

THE URBAN HEALTH INITIATIVE
ADVANCING EQUITY IN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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Atlanta is experiencing great disparity in health outcomes. Poor people and people of color are more likely to live shorter and sicker lives and are less likely to survive a host of chronic illnesses. Emory Urban Health Initiative (UHI) aims to end these disparities by working with underserved communities in metro Atlanta as well as with the students, professionals, volunteers, and organizations who partner with those communities. UHI provides health disparity education and advocacy, builds collaborative partnerships, and develops best-practice models with underserved communities to advance equity in health and well-being. Our tri-part mission focuses on: educating current and future health practitioners; engaging the community to create a sustainable infrastructure of health and reduce health disparities; and advancing research through culturally competent and community-informed interventions that meet the highest standards of excellence

Programs:

1. Emory Drexel Collaboration

The goal of the UHI/CNSJ collaboration is to increase healing services for young people in the community affected by trauma by creating CYPHER healing groups and supporting the development of a hospital-based intervention for survivors of violence seen at Emory Medical Center. In Philadelphia, the project will expand community partnerships which will increase opportunities for young people to connect to programs which address the social determinants of health such as food insecurity by increasing access to food and through community gardening to promote well-being.

This project will identify higher risk communities and determine community-based priorities for Well-Being; create a well-being/resiliency assessment in multiple communities; determine community-based priorities; create guides/manuals to Well-Being and Roadmaps to Replication; evaluation of authentic partnerships by surveying new and old partners; and host a number of CYPHER groups, community facing activities and 2 conferences. Two cities (Atlanta and Philadelphia) will have a guide to implementing strategies for well-being and programs that address healing from trauma and social determinants. Through a series of guides and convenings, participants will benefit from a peer learning collaborative. These tools will serve as a road map for reimaging and implementing health, well-being, and equity.

2. COVID-19 App

A new tool to screen track, and foresee your organization’s ability to manage the community spread of the coronavirus. TechTank COVID-19, an international leader in combating diseases like COVID-19, has developed a smartphone app and associated website that support and enhance public health officials,’ medical providers,’ other individuals’ and organizations’ capacity to manage and overcome the devastation and adverse impact the COVID-19 pandemic. The app allows individuals to self-screen for COVID-19 and enables real-time viewing of positive screening counts. Individuals and organizations can then utilize in-app resources to develop locally tailored containment and mitigation strategies. Data are stored in an open-access repository, and counts are shared with facilities that, in turn, can respond and follow up immediately. This system allows individuals/organizations to assess the prevalence of cases, contact tracing, contact mapping, and acuity of operation care plans needed on a day-to-day basis, and much more.

For this initiative, we have instituted a phased approach. It is anticipated that we will better understand the needs of institutions, parishioners/congregations and other faith-based organizations’ capacity to effectively predict and manage the coronavirus’ affect at the local level.

3. Healthy Way (Healthy Retail Atlanta)



The Healthy Way Program is made up of several community organizations (Atlanta Community Food Bank, HEALing Community Center, Emory Urban Health Initiative, Open Hand, and Wayfield Foods). Our goal is to improve the health and well-being of our communities by increasing access to food and health services. In this program, store employees are trained to be nutrition and health advocates so that they can, in turn, provide guidance to store customers, family and friends. This program provides a “layered” approach to reinforcing healthy activities by making direct connections between grocery stores and community health centers.

4. Atlanta Doula Connect

Atlanta Doula Connect is a program within Emory University's Urban Health Initiative that connects labor and delivery doulas and clients, especially providing doula support to low-wealth women and girls in Metropolitan Atlanta. Research on the value of doula support during labor and delivery, finds women who have continuous labor support (e.g., a Doula) are less likely to have cesarean delivery, medication for pain relief, operative vaginal delivery, or negative childbirth experiences. With this knowledge, the Emory University Urban Health Initiative developed and supports a Virtual Doula Program. This project includes development of a Guide to Being an Effective Virtual Doula and training, to help mitigate maternal morbidity and mortality in women of lower socioeconomic status. Georgia Tech ObsTetrics app development team developed the Atlanta Doula Connect app for the Urban Health Initiative and though they have graduated, Georgia Tech members continue to update the Atlanta Doula Connect App

5. Cancer Detecting Dogs

Emory University's Urban Health Initiative team and Grady Otolaryngology are working together to help underinsured patients in low-wealth communities in metro Atlanta have better access to cancer screening. Cancer detection dogs undergo basic training and learn to follow certain cues from their trainers. They are neither mistreated nor harmed while being trained and they build trusting and loving relationships with their handlers.

