

»» NEWSLETTER ««



**RCMI CENTER  
FOR HEALTH  
DISPARITIES  
RESEARCH**



Attendees of the Sexual Health Education Seminar + RCMI CEC & Dr. Tamara Henry - For further details, please refer to page 4.

»» **SLAM-DUNC SYMPOSIUM SHOWCASES ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH AT NCCU:  
DR. QING CHENG RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS REC SCHOLAR AWARD**



The third annual Symposium for Learning about Alzheimer's disease-related Medical research at Duke and UNC (SLAM-DUNC) was held at North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in Durham, NC. Sponsored by the Duke/UNC Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, the event brought together trainees, including students, residents, fellows, postdocs, and early-career faculty, to engage with the latest research in Alzheimer's and dementia.

SLAM-DUNC featured keynote presentations, panel discussions, and poster sessions highlighting advancements in basic, clinical, and translational research. The symposium fostered collaboration and networking among participants, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary efforts in the fight against Alzheimer's. Hosting the event at NCCU underscored the commitment to inclusivity, encouraging participation from underrepresented groups and expanding the impact of these vital scientific endeavors.

During the symposium, Dr. Qing Cheng from NCCU was awarded the Duke/UNC Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) Research Education Component (REC) Scholar Award for her pilot project, "APOE4 Regulates Nicotinic Receptor Function in the Hippocampus." Dr. Cheng's research aims to investigate how APOE4, a gene associated with a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease, affects nicotinic receptors in the brain. Using APOE4 transgenic mice, she will analyze the levels and specific functions of these receptors in different cell types. This work seeks to better understand how APOE4 alters receptor function, potentially leading to new treatments for Alzheimer's disease.



## INSIGHTS INTO CHRONIC AIRWAY DISEASE: RCMI SEMINAR RECAP



On September 18, 2024, the Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) hosted an engaging seminar titled “Mechanistic Insights into Human Chronic Airway Disease” at the Biomedical/Biotechnology Research Institute (BBRI). The seminar featured Dr. Jennifer Alexander-Brett, MD, PhD, an Assistant Professor in the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at the John T. Milliken Department of Internal Medicine, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.



Dr. Alexander-Brett presented her groundbreaking research on the mechanisms underlying chronic airway diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Her work focuses on unraveling the complex molecular and cellular pathways that drive these conditions, providing critical insights into disease progression and potential therapeutic approaches. The seminar offered a valuable opportunity for researchers, clinicians, and students to learn about the latest scientific advancements and explore new directions in chronic airway disease research.

## NCCU RURAL COMMUNITY HEALTH HUB HOSTS CHILD HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

North Carolina Central University's (NCCU) Rural Community Health Hub hosted a child health assessment event at Twilight Baptist Church in Halifax on September 7, 2024. This initiative was designed to provide nursing students with practical clinical experience in pediatric health assessments, focusing on a back-to-school theme to ensure children's readiness for the upcoming academic year.

Participants received body mass index (BMI) and blood pressure screenings, along with educational counseling on their results. Guided by the RCMi Community Engagement Core (CEC) team, the students practiced performing these assessments in a community setting. Additionally, through NCCU's partnership with the Rural Community Health Hub, food was provided to attendees, enhancing the event's holistic approach to child health and wellness.

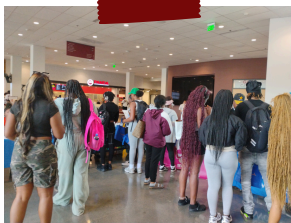


## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SHINES AT THE EAGLE PRIDE BLOOD DRIVE

The RCMi Community Engagement Core (CEC) successfully hosted the Passport to Your Health event as part of the Eagle Pride Blood Drive, held on September 17 and 18, 2024, at NCCU in Durham. This initiative brought together students, staff, faculty, and community members, connecting them with vital internal and external health resources.

Participants engaged with collaborating vendors, earned prizes, and received up to 8 hours of community service for participating and donating blood to the American Red Cross.

Throughout the two-day event, 160 participants attended, and CEC used the opportunity to implement a new engagement tool designed to foster ongoing relationships with key internal and external partners. The event also helped CEC establish 15 new informal partnerships, strengthening their network of community health collaborators.



## ➤➤➤ NURSING STUDENTS TRAINED ON NEW CARDIOVASCULAR SCREENING TOOL



On September 19, 2024, the Community Engagement Core (CEC) trained nursing students and faculty on a new heart health screening tool designed for community outreach. The session covered the use of the TANITA device, waist circumference measurements, and interpreting cardiovascular risk factors. Students also learned safety protocols and how to document results on a new screening waiver.

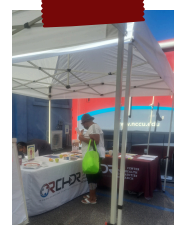
This tool aims to reduce health disparities in underserved communities by equipping students with skills to deliver accessible, culturally sensitive health assessments.

## ➤➤➤ EMPOWERING HEALTH IN SCOTLAND NECK: NC MEDASSIST MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The PBERN Community Engagement Core (CEC) partnered with NC MedAssist to host an impactful event in Scotland Neck, Halifax County, on September 20, 2024. The event attracted 250 community members and aimed to address the health challenges faced by this rural town, where population decline, limited health services, and transportation access contribute to chronic health conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep apnea.

Scotland Neck, home to one of the few grocery stores in the area (Food Lion), faces dwindling resources, making initiatives like this crucial for residents. The event took place at the Hattie Staton Senior Center, a vital gathering space for older adults that fosters connection and combats the isolation many experience due to family relocations.

