



PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTERS WORK WITH PARTNERS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH

CDC Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) work with diverse partners to improve community and public health by starting evidence-based programs, sharing research, and applying what is learned in real-world community settings. PRC partners include nonprofits, health care systems, Tribal organizations, professional associations, and community-based programs. Teamwork between community partners and the health sector is critical to address social determinants of health and reduce health inequities.¹

This brief highlights successes from three such partnerships:



Partnering to Promote Healthy Aging



Joining Forces to Address the Needs of Migrant People and Refugees



Long-Standing Partnership Building Community Health and Ability

PARTNERING TO PROMOTE HEALTHY AGING

The University of Washington Health Promotion Research Center (UW HPRC) developed an evidence-based program, Enhance[®]Fitness, to help older, independent adults become more active. The program is led by Sound Generations, a nonprofit offering Enhance[®]Fitness for over 20 years to socially disadvantaged older adults. UW HPRC's partnership with Sound Generations is important because Sound Generations started Enhance[®]Fitness classes, expanding the program's reach by training new sites and distributing the training nationally.



What are CDC Prevention Research Centers?

PRCs are academic research centers that study how people and their communities can reduce the risks for chronic illnesses. PRCs collaborate with local communities to make a positive impact, especially in populations affected by health disparities. Together, they identify key public health issues, develop and test programs to prevent chronic diseases, and create tools and resources that can be shared widely.



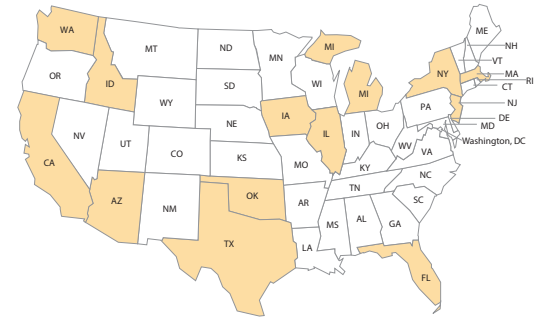
**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

“Our strong continuing community-academic partnership with UW-HPRC has supported problem-solving with the community to understand what works and for whom.”

— Paige Denison, Director of Health, Wellness, and Project Enhance, Sound Generations

UW HPRC provided scientific advisory support and ongoing research opportunities that allowed Sound Generations to expand their work and meet community needs as they emerge. For example:

- Enhance@Fitness was modified so it could be offered in an interactive livestream (online). This allows the program to reach new participants, including rural communities and people undergoing cancer treatments.
- In partnership with UW HPRC and the YMCA, Sound Generations helped develop and test a way to increase the outreach for YMCAs to physical therapy clinics by referring older adult patients to Enhance@Fitness.
- Sound Generations also helped develop and send out a toolkit for YMCAs to increase their outreach ability as part of this effort. UW HPRC researchers connected with 20 YMCAs nationwide, reaching 13 states with their outreach efforts. Participating YMCAs were in the West (Washington, Idaho, and California), Southwest (Arizona), Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Midwest (Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan), Southeast (Florida), and Northeast (Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York).



Participating YMCAs working with Sound Generations to offer Enhance@Fitness classes.

These YMCAs reported that the toolkit served as a flexible and useful resource.²


“Partnering with Sound Generations is critical to understanding the needs of the community from direct social service providers who are on the front lines every day. As an academic research center, we don’t have that kind of depth and breadth of knowledge and rapport with communities in the same way Sound Generations does, having served our area for 46 years.”


— Marlana Kohn, MPH, Research Scientist, The Hans Rosling Center for Population Health, University of Washington


JOINING FORCES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF MIGRANT PEOPLE AND REFUGEES

The [Prevention Research Center at Georgia State University](#) (PRC GSU) works to address the health and well-being of children, migrant people, and refugees. The GSU PRC has maintained a strong partnership with the [International Rescue Committee](#) (IRC), an organization offering a range of programs to help refugees and immigrants join and thrive in their communities.

