

# HEi Health Equity Initiative



## HEI News

### Quick Links



November/December, 2012



### Our Mission

Health Equity Initiative (HEI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to building community, capacity and communication resources for health equity. Health Equity Initiative works to encourage community action and partnerships in support of health equity while building capacity of other organizations and establishing a research-based roadmap toward progress.

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It's hard to believe the year is coming to a close and we are already approaching the holiday season. It's especially hard when we think of the many families who have been affected by Hurricane Sandy, and find themselves spending the holidays in precarious conditions, and as a consequence, being at risk of suffering from even greater disparities in health than in past years. Overall, 2012 has been keeping all of us on our toes between the increasing burden of so many health conditions among disadvantaged groups, and the progressive deterioration of the living, working, and socio-economic conditions of many communities across the United States and globally, which are likely to affect health outcomes for years to come. Our heart is with all these communities and groups as they are the reason we come to the office every day. Our appreciation goes to colleagues and lay people from different sectors who have found themselves sharpening their resilience and commitment to their causes in the face of changing circumstances.

Yet, 2012 was also an exceptional year for Health Equity Initiative. We have made significant progress on each of our strategic action areas (capacity building, community engagement, and research), and engaged many strategic partners. As the year comes to a close, we want to express our gratitude to you for being part of our community. Whether you attend our events, volunteer your time and ideas, donate to us, or simply stay in touch by following our activities, we are truly grateful for your support and commitment to our efforts to create better chances for better health among disadvantaged groups.

To read more about our accomplishments this year and why - despite all

**Kenneth Olden, PhD, ScD, LHD**

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Senior Associates

**Barbara Shapiro**

**May May Leung, PhD, RD**

**Upal Basu Roy, PhD, MS, MPH**

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[HEI Website](#)

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**Want to support our work?**

Our staff ensures that small contributions go a long way. Click on the button below to support our mission.



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that we've accomplished - we continue to need your help to make progress towards health equity, click [here](#), and also enjoy the following sections of this issue of our e-newsletter.

- [Mobilizing for Health Equity: Opportunities for Involvement in Our Sports for Health Equity Program!](#)
- [Recent Events: HEI holds Open House, HEI's Fourth Brown Bag Talk, and HEI at APHA Meeting 2012](#)
- [Upcoming Events: HEI at 2012 Science of Eliminating Health Disparities Summit and HEI's Winter/Spring 2013 Online Workshops](#)
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As we reflect on this past year and the approaching holiday season, we ask you to consider supporting our efforts and/or matching or increasing last year's donation with this year's annual appeal. Donations to HEI can be made both [online](#) or by mail.

Thanks again for all the ways you support our mission. We wish you a wonderful holiday season, and a successful and healthy 2013!

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Renata Schiavo".

Renata Schiavo, PhD, MA  
Founding President and CEO



**Mobilizing for Health Equity**

Health Equity Initiative's [Sports for Health Equity](#) campaign has been

building momentum since its launch in August 2012. This program aims to raise awareness among teens, their families, their communities, and the public at large about health disparities and their root causes, and encourage community action and partnerships for health equity. With the generous involvement of HEI's celebrity ambassador, [Essence Carson](#), WNBA-All Star, NY Liberty Player and Recording Artist, the program has already **reached an audience of over 1.24 million** people via our mass media, new/social media, and event-based outreach.

As part of this effort we are currently in the process of developing free, ready to use, educational materials to help middle and high schools integrate information on health disparities and health equity into the classroom. If you are a teacher, parent or student, we would like your input on what type of materials and resources (activities, games, teaching aids, etc.) you would most likely use to present this information and/or to make this topic more appealing to students.

*Please help us empower the next generation of leaders by becoming involved!*

Click [here](#) to join the virtual brainstorming session on our online forum, [Health Equity Exchange](#), and also circulate the link for comments to teachers, parents and middle and high school students.

**Teachers, Parents, Students and Principals:** If you are interested in becoming part of our ongoing advisory group for this project and contribute your input to the development of educational materials on health equity/health disparities for use in middle-high school settings, please email us at [volunteer@healthequityinitiative.org](mailto:volunteer@healthequityinitiative.org).

### Recent Events

#### HEI Holds Open House to Share its Work and Programs

**New York, NY, December 10, 2012.** Health Equity Initiative held an Open House to share its work and programs on each of its three action areas: Community Engagement, Capacity Building, and Research. Participants included professionals from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York Memory Center, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Hospital for Special Surgery, as well as faculty members and students from various academic institutions.