By providing essential health resources and outreach, the NC MedAssist event helped bridge gaps in healthcare access for a community grappling with significant socioeconomic challenges.



## ➤➤➤ HEALTH AND WELLNESS DARTY: PROMOTING CAMPUS SAFETY AND EDUCATION

The Student Health and Wellness Darty, held in Durham, welcomed around 200 attendees and focused on engaging NCCU students along with internal health-related departments and services. On September 24, 2024, the event featured Hands-Only CPR demonstrations provided by the Community Engagement Core (CEC) team .

Educational handouts were distributed, though feedback indicated that additional materials could be beneficial for future events. Attendees also requested specific items for future sessions, which will help shape our upcoming health outreach efforts. Stay tuned for more updates!



## ➤➤➤ BLACK HEALTH MATTERS: SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION SEMINAR

We are excited to share that the RCMC Community Engagement Core (CEC) team recently hosted a Sexual Health Education Seminar in Durham, organized in collaboration with Black Health Matters and the undergraduate chapter of Phi Beta Sigma. Led by Dr. Tamara Henry, a colleague of Dr. Cheris Harrington, the session engaged 25 attendees in important discussions about sexual health.

Looking ahead, Black Health Matters will return to the NCCU campus on October 29, partnering with Gilead Sciences to provide students with valuable sexual health education.

## ➤➤➤ MEET IMANI CLARK

Imani Clark is the Research Assistant for the RCMC Research Capacity Core. Imani brings a unique perspective to research with her background in quantitative and qualitative research.

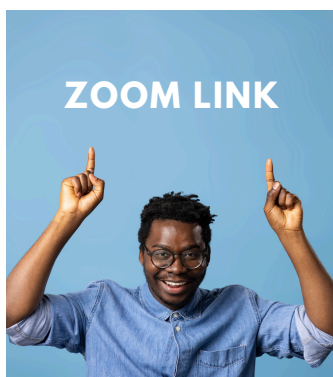


She received her Bachelor of Science in Biology with a Chemistry and Public minor and a cellular and molecular concentration from The Winston-Salem State University in 2019 and a Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in Maternal, Child, and Family health from The University of North Carolina at Chapel-Hill in 2022. Imani is passionate about addressing health disparities to improve health outcomes for minority population(s).

## ➤➤➤ YOUR VOICE, YOUR HEALTH: ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH BLACK MENTAL HEALTH AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

The RCMC Community Engagement Core (CEC) hosted a crucial online conversation on September 25, 2024. The event emphasized the importance of honoring those whose lives have been lost due to mental health disparities in minority communities, while seeking actionable strategies to prevent future tragedies.

This gathering is part of NCCU's broader initiative to bridge the gap between academic research and community needs, with a focus on building a learning community that supports health equity and the dissemination of best practices for addressing mental health disparities. Through continued collaboration, the CEC is committed to creating a future where minority mental health is no longer marginalized, and health equity becomes the standard.



**NEXT IN THE VIRTUAL  
LEARNING SERIES ON  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25.**

Community members, Researchers, Study teams and Clinicians are invited to join this special event.

**Your Voice, Your Health:**  
Stories from the Community to Improve Health Equity  
Join us on Friday October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 12 Noon - 1 pm

			
Alec Greenwald, MS Associate in Research Duke University	Xavier Cason, MM Director of Community Schools & School Transformation	Dr. Jonathan Livingston NCCU Department of Psychology	Jasmine Benner RCMC Public Health Educator

**ORCHDR** RCMC CENTER FOR HEALTH DISPARITIES RESEARCH  
NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

Scan the QR Code to register



## ROOTED IN WELLNESS



The Rooted in Wellness event at Saint Mark AME Church was a successful collaboration between the Audiology and Nursing Departments, attracting around 60 attendees. This initiative, part of the RCMI Community Engagement Collaborative (CEC), provided various health screenings, including blood pressure checks, BMI assessments, weight evaluations, and audiology and swallowing tests.



The Mobile Health Unit was present, where the health screenings were conducted, further supporting the community's health needs. Participants gained valuable education on heart health and nutrition, enhancing their understanding of wellness. To foster engagement, a fun spin-the-wheel game was included, along with exciting swag giveaways, creating a positive and interactive atmosphere for everyone.



## COMING SOON

- 10/01 - National Night Out - Durham, NC.
- 10/05 - Hunters and Landowners Breakfast - Bertie County.
- 10/09 - "Walk It Out" - NCCU, Durham, NC.
- 10/10 - "Talk It Out" - NCCU, Durham, NC.
- 10/12 - "Pink It Out" - NCCU, Durham, NC.
- 10/15 - RCMI Retreat Part 2
- 10/19 - A Matter of Faith and Health with Dr. Goldie Byrd - Warsaw, NC.
- 10/25 - Your Voice, Your Health: Stories of The Community to Help Advance Health Equity
- 10/26 - Homecoming event - NCCU.
- 10/28 - Warren County Health Department Community Day - Warrenton, NC.
- 10/29 - Black Health Matters - NCCU, Durham, NC.

**i** For further information regarding event specifics such as location and hours, please refer to our virtual calendar.

We invite you to connect with us and share your updates, ideas, faculty publications and ongoing research endeavors. Your insights are invaluable to us as we strive to keep our community informed and engaged. Reach out to us today and let's collaborate!



**Dr. Claudia Alberico**  
RCMI Program Manager

