NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ALLIANCE

Advancing Community-Engaged Research to Address the Impacts of Regional Health Stressors



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The **Alliance for Community Engagement-Partnership for Action Toward Health (ACE-PATH)** is a community-engaged research program fostering the development of strategies to address the health impacts of cumulative environmental exposures and extreme weather. ACE-PATH seeks to promote promising practices to support resilient communities. Through strong partnerships with multiple collaborators, ACE-PATH aims to encourage implementation of community-driven, evidence-based practices to strengthen and improve regional health conditions.

ACE-PATH Objectives

- **Identify, develop, and test** effective community-engaged strategies to improve the adoption and use of specific treatments or tools to respond to community health challenges.
- Support community-engaged research to enhance the **adoption, integration, and sustainment** of interventions addressing the impacts of the environment on local health outcomes, risk factors, diseases, and conditions.
- Build trust and strong partnerships with all interested parties to **exchange knowledge and encourage implementation** of promising practices to strengthen and improve community health.
- Inform strategies to **reduce the effects** of prioritized local health stressors in U.S. communities.

ACE-PATH Mission

ACE-PATH is a community-engaged alliance that promotes community-driven, sustainable strategies addressing the health impacts of local cumulative exposures and extreme weather on populations most affected. ACE-PATH research supports community knowledge of the health effects of regional challenges and builds partnerships with multiple stakeholders to encourage and build resiliency.

ACE-PATH Awardees

University of Alaska Fairbanks | AK ACE Phase II: Protecting Health in the American Arctic: Implementing Localized Solutions to Promote Health and Prevent Chronic Disease in Rural Alaska

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS Stacy Rasmus, Karsten Hueffer, and Taa'ąjį Peter

The University of Alaska Fairbanks team's project is rooted in strengthening community-protective factors to promote health in five rural Alaska Native communities. The team identified cross-cutting and community-specific health priorities in these areas, including air and water quality, fish health, subsistence practices, and intergenerational knowledge sharing. These priorities represent important opportunities to support and sustain community members' physical and mental health and well-being. Following a pilot in one rural community, a full-scale study in four additional communities will assess the intervention's impacts on health and well-being as well as community strengths, such as food security and social connectedness.

AK ACE FOCUS:

Mental well-being, social connectedness

Public Health Institute | Community Health and Resilience Mobilization (CHARM) Lake County

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS Michelle Wong, Sarah Ryan, and Susan Paulukonis

In rural Lake County, California, residents are at higher risk of heat-related illness. Wildfires, power outages, and harmful algal blooms can also affect health and well-being across the region. Many residents — including seniors, unhoused people, and Tribal community members — rely on trusted community spaces during extreme heat events. Working with trusted community sites, including senior centers and faith-based organizations, the Public Health Institute research team will implement and test an intervention in these trusted sites to reduce heat-related health risks while promoting preventive behaviors and strengthening individual and community resilience.

CHARM LAKE COUNTY FOCUS:

Extreme heat, community resilience to related environmental hazards

University of Colorado Denver | Mountain West Hub: Building Resilience to Address Health Impacts of Air Quality in Rural and Urban Communities

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS Carol Brown, Katherine Dickinson, Katherine James, Emily Brown, Jaime Aguilar

Events such as wildfires and dust storms contribute to poor air quality — both outside and indoors — including higher levels of particulate matter (PM) in the air. Breathing in elevated PM can lead to poor health outcomes, including heart disease and lung conditions. The Mountain West Hub research team is studying ways to mitigate the health effects of poor indoor air quality in the homes of two Colorado communities. The team will study the effects of partnering with community navigators to provide do-it-yourself (DIY) air cleaners to homes in lower-resourced rural and urban areas. The team will test how their intervention impacts residents' overall use of DIY air cleaners, how the air cleaners influence residents' exposure to indoor particulate matter measured with indoor and outdoor air quality sensors, and how the intervention ultimately impacts lung function and blood pressure, as well as mental health outcomes, throughout the communities.

MW HUB FOCUS:

Air quality and cardiopulmonary health

For more information about the ACE-PATH program, visit NIHCEAL.org.

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