



Health Equity Briefing



Milagros C. Rosal, PhD
Vice provost for health equity
UMass Medical School

We view it as our special trust at the only public medical school in the commonwealth to promote health equity, on our campus, in our community and state, across the country, and around the globe.”

The best health possible, regardless of race/ethnicity, educational attainment, age, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status, is the essence of health equity. Eliminating health disparities is at the heart of our mission. UMass Medical School is working on multiple fronts to advance health equity through education, research, health care delivery and public service. We highlight some examples here.

EDUCATION

UMMS impact since 2016:

97 MA high school students enrolled in the High School Health Careers Program

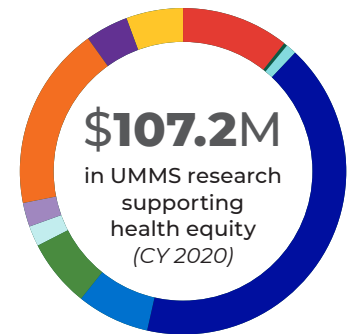
50 college students completed in the Summer Enrichment Program

486 Worcester Public School students served by the Worcester Pipeline Collaborative

61 UMass students joined the Baccalaureate MD Pathway Program

140 students participated in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program

RESEARCH



Specific research focus

- Aging
- Cancer
- Community
- COVID-19
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diversity
- Disability
- Global
- Immunodeficiency
- Mental health
- Substance abuse

SERVICE



Supporting community initiatives that advance health equity

- Advocacy and service
- STEM education
- Cultural diversity
- Programs for vulnerable youth
- Preventing domestic violence
- Aging and elder care services



Partnering in community collaborations

- North Quadrant Support Services
- Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester
- Worcester Free Clinic Coalition
- Academic Health Collaborative
- UMass Worcester Prevention Research Center

Learning to care for communities



UMMS Population Health Clerkships in 2020

34

clerkship teams

195

UMMS medical and nursing students

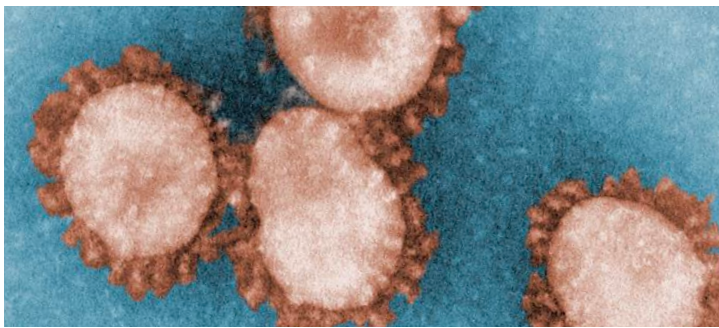
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community partners

The Population Health Clerkship exposes medical and nursing students to social determinants of health. Students get hands-on experience engaging with health systems and public health and human services agencies to address the disparities they learn about.

Featured collaboration: Moving Worcester—physical activity promotion

Students joined local service leaders including the YWCA, Worcester Public Schools and Family Health Center to overcome barriers to Worcester residents getting enough exercise via policy, accessible programs and behavior change.



Increasing diversity in COVID-19 studies

Storytelling by community members can best convey messages about why Black and Hispanic/LatinX people should take part in clinical research. With Worcester's COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force and community organizations, UMMS scientists will create narratives that address barriers to research study participation.

“COVID-19 is hitting these communities the hardest. We connect through personal stories, through hearing and seeing somebody that looks like you and has the same experiences you have had.”

Sarah Forrester, PhD

Assistant professor, population & quantitative health sciences



Gauging local pandemic impact to target relief

In partnership with the City of Worcester and the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance, UMMS designed and is conducting the Greater Worcester COVID-19 Community Health Survey to learn more about how COVID-19 is affecting local residents to help plan and prioritize relief efforts.

Key finding

37 percent report moderate mental distress and 11 percent report serious mental distress.



Diversifying health care EDUCATION

UMass Medical School outreach programs have drawn into the STEM education pipeline high school and college students from economically disadvantaged families and racial backgrounds underrepresented in health care and biomedical sciences careers—including 42 who have matriculated to UMass Medical School.

Outreach highlight: Summer Enrichment Program

The program helps Massachusetts college sophomores and juniors from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds improve their qualifications for admission to graduate or medical school with academic enrichment and activities to help enhance their communication skills.



Helping moms with depression SERVICE

Lifeline4Moms helps obstetricians and other primary care providers screen, diagnose and refer women suffering from depression during and after pregnancy. It is modeled on the Perinatal Psychiatry Access Program established in Massachusetts in collaboration with UMMS that has served more than 9,300 patients and enrolled more than 75 percent of the state's obstetric practices statewide, which cover nearly 85 percent of births in the commonwealth.

Lifeline4Moms helps meet growing demand from states and health plans seeking to implement a program like ours."

Nancy Byatt, DO, MS, MBA

Associate professor of psychiatry and Lifeline4Moms co-founder



Improving heart health in at-risk youth RESEARCH

The PR-OUTLOOK study is focusing on young adults in Puerto Rico, a uniquely underserved and understudied U.S. population, to assess their cardiovascular health and associations between types of stress and their CVD risk to help identify interventions for early disease prevention.

3K Puerto Ricans, 18–29 years old, included in this study

12 CVD factors examined, including:

Stress

- Hurricane Maria
- Obesity
- Entering adulthood

Resiliency

- Family support
- Social connection
- Spirituality



Fulfilling community needs ♥ SERVICE

The Remillard Family Community Service Fund provides ongoing support for efforts led by UMass Medical School faculty, staff and students that positively impact vulnerable individuals, groups and communities. Notably, the North Quadrant Support Services initiative has provided a food pantry, school supplies and, in the wake of COVID-19, wireless hotspots for remote learning to Worcester Public Schools students.

Featured grant: alleviating loneliness for elder hospital patients

UMass Medical School student volunteers are visiting virtually and in-person with English and Spanish-speaking patients aged 65+ suffering from or at risk for feelings of isolation.

\$3M
endowment

23
projects totaling
\$346.5K
have been funded
since 2017

Projects include:

- Worcester Free Medical Coalition
- Baby boxes for safe sleep
- Overdose prevention

UMass Medical School leadership is committed to achieving positive change and we have been encouraged by the ways in which our community members have already come together.”

Find out about health equity in action at UMass Medical School—what is underway, what’s coming and how to get involved.



Michael F. Collins, MD
Chancellor
UMass Medical School

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