



Geographical Management of Cancer Health Disparities Program (GMAP) REGION 2 NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2017

Geographical Management of Cancer Health Disparities Program (GMAP)

Greetings from the Geographical Management of Cancer Health Disparities (GMAP) Region 2 team.

GMAP is an integrated network of 7 hubs across the United States. Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, FL. serves as the hub for GMAP Region 2 (previously Region 3), which currently includes more than 40 partner institutions in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi and Puerto Rico.

[Click to visit our new GMAP Region 2 website!](#)

GMAP Region 2 Welcomes 12 New Scholars

The “Navigate your Way to a K” two-day interactive workshop took place on June 15 - 17, 2016 at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, FL. The workshop was designed to provide guidance on preparing and/or advancing a career development ‘K’ application for early stage investigators and post-doctoral fellows who are transitioning to independent researcher in the field of cancer and/or cancer health disparities research. The workshop focused on career development grant funding mechanisms (e.g., K01/K08/K22).



Pictures taken by: Joe Photography (Tampa, FL)

Ping-Ching Hsu, PhD (University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Assistant Professor), **Mario Fernandez, PhD** (Moffitt Cancer Center, Postdoctoral Fellow), **Theresa Hoenemeyer, PhD, MSHA** (University of Alabama (Birmingham), Research Fellow), **Aasha Hoogland, PhD** (Moffitt Cancer Center)

Postdoctoral Fellow), **Saira Khan, PhD** (Washington University in St. Louis, School of Medicine, Postdoctoral Fellow), **Marquita Lewis, PhD** (Washington University, Postdoctoral Fellow), **Marvin Langston, PhD** (Washington University in Saint Louis, Postdoctoral Fellow), **Brooke Montgomery, PhD** (University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, College of Public Health, Assistant Professor), **Michael Preston, PhD** (University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Assistant Professor), **Siddhartha Roy, DrPH** (Moffitt Cancer Center, Postdoctoral Fellow), **Jun Tao, PhD** (University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Postdoctoral Fellow), **Carmen Ortiz-Sánchez, PhD** (Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) Ponce Research Institute (PRI), Postdoctoral Researcher)



Drs. Tiffany Carson and Levi Ross, both past K-Award recipients within Region 2, led the training workshop with topics focusing on the essential components of a K Award and tips on crafting your K Award application. Abigail Soyombo, a program director from the NCI also presented on the importance of getting to know your NCI program directors while writing your K Award. Program facilitators, Drs. Clement Gwede and Cathy Meade, as well as other Moffitt faculty members provided perspectives related to grant writing, publications, study section review, and mentoring. Moffitt faculty included Drs. Teresita Muñoz-Antonia, Brian Gonzalez, Heather Jim, Jong Park, and Gwendolyn P. Quinn.

The workshop also included an interactive mock review session to help trainees better understand the study section process for grant reviews. Next steps include quarterly teleconferences to discuss K award application updates and development of a GMaP Region 2 trainee cohort #2 LinkedIn group for future networking and mentorship.

Special acknowledgements and thanks to our team members Cindy Burcham, Khaliah Fleming, Patricia Medina-Ramirez, Kimberly Williams, and Drs. Erika Eksioglu and Shannon Christy for all of the extra effort and outstanding work to contribute to a successful training workshop.



We are looking forward to continuing future collaborations with our GMaP Scholars as they each continue to "Navigate" their way to a K!

[Reduce Cancer Health Disparities \(CRCHD\)](#) that aims to increase Colorectal Cancer (CRC) screening rates through education and outreach activities. Click [here](#) to learn more.



The Ponce Health Sciences University-Moffitt Cancer Center Partnership (PHSU-MCC) facilitated its first Screen to Save activity during *Hablemos de cáncer* on March 4, 2017, which fell on Colorectal Cancer (CRC) Awareness Month.

The Community Health Educator, Jomar López, spoke with the Screen to Save participants about the CRC incidence in Puerto Rico, CRC risk factors, screening and early detection recommendations. The PHSU-MCC Partnership held the conference at the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico, located in Ponce, and facilitated various workshops, such as women's cancer, prostate cancer, colon cancer, lung cancer, skin cancer, nutrition, mental health, and physical activity. Approximately 641 community members from the southern region of Puerto Rico participated in *Hablemos de cáncer*.

Region 2 Pilot Funding Award Recipient Highlight

Meet our GMaP Region 2 Pilot Funding Awardees!



