ABOUT OUR WORK

The Center for Health Equity and Innovation (CHEqI) in the College of Pharmacy at Purdue University was established in 2020 to address the needs of populations who are underserved.

We believe every person deserves the opportunity to be as healthy as possible, and that the quality of care a person receives shouldn’t be determined by social factors such as how much money they have, where they live, what they look like, or what language they speak. Yet in Indiana, the United States, and around the world, social factors contribute to disparate health outcomes of individuals and communities.

Led by a passionate, interdisciplinary team of faculty and students, CHEqI:

- **seeks to better understand the social systems and structures that impact health outcomes.**
- **collaborates with community partners to assess needs and implement new, sustainable models that promote health equity.**
- **encourages pharmacy students and professionals to value person-centered care, an approach that respects and responds to individual needs.**
- **advocates for positive change in healthcare systems through increased awareness and sensitivities.**

### MISSION
**ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF POPULATIONS WHO ARE UNDERSERVED LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY**

### VISION
**TO REDUCE HEALTH INEQUITY THROUGH INNOVATIVE AND PROVEN STRATEGIES**

CHEqI initiatives are supported by generous gifts from Chris and Theresa Dimos, The McKinley Educational Initiative, and The Chaney Family.
Community Health Workforce Development Institute (CHWDI)

Indiana is home to communities that face barriers to employment, financial instability, and lack sustainable self-sufficiency. Significant inequities and health disparities persist despite existing efforts. A group of faculty from Purdue University has engaged a variety of community partners throughout Indiana in an effort to eliminate health disparities for communities who are marginalized. CHWDI aims to create and sustain community health worker (CHW) jobs for members of vulnerable neighborhoods in Indiana and help communities overcome barriers to employment and other poverty-associated challenges.

CHWs build individual and community capacity by increasing self-sufficiency and health knowledge through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support, and advocacy. CHWs improve clinical outcomes for chronic and other health conditions that disproportionately impact African American and Hispanic populations. CHWs in Indiana are currently supporting efforts related to maternal-infant health, diabetes, tobacco cessation, mental health, and more!

Nationwide, CHW models exist with varying degrees of implementation, breadth, and sustainability. Indiana lags behind the progress made for the CHW workforce in other states. Indiana currently has siloed CHW programs and scattered models of CHW training and employment, and the workforce has generally been underrecognized and underutilized. Access to certified training programs is limited, which presents a challenge to the low-income communities who would most benefit from CHW employment opportunities and service provision.

Outcomes: 9 individuals hired as CHWs and placed in high-need locations to-date

Core team: Jasmine Gonzalvo, Omolola (Lola) Adeoye–Olatunde, Ashley Meredith, Natalia Rodriguez, Yumary Ruiz, Carlyn (Carly) Kimiecik*, Randolph (Randy) Hubach

Community partners: CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions, Indiana State Department of Health, LTHC Homeless Services, Pedigo Health Center (Eskenazi), YMCA of Greater Indianapolis

*Student
Innovative COVID-19 & Flu Vaccination Model

Sociodemographic factors, including food insecurity, affect health outcomes such as COVID-19 morbidity and mortality. At least 1 in 5 central Indiana residents are affected by food insecurity, a problem that disproportionately affects groups experiencing disadvantage (Indianapolis poverty breakdown: 32% Hispanic, 26% Black, 23% Asian). National trends show COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy is greater among minorities, and Indiana’s fully vaccinated population lags behind the national average.

CHEqI partnered with community-based organizations to design and implement an innovative vaccination model, offering free COVID-19 and flu vaccinations to people experiencing food and housing insecurity at multiple event sites. Goals included decreasing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, increasing vaccine accessibility, and promoting health equity while addressing food insecurity.

Outcomes: More than 800 vaccines (COVID and flu) have been administered through this delivery model, across five community partners and 23 events between June 2021-January 2022. Of the people receiving a vaccine who reported their ethnicity (N=430) or race (N=372), 54% self-identified as Hispanic or Latino and 44% self-identified as Black or African American. Student and faculty pharmacists have engaged with more than 3,300 people to assess interest in receiving the vaccine and engage in discussions to reduce vaccine hesitancy.

