



PROFILE

Location

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Populations of Focus

racial and ethnic minority groups, rural populations, communities with limited resources

Topic Areas

health equity, cancer prevention and control, nutrition, obesity, rural health, high blood pressure, diabetes



HPDP researchers and staff lead many community-engaged research projects on different health topics at UNC.

“I’m looking forward to the opportunity to work across disciplines to make adolescent vaccination services more accessible and equitable.” “By synthesizing the talents of community experts, behavioral scientists, epidemiologists, and geographers, we have an amazing opportunity to support vaccine uptake and protect North Carolinians from vaccine preventable diseases, including COVID-19.”

Melissa Gilkey, PhD

Co-principal Investigator
HPDP

The [University of North Carolina \(UNC\) Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention](#) (HPDP) is one of 26 Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the 2019–2024 funding cycle. Each PRC is funded to establish and maintain their center and to conduct a core research project. PRCs may receive supplemental funding to conduct additional research projects and activities.

HPDP’s vision is to work with community partners to implement public health interventions and share findings to improve health outcomes in individuals and communities vulnerable to chronic disease and disability in North Carolina. Its mission is to help individuals and communities access health-promoting resources and services that can prevent disease. HPDP works to develop education, training, and other health-promoting resources that can be used to promote overall well-being.

CORE RESEARCH

Each PRC uses a community-engaged approach to conduct one primary applied public health prevention research project called a core research project. Project activities include design, development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. PRCs use at least 50% of their CDC funding to conduct the project in partnership with communities.

Med-South Lifestyle Program (MSLP)

The [Med-South Lifestyle Program \(MSLP\)](#) is a proven intervention that adjusts traditional Mediterranean diets to appeal to populations in the southeastern United States. Mediterranean-style dietary patterns emphasize consumption of whole grains, healthy fats, and vegetables. They have been shown to lower the incidence of chronic disease.

HPDP's core research project for the 2019–2024 funding cycle is to identify the most effective way to promote and support the implementation of MSLP across multiple settings, including communities with limited resources. The focus is on public health and clinical practice settings that reach rural, minority, and medically underserved communities.

The goal is to extend the program's reach to communities across North Carolina through local health departments and community health centers.

“Our core research project builds on years of research at HPDP to develop, test, and disseminate the Med-South Lifestyle Program, which culturally adapts the Mediterranean diet and other evidence-based health promotion and disease



The Med-South Lifestyle Program promotes healthy eating by emphasizing fresh vegetables and fruits.

prevention interventions for the southeastern United States,” said Alice Ammerman, DrPH, center director.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

PRCs may receive supplemental funding to work on additional research projects each funding cycle. These Special Interest Projects (SIPs) focus on a variety of health topics or gaps in scientific evidence. PRCs can also conduct additional research as part of SIP [Thematic Research Networks](#), which are groups of PRCs working together on related health topics.



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HIGHLIGHTED PUBLICATION

[A systematic review of clinic and community intervention to increase fecal testing for colorectal cancer in rural and low-income populations in the United States – how, what and when?](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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For more information on UNC's HPDP, visit [Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention](#).

2022

Electronic Health Record Study to Examine Factors and Diagnostic Pathways that Facilitate Early Ovarian Cancer Diagnoses

This SIP will use North Carolina cancer registry data that has been linked to electronic health records and medical claims data to address ovarian cancer knowledge gaps and provide critical information on clinical-, patient-, and health-systems-related factors that may help shift ovarian cancers to earlier diagnosis.

2021

PRC Vaccine Confidence Network (PRC VCN)

In April 2021, CDC funded a 12-month award to all 26 PRCs to form the PRC VCN in support of the agency's [Vaccinate with Confidence](#) strategy for COVID-19. As part of this network, HPDP is examining vaccine hesitancy to find ways to promote vaccine confidence, increase vaccine uptake, and reduce disparities in Black/African American, American Indian/Native American, and Latino/Latina communities, including among adolescents. The goal is to reduce the incidence of COVID-19 in the United States.

HPDP's strategy is to give primary care providers in North Carolina the data, support, and community engagement opportunities they need to increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence, uptake, and equity.

How Alcohol Source and Direct-to-Consumer Sales Impact Alcohol Behavior and Outcomes in a Shifting Regulatory Environment

This SIP study focuses on online direct-to-consumer (DTC) sales of age-restricted products— including alcohol, cigarettes, vaping, cannabis, and kratom products. It seeks to inform policy decisions at local, state, and federal levels about DTC alcohol sales and examine how changes to regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic affected alcohol-related behaviors.

Research findings will provide evidence to support policy recommendations for DTC alcohol sales. Regulators and policy advocates can use this information to guide their actions in this evolving area of health policy.

2019

Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CPCRN)

The University of North Carolina is home to the Coordinating Center for the Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network (CPCRN), a national network of academic, public health, and community partners who work together to reduce the burden of cancer, especially among those disproportionately affected. The Coordinating Center facilitates cross-center research efforts across the Network's eight collaborating centers.

The [Comprehensive Cancer Control Collaborative of North Carolina \(4CNC\)](#) is one of the collaborating centers in the Network. Its members conduct cancer prevention and control research to identify and support the implementation of effective clinical and public health cancer prevention and control interventions into a wide range of clinical and community settings. They also provide training, technical assistance, and tools to support the adoption and implementation of proven cancer prevention and control interventions.

Some 4CNC projects include colorectal cancer screening in pharmacies, organizational theory in implementation science, financial toxicity among rural cancer patients, and dissemination of CPCRN's [Putting Public Health Evidence into Action curriculum](#).

CDC Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) conduct innovative public health research at the community level. The PRC Program is a network of academic research centers in the United States that work with their communities to identify public health problems and develop, test, and evaluate solutions that can be widely shared and applied within the public health system. PRCs research a wide range of health topics and focus on populations experiencing health disparities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRC PROGRAM

Visit www.cdc.gov/prc or contact prcprogram@cdc.gov.



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Health and Human Services
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