Title:
Best-Practice Strategies for Engaging Community Stakeholders and Patients as Partners in Research

Speakers:

Tilicia L. Mayo-Gamble (Meharry Medical College)
Velma McBride Murry (Vanderbilt University)

Learning Objective:

Participants will be able to identify effective strategies for engaging community stakeholders and patients as partners in research with an emphasis on expectations for challenges and strengths.

Schedule:

Step 1: Speakers will provide the objective, rationale for the learning lab, and overview on the importance of engaging community stakeholders and patients as partnerships in research. Emphasis will be placed on challenges and strengths to creating and sustaining partnerships between community and academic partners.

Step 2: Interactive discussion of methods that build on participants' experiences

Step 3: Participants will list at least one factor that:

- *Made the partnership easy*
- *Made the partnership challenging*
- *Made the partnership successful*
- *Made the partnership last over time*

*For participants who are new to community-engaged research, the speakers will list common challenges and facilitators for collaborating with community stakeholders and patients in research.

Step 4: Discuss factors listed as a group and transition into a discussion of lessons that can implemented in community-engaged research.

Statement of Relevance:

While the importance of Community-Engaged Research is increasingly being recognized as a critical component to improving patient-care and reducing health disparities, for researchers new to this approach to conducting research, deciding how to establish community partnerships can be a challenge. This learning lab will provide tools to facilitate implementation of best practice strategies for engaging community stakeholders and patients as partners in research.

Abstract:

Community engagement and Community-Engaged Research are viewed as the cornerstones to improving health and reducing health disparities in underserved and underrepresented communities.

This approach to research facilitates collaboration between community stakeholders and researchers and provides an opportunity for community stakeholders to participate in research decision-making and implementation. Establishing partnerships through community-engagement also provides a unique opportunity to increase trust in research among community stakeholders representing underserved populations.

The ability to establish strong partnerships between community stakeholders and academic researchers produces better information and strategies about how to improve health. Yet, transition from traditional research models wherein the academic partner dictates the direction of a project to an approach where academic and community partners are viewed as equals, can be a challenge. Subsequently, there is an impetus to educate researchers who are new to conducting community-engaged research on effective strategies for engaging community stakeholders.

Researchers with limited understanding of and experience with effective methods of engaging communities will benefit from an interactive learning activity where there is an opportunity to learn about successful strategies for engaging community stakeholders and an opportunity to collectively think through steps of implementing these strategies in their respective academic environments. The objectives of this learning lab are to: 1) provide researchers and community partners with strategies for engaging community stakeholders as research partners; 2) provide a forum for discussions on challenges and facilitators for successfully partnering with community stakeholders; 3) discuss strategies for implementing and sustaining partnerships for conducting community-engaged research. Examples of strategies to be discussed are: 1) making active efforts to learn about the participants and their context; 2) establishing lines of communication; 3) building community capacity; 4) establishing community advisory committees; and 5) creating an iterative process when deciding upon research goals and grounded research question(s).