

## News from the CDC: collaborations to build capacity at the community level in cancer prevention and control

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### ABSTRACT

The Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CPCRN) is a national network of ten academic centers funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Cancer Institute, whose mission is to accelerate the adoption of evidence-based cancer prevention and control practices in communities through increased understanding of program dissemination and implementation. CPCRN researchers collaborate to raise awareness, provide education, guidance, and technical assistance to reduce cancer incidence and mortality rates in their communities. The CPCRN capacity building at the community level involves implementing evidence-based programs, policies, and strategies recommended by the Community Preventive Services Task Force to decrease obesity, increase physical activity, promote healthier behaviors, decrease tobacco use, and improve the appropriate use of cancer screening tests. These accomplishments demonstrate how the collaboration of federal, academic, and community-based organizations can be mutually beneficial by developing partnerships, research infrastructure, and community capacity that can catalyze behavior change.

Building community capacity is a team effort and requires collaboration among stakeholders to educate, share tools and resources, raise awareness, and develop innovative programs to move health knowledge to behavior change, and a greater quality of life. Community capacity building improves the dissemination and implementation of scientific findings into public health practice. This commentary will describe how two federal agencies, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Cancer Institute, collaborate to support ten academic centers across the USA to build community capacity in order to translate cancer prevention and control research at the community level.

The Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CPCRN) [1] (Table 1), a network of academic centers selected through a competitive application process, is a component of CDC's Prevention Research Centers [2]. The CPCRN's mission is to accelerate the adoption of evidence-based cancer

prevention and control practices in communities through increased understanding of program dissemination and implementation processes. The CPCRN members collaborate with state health departments, cancer control coalitions, and other community-based groups. Together, they target and tailor interventions for at-risk populations in their local communities to raise awareness, provide education, guidance, and technical assistance to reduce cancer incidence and mortality rates. The CPCRN's goal is to conduct community-based cancer prevention and control research that extends the knowledge base, addresses critical gaps, and leads to adoption, replication, implementation, and dissemination of successful evidence-based programs in communities [3]. The CPCRN provides the knowledge, tools, and technical assistance needed for local communities to effectively conduct and translate research. One of CPCRN's intervention tools, Make It Your Own (MIYO), is a web-based, interactive social media system allowing the user to select from evidence-based approaches such as small media and client reminders. MIYO offers audience-tested images, messages, and designs customizable for the target population [4], and has been successful in the promotion of colorectal cancer screening.

Accomplishments of the CPCRN are recognized and utilized both locally and nationally to increase the use of evidence-based cancer control programs that have been scientifically tested and have successfully changed behavior [5]. The Network has been successful in implementing new evidence-based programs to decrease obesity, increase physical activity, promote healthier behaviors, decrease tobacco use, and improve the appropriate use of cancer screening tests [1]. In addition, evidence-based trainings have been provided to local community leaders, state health departments, and other local and national health organizations to implement programs, policies, and strategies recommended by the Community Preventive Services Task Force [6]. The trainings teach participants to create programs that are adaptable to individual communities to change behaviors, systems, and policies. Trainings provide guidance and technical assistance to cancer control planners and guide users through the process of identifying, choosing, adapting,

**Table 1** | Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CPCRN)

Member name	Principal investigator	Research focus	Populations
Emory University Rollins School of Public Health	Michelle Kegler, DrPH, MPH	Evidence-based public health training, nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco use	African Americans, whites, rural areas
Harvard School of Public Health and Boston University School of Public Health	Jennifer Allen, PhD	Cancer screening, tobacco use, obesity, nutrition, physical activity	Low-income, multiethnic employees at worksites and community health centers
Texas A & M University Health Sciences Center Rural School of Public Health	Marcia Ory, PhD	Survivorship, healthy aging	Latinos, rural areas
University of California, at Los Angeles	Roshan Bastani, PhD	Cancer screening, nutrition, physical activity, tobacco use, and obesity	Latinos, urban minorities
University of Colorado, Denver	Betsy Risendal, PhD	Survivorship, colorectal cancer screening	Underserved and minority cancer survivors
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Cathy Melvin, PhD, MPH	Colorectal cancer screening and tobacco-related cancers	African Americans, low-income whites, Latinos
University of South Carolina Columbia Arnold School of Public Health	James Hebert, ScD	Physical activity, diet, disease mapping, RC colonoscopy, tobacco control, informed decision making, psychosocial/mental health	African Americans, rural areas
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston	Maria Fernandez, PhD	Replication/dissemination, informed decision making, colorectal cancer	Latinos, low-income, rural areas
University of Washington	Vicky Taylor, MD, MPH	Cancer screening, workplace	Low-income, minority men and women
Washington University in Saint Louis	Matt Kreuter, PhD	Cancer communication	African Americans
Coordinating Center—University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Kurt M. Ribisl, PhD		

implementing, and evaluating evidence-based approaches to promote cancer prevention. CPCRN plans to develop downloadable, web-based training materials appropriate for trainers who are planning to conduct face-to-face training, as well as individuals who prefer online training [7]. Multiple CPCRN centers have leveraged their CPCRN support to garner additional grants and cooperative agreements from local, state, and federal partners and other organizations to expand their research agenda.

Federal collaboration with academic centers is advantageous for meeting the needs of the local community by providing unique knowledge and expertise in chronic disease and cancer prevention and control [8]. Although the research focus and target population for each Center within the CPCRN is different, they share the common goal to reduce the burden of cancer. The endeavors of the CPCRN demonstrate how the collaboration of academic researchers and community-based organizations can be mutually beneficial, and a strong catalyst for building community capacity, research

infrastructure, and new partnerships. The continued federal-academic collaboration is needed to improve the health and quality of life of local communities.

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