Core team: Jasmine Gonzalvo, Omolola (Lola) Adeoye–Olatunde, Susie Crowe, Megan Conklin, Sonak Pastakia, Elizabeth (Liz) Crawford

Community partners: Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana, St. Vincent De Paul Food Pantry, FISH Food Bank, Latino Center for Wellness and Education, Walgreens, Wheeler Mission Shelter for Men, Marion County Public Health Department, LUNA Language Services
CORNERSTONE EFFORTS:

Improving Adolescent Wellbeing through University-School-Community Partnerships

In spring 2021, Purdue University students mentored students from Purdue Polytechnic High School (PPHS) in a 6-week wellbeing-based course. Due to the success and excitement surrounding this experience, CHEqI and PPHS leadership began to discuss collaboration around future wellbeing efforts. This collaborative approach allows PPHS students and college students to learn alongside each other, supporting positive youth development strategies with the goal of impacting individual and community health and wellness outcomes.

Outcomes:
- Created wellbeing plan for PPHS and hosted pilot programs, engaging close to 100 PPHS students and staff.
- Piloting a new Cycle 6 Immersion Program with PPHS Englewood in spring 2022; for three days a week PPHS students registered for the program will engage in physical activity and nutrition education.
- Cycling program has been created and will be implemented by Nine13sports, a non-profit organization based in Indianapolis: Students will spend one day a week completing cycling and physical activity; one day a week, students can go on a bike ride with Nine13sports staff members, planning routes, learning about neighborhood history, and practicing bicycle safety as a group.
- Nutrition programming will be conducted by a Purdue Extension educator from Marion County Extension.
- CHEqI will conduct an evaluation of these programming efforts and report on student and partnership outcomes.

Looking ahead:
- Nutrition programming will be conducted by a Purdue Extension educator from Marion County Extension.
- CHEqI will conduct an evaluation of these programming efforts and report on student and partnership outcomes.

Core team: Jasmine Gonzalvo, Carlyn (Carly) Kimiecik*

Community partners: Purdue Polytechnic High Schools (PPHS): Englewood and North Campuses, Nine13sports, Purdue University Marion County Extension

Left to right: Dr. Jasmine Gonzalvo, CHEqI Director, Nathan Smurdon, Nine13sports Chief Partnership & Strategy Officer, Carly Kimiecik, Purdue graduate student, Drew Goodin, PPHS Lead Instructor, Nathan Wilson, Nine13sports Creative Director
CORNERSTONE EFFORTS:

Learner Engagement

CHEqI is intentionally developing future providers who are equipped to address the challenges patients face and fill the gaps in care that exist today.

The CHEqI Student Advisory Board (SAB) is a committed group of interdisciplinary students determined to increase awareness of health disparities and understand the needs of underserved populations locally and globally. The SAB manages special projects under faculty and community partners as well as lead a university club with the same goals. In addition to individual projects, the SAB also leads a policy and advocacy committee within the club and works with community partners for volunteering opportunities. Goals include challenging and empowering students to become role models, advocates, and leaders in their profession, while supporting opportunities to learn about health disparities and how to advance health equity.

CHEqI established a two-year Health Equity and Global Health Fellowship program in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development. Goals include creating pharmacy leaders in public health who can identify the needs of communities, both locally and globally, and implement strategies to address health inequities. Building on this fellowship, CHEqI created a second two-year Health Equity Fellowship which partners with local safety-net hospitals. Fellows gain skills in 1) understanding the unique care implications for underserved populations, 2) utilization of implementation science skills to address disparities, and 3) assessment and evaluation of innovative solutions. A third Health Equity fellowship position will be open in 2022.

Outcomes: Implementation of the Spanish language track program, advancing efforts in mental health campus resources, developing LGBTQ-informed educational content, developing internship opportunities to support health equity, publishing and distributing monthly e-newsletters

AREAS OF FOCUS

CHEqI is committed to addressing upstream factors that address today’s health disparities using collaborative community- and person-centered approaches. We are particularly focused on adolescent and aging populations, along with populations experiencing food and housing insecurity, and have begun developing partnerships and programs that provide opportunities to engage and affect positive change.

CHEqI initiatives are organized by the following categories related to health equity and social determinants of health:

- **Neighborhood & Built Environment**
  - Delivery of and access to affordable and effective healthcare services
  - Building innovative, sustainable models for community members in health care delivery

- **Economic Stability**
  - Assisting with income generation and opportunity creation

- **Health & Health Care**
  - Supporting contextualized care delivery for the community

- **School & Community Context**
  - Integrating wellness content across the spectrum of education

In 2022 and beyond, our priorities will include focusing on existing relationships with partners and focusing on initiatives that will enhance and optimize care and lead to meaningful impact in communities who are underserved.