Goal: To seek ways in helping low-wealth patients have greater access to diagnostic cancer testing. Cancer sniffing dogs are the newest generation of service dogs and a resource we strive to bring to the patients and medical team at Grady Hospital.

Research: Numerous studies dating from the early 2000s to recent years have shown extensive evidence that the exceptional olfactory system of canines allows them to detect certain odors, otherwise known as VOCs (volatile organic compounds), that are thought to be biomarkers of a variety of cancers. The Atlanta-based Grady Hospital Otolaryngology Cancer Team has been researching the use of inexpensive cancer detection in order to increase detection access before and after surgery for low-wealth patients. Dr. Charles Moore, Chief of Otolaryngology, and the Emory University Urban Health Initiative team are seeking ways to help these low-wealth patients typically served by Grady Hospital so that they have greater access to cancer diagnostic testing.

The team developed a literature review and published "A review of the efficacy of a low-cost cancer screening test using cancer sniffing canines" by Muppidi, Srikar; Katragadda, Rishi; Lega, Julia; Alford, Taqiyya; Aidman, Carolyn; Moore, Charles. Article reference: JBR-101232.R1

6. Dental Diversion of Grady Hospital Emergency, Walk In, Maternity, Primary Care, Ambulatory Care Departments

The goal of the Dental Diversion Program is to divert patients from using the Grady Emergency Department for dental-related concerns; to train hospital staff in several departments to recognize oral health conditions and to refer patients to a dental home so they can have emergency and preventative care. Dental Diversion also seeks to increase the number of Atlantans with a dental

home by maximizing the presence of the HEALing Community Center's highly skilled dental team in the community. A key component of this initiative is to increase the oral health literacy of medical providers and community members.

7. Health Careers Collaborative



The Health Careers Collaborative encourages students to graduate from high school through project-based learning with a focus on science and health care related issues by modeling a diverse range of health-related career pathways and empowering students to identify the most pressing health needs in their community and engage students in community-based health promotion activities.

The goals are the following:

1. Engage students in project-based learning with a focus on science and health care related issues
2. Encourage students to graduate from high school
3. Model a diverse range of health-related career pathways
4. Empower students to identify the most pressing health needs in their community and to engage students in community-based health

8. Virtual Tutoring

Health Career Collaborative's pilot tutoring program offers tutoring services to students in the 9-11th grade attending high school in the metro-Atlanta area. The tutoring is a drop-in format, meant for students to come in, get their questions answered, and continue their day. Students are primarily assisted with their health/science curriculum, so volunteers focus on those subjects. Tutoring is available on a need-by-need basis during the school week. Teachers provide the Project Coordinators with days and times that accommodate the students, and the Coordinators share that information with the volunteers. Volunteers are students who attend Emory University or any of its health-focused professional schools: Rollins School of Public Health, School of Medicine, or Woodruff School of Nursing.

The tutoring program allows students who are interested in health-related career pathways to form relationships with volunteers both academically and professionally. The program also aligns with the goals of the Health Career Collaborative by encouraging high-school students to

graduate high school. Ultimately, we believe this tutoring program will be beneficial to the students as well as the volunteers. This program is being expanded to support K-12 students needing improved bandwidth capabilities.

9. Read-to-Me



This program promotes literacy and education of K-6th grade children in topics related to gardening and nutrition. A gardening-themed children’s book is read to the children, followed by a hands-on activity to reinforce the learning from the book. The children are also given books on a variety of topics to keep. The program started in September, 2019 and has met bi-weekly until mid-March 2020, with the exception of winter break and MLK Day when the school was closed. In mid-March, the program was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and re-started in the fall on days that we could hold the program outdoors, masked, and practicing social distancing. It has been held at PAWKids After School Daycare Center. We are currently determining the feasibility of providing this program through a virtual format and making it available to other daycare centers, given limited internet access and computer equipment of community members. Over 600 books have been obtained for distribution to youth in order to supplement educational attainment during COVID-19. We are building a garden at PAWKids for the kids to get hands-on gardening experience, and to provide fruits and vegetables for the kids at the center.

10. Senior Wellness Program

This integrative program is held monthly at the Johnnie B. Moore senior independent living facility (on hold secondary to pandemic) focused on health and wellness. Residents are engaged in activities and lectures on topics chosen by the residents related to optimal health and well-being. The programs are delivered by medical students from Emory School of Medicine, through the Community Learning and Service Program and UHI. Programs are held monthly.

