

Community Engagement at

RUTGERS

Institute for Health, Health Care
Policy and Aging Research

2021 Community Impact At-a-Glance

Build Trust, Learn, Engage & Serve.



IFH Outreach Team at Paterson Falls

Many communities experience severe health disparities, which are perpetuated by being left out of cutting-edge research. IFH's Community Outreach Core focuses on improving health equity by working with the community to ensure there is diversity in research participation. Through various community programs, we strive to engage, learn about, be of service to, and support communities. We invite you to join our community and be a part of our work to dismantle health disparities.

Throughout this year, we have been working to identify how IFH can serve as a resource to divested communities who feel the brunt of health inequity. Each week, we meet with new and current partners to discuss community health and ways to improve the connection between community and research. In 2021, we had over **100 collaborative meetings** with community partners to build and plan information sharing and service to the community. Each of these conversations has helped to share health information and research with community members and support organizations on the ground working with communities.

Additionally, we have collaborated with our partners to provide programming to communities via health screenings, health information canvassing, and webinars. To date, we have partnered with community partners to implement **over 35 virtual and in-person community events** and have served nearly **350 community members**.

Each of these events presents an opportunity for the IFH community to create transparency in our work and ensure our work is done in partnership with the community and is accessible to all. There is a lot more work to be done, however. This year, we have set the foundation for the difficult task ahead of utilizing partnership and collaboration to ensure health research reflects our communities and can use our research to respond to health inequities.

As we are working through the continued challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic we have had to think about how we best connect and ensure our message is reaching our intended audiences. Utilizing social media as one form of communication has been a challenge as we think about how people consume health information and what that information ecosystem looks like. Last year, we launched the #IFHTranslates initiative that translates government COVID-19 pandemic-related tweets into a variety of languages and we have continued to ensure our Community Classroom makes translated materials and workshops available online. Engaging mono-lingual non-English speakers and people who do not have access to technology has created a gargantuan task for all of us in the public health space. Although we have reached **over 1,600 people online**, there is much work to do to ensure we identify new ways to equitably connect with the community.

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Community Classroom

Providing clear and reliable health information to the community is an important part of the work. Throughout the year, we have worked with our partners to provide health information related to COVID-19, Vaccines, Brain Health, Mental Health and COVID, Oral Health, Nutrition, and more. Each quarter, we deliver about ten workshops on health related topics to communities across the state.

Community Health Services

COVID-19 Testing

This year we provided **over 650 free COVID-19 PCR tests** to community members. We will continue this effort to ensure accessibility to testing.

Health Screenings

This summer, we launched our newest program to provide free HbA1c, Lipids, Blood Pressure, and Nutrition counseling. In collaboration with our partners, we conducted **20 screenings** in over **10 towns/cities** across the state. We will continue to collaborate with partners to provide this service to ensure we are raising awareness about health and wellness.

Community Research Collaboratives

Regional Community Advisory Boards (RCAB)

We continued to connect with our RCABs this year. Each of these boards works to educate IFH on community priorities related to drivers of health and wellbeing, identify activities to recruit understudied communities into research, and provide concrete feedback on documents/tools that translate research findings for communities. We currently have 26 members across the three boards that have expertise and experiences ranging from community health, to aging, to food justice, etc.

New Jersey Minority Aging Collaborative (NJMAC)

Last year, we partnered with 3 community partners to implement a community-led health research recruitment effort. Through NIH funding, we were able to **award nearly \$200,000** to provide partners with resources to raise awareness about health research and increase recruitment in a study focused on older adult minorities. To date, **we have engaged with over 100 older adults** that will help us learn about the health and wellness of older adult minorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. We expect results from this study next year. Additionally, the NJMAC partners worked to help us recruit for our Trust in Research survey, a project focused on learning about how communities feel about research and helping us identify ways to bridge the gap.

Seniors and Research

Older Adults are one of the fastest growing demographics, and our country's policies and programs are not equipped to meet the growing needs of this community, older adults, especially minority older adults are often invisible in research. **Seniors and Research is a diverse group of referred community members ages 55 and over who live in the Greater New Brunswick Area**, and people who work with them. The group meets monthly to plan special public events for seniors and provides networking opportunities and resources to support their health. The membership works together to brainstorm ways to encourage research participation among older adults.

IFH Builds

To leverage and share IFH resources with the community, we are launching a program called IFH Builds--**this program is the capacity building arm** of the IFH Community Outreach Core, and will work to build capacity of community partners to tackle health disparities through their work.

We currently have several active projects within IFH Builds and in the coming months, we hope to expand and be able to offer tailored organizational support to our community partners. We welcome the opportunity to partner with new organizations.

Active and Past Projects

Community-Academic Partnerships Award

Each year we create spaces for community-academic partnerships by offering two funding opportunities to organizations working on health equity projects. **Grants up to \$20,000** are awarded each year. Through this initiative, we hope to connect Rutgers skilled faculty, staff, and students with the incredible community organizations doing impactful work in the health equity space.

Adverse Childhood Experiences Training

In partnership with the New Jersey Office of Resilience and CUMAC in Paterson, NJ, we will conduct training on adverse childhood experiences ACEs Interface. The initiative aims to build a common language and understanding of ACEs across sectors. We will start to offer this presentation early next year.

HealthEASE training

We have partnered with the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services, to offer the HealthEASE training. This training was designed to promote health among older adults.

Coming Soon!

Community Engagement Website

We are developing a new community-facing website to share information on our events and programming, as well as a variety of health resources and data tools for use by community members and community-based organizations.

Community Health Data Tool

We have created an online database for use by community organizations to better understand the health needs of their community, as well as to provide background for grant applications. You can view it here: <https://ifh.rutgers.edu/community-hub/>

Professional Development

We aim to provide support for community-based organizations via free professional development training.

Grant Writing Support

We plan to provide education on the grant writing process and the ideal proposal structure for NIH and other health-related grants.

Technical Assistance

Upon request and availability, we can provide data analysis support for a specific project or grant application.

[READ MORE ON IFH's WEBSITE](#)

