



# Immigrant Health & Cancer Disparities

*Towards Equity in Health*



## What's New at the IHCD?

### Presentations & Speakers

The Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities Service sponsored a series of talks this quarter: Claire Adams, PhD, Instructor in the Department of Health Disparities Research, University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, presented **"Emerging Strategies for Targeting Cancer Risk Behaviors in Underserved Populations;"** Joseph Salvo, Director of the Population Division, NYC Department of City Planning, presented **"Improving Health Services to the Arab-American Population of New York City;"** Mohamed Shinawi, MD, Associate Professor of General Surgery, Ain Shams University (Cairo, Egypt), presented **"Developing the Breast Cancer Multidisciplinary Team at Ain Shams University Hospitals: Challenges and Opportunities."**

Francesca Gany, MD, MS, IHCD Service Chief, gave the following presentations: **"Generating the Evidence to Decrease Cancer Disparities: Engaging the Patient and the Community"** during the Office of Clinical Research Grand Rounds at MSKCC, **"Overcoming Immigrant Health Disparities"** at the City College of New York; and **"Cancer Disparities"** at Weill Cornell Medical College. Dr. Gany and Program Manager Claudia Ayash presented **"Culture, Language, and Genetics"** and **"Community Based Participatory Research to Assess and Address Breast Cancer in the Arab American Community,"** respectively, at the Sixth International Conference on Health Issues in Arab Communities, in Dearborn, Michigan.

Abraham Aragones, MD, MS, Assistant Attending, presented **"HPV Vaccine and Primary Care Providers: Dissemination with the Latino Population"** during the Division of General Internal Medicine Grand Rounds at NYU School of Medicine; Lisa Diamond, MD, MPH, Assistant Attending, presented **"Language Access"** to the translational year interns at MSKCC; and Jennifer Leng, MD, MPH, presented **"Food to Overcome Outcomes Disparities Provider Training"** at the Ralph Lauren Center and the Queens Cancer Center. Dr. Aragones, Dr. Diamond, Dr. Leng, and Program Manager Javier Gonzalez conducted **cultural and linguistic competency** trainings at the Brooklyn Hospital Center and four of its satellite clinics.

### Funding Updates

Dr. Gany received R24 funding from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities for **"The Taxi Network,"** a community-based participatory research study to assess and address barriers to reducing Cancer and CVD risk faced by NYC taxi drivers. This three-year study will be conducted in partnership with the South Asian Council of Social Services, headed by Sudha Acharya.

Dr. Gany also received R13 funding from The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities to host **"South Asian Health: From Research to Practice and Policy"** this year. This innovative conference will use community based participatory methodology to develop a cancer and CVD research agenda for US-based South Asian immigrants.

Dr. Aragones was recently awarded an NIH/NCI U54 "Research Supplements to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research" grant for **"Building a Network of Community Primary Care Providers to Implement and Disseminate Cancer Prevention Interventions for Latino Populations,"** which will provide robust baseline data to develop a community-based participatory program with a network of primary care providers to serve the HPV-related cancer needs of the Latino patient population.

### IHCD Contact Information

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### Staff Updates

We are very happy to welcome the following new Research Study Assistants to the IHCD team: Margaux Genoff, Cynthia Gonzalez, Alina Kung, and Xiaoxiao Huang.

We would like to extend a big thank-you to all of our fall interns: Anto Ayinikal, MPH/MSN candidate at Hunter College; Greg Ceus, BS candidate at The City College of New York; Dalia Chehayeb Makarem, MPH candidate at Columbia University; Fresa Estevez, BA candidate at Hunter College; Pamela Icochea, BS, Stony Brook University; Timothy Ingalls, MPH candidate at New York University; Youngjin Jung, MPH, Emory University; Yamina Kezadri, BA, Brooklyn College; Umaima Khatun, BA, Dickinson College; Sandy Khuu, BA candidate at Hunter College; Henrietta Lewis, BS, The City College of New York; Gabriela Maniscalco, BA, University of Missouri; Yamilka Mena, BS, Stony Brook University; Girish Ramrattan, BA candidate at Hunter College; Luis Saavedra, BA candidate at Lehman College; Christopher Shin, BA, University of Notre Dame; and Bahia Wahbe, BA, Wesley College.



IHCD Staff and Intern International Lunch



Memorial Sloan-Kettering  
Cancer Center

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# Program Updates

## Cancer Portal Project

The Cancer Portal Project addresses the social and economic barriers to cancer treatment experienced by underserved cancer patients, and aims to improve health outcomes. We have increased capacity building to support community-based services for immigrant cancer patients through the delivery of ongoing training. We continue to host quarterly Integrated Cancer Care Access Network meetings to train cancer service providers and engage CBOs, cancer service providers, social workers, and immigrant advocacy organizations to brainstorm effective advocacy measures. Our December meeting was a great success, with more than 30 agencies represented. Eileen Fuentes from The SPEACH (Self Promotion Empowerment Advocacy and Care Haven) presented on the wellness program she runs for members of underserved communities in Upper Manhattan. For more information, contact Julia Ramirez at [ramirej1@mskcc.org](mailto:ramirej1@mskcc.org).

