



Research Center in  
Minority Institutions

# 2020 HEALTH EQUITY SYMPOSIUM

HARNESSING UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS TO ELIMINATE HEALTH DISPARITIES

February 3, 2020  
8:30am - 3:30pm  
Marc Pavillion  
Modesto Maidique Campus

FIU-RCMI IS FUNDED BY NIMHD  
GRANT U54MD012393



## EVENT DETAILS

THE FIU-RCMI HEALTH EQUITY SYMPOSIUM WILL ENRICH HEALTH DISPARITIES RESEARCH AT FIU AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY THROUGH TRAINING, RESEARCH AND MEANINGFUL NETWORKING. THE SYMPOSIUM WILL FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND FACILITATE NETWORKING WITH EXPERTS ON THE FRONT LINES OF ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY IN SOUTH FLORIDA.

THIS SYMPOSIUM IS SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MINORITY HEALTH AND HEALTH DISPARITIES GRANT U54MD012393.



# ABOUT THE FIU-RCMI

## OUR FOCUS

The FIU-RCMI, funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), is devoted to developing and sustaining a preeminent clinical and behavioral research program oriented toward eliminating health disparities and promoting health equity. Our applied research primarily focuses on health disparities associated with substance use problems and HIV.

## TRAINING & MENTORSHIP

The FIU-RCMI provides mentoring, colloquia, workshops, laboratory training, and biostatistics support for faculty pursuing health disparities research. Our research mentorship endeavors involve intensive training and pilot study funding for early career health disparities investigators. A particular focus is the recruitment, training, and retention of investigators from underrepresented backgrounds

## COMMUNITY

The FIU-RCMI collaborates with communities in the development, dissemination, and implementation of our research. Our community engagement endeavors are guided by an outstanding Community Advisory Board, whose members are at the forefront of efforts. The ACE Project, a pioneering investigation of e-cigarette use among teens, derives from partnering with Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

## CAPACITY EXPANSION

The FIU-RCMI has already supported over 50 faculty and staff, and this number is growing. Our capacity expansion endeavors are focused on expanding the depth and breadth of FIU health disparities research through fostering novel transdisciplinary collaborations, the recruitment and hiring of three senior health disparities investigators, and ongoing training and mentorship activities.

## RCMI CORES

Principal Investigator

*Eric F. Wagner, PhD*

Administrative Core

*Michelle Hospital, PhD*

*Staci Leon Morris, PhD*

Research Infrastructure Core

*Zoran Bursac, PhD*

Investigator Development

*Mary Jo Trepka, MD, MSPH*

*Diana Sheehan Delgado, PhD*

Community Engagement Core

*Adriana Campa, PhD*

Recruitment Core

*Tomás Guilarte*

ACE Project Co-PIs

*Elisa Trucco, PhD*

*Matthew Sutherland, PhD*

## RESOURCES

- Post-Doctoral and Junior Faculty Pilot Projects Program
- Health Disparities Transdisciplinary Colloquia Grant Proposal
- Development Trainings Community Engagement Activities
- Monthly Newsletter &
- Weekly Digest

