

# FIU-RCMI HEALTH EQUITY SYMPOSIUM

Friday, March 15, 2024

*Enhancing Community-Research Partnerships to  
Eliminate Health Disparities in South Florida*



# WELCOME

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Greetings,

Thank you for joining us for our annual FIU Research Center in Minority Institutions (FIU-RCMI) Health Equity Symposium. We are pleased to be hosting an outstanding group of researchers, community members, and partners from other prestigious institutions.

The FIU-RCMI is focused on world-class, community-partnered health disparities research and training. Health disparities are largely preventable differences in the burden of disease experienced by certain groups based on social, economic, or environmental disadvantage.

Since our last symposium, the FIU-RCMI was renewed for an additional 5-years and \$19.4 million in recognition of the FIU-RCMI's exceptional performance and its expansion plans.

This year's FIU-RCMI Health Equity Symposium will enrich health disparities research at FIU and the local community through training, research, and meaningful networking, encouraging new collaborations between researchers and community organizations in South Florida.

Once again, we thank you for attending the 2024 FIU-RCMI Health Equity Symposium.

Sincerely,  
The FIU-RCMI Team

*This symposium is sponsored by the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities Grant U54MD012393.*

# FIU-RCMI

## ABOUT

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The FIU-RCMI, funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), is a comprehensive clinical/health services, behavioral and population science, and basic biomedical research center that involves 78 faculty, staff, and students across 13 departments at Florida International University.

### OUR FOCUS

The FIU-RCMI is devoted to developing and sustaining a research portfolio addressing health disparities. Our investigators work with community partners to ensure our efforts promote health equity among and across the diverse communities of South Florida to address a wide range of topics including:

- Agrochemical Exposure
- Alzheimer's Disease
- COVID-19
- HIV
- Mental Health
- The Microbiome
- Pediatric Cancer
- Sleep Hygiene
- Substance Use Problems

### WHAT WE DO

Our vision is a South Florida where all populations have an equal opportunity to live long, healthy, and productive lives. To achieve this, we support meaningful health disparities research by:

- Training early-stage investigators on best practices for conducting rigorous and respectful health disparities research
- Convening a Community Advisory Board (CAB) to assist in guiding our research
- Establishing and strengthening research partnerships with community-based organizations
- Providing infrastructure support and educational opportunities to conduct state-of-the-art research

### POINTS OF PRIDE

**\$2.9M**

IN COVID-19  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
SUPPLEMENTAL  
AWARDS

**\$1.15M**

FOR PILOT  
RESEARCH AWARDS

**>50**

SPEAKERS  
HOSTED

**\$100K**

IN COMMUNITY  
FUNDING  
SUPPORTED BY  
FIU-RCMI

# FIU-RCMI HEALTH EQUITY SYMPOSIUM

## 2024 AGENDA

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8:30 -  
9:00 a.m.      **Registration & Breakfast**

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9:00 -  
9:15 a.m.      **Welcoming Remarks**  
Eric F. Wagner, PhD | Principal Investigator, FIU-RCMI  
Kenneth A. Jessell, PhD | President, Florida International University

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9:20 -  
9:35 a.m.      **Special Remarks**  
Deborah Linares, PhD, MA | Program Official, NIMHD

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9:40 -  
10:40 a.m.      **Keynote Speaker**  
William Southerland, PhD | Principal Investigator, Howard University RCMI

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10:45 -  
11:00 a.m.      **Break**

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11:00 -  
11:45 a.m.      **Panel Discussion: FIU-RCMI Pilot Project Alumni**  
*Facilitated by: Mary Jo Trepka, MD, MSPH | Core Leader, FIU-RCMI  
Investigator Development Core*

Panelists:

José Colón Burgos, DrPH, MS | Assistant Professor, University of Florida  
Hui Huang, PhD, MSW | Associate Professor, University of Texas at Arlington  
Karina Villalba, PhD, MPH | Assistant Professor, University of Central Florida  
Sheila Clemens, PhD, PT, MPT | Assistant Professor, University of Kentucky

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11:50 a.m. -  
12:10 p.m.      **Research Presentation: Advancing Personalized Treatment Approaches for  
Childhood Cancers in Minority Populations Study**  
Diana Azzam, PhD | Principal Investigator

