



HEi Health Equity Initiative



HEI News

Quick Links

May/June, 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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Linking Theory with Practice by "Walking the Walk"

Greetings! As summer makes its debut in everyone's life, a lot of new programs and activities are blooming at Health Equity Initiative! Most importantly, we are continuing with our commitment to encouraging community action and multi-sectoral partnerships in support of health equity while linking theory with practice in all of our interventions. Hopefully, you will stay engaged with us this summer from your vacation spots or workplaces.

At HEI, we are starting to gain recognition as an organization that effectively "walks the walk": whether it is by implementing health communication strategies we previously highlighted in a recent [publication](#) in support of Healthy People 2020 objectives; or adapting our resources to incorporate user's preferences - such as for example, converting our in-person professional development workshop series in an [online series](#); or encouraging other organizations to integrate their health issue-specific interventions with an agenda that takes into account key social determinants of health; or engaging in partnerships with organizations from multiple sectors (BTW, did you see our recently launched [Partners](#) page?), and developing resources and capacity to allow other groups, organizations, and communities to do the same... we never stop trying to listen to people's needs, and always strive to implement the integrated evidence-based agenda, which is at the heart of [HEI's mission](#) and [core values](#).

For me, one of the highlights of the month of June was spending some

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Good Luck, Essence!

time with our celebrity ambassador, [Essence Carson](#), in her native town of Paterson, NJ. Essence is so much loved there...everyone seems to know her and is proud of her accomplishments. Most importantly, from passers-by to old mentors, mothers, and young people...everyone we met regards her as a great role model: hard working, caring, results-driven, talented, always likable, down to earth... It made me think about what great role models may have in common...and hope you would all consider putting to work your role model's "hat" and becoming effective champions for health equity in your communities...Join our movement in support of health equity, and start today by commenting on our virtual town hall, [Health Equity Exchange](#), and/or by considering [supporting](#) our mission!

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the following sections of this issue of HEI News:

- [Mobilizing for Health Equity: LIU Campus-Community Outreach for Our Health Equity Exchange](#)
- [Recent Events : Brown Bag Talk; Online Workshops; Conferences; and Partnering with the OMH on Capacity Building/Partnership Development for Infant Mortality Prevention](#)
- [Upcoming Events : Summer Online Workshops, and HEI at APHA!](#)
- [2012 Sponsorship and Other Grant-Making Opportunities!](#)
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- [Sponsor's Corner: Sponsorship Opportunities!](#)

Finally, please feel free write to us to info@healthequityinitiative.org with ideas, suggestions, or just to say hello! We want to hear from you!

Thank you for following us!

Renata

[Renata Schiavo, PhD, MA](#)
Founding President and CEO

Mobilizing for Health Equity

HEI is excited to note that the [Health Equity Exchange Campus Tool Kit](#) was put to good use by Brandy Watts and Vinnette Heholt from the [Long Island University](#) (LIU) [MPH Program](#), who conducted a very successful 'Sit Down to Stand Up For Health Equity' community outreach program at the LIU- Brooklyn Campus. Thank you Brandy and Vinnette!



Good Luck to Health Equity Initiative's Celebrity Ambassador, [Essence Carson](#), on her ongoing WNBA season with the New York Liberty!



The Health Equity Exchange Campus Tool Kit is designed to enable college students and their groups to engage nearby communities to share their ideas on the [Health Equity Exchange](#), and help raise the influence of community voices on health equity. The kit contains suggested activities/campaigns to help drive a discussion on the Exchange within your own community. ***The outreach also aims to help us reach our goal of collecting 200 comments, showcasing diverse opinions and priorities, by October 15, 2012.***

HEI is hopeful that other campuses across the U.S. will take the initiative to conduct such Campus-Community outreach and drive a discussion on health equity. ***Students groups that attract the most comments will receive a prize.*** Read the toolkit for more details.

To learn more about our Campus-Community Outreach activities for the Health Equity Exchange download the [Health Equity Exchange Campus Kit](#). If you haven't already done so, visit the [Health Equity Exchange](#) and add your voice to the conversation!