## POINTS OF PRIDE

**\$400K**

FOR PILOT  
RESEARCH  
AWARDS

**50+**

FACULTY  
SUPPORTED BY  
FIU-RCMI

**23**

COMMUNITY  
AFFILIATIONS

**10**

TRANSDISCIPLINARY  
DEPARTMENTS  
ENGAGED WITH THE

**\$30K**

IN SEED FUNDING  
TO COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS

# SYMPOSIUM AGENDA

8:30 - 9:00AM	BREAKFAST AND REGISTRATION
9:00 - 9:25AM	WELCOMING REMARKS ERIC F. WAGNER, PhD. PI, FIU-RCMI TOMÁS GUILARTE, PhD. DEAN, ROBERT STEMPEL COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK
9:30 - 10:30AM	KEYNOTE SPEAKER “LEVERAGING STRENGTH TO PROMOTE WELLBEING IN MINORITY FAMILIES AFFECTED BY MATERNAL MENTAL DISORDERS, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND HIV” VICTORIA BEHAR-ZUSMAN, PhD PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF NURSING AND HEALTH STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI PI, CENTER FOR LATINO HEALTH RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES (CLaRO)
10:30 - 10:40AM	BREAK
10:40 - 11:20AM	“WORKING TOWARDS HEALTH EQUITY IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE 2020 CENSUS” RAFAEL DE LA PORTILLA, MS. SENIOR PARTNERSHIP SPECIALIST, US CENSUS BUREAU
11:25 - 11:45AM	FIU-RCMI PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM PRESENTATION MARY JO TREPKA, MD, MSPH CORE LEADER, FIU-RCMI INVESTIGATOR DEVELOPMENT CORE
11:45 - 12:50PM	LUNCH CONCURRENT WITH POSTER SESSION, COHORTS 1 & 2 OF FIU-RCMI PILOT GRANT AWARDEES
1:00 - 1:30PM	“ACE PROJECT: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS” ELISA TRUCCO, PhD. CO-PI, FIU-RCMI ACE PROJECT MATTHEW SUTHERLAND, PhD. CO-PI, FIU-RCMI ACE PROJECT
1:35 - 1:55PM	“THE TRIPLE EFFECT - COMPREHENSIVE HIV PREVENTION” BARBARA M. KUBILUS, MPA CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, PROJECT ACCESS FOUNDATION
2:00 - 2:25PM	FIU-RCMI COMMUNITY PROJECT AWARD RECOGNITION ADRIANA CAMPA, PhD, MBA, RD, LD/N CORE LEADER, FIU-RCMI COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CORE
2:30 - 2:50PM	CLOSING REMARKS ERIC F. WAGNER, PhD. PI, FIU-RCMI
2:50 - 3:30PM	NETWORKING



# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



## Victoria Behar-Zusman, PhD

Professor, School of Nursing & Health Studies  
University of Miami  
Principal Investigator (Multi-PI Award)  
Center for Latino Health Research Opportunities (CLaRO)

Dr. Behar-Zusman is Professor at the University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies. Her research focuses on family process and family intervention in populations affected by HIV, substance abuse and other mental health disorders. She directs the School of Nursing and Health Studies' Center of Excellence for Health Disparities Research: El Centro, and is a principal investigator of the NIH-funded Center for Latino Health Research Opportunities: CLaRO, a partnership with Florida International University, which advances interventions to address HIV, substance

abuse and trauma-related mental health problems among vulnerable Latino communities. Dr. Behar-Zusman mentors early-stage faculty and nursing PhD students and teaches quantitative research methods and research ethics in the PhD program.



## Elisa Trucco, PhD

Co-Principal Investigator  
FIU-RCMI ACE Project

Dr. Trucco's research focuses on understanding how adolescent substance use develops through a social ecological perspective. This involves identifying early risk and protective factors that lead to adolescent problem behavior and substance use across multiple levels. These levels include: biology (genetics, neurobiology), social contexts (peers, parents), and individual characteristics (personality, temperament). She examines factors that increase susceptibility to social contexts that either promote or deter adolescents from using alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. She also investigates pathways through which genes and temperament impact the onset of substance use. The goal of this work is to improve substance use prevention programs.



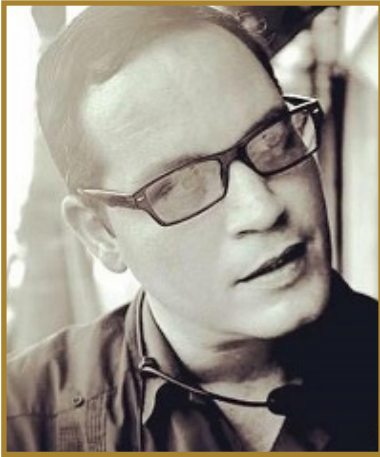
## Matthew T. Sutherland, PhD

Co-Principal Investigator  
FIU-RCMI ACE Project

Dr. Sutherland's research focuses on understanding the brain processes that lead to and maintain drug use/abuse (e.g., nicotine, marijuana) and associated conditions (e.g., HIV infection). His research utilizes magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) techniques to examine human brain function and structure. Better understanding of the brain processing linked with drug use will inform the development of improved treatments for addiction, strategies to match people with the best treatment options, and efforts to prevent vulnerable individuals from initiating drug use.



# COMMUNITY SPEAKERS



## Rafael "Ralph" D. de la Portilla, M.S.

Partnership Specialist  
Miami-Dade County (FL)  
U.S. Census Bureau

Ralph is a native Miamian and alumnus of the New World School of the Arts where he studied Music & Theatre and later was accepted into the B.F.A. Theatre program there. He has worked professionally in virtually every facet of the performing arts for over a decade and has sat on several advisory boards for local not-for-profit arts organizations throughout South Florida. Mr. de la Portilla has been working for the U.S. Census Bureau for over eight years and is a local media spokesperson for the 2020 Census campaign in Miami-Dade County. This is his third decennial census.

## U.S. Census Bureau

The Census Bureau is the federal government's largest statistical agency. They are dedicated to providing current facts and figures about America's people, places, and economy. Federal law protects the confidentiality of all the information the Census Bureau collects.