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12:15 -  
1:30 p.m.      **Lunch & Poster Session, Cohort 6 of FIU-RCMI Pilot Grant Awardees**  
Aaliyah Gray, PhD | Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Epidemiology  
Amber Sophus, PhD, MPH | Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Health  
Promotion and Disease Prevention  
Genevieve Reid, PhD | Assistant Professor, Department of Global &  
Sociocultural Studies  
Rumi Agarwal, PhD, MPH, MBA | Research Assistant Professor, FIU Embrace

# FIU-RCMI HEALTH EQUITY SYMPOSIUM

## 2024 AGENDA

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1:30 - **Panel Discussion: Collaborative Partnerships for Impactful Community-Based Research**  
2:20 p.m.

*Facilitated by: Michelle Hospital, PhD | Core Leader, FIU-RCMI Community Engagement Core*

Panelists:

Andrea Iglesias, PsyD | Executive Director, Urban Health Partnerships

Emelina Martinez | Manager, Safe Syringe Exchange Services for The SPOT

Jeannette Torres, MS | Chief Executive Officer, Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade

Jennifer Ulysse, MPH | Research Business Analyst, The Children's Trust

Susana Peñaranda, MPA | Project Manager, City of Miami's Department of Human Services

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2:25 - **Presentation: Tri-Sleep Study: Sleep, Gut Microbiome, and Mind**

2:45 p.m. Shanna Burke, PhD, MSW, MPH | Co-Principal Investigator

Sabrina Sales Martinez, PhD, MS, RDN | Co-Principal Investigator

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2:50 - **Presentation: Addressing Community-level Influences of HIV and COVID-19 Disparities Among People with HIV Study**

3:10 p.m.

Diana Sheehan Delgado, PhD | Principal Investigator

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3:15 - **Closing Remarks**

3:25 p.m. Eric F. Wagner, PhD | Principal Investigator, FIU-RCMI

Andrés G. Gil, PhD | Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Florida International University

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3:25 - **Coffee & Networking**

3:45 p.m.

# SPECIAL REMARKS

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## **Deborah Linares, PhD, MA**

Program Official, Behavioral Sciences Lead,  
Division of Integrative Biological and Behavioral Sciences, National  
Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD)

Dr. Deborah Linares focuses on promoting research to understand behavioral and interpersonal factors contributing to resilience and susceptibility to adverse health conditions among disadvantaged and underserved populations. She provides expertise in conducting minority health and health disparities research in the areas of behavioral health, women's health, child development, healthy aging, eHealth, and cancer control.

# STRATEGIES FOR THE RECRUITMENT, MENTORSHIP, AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY-STAGE FACULTY

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER PRESENTATION

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## **William Southerland, PhD**

Professor, Department of Biochemistry,  
Director, Center for Computational Biology & Bioinformatics,  
Interim Director, Center for Applied Data Science and Analytics  
Principal Investigator, Howard University RCMI  
Howard University

Dr. William Southerland attended North Carolina State University where he earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry and subsequently earned the PhD in Biochemistry from Duke University.

Dr. William's research interests include utilization of data science principles to better understand the differing chronic disease burdens among different ethnic groups in the Washington, DC area. His interests also include investigating the association between allele frequencies and chronic disease expression among different ethnic groups. Earlier interests include using molecular dynamics approaches to investigate the rules of recognition and binding between small molecule ligands and their macromolecular targets. This work focuses on analysis of how time-dependent conformational changes influences binding quality between ligand and target molecules. This approach has been used to study interaction mechanisms of small molecules with both proteins and DNA and it has important implications for the design of therapeutic agents. Additional interests have included the design of proteins with increased thermal stability for application to industrial, environmental, and diagnostic arenas.

