

SPHHS Research Action Plan
Adopted by the SPHHS Faculty on November 17, 2006
Prepared by the SPHHS Research Committee

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The Medical Center underwent a process and developed a research strategic plan for both SMHS and SPHHS. In this plan, thematic areas for cross-cutting research were identified (e.g. HIV, Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease) as priority areas. Given the growing research efforts of SPHHS in these areas along with other important public health domains, the Research Committee reviewed the Medical Center's framework and discussed ways to carry out this plan. The draft of the SPHHS Research Action Plan was formed in response to the request by the Departmental Chairs. The committee has representatives from all Departments within the school and met frequently over the summer to develop the Plan to advance the SPHHS research agenda. SPHHS is at a pivotal juncture as it celebrates its 10th year, and this document reflects goals and objectives which will support and strengthen the school's research endeavors.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Working together in the nation's capital, the SPHHS is committed to collectively conceptualizing and conducting research that influences policy and advances the health and well-being of local, national, and global communities.

SPHHS will:

- Work in partnership with communities to conduct research that will result in public health improvements in those communities
- Form multi-disciplinary collaborations to help meet important public health challenges
- Foster an environment that supports creative and synergistic research productivity
- Translate research into policies, practices, methodologies, and programs
- Disseminate knowledge through innovative approaches

GOALS

G1: Expand SPHHS' research capacity to serve priority populations¹ that will ultimately improve public health locally, nationally, and globally.

G2: Strengthen SPHHS' multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research collaborations within the University.

G3: Enhance SPHHS research infrastructure and capacity.

G4: Foster the dissemination and implementation of effective SPHHS research-based public health concepts and innovations.

G5: Ensure that SPHHS is a primary resource for public health expertise locally, nationally, and internationally.

¹ Priority populations, as used here, are defined as high-risk, vulnerable, or underserved populations.

GOAL 1: Expand SPHHS' research capacity to serve priority populations that will ultimately improve public health locally, nationally, and globally.

O1.1. By 2007, identify priority populations to be addressed by SPHHS' research portfolio.

For example, work with community partners to identify populations with excess adverse health outcomes.

O1.2. By 2007, assess SPHHS' research capacity and potential to serve priority populations.

O1.3. Ensure that SPHHS addresses the public health needs of priority populations in the Metropolitan DC region through its research initiatives.

For example, establish a community-based research resource center that will provide consultation and training services for the community.

O1.4. Ensure that SPHHS addresses the public health needs of priority populations nationally and globally through its research initiatives.

GOAL 2: Strengthen SPHHS' multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research collaborations within the University.²

O2.1. By 2008, SPHHS will expand its capacity to conduct multidisciplinary research.

For example, SPHHS will assist lead and junior investigators to explore and establish multidisciplinary centers.

O2.2. By 2010, SPHHS will work toward increasing its capacity to conduct interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

For example, SPHHS will work with relevant University and Medical Center leaders to identify funding opportunities, research partners, and training opportunities to conduct interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research.

O2.3. SPHHS will continue seeking funding for identified thematic areas of expertise to advance multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research.

O2.4. Beginning in 2007, SPHHS will provide greater support for faculty engaged in multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research.

For example, to include explicit recognition of these forms of research as part of the SPHHS Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure committee review.

² Definitions; (Rosenfield, 1992)

Multidisciplinary - researchers in different disciplines *work independently* or sequentially, each from his or her own disciplinary-specific perspective, to address a common problem.

Interdisciplinary - researchers *work jointly*, but from each of their respective disciplinary perspectives, to address a common problem.

Transdisciplinary - researchers work jointly using a *shared conceptual framework* that draws together discipline-specific theories, concepts, and approaches, to address a common problem

GOAL 3: Enhance SPHHS research infrastructure and capacity.

O3.1. Beginning in 2007, assess SPHHS research infrastructure, capacity, and needs.³

O3.2. Within a year after each survey or annual measurement, determine steps to enhance research infrastructure and capacity.

For example, develop a plan and subsequent system to implement it.

O3.3 By 2010, SPHHS will enhance strategic investments to support faculty research.

Examples may include a Research Innovation Seed Grant program, formal research mentoring program for junior faculty, and Visiting Scholar program.

O3.4. By 2010, SPHHS will improve its capacity for students to conduct research.

For example, establish a working interface with the Curriculum Committee and seek funding opportunities to support student research activities (e.g., training grants, minority research supplements).

GOAL 4: Foster the dissemination and implementation of effective SPHHS research-based public health concepts and innovations.

O4.1 By 2008, SPHHS will have improved capabilities to conduct timely external communications.

For example, work with Biomedical Communications to host training workshops, increase dissemination of SPHHS research-related news, and utilize the website to highlight research-related activities.

O4.2: Annually, assess the dissemination and implementation of SPHHS research-related activities.

Examples include books, peer-review journals, high impact journals, and dissemination of our research in the classroom.

O4.3: By 2009, develop a plan to enhance effective research-based concepts and innovations.

O4.4: By 2012, develop a system to implement the plan.

³ To include: (1) administrative resources (e.g., grant assistance services, application development, editorial services, research coordination, and fiscal management), (2) computer and software resources (e.g., computer equipment and services supporting shared needs), (3) information resources (e.g., supports for retrieving information, materials and databases, online journals), (4) methodology support resources (e.g., statistical analysis, GIS, biomarkers, survey methods), and (5) technology transfer and commercial application of SPHHS-generated research.

GOAL 5: Ensure that SPHHS is a primary resource for public health expertise locally, nationally, and internationally.

O5.1. Annually assess the number of faculty whose expertise is sought out for local, national, and international public health issues.⁴

O5.2. At least every three years, assess the number of times SPHHS and its departments are sought out for formal partnerships.

O5.3: Promote a culture of service on study sections, symposia, invited expert panels, peer-review panels, and professional organizations.

Examples include increasing the number of faculty who recommend each other for expert panels, invited speeches, etc. and encouraging the SPHHS Appointments, Promotions and Tenure committee to recognize peer recommendation and participation activities.

⁴ Note that evidence for these assessments can be obtained from Annual Reports and Biomedical Communications. Elements to look for may include: service on study sections, peer-review panels, service on expert panels for federal agencies (e.g., NIH, EPA, CDC, etc) and major foundations, invited speeches and consultations, and requests from news organizations for experts from SPHHS.