The Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) program develops and enhances the research infrastructure of Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander minority institutions by expanding human and physical resources for conducting basic, clinical and translational research.

RESEARCH CENTERS IN MINORITY INSTITUTIONS

The Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) program develops and enhances the research infrastructure of minority institutions by expanding human and physical resources for conducting basic, clinical and translational research. The RCMI program provides grants to institutions that award doctoral degrees in the health professions or health-related sciences and have a 50 percent or greater enrollment of students from minority communities underrepresented in the biomedical sciences. The minority enrollment includes people who are African American, Hispanic, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander.

The program currently funds grants to 18 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

The Institutional Development Award (IDeA) program supports and fosters health-related research at institutions in states for which NIH funding has historically been low. The program also serves unique populations, such as rural and medically underserved communities.

The IDeA program provides cutting-edge research on health topics central to underserved communities, offers junior investigator research opportunities, supports faculty development, enhances research infrastructure, and increases the number of competitive investigators in 23 states and Puerto Rico.

EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH

MEHARRY CENTER FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH RESEARCH

Listening is an becoming familiar with the needs of the Nashville area community has been a focus for the research at Meharry Medical College for years. To better address the specific needs of Nashville’s women, Meharry developed the Center for Women’s Health Research — the nation’s first research center devoted exclusively to understanding why African American women are at greater risk for certain diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and HIV/AIDS, and how biology, race and ethnicity, and women’s contributions to health disparities in women.

Funded with grants from NCRR and NIH’s National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, the Center for Women’s Health Research is a 10,000-square-foot research facility that includes exercise and nutrition, hormone, and behavioral research cores. The Center for Women’s Health Research is a 10,000-square-foot research facility that includes exercise and nutrition, hormone, and behavioral research cores. The Center for Women’s Health Research is a 10,000-square-foot research facility that includes exercise and nutrition, hormone, and behavioral research cores.

META-HEALTH: MOREHOUROUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Collaborations are essential to developing research that improves the health of minority populations. In Atlanta, the Morehouse Emory Partnership to Eliminate Disparities in Cardiovascular Health (META-Health) is an excellent example of such collaboration at work.

META-Health integrates the skills and expertise of researchers at the Morehouse School of Medicine and Emory University School of Medicine to fight cardiovascular disease. The partnership’s goal is to understand the mechanisms of ethnic differences in the metabolic syndrome and to test lifestyle interventions — including diet and exercise — offered through community-based practices that care for underserved minority populations.

META-Health builds the strength of both institutions and ensures an equal sharing of resources and research activities. The partnership provides an exciting link between community-based practices in minority communities and sophisticated clinical investigation protocols conducted within NCRR-funded clinical research centers.

DELWARE IDEA NETWORK OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

Established in 2004, the Delaware Dukow Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (DBRE) strengthens research infrastructure across Delaware by linking colleges and universities to the state’s largest hospital system. The program emphasizes support for new and junior investigators through mentored research projects in seven broad areas, including nursing research studies with varied patient populations.

One project explores how families incorporate a child’s chronic illness into everyday life, which can influence the course and outcome of the illness. The project focuses on African American parents and their management of cardiac and complex disease in children. DBRE investigators will use the results to develop family management interventions for this chronic disease.

In another project, investigators are improving the quality of life for individuals with Parkinson’s disease and their caregivers. Over time, individuals with Parkinson’s may lose their ability to function independently, which leads to a decline in family caregivers who are often untrained and unsure of needed care. To address these obstacles, DBRE researchers are evaluating a restorative care intervention that focuses on the health of participating family caregivers (e.g., eating, dressing, toileting, physical activity and exercise).

SOUTH DAKOTA BIO MEDICAL RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

For individuals suffering from cocaine addiction, stress is a major contributing factor to behavioral problems, including increased drug use and relapse after clinical treatment. Cocaine withdrawal causes increased anxiety-like behavior and other stress-associated responses that increase the likelihood of relapse.

To further explore the role of stress in cocaine addiction and relapse behaviors, researchers from the South Dakota Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network are investigating corticotropin releasing factor (CRF) — a major coordinator of the body’s response to stressful stimuli in the brain, cortex, and hypothalamus. The research team is investigating how cocaine use and withdrawal increase levels of CRF activity, an effort to examine behavioral responses related to cocaine reward and relapse. Ultimately, this team hopes to gain a better understanding of CRF’s role in the behavior problems associated with cocaine addiction and stress-induced relapse to drug use.

The NCRR-funded Center for Alaska Native Health Research works with communities to address chronic diseases and other health concerns in Alaska Native, Alaska Native, Alaska Native, Alaska Native, Alaska Native, Alaska Native, Alaska Native, Alaska Native, Alaska Native.