

# Community Voices: A photo documentary of health disparities in Roxbury

Elmer R. Freeman, MSW Executive Director Center for Community Health Education, Research and Service American Public Health Association Annual Meeting Washington, DC November 5, 2007

### **CCHERS** Mission

The mission of CCHERS is to promote the development of "academic community health centers" that integrate service, education and research to influence and change health professions education, improve health care delivery, and promote health systems change, <u>to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in health</u>.

#### **Organizational History and Development**

#### 1991

CCHERS Partner ship between Boston University School of Medicine, Northeastern University College of Nursing, the Boston Department of Health and Hospitals is funded by W.K. Kellogg Foundation as a Community Partnership in Health Professions Education, along with Codman Square, Dorchester House, East Boston and Whittier Street health centers.

#### 1997

**CCHERS, Inc.** established as an independent not-for-profit corporation with a board of directors composed of representatives of the partner organizations and the communities they serve.

#### 2001

CCHERS, NU School of Pharmacy and four community health centers funded for **Boston Clinical Pharmacy Practice Network** a HRSA demonstration project in clinical pharmacy and affordability of prescription drugs.

#### 2003

1994

Funding from Corporation for National Service establishes **Community Health Service Corps** service learning program for students from BUSM and NU.

#### NU Institutional Grant for CCHERS to integrate other health professions into model of community based educati on.

1999

#### CCHERS becomes organizational home of the **New England Region al Network of Community Campus Partner ships for Health** organizing a leadership team of academic faculty and their community partners in service learning, research and other community engagement in Massachusetts and New England.

#### 1993

Six new health centers join CCHERS Partnership: *Bowdoin Street, Dimock, Geiger-Gibson, Little House, Mattapan,* and *Neponset.* 

#### 1996

Funded by Kellogg as a Community Partnership in Graduate Medical and Nursing Education. Merger of BCH and BUMC creates *Boston Medical Center* and the *Boston Public Health Commission* as successor institutional partners in CCHERS.

#### 2000

CCHERS establishes **Boston Community Practice Research Collaborative** as a primary care practice based research network recognized by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

#### 2002

#### 1998

Health Careers Academy becomes a Horace Mann Charter School and relocates to Northe aster n University Campus. Merger of Northe aster n's Colleges of Nursing and Phar macy and Allied Health. Three new health centers join CCHERS partnership: *Harvard Street, Greater Roslindale and Uphams Corner*  CCHERS Asthma Center on Community Environment and Social Stress in partnership with Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvar d School of Public Health funded by NIH/NHLBI as a national center for reducing disparities in asthma. Two new health centers join CCHERS partnership: Brookside and Souther n Jamaica Plain.

#### 1995

CCHERS establishes *Health Careers Academy* as pilot high school of the Boston Public Schools for students interested in pursuing careers in the health professions. The *Community Advo cacy Program* established as a response to domestic violence in Dorchester.

### **Community Voices Program**

Engage high school students interested in health to develop **photo essay documenting racial and ethnic health disparities** in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston.

Developed in partnership with

- ACT (Arts, Culture, Trade) Roxbury
- Health Careers Academy (HCa)
- Boston Area Health Education Center (BAHEC)
- Funded in Fall 2006 by Johnson & Johnson and Society for the Arts in Healthcare

Other funders

### Program Goals

- Address and increase awareness of persistent racial and ethnic health disparities in target neighborhood.
- Encourage students of color to pursue careers in health professions and research.
- Further develop use of Photovoice in public health research, practice and policy.

### **Program Activities**

### Classroom Experience

### Community Health Center Placements

### Photovoice Methodology

## **Classroom Experience**

- Built upon HCa and BAHEC Health Disparities curriculum
- Students educated by fourteen experts
  - o Health Disparities
  - o Chronic Disease
  - o Qualitative Research Methods
  - o Photography
  - o Creative Writing
  - o Journalism and Interviewing
  - o Community Advocacy



### **Community Health Center Placements**



- Students placed at three Roxbury CHC
  - Dimock
  - Roxbury Comprehensive
  - Whittier Street
- Primary site of field work and other summer work experience
- Learned how CHC and health workers can reduce health disparities

## Photovoice Methodology

#### Community-based participatory research method that combines **photography**, writing and social action

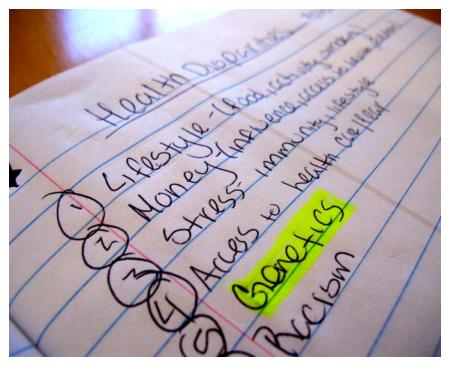
Three objectives

- o To enable students to record and reflect their community's strengths and health concerns
- o To promote critical dialogue and knowledge of health disparities through discussions of photographs
- o To reach community members, health care professionals and policy makers through public display



From www.photovoice.com

## Outcomes: Health Disparities Awareness



- All students report:
  - Increased awareness of health disparities and chronic disease
  - Desire to continue with Community Voices program to educate community
- Photo essay booklet will be available in students' schools, participating CHCs and community centers

### **Outcomes: Pursuit of Health Careers**

- All students report:
  - Increased understanding of role of healthcare workers and CHCs
  - Increased commitment to pursuing health careers
  - Increased commitment to ending health disparities



# Outcomes: Photovoice in public health research, policy and practice





Photos courtesy of Health Care for All

- Research during project
  Develop and conduct community surveys, interviews, etc.
- Health policy advocacy
  Statehouse Lobby Day for the Disparities Action Network
- Photo essay displays
  - For community members, healthcare workers, public health workers

### The Future of Community Voices

- Expanding
  - Develop year-round activities
  - Recruit more students and community partners
- Developing Broaden scope of health topics
  - Increase potential for health reform advocacy



### **Contact Information**

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