Attendees received information and resources, as well as copies of our presentations from past events and workshops. Dr. Renata Schiavo, Health Equity Initiative's Founding President and CEO, provided a brief introduction to the organization and its focus areas, and addressed questions about past and upcoming projects, as well as opportunities for partnerships and new ideas. Attendees also participated in a raffle and won prizes generously donated by the event's sponsors, which included [Argo Tea](#) (Chelsea location in New York City), [Baked by Melissa](#), and [Jossey-Bass](#).

Thank you to all who attended! If you were not able to attend but want to share ideas, information, or suggestions for potential partnerships, please email [info@healthequityinitiative.org](mailto:info@healthequityinitiative.org).

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### **HEI's Brown Bag Talk on Multi-sectoral Perspectives on Advancing Health Equity in Urban Settings**

**New York, NY, November 19, 2012.** Health Equity Initiative held a Health Equity Brown Bag Talk on *'Multi-sectoral Perspectives on Advancing Health Equity in Urban Settings'*, featuring as presenters, **Karen K. Lee**, Director, Built Environment and Healthy Housing, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and **Skye Duncan**, Associate Urban Designer at the Office of the Chief Urban Designer, New York City Department of City Planning.

Did you know that as of 2010, an estimated 60% of adult New Yorkers are overweight or obese? According to the [New York State Department of Health](#), there are substantial disparities in adult obesity prevalence by race, gender, level of education, household income, and disability. Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer and stroke, much of which are caused by multiple social and behavioral factors, and resulting obesity, account for 70% of deaths among Americans each year ([CDC, 2012](#)). Our built environment, which for example determines our access to healthy food and beverages, and opportunities for physical activity, is one of the many factors that directly impacts health outcomes, and health equity.

Participants at this month's Talk included professionals from The New York Academy of Sciences, New York Lawyers for Public Interest, CUNY Institute for Health Equity, GBCHealth, Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center, Columbia University, as well as private citizens, professionals from different sectors, and students from various institutions.



**Karen Lee addressing the audience**

Karen Lee began the Brown Bag Talk with lessons learned from New York City's history. A century ago, improvements in the city's built environment (better sanitation, water systems, zoning and building regulations) dramatically reduced the rates of infectious disease and led to better health outcomes. Ms. Lee went on to address the impact of active urban and building design on chronic diseases that are a leading cause of death and disability today.

Skye Duncan's visually rich presentation detailed strategies from the [Active Design Guidelines](#) to design buildings, neighborhoods, streets, and outdoor spaces that create opportunities for, and encourage regular physical

activity via innovative design measures, such as skip-stop elevators, point-of-decision stair prompts, connected sidewalks and bike paths, access to walking trails, parks, and playgrounds, attractive streetscapes, etc.



**Skye Duncan presents on Active Guidelines**



**Participants at our Fourth Brown Bag Talk**

Moderated by HEI's Founding President and CEO, Dr. Renata Schiavo, the discussion brought up several important subjects, such as (1) the need to engage and involve community members in identifying and providing input on most needed services/urban planning, (2) the importance of employing a multi-sectoral approach to urban planning as it relates to health outcomes, and (3) the accessibility of active design features by children, the elderly, and people with mental or physical disabilities.

More Talks will be coming up in 2013. Visit our [Events](#) page to stay updated.

### **About the Health Equity Brown Bag Series**

Health Equity Brown Bag Talks, a program of Health Equity Initiative, is an interactive series featuring presentations and HEI-moderated conversations with professionals from the public, non profit, private, health care, and community development sectors who work on health equity issues. The Brown Bag Talks provide an avenue for participants to discuss their key programs as well as opportunities for, and challenges to community involvement on health equity-related topics. They are a unique forum where participants examine/ debate central themes in the movement for health equity as well as share best practices, strategies and interventions within their own sectors. The series supports HEI's ongoing efforts to encourage community members and professionals to join across sectors, pooling resources and mobilizing for a common cause.