Recent Events

HEI's June 25 Brown Bag Talk on Reaching Underserved Communities in Urban Settings

New York, NY, June 25, 2012. HEI held its third Health Equity Brown Talk on '***Reaching Underserved Communities in Urban Settings: Perspectives on Culturally Competent Interventions***', featuring as presenter, **Paulette Spencer**, MPH, MA, Program Director, [The Bronx Health Link](#) (TBHL). TBHL works to improve perinatal outcomes in the Bronx, which happens to be one of most diverse areas in the country, and has some of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies, STD infections, high-school drop-outs, domestic violence and chronic diseases, like asthma and obesity, when compared to the rest of New York City.

The event helped to reflect on one of HEI's core areas of interest, and highlighted the importance of culturally competent interventions, especially in urban areas, which are usually characterized by dense populations and cultural, social, and religious diversity, due to the influx of migrants from other parts of the country, and, indeed, many parts of the world. Culturally distinct communities often have different ideas about illness,

wellness and health, and varying attitudes towards health-care providers. In addition, the structure and hierarchy of their community influences their health-related decisions. Creating a socially inclusive environment that does not allow for health disparities and inequities to thrive, requires not only a sensitivity to cultural differences, but conscious implementation of practices and attitudes that incorporate research-driven learnings about different groups of people. Culturally and linguistically competent practices are thus a crucial component of the road map to advance health equity, and the world that we envision at HEI.

Participants at this month's Talk included professionals from the The Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America, The New York Academy of Medicine, New York City Department of Health, and Brooklyn Plaza Medical Center, as well as students from various institutions.



Participants at the June Brown Bag Talk

Ms. Spencer's presentation described the strategies employed by TBHL to reach pre-teens, teenagers, and adults; and to connect the community residents with social support services and health care providers, in the ethnically diverse borough of Bronx. She spoke of community engagement through schools, community centers, churches, daycare centers, breastfeeding alliances and health fairs, and coalition with local hospitals, and emphasized the importance of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in trying to understand cultural perceptions of medical care, levels of clinical/obstetric care, and to come up with suitable interventions to promote preconception health.

Following the presentation, was an interactive discussion moderated by HEI's Founding President and CEO, Dr. Renata Schiavo, that invited participants to explore best practices and challenges in implementing culturally competent interventions. Ms. Spencer spoke of the significance of using appropriate gatekeepers and key intermediaries, such as engaging men to reach their wives, sisters and daughters, and parent coordinators to reach parents and their pre-teens/teenagers. Among other core strategies to develop culturally competent interventions, both Ms. Spencer and the Talk's attendees underscored (a) the importance of adequate representation of the target population among the staff, who are also trained to further understand and appreciate cultural practices and beliefs; (b) the critical role community boards may play in providing input on strategies and activities; and (c) the significance of initiating and maintaining ongoing relationships with different organizations and institutions that also work within intended communities. The crucial role played by faith-based organizations in reaching hard-to-reach populations, as well as their suitability to promote different kinds of health behaviors were also debated.

More Talks will be coming up later this year. 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 on-going efforts to encourage community members and professionals to join across sectors, pooling resources and mobilizing for a common cause.

HEI launches Online Professional Development Workshop Series

We are happy to report that two first online professional development workshop, *Strategies for Successful Multi-Sectoral Partnerships*, on June 19, 2012, and *Health Communication in the New Media Age: What Has Changed and What Should Not Change*, on June 28, 2012, were very well received. Participants, both from the United States and international settings (including Scotland, Canada, and United Kingdom), represented diverse sectors, such as non-profit organizations, government agencies, professional associations, and social change-oriented private companies. Participants "thoroughly appreciated the insights and the comprehensive nature of the workshop," and interacted with each other in discussing specific questions. We have more online workshops coming up as part of our Summer 2012 series. Click [here](#) for workshop descriptions and registration information.

HEI attends *Fit City 7* conference

Does your neighborhood have outdoor spaces that encourage walking, bicycling, exercise and recreation? Do the design and placement of stairs and elevators, and other spaces at your home and workplace support active living?