## Barbara M. Kubilus, M.P.A.

Chief Operating Officer  
Project Access Foundation, Inc.

Barbara has over fifteen years of progressive leadership and administrative experience in human/social service organizations serving children and their families in multi-cultural settings. She has experience in program design, development, and implementation. She has overseen HIV/AIDS and cancer screenings programs for the underserved, worked with the Juvenile Justice Court, acted as an executive director of a nonprofit dental clinic; administrator for HIV/AIDS and school health programs, outreach, maternal health/education, substance abuse and primary care/behavioral health integration for a Federally Qualified Health Center.

## Project Access Foundation

Project Access Foundation is a non-profit organization that serves the community by providing access to medical services that you may need and may not be able to access. They also are focused on cure research of certain cancerous illnesses contributing to their future cure and eradication.



# FIU-RCMI PILOT GRANTEES COHORT 2

**SHANNA BURKE, PHD, MSW, BA**

**THE DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF APOLIPOPROTEIN E GENOTYPE ON COGNITIVE AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG MINORITIES WITH HIV AND HCV**

The purpose of Dr. Burke's project is to conduct the formative work needed to examine the impact of APOE genotype on cognitive and mental health among a minority sample of HIV/HCV patients, which will provide the opportunity to collect the pilot data needed for a more exhaustive large-scale study of the impact of APOE genotype on individuals with HIV and/or HCV from disadvantaged backgrounds

**MELISSA WARD-PETERSON, PHD, MPH**

**EXAMINING BARRIERS TO ACCESSING MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT AMONG WOMEN WITH OPIOID USE DISORDER: A MIXED-METHODS PILOT STUDY**

The objective of Dr. Ward-Peterson's study is to conduct a rigorous mixed methods analysis of the key factors determining women's access to MAT to inform the development of an intervention that engages both clinical and community partners in reducing barriers to care. Methods will include in-depth interviews with women who have OUD, as well as with healthcare providers and social workers. Additionally, areas where women are most in need of MAT services will be identified from EMS data based on the locations of opioid overdoses, and community-level factors associated with the availability of MAT facilities in these areas will be examined.

**MICHAEL TOBIA, PHD, MA**

**OLFACTORY FUNCTION AND BRAIN CONNECTIVITY AS BIOMARKERS FOR SENESCENT RACIAL/ETHNIC HEALTH DISPARITIES**

Dr. Tobia's pilot project represents the first step in a research program aiming to discover the impact of health disparity on brain function, with the ultimate goal of identifying prognostic brain-based biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease (AD) and dementia among the racially and ethnically diverse aging population residing in the South Florida region. A brain-based assessment that probes the integrity of olfactory-related brain regions and brain networks may provide prognostic insight into olfactory dysfunction or disease trajectory, and would allow for early/preventive health programs to intervene more successfully.

**VERONICA DEL PRETE PEREZ, MD**

**BRAIN-BASED MECHANISMS FOR RISK AND RESILIENCE IN POSTPARTUM RECOVERY AMONG HISPANIC/LATINA WOMEN**

Dr. Del Prete Perez' pilot will test the feasibility and precision of the tools to measure behavioral domains in Hispanic/Latina women during the postpartum period and will develop the fMRI neuroimaging methodology needed to further study emotion dysregulation during early postpartum period. The data and methodologies developed from this study will be used in future long-term studies to investigate the risk and resilience factors that impact the neural systems supporting emotional reactivity and emotion regulation in Hispanic/Latina women.



# COMMUNITY RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT GRANT AWARDEES



## CARE 4 U COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Representative: Vanessa Mills, RN, BSN, MPH

FIU Collaborator: Dr. Jessy G. Dévieux

PREDICTORS OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF PRE-EXPOSURE  
PROPHYLAXIS (PREP) FOR HIV PREVENTION IN A COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE  
SETTING

This project will conduct secondary data analysis to advance the understanding of the indicators associated with patients cycling into and out of PrEP use and the implications for clinical management.



## CARIDAD CENTER

Representative: Jezebel Maisonet

FIU Collaborator: Dr. Sabrina Sales-Martinez

NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF  
DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY IN HISPANICS/LATINS AT CARIDAD CENTERA  
COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE SETTING

This project will conduct secondary data analysis to advance the understanding of the indicators associated with patients cycling into and out of PrEP use and the implications for clinical management.



## HEALTHY START COALITION OF MIAMI-DADE

Representative: Jeanette Torres, MS, MHC

FIU Collaborator: Dr. Melissa M. Howard

FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING AN INNOVATIVE TOOL TO PREVENT POOR  
PREGNANCY OUTCOMES AMONG BLACK MOTHERS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

This project will use a mixed-methods approach including questionnaire surveys and in-depth-interviews to inform decisions of whether, and how, to introduce "Count the Kicks" (CTK), an app which makes it simple to track a baby's movement pattern, in Miami-Dade.





