

Best Practices for CEnR Partnerships for Health Equity

Patrice Forrester, PhD, MSW^{1,ORCID: 0000-0002-8180-454X}, Abdou Simon Senghor, PhD^{1,ORCID: 0000-0001-9353-5482}, C. Daniel Mullins, PhD^{1,ORCID: 0000-0003-4322-2490}, Michelle Medeiros, MS, MA^{1,ORCID: 0000-0001-5303-5280}, Claudia Baquet, MD, MPH, PhD^{1,ORCID: 0000-0002-7914-1871}, Donald L. Wright, EMBA, MDiv², and T. Joseph Mattingly II, PharmD, MBA, PhD^{3,ORCID: 0000-0001-7786-5780}

(1) University of Maryland School of Pharmacy; (2) Mount Lebanon Baptist Church; (3) and University of Utah College of Pharmacy.

What Is the Purpose of This Study?

- This study was led by a partnership between a trusted community church in West Baltimore, Mount Lebanon Baptist Church (MLBC), and an academic partner, the PATIENTS Program at University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB).
- The purpose of this study was to co-develop best practices for community-engaged research (CEnR) partnerships promoting health equity.

What Is the Problem?

- Many patients from underserved communities of color who died from COVID-19, were never tested due to barriers to accessing testing (e.g., high cost; lack of awareness of free testing once this became available). CEnR partnerships have played a significant role in increasing COVID-19 testing among underserved communities. Best practices for CEnR partnerships to promote health equity can improve access to health care, especially during public health crises.

What Are the Findings?

- The study included three phases: 1) two focus groups, including one for academic members only and one for community representatives only, 2) one joint focus group with community representatives and academic members to reach consensus on best practices, and 3) one joint focus group with community representatives and academic members who could not attend the first joint focus group, to reach consensus on best practices.
- Focus group discussions led to the co-development of a CEnR best practices document that included two sections. The first section included general principles for CEnR partnerships promoting health equity and the second section detailed principles for CEnR partnerships specific to COVID-19 testing.
- Best practices for all CEnR partnerships promoting health equity include development of shared goals, accountability, and transparency. Best practices specific to COVID-19 testing include identifying community resources and challenges, identifying and communicating the value and risks associated with COVID-19 and COVID-19 testing, and minimizing risks and hardships relevant to COVID-19 testing.

Who Should Care Most?

- Partners involved in CEnR partnerships promoting health equity: this study provides an example of a process by which community and academic members can develop best practices together to promote health equity.
- Community members and researchers engaged in CEnR to promote health equity.



Recommendations for Action

- Best practices for CEnR partnerships promoting health equity should be adapted to the specific CEnR partnership.
- Future research could explore how community members and researchers use CEnR partnership best practices to promote health equity for underserved communities.