11. Health Equity and the Social Determinants of Health course

This interprofessional, graduate-level program builds the capacity of future health care providers and public health professionals to advocate for policy changes that impact the social determinants of health and advance health equity and action. The course aims to: 1) deepen learner perspectives on the social determinants of health through experiential learning opportunities, 2) provide training in engaged professionalism and leadership and 3) develop

future health professionals' policy advocacy and communication skills. This is the third year of this course, and this year the course has been expanded from a 1 credit hour seminar course to a three-hour course that features a didactic portion and a practicum.

12. Food System Consortium

The Food System Consortium is a new initiative that seeks to create an inter-professional network and provide a forum for the exchange of education and ideas for a more healthy, sustainable and just food system for everyone. This program will be offered virtually twice each month, beginning January 2021, and is open to anyone who is interested in food security, food sustainability, food justice, or even basic gardening.

13. Community Resource Hub

The community resource hub provides volunteers for community events. We have worked with Positive Growth, Inc. to provide a speaker for their annual mental health symposium. We worked with Neighborhood Nexus to provide volunteers to collect data at community events and provided clinician volunteers for local health fairs at churches in Metro-Atlanta. We have provided volunteers for food distributions in metropolitan Atlanta. We have also provided over a thousand masks to low wealth communities in Georgia and South Carolina.

14. Healthy Pregnancy Spacing



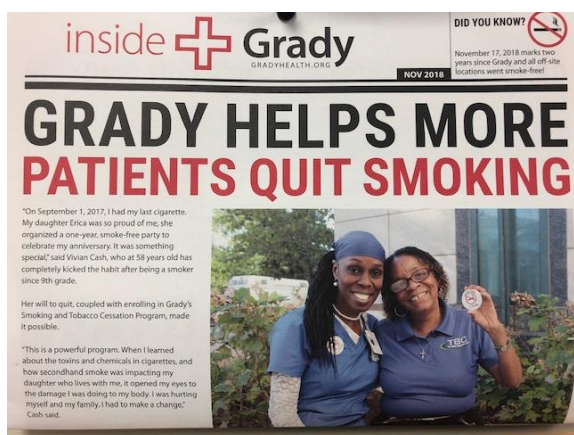
The purpose of this initiative is to develop and disseminate information related to healthy pregnancy spacing to medical professionals, influencers and people of reproductive age in Atlanta. Research has found women should wait until the youngest child is at least 18 months old and walking (implication is if walking, the child is healthy) before becoming pregnant again. Promoting this information to improve the life course of the mother, children and family.

15. Rolling Suitcase Drive



This program provides rolling suitcases to homeless individuals with limited transportation, to improve secured mobility of their possessions. To date UHI has delivered 676 suitcases to the Day Shelter for Women and Children, who says a suitcase takes a family from carrying their possessions in plastic bags to the dignity and mobility of a suitcase.

16. Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation



This program provides Grady Hospital patients, employees, and Atlanta community members with information and advice about the dangers of smoking and vaping. The goal of Freshstart is to help participants make a successful quit attempt. The program is designed to help smokers quit by addressing the behaviors, thoughts, and feelings of the smoker, as well as assisting in developing a plan to quit. Freshstart consists of four one-hour sessions designed around the

stages of change when quitting smoking. Grady employees have been assisted and some have learned to be cessation trainers for patients.

17. Walk With A Doc



This national initiative provides a no cost walking program for anyone interested in living a healthier lifestyle. It provides an avenue to talk with medical professionals outside the office. Walk with a Doc provides the following:

1. Exercise- Walking is one of the single-most important things we can do for our health. It's good for the heart, brain, bones, lungs, muscles, and even helps prevent disease.
2. Health Education- Our docs give tips on maintaining a healthy lifestyle and you can also ask them health-related questions while we walk.

18. Women and Girls Gardening Program

This program focuses on teaching women and girls to garden, with an emphasis on teaching STEM components. The workshops are taught out of our community garden, as well as in other community gardens that have expressed an interest in having this program. The participants are provided with resources to start their own container gardens at home.