Our built environment, which 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. We, at HEI, were excited to attend [Fit City 7: Promoting Physical Activity through Design](#) on May 21, 2012, which explored this theme, that ties in fittingly with our own agenda. Hosted by the AIA (American Institute of Architects - New York Chapter) in partnership with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, this unique conference brought together diverse professionals, such as architects, planners, designers, landscape architects, developers and public health professionals, to discuss the link between architectural and urban

design strategies, and the public health epidemics of our time - obesity and related chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, some cancers and asthma.

HEI Partners with the US DHHS Office of Minority Health to Build Capacity for the Development of Community-Campus Partnerships for Infant Mortality Prevention

In 2007, the [Office of Minority Health](#) (OMH) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) launched a national campaign, [A Healthy Baby Begins with You](#), to raise awareness about the high rates of infant mortality and the importance of preconception health, with an emphasis on the African-American community, which currently bears the highest infant mortality burden in the nation, when compared with other ethnicities. The campaign also enlists college and graduate students, who are then trained to serve as [Preconception Peer Educators \(PPEs\)](#) in their communities.

As part of Health Equity Initiative's ongoing collaboration with the OMH to develop nationwide infant mortality task forces/networks including participants from multiple sectors, HEI designed and conducted a workshop on '**Strategies to Build Successful Partnerships**', followed by a partnership plan development session for the PPE-Campus-to-Community Partnership Development Pilot Project in Nashville, TN (April 16-17), and Charlotte, NC (May 11-12). This event was facilitated by Dr. Renata Schiavo, Founding President and CEO of Health Equity Initiative, and organized/funded by the US DHHS [OMH Resource Center](#) (OMHRC). In order to address the wide array of causes of infant mortality, ranging across several social determinants of health, the importance of strategic multi-sectoral partnerships cannot be emphasized enough, and this event aimed to create a structured approach to building partnerships for infant mortality prevention, and community engagement. Similar training sessions will be held in Jacksonville, FL and Los Angeles this fall, and a variety of tools and activities are already planned for later implementation. Thank you to all participants from Nashville and Charlotte, including PPEs and staff members of local and state departments of health, community health centers, local business, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions! Great start and great hospitality!

To learn more about these efforts, please attend this [upcoming presentation](#) at the 140th Annual APHA Meeting in San Francisco, CA later this year.

Join Us for These Upcoming Events!

June - July, 2012 Web-Based Professional Development Workshops

For online workshop descriptions (as well as a description of other recent workshop offerings), please [click here](#).

[Health Equity and Health Communication: Strategies to Reach the Underserved](#)

Wednesday, July 11, 2012

12pm - 2pm

[Implementing the Social Determinants of Health Agenda: New Trends, Strategies and Case Studies](#)

Wednesday, July 25, 2012

12pm - 2pm

*All participants who attend at least 4 online workshops in our **New Directions in Public Health and Community Development** series within a 6-month period (summer and fall 2012) will receive a **Certificate in Promoting Health Equity: Emerging Strategies and Tools**. In addition, eligible professionals can apply for Certified in Public Health (CPH) CE credits. For information please see the bottom of the [Professional Development Workshop Page](#).*

Health Equity Initiative at APHA Annual Meeting 2012!

Please join us this October at the APHA 140th Annual Meeting and Expo in San Francisco, CA for the following sessions:

[Building Public Health Capacity to Address Health Disparity](#)

Monday, October 29, 2012

10:30 am - 12:00 am

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

Monday, October 29, 2012

5:15 pm - 5:30 pm

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](#).

HEI Intern Reflection

Read about what HEI's Spring 2012 Communications and Social Media Intern, Brandy Watts, has to say about her experience with

our internship program:

"The Health Equity Initiative internship, an educationally enriching experience, gives a unique opportunity for interns to learn how a health-focused non-profit works."

I had the pleasure of completing my Long Island University's practicum experience as the Communications and Social Media Intern with the Health Equity Initiative (HEI) team. I choose HEI as my practicum site because of Renata Schiavo's (HEI's Founder and President) presentation about the young non-profit organization at my LIU class. Additionally, achieving health equity for all and bridging the gap of health disparities within communities is very important to me.