The IRC plays an active role in translating materials, reviewing results, and developing ways to widely share PRC GSU’s research. For example, they helped start [SafeCare](#), an evidence-based skills training program for in-home caregivers of children under five. SafeCare focuses on three key outcomes that are important for families:

 **Creating positive relationships between caregivers and their children.**

 **Making sure homes are safe to reduce accidental injuries.**

 **Keeping children as healthy as possible.**

“This collaboration brings together the expertise, resources, and passion of two organizations that are deeply committed to making a difference in the lives of vulnerable populations and fostering a stronger, more resilient community,” said Omar Aziz, BDS, Deputy Director of Resettlement Programs, IRC.

Caregivers can improve their skills in crafting daily activities for their children and preventing challenging behaviors. The program also targets risk factors associated with neglect and physical abuse. Caregivers learn how to childproof their home and watch children in an age-appropriate way. Caregivers can also spot common childhood illnesses and injuries and find the best ways to care for their kids. IRC provided a research site, recruited participants, and trained staff to begin the program. In a study to start and review an adapted version of the SafeCare model for Afghan, Burmese, and Congolese refugees, positive changes in parenting skills were observed by all three groups.

During COVID-19, IRC supported a needs evaluation conducted by PRC GSU to compare the health and welfare of refugees and nonrefugees in Clarkston County, Georgia.³



“ This partnership sets an inspiring example for collaboration within local communities and beyond. By working together, the IRC in Atlanta and GSU PRC show that organizations with different expertise can unite for a shared goal. This spirit of collaboration can inspire other entities to seek out meaningful partnerships that leverage diverse strengths and create a ripple effect of positive change.”

— Omar Aziz, BDS, Deputy Director of Resettlement Programs, IRC

LONG-STANDING PARTNERSHIP BUILDING COMMUNITY HEALTH AND ABILITY

The [University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center](#) (UNM PRC) works with underrepresented populations in New Mexico to improve health and well-being through community-focused research. Their [Healthy Places–Healthy People](#) (HPHP) program builds on an earlier evidence-based program, [VIVA—Step Into Cuba](#), to increase access to and awareness of ways to be more active across the Navajo Nation. Since 2009, Diné College has been a trusted partner helping make this program successful. Diné serves a mostly Navajo student population and guarantees the program’s success by participating in workshops, training, and running and evaluating the project. The UNM PRC contacted Diné College to support HPHP by having undergraduate students participate in trail-building events in the Eastern Navajo Nation. These trail-building programs involve hands-on activities, such as learning to use traditional tools to create trails. With proper training, students can get more involved in their community and do service-learning projects to get experience and volunteer time. Students can also develop projects to understand how the Navajo Housing Authority uses liability policies with Navajo Nation and Parks and Recreation, addressing how loose dogs affect safe trails.

This partnership allows students in public health classes to share presentations they have developed during the monthly HPHP Networking Meetings. Students show the benefits of physical activity and share cultural perspectives and teachings, such as running to the east each morning and using Hózhó and respect in daily life. Hózhó is a philosophy and wellness belief system that guides a person’s actions, behaviors, and speech. Community members can relate to these workshops because the students are a part of the community, and many elders speak Navajo only, so HPHP must meet their needs.

“ This type of collaboration provides capacity building for students who will be the future of the public health workforce in communities on the Navajo Nation.”

— Carmella Kahn, DrPH, MPH, Former Assistant Professor with the Diné College Public Health Program

References

¹ Tsai E, Allen P, Saliba LF, *et al*. The power of partnerships: state public health department multisector collaborations in major chronic disease programme areas in the United States. *Health Res Policy Syst*. 2022;20(1):80. doi:10.1186/s12961-021-00765-3

² <https://depts.washington.edu/hprc/projects/pt-refer/>

³ Lyons MJ, O’Connor MH, Feinberg I, *et al*. Comparing the health and welfare of refugees and non-refugees at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic: the results of a community needs assessment. *J Refugee Glob Health*. 2021;4(1):3. doi:10.55504/2473-0327.1065

LEARN MORE

To find out more about the PRC Program and our ongoing projects, visit our website at www.cdc.gov/prc and explore the [Pathway to Practice \(P2P\) Resource Center](#) for details on past and current projects.