to faculty and staff at the Center.
- (4) Engage interested staff members in writing academic papers and familiarize them with the whole process.
- (5) Be more aggressive in exploring potential opportunities of collaboration with faculty in the College, in particular with those who are currently affiliated with the Center.
- (6) Cultivate a culture that appreciates and values research at the Center. The current incentive structure as well as the criteria used in annual evaluation will be revisited and revised if needed to make sure that quality research is rewarded at the Center.
- (7) Add a module to the Center's website highlighting its publications and important research findings.
- (8) Compile a report on the status quo of health disparities in Nebraska based on most recent statistics available.
- (9) (1)-(8) will be implemented during Year 1. By the end of Year 2, Center faculty and staff should at least generate 10 peer-reviewed publications and 15-20 conference presentations. These numbers are expected to further increase as research is becoming more established and prioritized at the Center over time.

**Goal #3: Diversify the sources of funding support for the Center and gradually reduce its dependence on internal support from UNMC.**

**A. Significance**

- (1) Currently most of the funding support received by the Center comes from UNMC.
- (2) More sources of funding support will strengthen the Center's financial security and enable it to further improve its research capacity and performance.

**B. Major Outcome Measures**

- (1) Number of grant applications submitted each year
- (2) Types and sizes of grants that have been applied for
- (3) Results of submitted grant applications (scored, funded, size of grant, and so forth)

- (4) The proportion of the Center budget that comes from UNMC
- (5) Number of new partnerships established each year for grant application purposes

**C. Strategic plan and Milestones to Success**

- (1) Have regular brainstorming meetings at the Center to develop grant ideas based on the significance of the topics and strengths of the Center.
- (2) Transform the current “service oriented” model of community engagement at the Center into “service-and-data oriented” model of community engagement so that unmet health needs as well as the effectiveness of the implemented health promotion programs can be more adequately assessed based on the data collected. Findings from these assessments are expected to contribute to scholarly publications and grant applications at the Center.
- (3) Review the current incentive structure at the Center and make sure that there are incentives to motivate Center staff to actively participate in grant applications.
- (4) Engage scholars both within and outside of UNMC to explore potential niches and synergies that would lead to collaborations in grant applications.
- (5) Strengthen and continue to expand the Center’s ties and working relationships with community leaders and stakeholders and prioritize those ties that could help diversify the funding support for the Center.
- (6) Collect updated information about emerging grant opportunities for the Center.
- (7) Submit at least five major grant applications per year to obtain funding support from local, state, and federal sources.
- (8) Establish the needed publication and grant records as an integral part of the preparations for the submission of a NIMHD Center of Excellence grant by 2016.
- (9) Secure at least 30% of the Center’s 2010 budget from external sources including but not limited to research grants, contracts, and partnership agreements by 2016.

**Goal #4: Support UNMC’s education initiatives in health disparities**

**A. Significance**

- (1) The magnitude as well as the persistence of health disparities poses a serious challenge to public health today.
- (2) The Center’s research and community engagement activities can provide unique learning and training opportunities for UNMC students, faculty, and staff who are interested in health disparities.

**B. Major Outcome Measures**

- (1) Number of courses on health disparities offered by Center faculty and staff each year
- (2) Number of seminars/guest lectures on health disparities hosted by the Center each year
- (3) Number of internship positions the Center and its partners provide to UNMC students each year
- (4) Number of UNMC students who work as research assistants at the Center each year

**C. Strategic plan and Milestones to Success**

- (1) Host regularly a Guest Lecture Series on Health Disparities by inviting renowned scholars in the field to come to UNMC to lecture on health disparities.
- (2) Contribute to the curriculum at College of Public Health by offering courses on health disparities on a regular basis.
- (3) Provide UNMC students with internship opportunities based on the needs of the Center’s community partners and UNMC degree programs.
- (4) Recruit UNMC students to work as research assistants at the Center and actively involve them in the Center’s research projects.

**Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness**

Successful implementation of the proposed strategic plan and accomplishment of the aforementioned goals requires skillful and dedicated leadership that would inspire and motivate each member at the Center to do their part of the job to fulfill the mission of the Center. Internally, the Center needs to have a clear and efficient division of labor among its members to make sure that each member fully understands their responsibility and is doing what he or she is good at. The leadership team at the Center needs to have regular meetings with staff members to review progress and resolve emerging problems in a timely fashion. It is important for the Center to cultivate a culture of mutual respect, appreciation, and support. Externally, the Center needs to work closely with the College of Public Health and other stakeholders both on and off campus to ensure and improve access to needed resources and support for the Center.