Over the course of the spring semester I had the opportunity to work on many projects with the HEI team, especially Elena Hoepfner and Ohemaa Boahemaa. I gained communication, editorial, writing, and project coordination skills via the development of Campus Kit materials and resources as well as enhanced skills in mobilizing community members to participate on the Exchange. I also helped with the launch of the Campus Kit and aided in the development of a press release for the first time; I was excited and nervous! My nerves, though, helped me find one of the great things about HEI's Internship program: here at HEI student interns are able to utilize the theories and applications that we learn in classes and apply them to the "real-world" in an environment that nurtures them and sharpens their skills. In my opinion this is an invaluable experience and I have gained more confidence in calling myself a "public health professional" because of my experience as an HEI Intern. Although my internship has come to an end, I am looking forward to attending future HEI Brown Bag Talks and Professional Development Workshops and being an active participant in the HEI community.

To students looking for internship opportunities, definitely consider Health Equity Initiative!

I want to express my gratitude to the HEI Team!

- Brandy Watts, Long Island University- Brooklyn Campus, Communications and Social Media Intern, Spring 2012



Feature Article: "As Grains Pile Up, India's Poor Still Go Hungry"

HEI's favorite section of the article: *Currently, approximately 20% (250 million people) of India's population are malnourished. This rate is double that of Vietnam and neighboring China, and other developing nations in Asia. What is most harrowing about this statistic, however, is that India is also the country with a larger grain stockpile than any other nation in the world, except for China, and exports much of its grain to other countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Australia. The mismanagement of food policies in India has become the subject of serious contention within the government and has sparked debate among lawmakers, advocates for the poor, health organizations, economists, and the*

media.

"RANWAN, India - In this north Indian village, workers recently dismantled stacks of burned and mildewed rice while flies swarmed nearby over spoiled wheat. Local residents said the rice crop had been sitting along the side of a highway for several years and was now being sent to a distillery to be turned into liquor.

Just 180 miles to the south, in a slum on the outskirts of New Delhi, Leela Devi struggled to feed her family of four on meager portions of flatbread and potatoes, which she said were all she could afford on her disability pension and the irregular wages of her day-laborer husband. Her family is among the estimated 250 million Indians who do not get enough to eat." [Read More.](#)

Feature Media: "How Effective Healthcare Communication Contributes to Health Equity"

HEI's favorite section of the film: *Effective Health Care Communication must involve a synergy of three key areas: health literacy, cultural competency and linguistic competency. However, each of these three areas is, itself, influenced by other key factors. A person's health literacy, for example, is influenced by his education, income, country of origin and other socio-economic factors; his cultural competency is influenced not only by his language, gender identity and religion but also his physical and mental capacity, age and regional differences. All of these factors are interdependent and need to be assimilated into health care language to effectively communicate with the linguistically and culturally diverse populations that exist within our communities.*

"Effective healthcare communication policies and practices, including provider health literacy, contribute to improving the quality of services for culturally and linguistically diverse populations as well as people with limited health literacy skills."



How Effective Healthcare Communication Contributes to Health Equity

Sponsor's Corner

Interested in expanding your outreach to the public health, health care, nonprofit, grantmaking, academic, and global health community? This section could be dedicated to you!

Support HEI's newsletter and feature your publications, news, and programs that fit with HEI's mission within this section (in addition to the inclusion of your logo and/or link to your website). Reach 10,000+ professionals who may be interested in your organization through our monthly distribution and social media promotion of this eNewsletter.

Other newsletter sponsorship opportunities are also available and

are commensurate with funding levels. For additional information, email to: development@healthequityinitiative.org

Organizations previously featured in this space included [Jossey-Bass](#), an imprint of Wiley, and [UNICEF Communication for Development unit](#).

The content of this section (Sponsor's Corner) of HEI News is provided by the featured sponsor. HEI reserves the right to review and edit all submissions. HEI does not publish information or news about commercial products and/or services with the exception of peer-reviewed journals and books from like-minded publishers. Information to be considered for inclusion in this section includes news and publications on the sponsor's programs, research efforts, events, and activities.

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Health Equity Initiative

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