New Fellowship Offered to Community Organizations Emphasizes Research and Engagement

Prevention Research Center at Case Western Reserve University Trains Northeast Ohioans on Community Health

CLEVELAND – May 29, 2012 – The opportunity to find common ground in health research between academia and community organizations is vast. Unwavering in its vision to work for the collective good, a new pilot program at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine aims to bolster these collaborations by offering a fellowship program, not to researchers or doctors, but to employees of community organizations.

The new Partners in Education, Evaluation, and Research (PEER) Program will bring community organizations together with the academic community to foster and grow research relationships, specifically to improve community health. This is an 18-month, part-time training program for individuals from community organizations, such as government health departments and non-profit agencies. The training will introduce the fellows to study processes and methodologies, helping them learn how to implement and evaluate research within their organization.

Within this time period, the five representatives will attend a year of interactive training and develop a research project on a health topic relevant to their organization. Additionally, each PEER fellow will be matched with both a partner from their organization and a faculty partner from Case Western Reserve who is active in community-based participatory research, which engages the community members in all stages of research. During the program, the fellows will disseminate their key learnings to their organization. The goal is for their new skills and training to increase their organization’s research capacity.

“We know the PEER Program will go a long way toward removing some of the mutual misconceptions held by both the academic community and community organizations about research and evaluation,” says Elaine Borawski, PhD, principal investigator and director, Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods and Angela Bowen Williamson Professor in Community Nutrition at the School of Medicine. “Our hope is to build a lasting bridge between the two for future partnerships that extend well beyond the pilot cohort and the initial participants.”

The inaugural fellows from the June 2012 Pilot Cohort are from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, AIDS Task Force of Greater Cleveland, Susan G. Komen for the Cure (Northeast Ohio Affiliate), Environmental Health Watch, and Ohio State University Extension.

“I work within the community every day, and this program will help me translate our work to them and help me understand more about evaluation and research without relying on an outside agency,” says pilot cohort fellow Kimberly Foreman, associate director, Environmental Health Watch.

- PEER is a collaborative effort by the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods and the Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative at Case Western Reserve. For more information, visit http://prchn.org/.
About Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

Founded in 1843, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine is the largest medical research institution in Ohio and is among the nation’s top medical schools for research funding from the National Institutes of Health. The School of Medicine is recognized throughout the international medical community for outstanding achievements in teaching. The School’s innovative and pioneering Western Reserve2 curriculum interweaves four themes—research and scholarship, clinical mastery, leadership, and civic professionalism—to prepare students for the practice of evidence-based medicine in the rapidly changing health care environment of the 21st century. Nine Nobel Laureates have been affiliated with the school of medicine.

Annually, the School of Medicine trains more than 800 MD and MD/PhD students and ranks in the top 25 among U.S. research-oriented medical schools as designated by U.S. News & World Report “Guide to Graduate Education.”

The School of Medicine’s primary affiliate is University Hospitals Case Medical Center and is additionally affiliated with MetroHealth Medical Center, the Louis Stokes Cleveland Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and the Cleveland Clinic, with which it established the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University in 2002. http://casemed.case.edu.