

UW School of Medicine and Public Health: Leadership Institute aims to advance health-disparities research

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Public reception to meet the scholars June 12 at Tripp Commons

MADISON – Dozens of researchers from around the country will soon come to UW-Madison for a “boot camp” to help increase the number of minority researchers investigating health disparities and health equity.

The ninth annual Health Equity Leadership Institute (HELI) will be held on campus June 11 to 15. Attendees are expected from 11 states.

As evidence mounts that significant disparities persist in health-care access, treatment and outcomes, the research community is putting effort into increasing the number of investigators, particularly minority investigators, engaged in research on such disparities. The Institute is an intensive weeklong career development opportunity focused on African-American, Asian-American, Southeast Asian, Hispanic/Latino and Native American investigators who are underrepresented in the health-care and public-health workforce.

Specifically, the program is to support researchers to successfully secure tenure-track academic appointments in schools of public health, medicine and other health and behavioral health science disciplines. It is also designed to help them achieve research funding through the National Institutes of Health.

“These investigators often face unique obstacles to their research success, including feelings of loneliness and isolation, difficulty securing research funding and research mentoring and limited research collaboration opportunities,” said Dorothy Farrar-Edwards, director of the UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research’s Collaborative Center for Health Equity. “Thus, the mission of HELI is to support and advance the career development of underrepresented minority investigators who are committed to the elimination of health disparities.”

Importantly, the Institute is also designed to foster professional networking for participating scholars and to create a collaborative learning environment for Institute alumni, scholars and faculty.

The HELI program is hosted by the UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research’s Collaborative Center for Health Equity in partnership with the Maryland Center for Health Equity in the School of Public Health at University of Maryland, College Park.

Institute sessions are carefully structured to include large didactic and small group opportunities, special events and mentoring.

Community-engaged translational research efforts, focused on health equity and disparities in Wisconsin, are showcased all week and most of these studies are being conducted in partnership with agencies who serve racially and ethnically diverse communities.

“It’s an honor to offer this Institute with our longtime Maryland collaborators and with four of our HELI alumni lending instruction to the program,” Farrar Edwards, said. “I’m also proud to have our invaluable Milwaukee-based partners at the United Community Center host one day of the program and lend instruction about community-academic partnerships.”

Ten of the 2018 participants are from Wisconsin and four are from Maryland. The HELI scholars are involved in community-based participatory, behavioral health, health services, public health and community-engaged research. They are working in African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, White, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hmong and low-income communities.

A reception to welcome the 2018 scholars to Madison will occur from 5 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, June 12, at Tripp Commons at Memorial Union. This event is free and open

to the public, but [registration is required](#).

For more information about HELI, visit: <https://uwheli.com/>