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### **HEI at APHA Annual Meeting 2012**

HEI was at the following sessions at the APHA 140th Annual Meeting and Expo in San Francisco, CA:

[Building public health capacity to address health disparity](#)

Monday, October 29, 2012

[Building community-campus partnerships to prevent infant mortality: Lessons learned from building capacity in four U.S. cities](#)

Monday, October 29, 2012

[Sports for Health Equity Video Screening](#)

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

[Social media exposure and health behaviors](#)

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

**Join Us for These Upcoming Events!**

**Health Equity Initiative at the 2012 Summit on the Science of Eliminating Health Disparities!**

The [2012 Summit on the Science of Eliminating Health Disparities](#), organized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under the leadership of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will be held December 17-19, 2012 at National Harbor, Maryland. Do join us at the following events:



[Building Community-Campus Partnerships to Prevent Infant Mortality: Lessons Learned from Building Capacity in Four U.S. Cities](#)

Schiavo, R.\*, Estrada-Portales, I.\*\* Hoepfner, E\*., and Ormaza, D.\*\*

Poster Presentation

Poster Session 1

Poster Number: T09-006

*Monday, December 17, 2012*

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

[Preconception health and peer-to-peer communication: Assessing results of a national program for infant mortality prevention](#)

Schiavo, R.\*, Estrada-Portales, E.\*\* and Hoepfner, E.\*

Oral presentation

Session C1-14 - Healthcare Disparities and Quality Research

*Monday, December 17, 2012*

5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

[Raising the influence of community voices on health equity via an integrated communication and community engagement approach](#)

Schiavo, R.\*, Boahemaa, O.\*, Watts, B.\*, and Hoepfner, E.\*

Poster Presentation

Poster Session 2

Poster Number: F15-014

*Tuesday, December 18, 2012*

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

[\\* Health Equity Initiative](#)

[\\*\\* Office of Minority Health Resource Center, HHS Office of Minority Health](#)

NB Brandy Watts was a communication and social media intern at HEI

during Spring 2012. Since then she has completed her MPH at [Long Island University](#).

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**Save the Date for HEI's Winter/Spring 2013 Online Workshops in our *New Directions in Public Health and Community Development Series!***

Implementing the Social Determinants of Health Agenda: New Trends, Strategies, and Case Studies  
Thursday, February 21, 2013  
12 pm - 2 pm

Evaluating Outcomes of New Media-based Public Health and Health Communication Programs  
Tuesday, March 5, 2013  
12 pm - 2 pm

Health Equity and Health Communication: Strategies to Reach the Underserved  
Thursday, April 18, 2013  
12 pm - 2 pm

Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI): An Integrated Model for Health and Social Change  
TBD

Stay tuned for more details. For more information about our Professional development Workshops, click [here](#).

All participants who attend at least four [online workshops](#) in our *New Directions in Public Health and Community Development* series within a 6 month period will receive a *Certificate in Promoting Health Equity: Emerging Strategies and Tools*. In addition, eligible professionals can apply for Certified in Public Health (CPH) Continuing Education (CE) credits. HEI is a pre-approved provider of CPH CE credits by the [National Board of Public Health Examiners](#) (NBPHE). For more information, please email [training@healthequityinitiative.org](mailto:training@healthequityinitiative.org).

**2012 Sponsorship and Other Grant-making Opportunities!**

Sponsoring Health Equity Initiative's events and monthly e-newsletter provides an excellent opportunity for your organization to expand its reach to the public health, health communication, global health, nonprofit, healthcare and academic sectors both in the U.S. and internationally. Our event publicity efforts and e-newsletter distribution reach approximately 10,000 professionals via our e-mailing list and social media promotion. HEI welcomes contributions for its events and activities from a variety of organizations (e.g. foundations, universities, etc.) and corporate sponsors (e.g., publishers, agencies, etc.) with an interest in the fields of health equity, public health, health communication, global health, and sustainable community development.

With its entrepreneurial approach, communication savvy, and commitment to outcome evaluation, HEI knows how to make things happen. We are committed to making sponsorship benefits work for you. Depending on funding levels and priorities, we can customize a package that includes a mix of the benefits [listed here](#).

To support our scholarship fund or learn about other grant-making opportunities, please click [here](#).

### Meet HEI Team

#### Upal Basu Roy, PhD, MS, MPH (Senior Associate)

I have always been interested in chronic disease prevention especially among disadvantaged groups. My training in cancer research continues to remind me of the stark disparities that exist at the level of treatment and outcome after a cancer diagnosis in different minority populations in the US. My graduate and postgraduate training in the US has certainly pointed out that a lot needs to be done, to eliminate the disparities that exist in health outcomes in the US and globally. I have tried to combine my interest in basic science with health disparities research by being involved in organizations such as HEI dedicated to advancing health equity.