## Arab Health Initiatives

The Arab Health Initiative (AHI) focuses on education and services to reduce health disparities experienced by local and international Arab communities. The Arabic-language AMBER (Arab American Breast Cancer Education and Referral) Support and Education program continues to provide women diagnosed with breast cancer with an opportunity to share experiences, learn about various educational topics, and participate in interactive activities. At the last meeting, participants engaged in art making and learned about the benefits of art therapy. We had a busy Fall schedule, educating more than 260 women in Staten Island, Queens, and Brooklyn about breast cancer in collaboration with AMBER partners. We also continued to work with our partner hospitals, the Cancer Services Program, and physicians who serve the Arab American community to help women obtain screening mammograms. We are implementing a social marketing campaign and reaching out to doctors with large Arab American patient populations to inform them about our program so their patients can benefit from our services. For more information, contact Sahar Farah at [farahs@mskcc.org](mailto:farahs@mskcc.org).

## Ventanilla de Salud (Health Windows)

Ventanillas de Salud (Health Windows) is a partnership between the Mexican Consulate and IHCD to provide disease prevention activities for Mexican families in New York City. In 2012 the VDS provided the following services: educational sessions to more than 27,000 individuals; one-on-one assistance and specialized health information to more than 8,000 individuals on specific health issues that were affecting themselves or a family member; and screenings for blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, and BMI for more than 1,200 individuals. Case managers linked those who required additional medical attention to the healthcare system and facilitated health insurance enrollment for those who had no insurance. This resulted in more than 60% of participants enrolling in a medical home, including individuals with previously untreated diabetes and hypertension. IHCD hosted the Mexican Consulate as part of the initiation of the Ventanillas de Salud Second Generation Initiative (VDS 2G). During this meeting all members of VDS 2G had an opportunity to share their work plan, identify challenges and explore possible solutions, and network with other VDS 2G members. For more information, contact Julia Ramirez at [ramirej1@mskcc.org](mailto:ramirej1@mskcc.org).

## South Asian Health Initiative (SAHI)

SAHI is a multidisciplinary community-academic partnership that focuses on community-engaged research, education, and service to reduce health disparities faced by the South Asian community. In October, SAHI held a dynamic community board meeting with the following presentations: Judith Zelikoff, PhD, of the NYU School of Environmental Medicine, presented on arsenic exposure and its health impacts; Narbada Chhetri from Adhikaar presented on the multiple challenges faced by the Nepali-speaking immigrant community in accessing food and medicine; and Francesca Gany, MD, and Sudha Acharya, co-directors of SAHI, facilitated a discussion to identify health priorities in the local South Asian community. Findings from the discussion will inform the agenda for SAHI's upcoming *South Asian Health: From Research to Practice to Policy* conference to be held Fall, 2013. This innovative year-long initiative will bring together researchers, community members, and practitioners through a series of working group and town hall meetings and a one-day convening to identify cancer and CVD risk and research priorities among US-based South Asian immigrants. The conference will develop a blueprint for future research and service priorities. For more information, contact Lakshmi Prasad at [prasadl@mskcc.org](mailto:prasadl@mskcc.org).

## Food to Overcome Outcomes Disparities (FOOD)

The FOOD Program continues to expand its food assistance services, now helping oncology patients in Queens, the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. Five hospital-based FOOD pantries at cancer centers throughout the City provide more than 250 bags of food per month to cancer patients in need. Education is also an essential component of the FOOD Program. Nutrition workshops co-facilitated by Ina Flores, MS, RD, clinical nutritionist at Mount Sinai Hospital, and Chef Reggie Leveque, Executive Chef at Best Chef, Inc., have provided patients and caregivers with an interactive space where they can discuss food strategies for coping with common treatment side effects. We are now expanding the program to work with additional nutrition partners.

The FOOD Program also educates cancer care providers about food security, its impact on cancer treatment outcomes, and how to speak with patients about food. During in-person presentations at cancer centers, oncologists, nurses, social workers, nutritionists, and other clinical staff discuss the importance of addressing food intake and access during patient encounters. For more information, contact Josh Wessler at [wesslerj@mskcc.org](mailto:wesslerj@mskcc.org).

## Language and Cultural Responsiveness Initiatives

Language Initiatives helps to equip researchers with the tools to enroll and serve diverse populations in a culturally and linguistically competent manner. We recently completed review and revision of six brochures for the NYC Poison Control Program, and conducted field tests to check the understanding of actual community members.

We are publishing a book chapter on translation and interpreting entitled, "Ensuring Access to Research for Non-Dominant Language Speakers" in *Migration and Health Research Methodologies: A Handbook for the Study of Migrant Populations* (UC Press). Program Manager Javier Gonzalez was invited to participate in the Certification Commission for Health Care Interpreters' panel of experts for interpreter continuing education and curriculum development.

PROMISE, the Program for Medical Interpreting Services and Education, is completing cycle 11 of the PROMISE training program in the Spring. PROMISE will be featured at the Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations Conference in Oakland, CA, the International Medical Interpreters Association Conference in Miami, and The Critical Link Conference in Toronto. For more information, contact Carlos Javier Gonzalez at [gonzalc3@mskcc.org](mailto:gonzalc3@mskcc.org).