# FIU-RCMI PILOT PROJECT ALUMNI PANEL

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Facilitated by: Mary Jo Trepka, MD, MSPH | Core Leader, FIU-RCMI Investigator Development Core



**Hui Huang, PhD, MSW | Cohort 1, 2018 - 2019**

Associate Professor, School of Social Work  
University of Texas at Arlington

Pilot Project:

*Substance-using Parents' Needs and Receipt for Ancillary Services, Their Relationship to Substance Use Treatment Compliance and New Child Maltreatment Reports*



**José Colón Burgos, DrPH, MS | Cohort 1, 2018 - 2019**

Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental and Global Health  
University of Florida

Pilot Project:

*Examining the Syndemic of Drug Use and HIV Among Latino MSM Who Work in the Tourism Sector of South Florida*



**Karina Villalba, PhD, MPH | Cohort 1, 2018 - 2019**

Assistant Professor, Department of Population Health Sciences  
University of Central Florida

Pilot Project:

*Effects of Childhood Abuse on Emotion and Cognition and Health-Risk Behaviors Among Alcohol Using Women of Color At Risk for HIV*



**Sheila Clemens, PhD, PT, MPT | Cohort 3, 2020 - 2021**

Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Therapy,  
University of Kentucky

Pilot Project:

*Examining racial/ethnic disparities in functional outcomes of people with dysvascular lower limb amputation and the effect of socioenvironmental factors*

# COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPACTFUL COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH PANEL

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*Facilitated by: Michelle Hospital, PhD | Core Leader, FIU-RCMI Community Engagement Core*



**Andrea Iglesias, PsyD**  
Executive Director,  
Urban Health  
Partnerships



**Emelina Martinez**  
Manager,  
Safe Syringe Exchange  
Services for The SPOT



**Jeannette Torres, MS**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Healthy Start Coalition  
of Miami-Dade



**Jennifer Ulysse, MPH**  
Research Business  
Analyst,  
The Children's Trust



**Susana Peñaranda, MPA**  
Project Manager,  
City of Miami's  
Department of Human  
Services



# FIU-RCMI RESEARCH PROJECTS PRESENTATIONS

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**Diana Azzam, PhD**  
Principal Investigator

*Advancing Personalized Treatment Approaches for Childhood Cancers in Minority Populations Study*



**Shanna Burke, PhD, MSW, MPH**  
Co-Principal Investigator

*Tri-Sleep Study: Sleep, Gut Microbiome, and Mind*



**Sabrina Sales Martinez, PhD, MS, RDN**  
Co-Principal Investigator

*Tri-Sleep Study: Sleep, Gut Microbiome, and Mind*



**Diana Sheehan Delgado, PhD**  
Principal Investigator

*Addressing Community-level Influences of HIV and COVID-19 Disparities Among People with HIV*

# OUR LEADERSHIP

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**Eric Wagner, PhD**  
Principal Investigator,  
FIU-RCMI



**Mary Jo Trepka, MD, MPH**  
Core Lead,  
Investigator Development  
Core



**Michelle Hospital, PhD**  
Core Lead,  
Administrative Core  
Core Lead,  
Community Engagement  
Core



**Staci Leon Morris, PsyD**  
Core Lead,  
Administrative Core



**Zoran Bursac, PhD**  
Core Lead,  
Research Capacity Core



**Tomás R. Guilarte, PhD**  
Core Lead,  
Recruitment Core



**Diana Azzam, PhD**  
Principal Investigator,  
FIU-RCMI Research Project



**Diana Sheehan Delgado, PhD**  
Principal Investigator,  
FIU-RCMI Research Project,  
Core Co-Lead,  
Investigator Development  
Core



**Jason Mitchell, PhD, MPH**  
Core Co-Lead,  
Investigator Development  
Core



**Melissa Ward, PhD**  
Core Co-Lead, Research  
Capacity Core



**Sabrina Sales-Martinez,  
PhD, MS, RDN**  
Core Co-Lead,  
Recruitment Core  
Co-Principal Investigator,  
FIU-RCMI Research Project



**Shanna L. Burke, PhD,  
MSW, MPH**  
Core Co-Lead,  
Recruitment Core  
Co-Principal Investigator,  
FIU-RCMI Research Project

# SPECIAL THANKS

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## Our Attendees

Thank you for joining us for the 2024 FIU-RCMI Health Equity Symposium. We appreciate your participation today and look forward to your support in the future.

*"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."* – Coretta Scott King

*"Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much."* – Helen Keller.