**Evelyn A. Reynolds,
MD Associate Professor,
MSM, Division of Gynecologic**

Evelyn Reynolds, MD

Evelyn Reynolds, MD is an alumna of Princeton University, celebrating her twentieth year reunion. Dr. Reynolds completed her medical education and residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Rochester, School of Medicine in Rochester, NY. After completing her residency, Dr. Reynolds completed a fellowship in Pelvic Surgery at Emory University in Atlanta, GA where she later held a faculty position. Dr. Reynolds also completed a formal fellowship in gynecologic oncology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. After 5 years on faculty at the University of Kansas Hospital in Kansas City, Kansas, Dr. Reynolds returned to Atlanta, Georgia in July 2015 where she accepted a position as Associate Professor with Morehouse School

Oncology

Martin Luther King, Jr. stated that “*of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.*” The most common gynecologic malignancy in the United States is endometrial cancer. Currently, the 5 year survival in white women is 84% versus 62% for black women. This reason for this disparity is multifactorial. As a woman of color and a gynecologic oncologist, I strive to eliminate this disparity and a large part of that is to determine any potential biologic causes through meaningful research.” – Dr. Reynolds

Click to learn more
about GMaP Region 2 Pilot
Project Awards

of Medicine, Division of Gynecologic Oncology.

Dr. Reynolds’ interests in cancer research are focused on eliminating endometrial cancer health disparities in black women. She is striving to eliminate the disparities in black women, where the more aggressive forms of endometrial cancer are more prevalent. Her current research includes a pilot project collaboration with her mentor Dr. John McDonald, Professor and Director of the Integrated Cancer Research Center at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. McDonald’s lab has previously used machine learning, along with high-resolution mass spectrometry of patient sera to develop a minimally-invasive accurate method for detecting early stage prostate and ovarian cancer. Dr. Reynolds plans to utilize a similar approach to distinguish between benign endometrial processes and type 1 and type 2 (aggressive) endometrial cancers. Dr. Reynolds is married with two children, Vivienne (age 5) and Noella (age 2). Outside of their activities, she enjoys playing tennis, reading and socializing with colleagues in a book club, and watching her favorite show, “Game of Thrones.”

Tekeda Ferguson, PhD

Tekeda Ferguson, PhD completed her public health training at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Dr. Ferguson is a chronic disease epidemiologist and a Certified Health Education Specialist. Dr. Ferguson has experience in collection and analysis of human longitudinal data and is currently the co-Director of the Data and Analysis Unit for the LSUHSC-NO Comprehensive Alcohol-HIV/AIDS Research Center which conducts clinical studies that facilitate bi-directional translational research. She is also currently working with LSU Health Care Services Division investigating clinical health outcomes and the principal investigator for a pilot project title “Identifying Social Determinants of Disparities in Inflammatory Cancer”. Dr. Ferguson’s research interests have focused on population differences in disease occurrence and the racial differences that unfortunately continue to exist and often lead to disparities. Her research aims to identify and eliminate key social determinants of health impacting cancer health outcomes by targeting social determinants, which encompass the social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental



Tekeda Ferguson, PhD
Assistant Professor of Epidemiology
Louisiana State University Health
Sciences Center (LSUHSC) School of
Public Health

“A person’s environment including the social contexts in which people are born and live are of high importance for shaping health and give rise to health disparities across a number of chronic conditions. This has been come a large interest of mine.” - Dr. Ferguson

factors, which are of high importance for shaping health and contributing to health disparities across a number of chronic conditions.

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Dr. Ferguson plans to utilize her GMaP Region 2 Pilot Funding Award to investigate the hypothesis that early life factors play an important role in the development of cancers mid-life and later. Dr. Ferguson's study will examine the effect of specific early life, childhood, and adolescent risk factors on the type and frequency of cancer development. Through linkage of the Bogalusa Heart Study to cancer diagnosis data collected as part of the Louisiana Tumor Registry, Dr. Ferguson aims to determine whether trajectories of growth, adiposity, glucose, insulin, and lipid profiles in early life are associated with cancer development in mid-life and later.

Click to learn more about [Dr. Tekeda Ferguson.](#)

