OUR MAIN MISSION

To make transformative contributions toward the elimination of structural violence through collaborative community partnerships, innovative research, and development of researchers.

VALUES

01 SCIENCE
CHER Chicago strives to advance health equity research by developing and refining theoretical frameworks of structural violence and health equity, and by promoting multi-level, multi-disciplinary research on the social, economic, psychosocial, behavioral, and biophysical processes linking structural violence and health equity.

02 DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH
Chicago CHER strengthens health equity scholars and research activities that can expand our understanding of structural inequalities that expose racial, ethnic, and sexual and gender minority groups to differential risks and vulnerabilities.

03 COMMUNITY
CHER Chicago acknowledges structural violence and its effects on people and communities can only be eliminated through engaging community partners in meaningful ways to transform academic research to real world social change

04 COLLABORATION
The three-Core organization of CHER Chicago reflects authentic partnership principals that value equitable and meaningful engagement of all participants. The Administrative Core (AC) of CHER is responsible for facilitating authentic partnership of all Cores in all stages of CHER Chicago activities. Investigator Development Core (IDC) identifies and cultivates equity research. Community Engagement and Dissemination Core (CEDC) supports community projects and dissemination of research findings.

05 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:
CHER Chicago aims to eliminate the effects of structural violence on health inequalities among racial, ethnic, and sexual and gender minorities.

06 POLICY IMPACT
CHER Chicago seeks to influence and partner with elected officials and government entities to advance legislation and protect programs that work in concert with our mission.
"Structural violence" refers to the multiple ways in which social, economic, and political systems expose particular populations to risks and vulnerabilities leading to increased morbidity and mortality. Those systems include income inequality, racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, sexism, ableism, and other means of social exclusion leading to vulnerabilities, such as poverty, stress, trauma, crime, incarceration, lack of access to care, healthy food, and physical activity.

These systems shape the health of populations via neighborhood contexts and individual actions. That is, the health inequalities we observe are the immediate product of where and how people live - and that is defined by the forces of racism, social class, and heteronormativity.
The CHER Chicago-CP is comprised of representatives from various parts of the structural violence continuum, including but not limited to community-based organizations, social service groups, workplace unions, advocacy alliances, and faith-based bodies. These individuals and groups work to ensure CHER Chicago becomes a groundbreaking and inclusive hub of research and community partnerships creating a world free of structural violence. The CHER Chicago-CP works with the Community Engagement and Dissemination Core, to provide a forum to identify and address the complexities of structural violence as a thematic topic and to identify multipronged strategies to achieve the vision of CHER Chicago.

CHER Chicago-CP members bring diverse thoughts and an inclusive culture by design. Diverse experiences and perspectives based on disability, migration status, veteran status, gender expression, sex, ethnicity, race, religion, industry, age, pregnancy status, socioeconomic class, and other related qualities are vital to ensure CHER Chicago achieves its mission. Prospective community partners are identified by the Community Engagement and Dissemination Core (CEDC).

There will be 4 community partners as part of the CHER Chicago-CP at any time. CHER proposed within the unique identity of UIC as a Minority Serving Institution with a Research-1 designation and with a mission of community engagement and social justice. The thematic focus of the Center, Structural Violence, is at the core of UIC’s social justice initiative.
For more than 25 years, ACCESS has been on the frontlines of community-based health care. ACCESS provides a continuum of care model that connects patients to health care resources both within and beyond the walls of our 34 federally-qualified health centers (FQHCs). ACCESS’ services are designed to address the health of our underserved communities in such areas as preventive care, chronic disease management, and support services. To address patients’ comprehensive health needs, ACCESS physicians, nurse practitioners, midwives and other providers are teamed with outreach staff, case managers, social workers and substance abuse counselors to advance a continuum of care.

MISSION
ACCESS partners with patients at all points of care, providing high quality, patient-centered health services accessible to all in their own communities.

