Limited Submission Funding Opportunity

National Institutes of Health

NI MHD Specialized Centers of Excellence on Minority Health and Health Disparities (U54)

FOA#: RFA-MD-17-005

This FOA invites applications to establish NI MHD Centers of Excellence in eligible institutions of higher education. The purpose of this initiative is to advance the science of minority health and health disparities by conducting transdisciplinary, multi-level research in a defined thematic area and by providing research opportunities and support for post-doctoral fellows, junior faculty, and other investigators.

Each Center of Excellence is expected to have a unifying thematic focus. The thematic focus should be at a level of specificity such that it is reasonable to expect that center activities can have a direct and demonstrable impact on addressing minority health and health disparities in that topic area. All center activities, including research projects, pilot projects, and community dissemination activities, should be designed to contribute to this impact.

- The thematic focus may involve:
  
  (a) Specific disease areas that disproportionately affect disparity populations and contribute substantially to health outcomes (e.g., cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes mellitus, asthma, HIV/AIDS, chronic lung disease, chronic liver disease/cirrhosis, accidents, depression, osteoarthritis, inflammatory arthritis, chronic kidney disease, specific cancers)

  (b) Prevention topics that cut across health conditions and populations (e.g., physical activity, tobacco use and cessation, healthy nutrition, obtaining recommended screening tests, immunizations, pre-natal care, breast feeding, adherence to medications and behavioral recommendations)

  (c) Life course groups that incorporate selected components from above (e.g., children, women, older adults, men)

- This thematic focus may also involve:

  (a) Understanding the etiology and mechanisms of diseases and health
conditions in health disparity populations (e.g., how poverty creates and sustains health disparities, how structural racism/discrimination affects biological processes, why rural populations are disproportionately affected by opioid dependence);

(b) Evaluating intervention approaches to improve minority health or reduce health disparities (e.g., neighborhood-level interventions to reduce obesity in racial/ethnic minority populations, interventions to address provider bias towards sexual and gender minority patients); and/or

(c) Developing methodological approaches or addressing measurement issues (e.g., systems science methods to understand structural drivers of health disparities; measurement of neighborhood level effects on health disparities; methods for assessing the impact of policies on local, regional, or statewide population health).

• The thematic focus must revolve around one or more NIH-designated health disparity populations, which include Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, underserved rural populations, and sexual and gender minorities. This focus may include multiple health disparity populations, a single health disparity population, or a subgroup within a health disparity population.

Areas of specific interest regarding the thematic focus include, but are not limited to, the following:

• Projects that encompass multiple health disparity populations and/or the intersectionality of multiple health disparity populations (e.g., race/ethnicity and SES, SGM status and rural vs. urban residence, etc.)
• Understanding or addressing risk factors or mechanisms that are common to multiple diseases or conditions.
• The pathways and mechanisms by which biologic or non-biologic determinants contribute to or influence minority health or health disparities.
• Development of methodological tools, measures, validated instruments, and novel research designs for disentangling the contribution of biologic factors, behaviors, and social factors to health disparities.
• Multi-sectoral collaborations and/or interventions, i.e., those that involve other service sectors in addition to health, such as education, housing, justice, transportation, labor, etc.
• Interaction of culture and other factors on recruitment into research studies and clinical trials, utilization of health services, adherence to lifestyle and behavioral changes; and understanding individual cultural beliefs and expressions within a multicultural setting.
• Communications research – how to reach minority and health disparity populations and clinicians serving these populations with information that will lead to positive changes in behaviors, practices, and health.
• Understanding the dynamics governing the successful translation of minority health and health disparities research into multilevel interventions, health promotion/prevention programs or sustained behavioral changes and practices in communities, schools, businesses, families, prisons, etc.

**AWARD**
Award budgets are limited to $950,000 in direct costs annually. The maximum project period is 5 years.

**ELIGIBILITY**
Institutions of higher education must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

• Had a significant number of members of health disparity populations enrolled as students in the institution, including individuals accepted for enrollment in the institution. NIH-designated health disparity populations are Blacks or African Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, underserved rural populations, and sexual and gender minorities.
• Been effective in assisting students from health disparity populations to complete a program of study or training and receive the advanced degree(s) offered.
• Made significant efforts to recruit and enroll health disparity population students into and graduate from the institution, which may include providing means-tested scholarships and other financial assistance as appropriate.
• Made significant recruitment efforts to increase the number of members of health disparity populations serving in full-time faculty or administrative positions at the institutions.

**LIMIT ON NUMBER OF PROPOSALS PER ORGANIZATION**
Only one application per institution (normally identified by having a unique DUNS number or NIH IPF number) is allowed.

**KEY DATES**
Internal Letter of Intent Due: March 20, 2017 (by midnight)
Sponsor Proposal Due: May 15, 2017

**SUBMITTING A MANDATORY LETTER OF INTENT**
Faculty members interested in applying are required to submit a letter of intent (LOI) by the deadline specified above. If interest exceeds the number of submissions the university is allowed, an internal competition will be held. Typically, all investigators that submit an LOI will be invited to submit an internal proposal. Occasionally, as
appropriate, based on the LOI, only selected applicants will be invited to submit an internal proposal.

1. Click here to access the LOI form.
2. Name the LOI as follows: “LastName-FirstInitial-NIMHD-U54-2017”, replacing "LastName" with your last name and “First Initial” with your first initial.
3. Submit your LOI by completing this web form. Note: Supplemental documents are not accepted.
4. To receive a confirmation email and copy of your submission, check the box (“Send me a copy of my responses”) and enter your email address.
5. Click “Submit”.

COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES
The Office of Research Development offers assistance in identifying and facilitating collaborations, putting together interdisciplinary teams, programmatic and administrative development of large, cross-school proposals, and leveraging institutional resources for outreach and education. Contact Nicole Moore (nicole.moore@northwestern.edu), Director, for more information.

CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Nicole Moore, Director, 847-467-0566, nicole.moore@northwestern.edu
Limited Submissions web site: ord.northwestern.edu/limited-submissions

Please visit the new ORD website for up to date information on research funding opportunities and resources. Also, follow us on Twitter.