## Our Team

We would like to express our gratitude towards our FIU-RCMI core staff, along with our affiliated faculty, staff, and students.

### *Core Staff*

Celine Cambara, BA | Program Coordinator, FIU-RCMI Research Project

Chelsea Lopez, MS | Program Manager, Administrative Core

Cinthya Silva-Cruz, MPA | Program Manager, Investigator Development Core

Ebony Coats, MS | Research Specialist, FIU-RCMI Research Project

Jordan Quintana, MSW | Program Manager, Administrative Core

Katherine Perez, MSW, MPH | Program Manager, Community Engagement Core

Maria Carricarte, MPH | Special Events Manager, Administrative Core

Shelbie Burchfield, MS, MPH | Research Coordinator, FIU-RCMI Research Project

Thelma Robles, BA | Coordinator of Administrative Services, Administrative Core

# SPECIAL THANKS

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## *Affiliated Faculty, Staff, and Students*

Aaliyah Gray, PhD, MPH | Principal Investigator, FIU-RCMI Pilot Project  
Adrienne Grudzien, PhD | Postdoctoral Associate, FIU-RCMI Research Project  
Alexandra Briceno, MS | Graduate Assistant, FIU-RCMI Research Project  
Amber Sophus, PhD, MPH | Principal Investigator, FIU-RCMI Pilot Project  
Andrés G. Gil, PhD | Co-Investigator, Recruitment Core  
Angela Laird, PhD | Pilot Mentor, Investigator Development Core  
Ariful Hoque, MS | Graduate Assistant, Research Capacity Core  
Arlet Acanda De La Rocha, PhD | Postdoctoral Associate, FIU-RCMI Research Project  
Boubakari Ibrahimou, PhD | Co-Investigator, Research Capacity Core  
Daisy Ramírez Ortiz, PhD, MPH | Research Assistant Professor, FIU-RCMI Research Project  
Edgar Ramos Vieira, PhD | Co-Investigator, Community Engagement Core  
Farah Mahmoud, MSW | Graduate Assistant, Administrative Core  
Genevieve Reid, PhD | Principal Investigator, FIU-RCMI Pilot Project  
Giselle Barreto, MPH | Graduate Assistant, FIU-RCMI Research Project  
Ingrid Gonzalez, MPH | Biostatistician, Administrative Core  
Janet Diaz-Martinez, PhD, RD, LDN | Postdoctoral Associate, Community Engagement Core  
Jessy G. Devieux, PhD, MA | Co-Investigator, Recruitment Core  
Maria Eugenia Contreras Perez, MS | Graduate Assistant, Community Engagement Core  
Nan Hu, PhD | Co-Investigator, Research Capacity Core  
Nana Aisha Garba, MD, PhD, MPH | Co-Investigator, Community Engagement Core  
Nelson Varas-Diaz, PhD | Pilot Mentor, Investigator Development Core  
Ning Sun, MPH | Graduate Assistant, Research Capacity Core  
Patrice Lewis, BSc | Graduate Assistant, FIU-RCMI Research Project  
Rabeya Noon, MS | Graduate Assistant, Research Capacity Core  
Rumi Agarwal, PhD | Principal Investigator, FIU-RCMI Pilot Project  
Samantha Gonzales, MS | Data Analyst, Research Capacity Core  
Sofia B. Fernandez, PhD, MSW | Co-Investigator, Investigator Development Core  
Stefanie Moore, MPH | Biostatistician, Research Capacity Core  
Stephanie Aleite, MSW | Graduate Assistant, FIU-RCMI Pilot Project  
Stephanie Garcia, MPH | Research Scientist, Research Capacity Core  
Stephanie Rendon, BS | Communications, Community Engagement Core  
Suzanna Rose, PhD | Co-Investigator, Recruitment Core  
Tan Li, PhD | Co-Investigator, Research Capacity Core  
Thais Escobar Sanabria, MA | Graduate Assistant, FIU-RCMI Pilot Project  
Timothy Hayes, PhD | Co-Investigator, FIU-RCMI Research Project  
Xeuxia Wang, PhD | Co-Investigator, Research Capacity Core