19. Agricultural Entrepreneur Program

The program was developed as part of a previous United States Department of Agriculture, National Institutes of Food and Agriculture, Community Foods Projects Grant. The program engages older youth (16+ years) and adults in a three-pronged approach to help them develop knowledge and skills in: a) agriculture, b) business, and c) leadership. Groups such as nearby

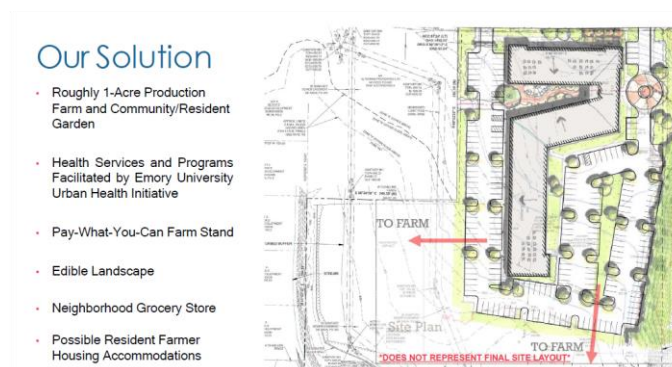
Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (ACE) will be engaged to help youths understand entrepreneurship and ways to find startup funding.

20. Fathership Gardening Program

This program utilizes gardening as a platform to equip fathers with the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively engage in their children's lives. Peer support and structured programming are included in this initiative to achieve increased engagement between children and their fathers.

21. 2176 Donald Lee Hollowell Project

A Step Toward A Comprehensive Plan



This project involves a public – private partnership to develop and implement a new low-income, multi-family housing development in Northwest Atlanta. Affordable housing supports positive health and educational outcomes. Low-quality housing is associated with food insecurity, limited healthcare accessibility, increased stress, financial insecurity, and decreased educational opportunities. The Vecino Group (VG) is a property management company dedicated to housing “development for the greater good” across the nation (Vecino Group, n.d.) and aims to create affordable housing developments in communities of need. In collaboration with UHI, VG plans to build an affordable multi-family housing complex on Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway (DLH) in Northwest Atlanta, Georgia. Through community-based focus groups, needs were identified to be of high importance and high feasibility and were classified into three broader thematic categories: life necessities, community engagement (spaces/partnerships), and programming (life skills/financial literacy/health & wellness). Evidence-based recommendations were developed accordingly:

1. Construct a grocery store offering fresh produce in the complex's retail space
2. Ensure the inclusion of communal (meeting and green spaces) in the development
3. Host monthly financial literacy programming
4. Host monthly health & wellness programming
5. Host monthly life skills training programming

6. Implement a mobile clinic to improve access to healthcare
7. Strengthen existing partnerships with community organizations

This initiative is in its early stages awaiting final approval for the buildout from the city of Atlanta.

Urban Health Initiative Partnerships

Healthcare Partners

Grady Health System
HEALing Community Centers (federally qualified healthcare centers)
Emory Midtown Hospital

University Partners

Emory University, including the

- Rollins School of Public Health
- Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
- Center for Ethics
- College of Arts and Sciences
- Communications Department
- Public Affairs and State Affairs Office

Drexel University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Georgia State University
Morehouse College
Tuskegee University

Community Garden Partners

City of Atlanta Department of Urban Agriculture, Department of Sustainability
Atlanta Food Bank

Doula and Pregnancy Spacing Partners

DeKalb Board of Health Director
Center for Black Women's Wellness and Atlanta Healthy Start Initiative
Grady Hospital
Hughes Spalding Children's Hospital of Atlanta (CHOA) Patient Navigator Team

Dental Diversion Partners

Atlanta Medical Center Emergency Department
Ben Massell Dental Clinic of the Jewish Family and Career Services

Faith Based Organizations

Regional Council of Churches
Concerned Black Clergy
Greater Community COGIC
Tuskegee Council of Churches

Society Hill AME Church

Nutrition Partners

Wayfield Foods

Open Hand

Health Career Collaborative Partners

Atlanta Public Schools

Clarkston High School

Redan High School

Sponsor Organization Partners

ARCHI

WellCare

Community Learning Social Medicine Site Partners

Jerusalem House

Soccer in the Streets

Police Athletic League (PAL)

Toco Hills Community Alliance

Dekalb Regional Youth Detention Center

JFCS Supportive Services

Clarkston Community Health Center (CCHC)

Marcus Autism Center

Center for Visually Impaired (CVI)

OLLI at Emory University

Decatur Active Living, Active Adults & Seniors Program

DREAMS Program (Developing Research Participation Enhancement & Advocacy Training Program for Diverse Seniors)

Toco Hills Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC)

Oliver House

Wesley Woods Towers

North Dekalb Senior Center