RESEARCH

Advancing the science of minority health and health disparities requires scientific vision; that means building and developing evidence-based information that takes into account the social determinants of health and the places where we live, learn, work, and play. To meet the demands of keeping up with biomedical advances, NIMHD is redefining, reorganizing, and establishing new research

risk and protective factors; human microbiome contributions to health and disease; and mechanisms through which behavioral risk and protective factors influence the development of adverse health conditions by triggering adverse biological pathways. For example, research found that DNA methylation can be used to accurately estimate gestational age and may be a useful tool in addressing persistent higher rates of low birth weights for some minority populations.

The Community Health and Population Sciences research area focuses on community engaged research and large studies ofpopulations in a defined geographic area that reflect overall health of minority and underserved population groups. Community engagement refers to the active participation of community members in contributing to the research process in a partnership with investigators. Studies within this area examine causes, prevention, screening, early detection, and management of disease such as epidemiologic studies that identify and describe disease burden and risk factors in disparity populations; behavioral, sociocultural, and environmental influences on disease risks and outcomes; and research integrating the multiple determinants of health at the biologic, behavioral, and contextual levels and their interactions. In a study examining the perspective of older breast cancer survivors toward physical activity, researchers found that physical activity programs should focus on cancer treatment related concerns and include strength training.

Innovative partnerships and collaborations are instrumental and essential to improve minority health and reduce health disparities. NIMHD supports research partnerships across NIH and the federal government with a goal to create synergistic research approaches to improve public health for health disparity populations. Partnerships conducted and supported by the NIMHD have created innovative studies into how to promote screening for breast, prostate, and pancreatic cancers; examine how children's experiences affect brain development; investigate the effects of environmental s (governmebuil0154 Tc 1.73595 -1.229 p4evelopment; exposures and ex3 n

disparities researchers. The Centers of Excellence program creates collaborative hubs for minority health and health disparities research among research institutions and local communities, which support early-career scientists as well as established investigators. The Research Centers in Minority Institutions program builds research capacity, supports a new generation of researchers from underrepresented populations through pilot funding, and established scientists conduct cutting edge science in basic, behavioral or clinical research topics. The Research Endowment program provides funds to low resource academic institutions with a diverse student body and faculty, to support endowments that will help to support a training or research capacity program to promote minority health and health disparities research.

NIMHD is committed to supporting and developing a diverse biomedical workforce. We support training grants across the spectrum of experience from pre-doctoral awards through mid-career awards. Moreover, NIMHD has enhanced opportunities for early-stage investigators by: expanding awards to help senior postdoctoral fellows and junior faculty-level candidates to become competitive for major grant support; providing fellowships to help less experienced researchers to become productive, independent investigators and; restructuring the NIMHD Health Disparities Research Institute to support the career development for promising early-career minority health and health disparities research scientists.

CONCLUSION

NIMHD continues to advance the science of minority health and health disparities by building upon evidence-based research; developing researchers from underrepresented populations and retaining their diverse insights; and enhancing programs that create research infrastructure and train a diverse scientific workforce. Through this scientific research agenda, NIMHD' s mission and vision will lead to discoveries that will promote health equity and ultimately improve minority health and reduce health disparities.

Eliseo J. Perez-Stable, M.D.

Director, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities

Eliseo J. Perez-Stable, M.D. is Director of the National Institutes of Health's
National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), which seeks to advance the science ofminority health and health disparities research. NIMHD is the newest institute at NIH and had a budget over $314 million in 2019. NIMHD also promotes diversity in the biomedical workforce. Under this framework, the Institute conducts and supports research programs to advance knowledge and understanding of mechanisms to improve minority health, identifies and understands health disparities and develops effective interventions to reduce these disparities in community and clinical settings. NIMHD is the lead organization at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for planning, reviewing, coordinating, and evaluating minority health and health disparities research activities conducted by NIH.

Prior to becoming NIMHD Director in September 2015, Dr. Perez-Stable
practiced general internal medicine for 37 years at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) before moving to NIH in September 2015. He was professor of medicine at UCSF and chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine for 17 years.

Dr. Perez-Stable's research expertise spans a broad range of minority health and health disparities disciplines. His research interests