

Project Director: Lawrence M. Schell

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Exploratory Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities in Smaller Cities

The fundamental basis for the proposed work is that minority communities in smaller cities and towns differ in important ways from those in very large cities, and these differences influence both the character of health disparities, as well as the solutions to eliminate them. The Exploratory Center on Minority Health and Disparities in Smaller Cities will support researchers from multiple disciplines to perform research with community partners to understand the multiple determinants of health disparities in smaller cities, and, by working with community groups, it will test programs to reduce barriers, and improve utilization and health. Thus, the Center's focus is not on one specific disease, but on the problems of health disparity characterizing smaller cities. The Center will conduct three research projects one with a local African American community to improve the use of reproductive health care services, another with a Native American community concerned with health effects of local contamination of the food supply, and a third that pools data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System over a 14 year period from all participating states to describe the relationship of race, ethnicity and measures of socioeconomic status with health status. These projects expand the Center beyond its original geographic focus on Albany and Amsterdam, NY, while retaining its conceptual focus on minority health disparities in smaller cities. The Center also will support and enhance research on health disparities by other university researchers, and thus develop greater understanding of, and more solutions to health disparity. It will expose undergraduate and graduate students to research on minority health disparities, and enhance their opportunities to pursue this research professionally. In addition, the Center will provide untenured faculty with training on health disparities and partnership research methods enabling them to obtain research support. As part of its research training and community partnership, the Center will disseminate health care information, and integrate research findings into educational outreach materials for community members that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and relevant.