*Upal is a Children's Cancer Research Fund Fellow/Assistant Research Scientist at the New York University School of Medicine, where he is conducting research in the field of pediatric cancer.*

### HEI Intern Reflection

#### Read about what HEI's Fall 2012 Social Media and Communications Intern has to say about his experience with our internship program:

After graduating from Brooklyn College with a Master's in Public Health, along with a passion and commitment for direct service, I was in pursuit of opportunities in the health sector that would allow me to empower communities in need. After learning about Health Equity Initiative (HEI) and their mission to encourage community action in support of health equity, I was eager to start my internship.

Interning with HEI was an invaluable learning experience, as it not only allowed me to utilize the skills that I obtained through my studies, but it also gave me the opportunity to put them into real world practice. My work on the Sports for Health Equity program was the most fulfilling part of my internship because of its goals of arming and empowering youth. Among others, the program aims to provide middle and high school students with practical knowledge about health disparities, through educational materials to developed by HEI with the input of principals, parents, teachers, students, and community leaders. I believe programs like [Sports for Health Equity](#), which involve community engagement to tackle an issue, are what set Health Equity Initiative apart from other nonprofit organizations.

Everyone at HEI, including its founding President and CEO, provided an atmosphere that was conducive to experiencing first-hand, new aspects of working at a not-for-profit that could not be attained in the classroom. I was always encouraged to lend my thoughts and ideas to the execution of various HEI projects. Whether working on a community engagement project or capacity building forum, or networking with local funders and colleagues in the field at the open house, I felt I was gaining experience that would sustain my future endeavors and work in the public health field. Lastly, HEI encouraged a collaborative effort amongst interns, which is a crucial element of creating successful teams and programs.

I would recommend an internship at HEI to anyone who is interested in working on narrowing the gap in health disparities in the U.S or abroad, reaching out to, and empowering, communities in need, and gaining immense knowledge that can only be attained by working for a community-driven organization in the midst of launching very important programs.

*- Lartif Thornton*

**MPH, Brooklyn College**

**HEI Social Media and Communications Intern, Fall 2012**

### **Feature Media: Task-Shifting to Improve Access to Maternal and Child Health Interventions: WHO Recommendations**

**HEI's Favorite Section of the Video is ...** that it carefully weighs the pros and cons of using task-shifting to improve access to life-saving interventions for mothers and infants in high-burden areas.



*"Every day 800 mothers and 8000 newborns die in pregnancy and childbirth".*

#### **WHO recommendations: optimizing health worker roles for maternal and newborn health**

Most of these deaths are preventable and often the result of shortage of health workers in high-burden countries. To deliver critical interventions to mothers and newborns that most need them, the World Health Organization has released its recommendations on [Optimizing health worker roles to improve access to key maternal and newborn health interventions through task shifting.](#) This [video](#) discusses human resource shortages in health services, as well as the need to bring services closer to the community. It also features evidence-based recommendations to promote universal access to health care via task-shifting and task-sharing, and the issues and opportunities surrounding these practices.

### **Feature Article: Black Women more likely to die from Breast Cancer**

**HEI's Favorite Section of the Article is ...**that is shows that "despite significant progress in breast cancer detection and treatment, black women experience higher death rates even though they have a lower incidence of breast cancer compared to white women."

Over the last two decades, early detection and advances in treatment have contributed to declining breast cancer death rates among U.S. women. However, United States Cancer Statistics (USCS) data reveals that during the period 2005-2009, black women had a 41% higher breast cancer death rate than white women. [Vital Signs: Racial Disparities in Breast Cancer Severity - United States, 2005-2009](#), a report published in a November issue of [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#) concludes that "black women experience inequities in breast cancer screening, follow-up, and treatment after diagnosis, leading to greater mortality."

Citing disparities that exist at each of these three stages of the breast cancer care trajectory, the report finds that black women have longer

intervals between diagnosis and treatment initiation. Black women are also frequently diagnosed with types of tumors that have poorer prognosis. The report also discusses implications for public health, and recommends strengthening health care delivery through performance-based reimbursement, meaningful use of electronic health records, quality assurance reporting protocols, as well as employing peer educators and patient navigators to improve adherence to breast cancer screening and treatment recommendations.

### Sponsor's Corner

 argo tea.



Thank you to [Argo Tea \(Chelsea Location in New York City\)](#), [Baked by Melissa](#), and [Jossey-Bass](#) for sponsoring HEI's open house on Dec. 10 and providing prizes for our raffle and/or in-kind goods and services.

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Sincerely,

**HEI** Health Equity Initiative

Health Equity Initiative

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