# COMMUNITY RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT GRANT AWARDEES



## MIAMI MACARTHUR EDUCATIONAL CENTER

Representative: Lissette Gil

FIU Collaborator: Dr. Matthew Sutherland & Dr. Elisa Trucco

### MACCARES MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES AND RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE EFFECTS OF DRUG USE ON THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

This project aims to change the narrative of the Miami MacArthur Educational Center (MMEC) by creating a school culture and climate that fosters a proactive and holistic approach to alternative education. The study's intent is for at-risk students to become empowered, make better decisions, and be equipped with a set of life and coping skills that replace previous maladaptive coping strategies and behaviors.



## MIAMI MUSIC PROJECT INC

Representative: Anna Kimala

FIU Collaborator: Dr. Michelle Hospital

### EXPANDING MIAMI MUSIC PROJECT'S CAPACITY FOR EVALUATION AND RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

This project aims to establish a partnership with FIU that actively engages in reducing youth inequality and promoting the wellbeing of economically disadvantaged racial/ethnic minority youth in South Florida. This study will conduct a thorough review of current evaluation practices and develop a detailed and comprehensive research plan for Miami Music Project, Inc.

## UHI COMMUNITY CLINIC

Representative: Dima Samra

FIU Collaborator: Dr. Sahar Ajabshir

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR INCLUSION OF NUTRITION EDUCATION SERVICES AT THE UHI COMMUNITY CARE CLINIC

This project will perform a systematic needs assessment for inclusion of nutrition education services at the UHI Community Clinic (UHI). This non-profit volunteer-based clinic provides free healthcare services to low-income, uninsured members of the community, many of whom have nutrition-related chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Due to the clinic's limited resources, no nutritional services are currently available for patients.

For more information about the Community Research Enhancement Grant, please visit:

<https://rcmi.fiu.edu/community>



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Dr. Ray Balise and Ms. Layla Bouzoubaa

### TEARING DOWN BARRIERS TO PUBLICATION

Friday, February 28, 2020

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: MMC Campus, WC-130

## Dr. Vetta Thompson

### COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH SEMINAR

Thursday, March 12, 2020

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Location: MMC Campus, GC-150

Friday, March 13, 2020

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Location: MMC Campus, GC-150

## Dr. Felicia Hill-Briggs

### HEALTH DISPARITIES SEMINAR SERIES

Friday, March 27, 2020

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

Location: TBA (Please check: [rcmi.fiu.edu](http://rcmi.fiu.edu) for updates)

## Dr. Michael Tobia

### PILOT GRANT RESEARCH IN PROGRESS PRESENTATION

Friday, April 10, 2020

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: MMC Campus, WC-130

## Dr. Shanna Burke

### PILOT GRANT RESEARCH IN PROGRESS PRESENTATION

Friday, April 24, 2020

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

Location: MMC Campus, WC-130

For more about upcoming FIU-RCMI events, please visit the Upcoming Events section at:

<https://rcmi.fiu.edu>



# SPECIAL THANK YOU

Thank you for joining us for the 2020 FIU-RCMI Health Equity Symposium. We appreciate your participation today and look forward to your support in the future. Only by working together will we succeed in eliminating health disparities once and for all.

## The FIU-RCMI Team

### Core Leaders

Eric F. Wagner, PhD - PI FIU-RCMI  
Michelle Hospital, PhD - Administrative Core  
Staci Leon Morris, PSYD - Administrative Core  
Zoran Bursac, PhD - Research Infrastructure Core  
Mary Jo Trepka, MD, MSPH - Investigator Development Core  
Diana Sheehan-Delgado, PhD - Investigator Development Core  
Adriana Campa, PhD - Community Engagement Core  
Tomás Guilarte, PhD - Recruitment Core  
Elisa Trucco, PhD - ACE Project  
Matthew Sutherland, PhD - ACE Project

### Core Coordinators

Sara Charles, MPH - Administrative Core  
Melissa Ward-Peterson PhD - Research Infrastructure Core  
Sofia Fernandez, PhD, MSW - Investigator Development Core  
Sophia Oliva, BA - Community Engagement Core  
Jordan Quintana, MSW - Recruitment Core  
Nasreen Hidmi, MS - ACE Project  
Brigitte Madan, BA - ACE Project  
Robbert J. Langwerden, MS - Evaluation Coordinator

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# OUR PARTNERS