Spotlight



Candidate for B.S. Biology – Bethune-Cookman University Class of 2018

Phenomenal Women in Higher Education Think Tank, President

Pre-Med Society, President

Health Occupations Students of America, Secretary

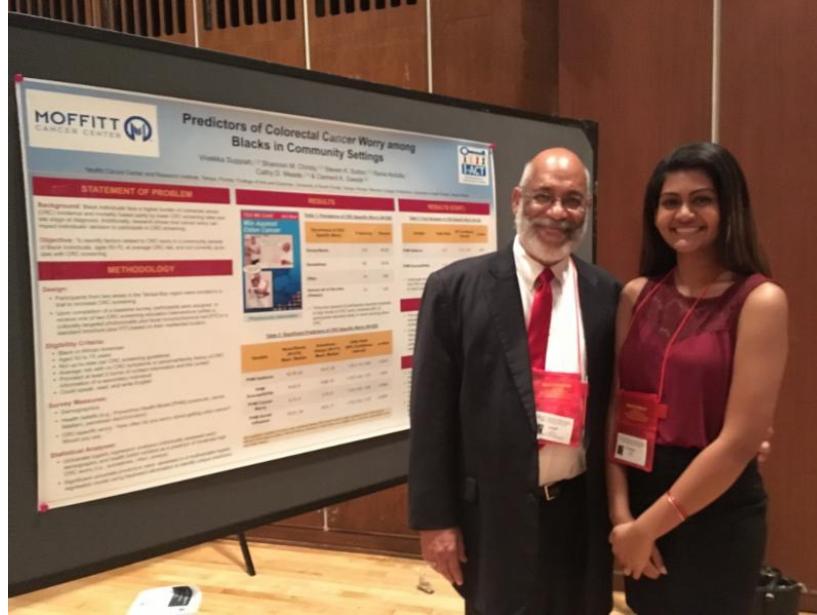
Miss Maroon and Silver 2016-2017

Gabrielle S. Johnson

Congratulations to Gabrielle Johnson for her accomplishments at the [STEM Innovators Conference 2016](#) hosted by [Peach State Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation](#) (Peach State LSAMP). Peach State LSAMP is a National Science Foundation (NSF) sponsored program with the mission to significantly increase the number of underrepresented minorities pursuing degrees Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Ms. Johnson was awarded third place in the Microbiology oral sessions competition this past October.

Through a partnership established between [GMaP Region 2](#) and [Bethune – Cookman University](#), a partner institution, Ms. Johnson participated in a summer research experience at Moffitt Cancer Center with Project LINK where she focused on cancer health disparities research and community outreach and engagement under the direction of GMaP Region 2 program co-directors Drs. Cathy Meade and Clement Gwede.

The HDEART Consortium: A CURE Trainee's Perspective



By Vivekka Suppiah

Vivekka Suppiah is a rising junior at the University of South Florida and has been a part of the Project LINK program since December 2013. She works under her mentors Drs. Cathy D. Meade and Clement K. Gwede alongside the TBCCN team.

From Monday, June 19th to Saturday, June 24th I had the chance to travel to Houston, Texas and attend the 15th Annual Disparities in Health in America: Working Toward Social Justice Summer Workshop. In addition to attending the workshop, I was able to speak on health literacy with my mentor, Dr. Cathy D. Meade and present a poster presentation on the “*Predictors of Colorectal Cancer Worry among Blacks in Community Settings*” in collaboration with Drs. Shannon M. Christy, Steven K. Sutton, Cathy D. Meade, Clement K. Gwede and Rania Abdulla.

This workshop served to inform not only my current work in health disparities research but my foundational understanding of the field. Speakers and workshop topics came from a variety of disciplines such as drug development, environmental health, sociology, law, anthropology and even urban planning. I found presentations on “*Improving Generational Equity Through Investments in Early Childhood Development*” by Dr. Quianta Moore and “*Cultural Beliefs, Behaviors, and the Environment Merge to Influence Migrant and Seasonal Worker Health*” by Dr. Shedra Amy Snipes to be some of the most engaging and eye-opening. The policy advocacy component and future intervention recommendations of these talks helped me understand the steps that researchers should take to translate their findings into positive change for their communities.

Several presentations also touched on work specific to the Harris County region of Houston. In listening to the talks and experiencing some of the city myself, I can see that Houston is a fascinating melting pot of cultures and peoples, a microcosm of the United States itself. Scientists and healthcare professionals from the University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center and Harris County Public Health department come together to form a formidable cadre of health disparities researchers and I hope to continue learning from this robust community throughout my career.

All in all, the biggest takeaway I have from this workshop is context. Having the wonderful opportunity to conduct research with diverse populations in my native Tampa has certainly inspired my future goals and aspirations. But the broad range of areas in which health disparities exist, as discussed throughout the workshop, has made me realize that the fight is much bigger than I thought. Instead of acting in a vacuum to address these problems, it is imperative that we collaborate with other researchers, providers, patients and community members alike so we can ensure everyone’s right to good health.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to Dr. Lovell A. Jones, Executive Directive of the Health Disparities, Education, Awareness, Research & Training (HDEART) Consortium, whose efforts allowed me to attend this workshop in its entirety with a travel scholarship. I also want to thank Dr. Lisako E. McKyer, the workshop organizers and the workshop presenters for creating an interesting program and generating insightful conversations throughout the week. As promised, this was a

life-changing experience and I will most definitely remember the lessons I learned and friends I made for years to come!

[Click to learn more about HDEART](#)

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