VISION
ACCESS is the health care home of choice, partnering with patients and communities to improve total health and create health equity.

https://www.achn.net/
Established in 1996, the Asian Health Coalition strives to improve the health and wellness of primarily Asians and Pacific Islanders, as well as African and other immigrant communities of color through advocacy, technical assistance, education, and research. Working with over 25 different ethnic community-based organizations throughout the area, we utilize a collaborative partnership approach to support the development and implementation of culturally and linguistically appropriate health programs and initiatives.

Over the past 22+ years, the Asian Health Coalition has developed a multitude of health programs and made huge inroads to reach and educate immigrant and refugee populations. Taking a leadership role, we have partnered with community-based, health, and government organizations to create and establish resources for people to learn about health issues facing their populations, health insurance enrollment, screening opportunities, and access to life-saving care.

https://www.asianhealth.org/
The Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC) serves the Brighton Park community, a predominately Latino low-income community located in southwest Chicago. BPNC's mission is to create a safer community, improve the learning environment at public schools, preserve affordable housing, provide a voice for youth, protect immigrants' rights, promote gender equity, and end all forms of violence. BPNC was founded in 1997 after several community leaders came together to organize their neighbors in campaigns to win new resources for the community which had seen significant disinvestment and had been ignored by its elected officials.

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC) is a community-based, nonprofit organization serving a working class neighborhood on Chicago's Southwest side. BPNC's mission is to create a safer community, improve the learning environment at public schools, preserve affordable housing, provide a voice for youth, protect immigrant rights, promote gender equality, and end all forms of violence.

https://www.bpnccchicago.org/
Pride Action Tank is a results-driven group that addresses challenges facing individuals and groups within LGBTQ+ communities through a collaborative process of inquiry, advocacy and action. The work of Pride Action Tank focuses on six overlapping issue areas: housing, health, safety, financial security, youth and aging. Pride Action Tank brings together and supports the work of subject matter experts as well as people directly impacted by challenges facing the LGBTQ+ community to envision and realize practical and longer-term policy solutions. Moreover, Pride Action Tank fuels collaborations among organizations, departments, experts, policy-makers and community members in order to fill in gaps and ensure better support for all people in LGBTQ+ communities.

To improve the health, safety and progress of individuals and groups within the LGBTQ+ community by inspiring, supporting and leading collaborative action that improves policy, service, access and community dynamics in the core areas of housing, health, safety, financial security, youth and aging.

https://prideactiontank.org/
Meet the 2019-2020 Seed Grant Awardees

SEED GRANTS
The Community Discussion & Dissemination Seed Grants ("SeedGrants") aim to stimulate discussion around structural violence within diverse communities throughout Chicago, and to support the dissemination of new ideas and knowledge about how to address/minimize structural violence. Proposed activities are to be conducted in a period starting July 1, 2020 and ending in June 30, 2021. The Center for Health Equity Research Chicago (CHER Chicago).

The objectives of this grant are to:-
- Build community awareness around structural violence,
- Identify how your community is affected by structural violence,
- Develop creative community-based solutions to inform the elimination of structural violence.

SISTERS WORKING IT OUT
Sisters Working It Out (SWIO) is a 501c3 nonprofit with over 17th years of dedicated service to eliminating systems of structural violence perpetuating racial disparities in breast cancer mortality for African American and Latina women.

SEX WORKERS OUTREACH PROJECT
The Sex Workers Outreach Project is a grassroots collective led by and for sex workers which provides resources (such as condoms, sterile syringes, and Naloxone) to street-based workers in a weekly outreach program; a monthly support group led by clinically trained therapists; and a free legal clinic specializing in issues of discrimination and immigration status.
2018-2019 Seed Grant Awardees

AMERICAN INDIAN CENTER

Sisters Working It Out (SWIO) is a 501c3 nonprofit with over 17th years of dedicated service to eliminating systems of structural violence perpetuating racial disparities in breast cancer mortality for African American and Latina women.

