

Prevention RESEARCH Center

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS
ESTABLISHED 1999



20 Years of Commitment: Celebrating the MSM PRC

We are humbled and thrilled to celebrate twenty years of the Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center (MSM PRC)!

This success has been the product over 75 other center-affiliated research, evaluation, service and training initiatives created with or by community residents. More importantly, all of this has been founded on countless hours of community-academic-agency partners working together to plan, implement, evaluate and disseminate processes and outcomes that matter. We have collaboratively developed over 250 publications in academic journals, over 175 MSM PRC Community Health Connections radio shows, media spots and newsletters shared locally, nationally and globally. In addition, we have annually trained over 2,000 academic learners (elementary to post-graduate), community residents/leaders, researchers, clinicians

and practitioners. The MSM PRC Community Coalition Board (CCB) governs how we conduct community-based participatory research, evaluation and other initiatives designed to address obstinate health disparities and related inequities with unfair, unjust and preventable causes.

While our legacy is not contingent upon a single grant, we are pleased to announce that following a nationally competitive application for center funding, we have received notification that we will be funded for five more years (2019-2024)! We strategically reflect on triumphs, lessons learned and challenges of the past and the present as we position ourselves for a season that is stronger than ever before.

**- By Tabia H. Akintobi, PhD, MPH
Principal Investigator (PI)**

Words from Our Founder

The year was 1999. Among other memorable events, President Clinton was acquitted in the Senate after being impeached in the House of Representatives, there



was a mass shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, the New York Yankees won the World Series – and the Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center was founded, with NPU Y as its community partner. Those were exciting and turbulent times. Many doubted that a medical school could enter into a research partnership with a low-income minority community without exploiting the community for the school's benefit and the community's detriment. But the PRC had been created with the expressed purpose of doing just that. Oversight of the Center's policies and programs was vested in a community-majority Community Coalition Board. Under the leadership of its first chair, Nana Nyarko, the Board created a research agenda that emphasized the health of African-American men, and it developed a set of community values against which all proposed research would be evaluated. It demanded modifications in the first research protocols and even scared off one would-be researcher by asking too many questions about her proposed research. A dispute about the best location for the Center ended in compromise.

And as the dust slowly settled, trust was established between the Center's staff, the medical school, and the community. In the years that followed, the PRC lived up to its promise and established a model for the ethical conduct of community-based participatory research that both identified better ways to improve community health and promoted community development. The Center garnered a number of national awards. New grants helped create new programs as the PRC's partners grew in number to include NPUs T, V, X, and Z in addition to the original NPU Y. And though the new grants are exhilarating, both the PRC and its community partners acknowledge that their partnership is not dependent on grants. With or without grants, the partnership will continue, the partners will continue to pursue health equity together, and the program will continue to be a model for others to emulate.

**- By Daniel Blumenthal, MD, MPH
Founding Principal Investigator (PI)**



Advancing Community Engaged Research

Georgia Clinical and Translational Science Alliance Community Engagement Program (Georgia CTSA CE), led by the MSM PRC, is designed to advance the art, science and practice of community-engaged clinical and translational research that is broadly disseminated to and adapted in communities and practice towards improved population health across the State of Georgia. April 2019, the 4th Biennial

Georgia CTSA Community Engagement Forum took place at the Atlanta Technical College. The theme was One Georgia: Building Bridges to Promote Quality Healthcare and Optimal Health. The forum brought together local state and national The Forum include breakout sessions to build capacities towards stronger community-academic

research partnerships, grants, and evaluations.

Poster sessions displayed initiatives and interventions led by community, academic, and policy leaders. Roundtables were designed to foster and seed rural/urban collaborations to address opioid, cardiovascular, HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health disparities and advance collaborative health equity strategies. We are strategically developing next steps in response to local, state and national partners engaged.





Community Health Workers Convening on the Frontlines

The National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW) has designated Adrienne Serrano Proeller as a 2019 NACHW Ambassador. Proeller, pictured above, was selected based on her commitment and dedication to the CHW workforce. She has worked as a CHW for the Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center (MSM PRC) since July 2015. She was previously a member of the Center's Community Coalition Board, representing Neighborhood Planning Unit X. Adrienne's designation as an



NACHW Ambassador is especially noteworthy as she not only represents our Center, but the state of Georgia! She exempli-

fies the type of leadership needed for research teams to move from translational research to community transformation.



Building Future Public Health Leaders

My time at Morehouse School of Medicine's Prevention Research Center (PRC) has been one of the most significant experiences of my public health career, so far. The work that I have been able to do and the people that I have been able to connect with, have helped me further develop my skillset, networks, and goals. While at MSM, I have been able to evaluate and improve a number of public health initiatives for organizations such as the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Georgia Clinical and Translational Science Alliance. Ultimately, I have had the chance to make significant contributions to initiatives that provide avenues to equity in health and education among underserved and underrepresented populations. As I move on to my next chapter, I will always remember the experiences and relationships that I was able to gain from my time at the PRC. I truly hope for success for the center moving forward.

By Manzi Ngaiza, MPH

I am a MPH graduate of Fort Valley State University. My journey with Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center started as an ASPHN (Association of State Public Health Nutritionist) Intern and matriculated to a full time position as a Graduate Research Assistant Under the guidance of Dr. Latrice Rollins, I served as a health education resource provider at PRC, informing res-

idents in economically challenged communities about the effects of poor air quality and litter on their health. Based on data collected and analyzed from the Community Health Needs & Assets Assessment Survey conducted by the PRC, environmental health was a major concern in communities. I used my background in public health to create informative infographics to educate the community on the topic. Many of the community driven environmental concerns often focus on climate change, air quality, pollution, and the equally important issue of litter. Litter, such as standing water in abandoned tires and cans, can increase vector-borne disease transmission. These diseases have a greater impact on people living with chronic diseases, especially minorities and those living in economically challenged communities. With the help of PRC, I was also able to educate the faculty and staff on the effect of these issues as well as educate minority and economically challenged communities about what they can do to protect themselves. These effects can lessen the effects of climate change in their communities.

Throughout my time at the PRC, I have gained quantitative and qualitative research skills. I have conducted key informant interviews, noting residents' perceptions of environmental threats and using SPSS software to perform analyses on PRC's environmental assessment data.

By Sha'Bria Johnson, MPH

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