

**Building Bridges between a Community and an Academic Medical Center  
via Community Tours**

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To better appreciate the root causes of health inequalities, faculty, administrators, and staff of academic medical centers can benefit from understanding the social determinants of health (SDH) within their local communities. Wake Forest School of Medicine (WFSM) historically has faced challenges in reaching and conducting research within the vulnerable communities it serves. The Program in Community Engagement of the Wake Forest Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI), in collaboration with community partners, implements community tours to enhance knowledge of underlying causes of health disparities, improve cross-cultural understanding and communication with patients, and build awareness of community resources (assets) that can be harnessed to effect health. Over the past 3 years, 6 day-long tours have been conducted with 60 faculty, administrators, and staff representing various disciplines (e.g., neurology, geriatrics, and pediatrics). Tours include routes through under-resourced neighborhoods and visits to community resources (e.g., foodbanks, clinics, schools, community centers, churches, and grocery stores). Evaluations are administered to assess program quality with 100% of participants reporting enhanced understanding access-to-care barriers and how SDH impact health; 80% acknowledging the experience would impact interactions with patients and future research study designs; and 100% agreeing they would recommend the tour to colleagues. Feedback from community partners and participants guided quality improvements with each tour iteration. This work advances the science of community-engaged research by partnering with community organizations to highlight the needs, priorities, and assets of communities served by WFSM, an approach intended to ensure that care provided and research conducted are inclusive of SDH.