GREATER CHICAGO FOOD DEPOSITORY

The Greater Chicago Food Depository is Chicago’s food bank. We provide food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in our community.

GADS HILL

Gads Hill Center families face complex issues as they strive to build better lives. Our programs address some of the most pressing challenges facing working families throughout Chicago, including lack of resources and education.

ROLL CALL CHICAGO

Roll Call’s vision for achieving unity by reconnecting ex-offenders and their communities through local action, self-determination, and mutual support networks reads like a playbook for solidarity. In fact, its members describe their challenge as helping West haven residents and ex-offenders harness their na scent “solidarity as a people.”
PILOT GRANTS

CHERChicago strengthens health equity scholars and research activities that expand our understanding of structural and systemic inequality and discrimination.

In consultation with leadership from the Community Engagement and Dissemination (CEDC) and Administrative Cores (AC), Investigator Development Core (IDC) personnel has developed this program to solicit and select pilot projects, provide necessary guidance for the development of pilot projects, and support awardees to ensure successful completion of projects to publication and dissemination of results and submission of subsequent grant applications. All proposed pilot projects must illustrate collaboration with a community partner regarding research, recruitment, dissemination, and other partnership opportunities.

The pilot project mechanism provides opportunities for early stage investigators to generate secondary data analyses, feasibility trial studies, or build upon existing protocols with an exploratory aim in the thematic focus area of CHER Chicago, which is structural violence, that can support subsequent development and submission of grant applications for larger studies.

PILOT PROJECT MECHANISM PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR EARLY STAGE INVESTIGATORS
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<td><strong>22</strong> A total of 22 publications have been submitted from early stage investigators and project investigators from Years 2019-2020.</td>
<td><strong>6</strong> Early stage investigators have presented their research nationally at various conferences and they have plans to submit abstracts for the next APHA conference.</td>
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<td><strong>20</strong> The total number of grants submitted from early stage investigators and project investigators, varying from private foundation to NIH grants such as R01 and R34.</td>
<td><strong>4</strong> Two out of the three research project investigators have been promoted and two early stage investigators have been promoted to Associate Professors. One from year 1 cohort and another from year 3 cohort.</td>
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45% of all grants submitted were from early stage investigators.

73% of all publications submitted were from early stage investigators.
CHER CHICAGO EVALUATION SURVEY
DISTRIBUTED AT COMMUNITY EVENTS
Date

Zip Code

Chicago Community Area

Race/Ethnicity

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- White

Gender

- Female
- Male
- Trans female
- Trans male
- Gender nonconforming

Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual/straight
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other

Age

- 18-25yrs
- 25-39yrs
- 40-50yrs
- 51-64yrs
- 65yrs or older

Education

- <High school
- High school or GED
- Some College
- College
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate degree
- Postdoc or higher
Please describe your affiliation (check all that apply)

- [ ] UIC Student
- [ ] UIC Faculty
- [ ] UIC Staff
- [ ] Community-based organization
- [ ] Community Member
- [ ] Patient
- [ ] Other

Prior to today’s event did you know what structural violence refers to?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Did today’s event help improve your knowledge on health disparities?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

What other topics would you like CHER Chicago to cover to help engage community and academic partners on the issue of health equity?

To what extent do you agree with the statements below? (Check one for each row).
1=Disagree and 5=Agree

Today’s conversation informed my views on how health disparity affects our community

- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5

As a result of today’s event, I am more likely to talk or discuss about structural violence and health equity with others

- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5

Programs like the one today are valuable and informative

- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5

I would attend similar programs like the CHER Chicago event in the future

- [ ] 1
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 3
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 5
Resources

Below are a few recommended readings and videos selected from our co-investigators.

Read:
STEMMING THE TIDE: Diverting Youth with Mental Health Conditions from the Illinois Juvenile Justice System


Watch:
UIC Great Cities Institute: The Kerner Report-50 Years Later

The future of Black Chicago