

Healthy Signs



UNIVERSITY of
ROCHESTER
MEDICAL CENTER

MEDICINE of THE HIGHEST ORDER

National Center for Deaf Health Research November 2008

Mission of NCDHR:

To promote health and prevent disease in the Deaf population through community-participatory research.

Center's Logo

The logo, which was created by a Deaf artist, reflects two key components of the mission of the Center (1) health and (2) a focus on the culturally Deaf community.

This contemporary logo design shows a person signing, with arms extending around and above the head. The solid circles at the end of this person's arms represent closed fists, indicating the sign for "health." The fact that this person's arms occupy space above this person is indicative of enthusiasm and being in good health.

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This newsletter was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number U48-DP-000031 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The findings and conclusions in this newsletter are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the CDC.

Groundbreaking of the CTSB Matthew Starr

On October 27, Dr. **Thomas Pearson**, Program Director of NCDHR, along with other UR officials and state policymakers, broke ground for the new Clinical & Translational Science Building (CTSB), a \$76 million, 4-story 200,000 square foot facility.



Slated for completion in Summer of 2010, CTSB will

be the permanent home of several important research programs, including NCDHR.

Plans are underway to create blue-grey walls and matching curtains, circular seating arrangement in the meeting room and specially designed overhead lighting which will minimize shadows. These architecturally accommodations are designed to be friendly to our "eyes" as we communicate visually. Videophones and assistive listening devices will augment our facility.

The University of Rochester is one of the first 12 leading universities

awarded the \$40 million Clinical & Translational Science grant from the National Institutes of Health. The purpose of this grant is to reduce the length of time between new biomedical research discoveries treatments for patients. Community engagement is a key aspect of the grant.

NCDHR promotes health and prevents disease in the Deaf population through culturally and linguistically appropriate Community-based Participatory Research.

For more information about CTSB, go to: <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/ctsi>.

Part 2: 2nd Deaf Health Research Grant Tom Fogg



Thanks to the combined efforts of NCDHR faculty and staff and community supporters, we submitted our second five-year Deaf Health research grant to the

CDC on October 8, 2008. The application was 429 pages long, and included 63 letters of support from the DHCC, the URMC, volunteers, consultants, HLAA and other partners. NCDHR hosted five town-hall meetings in August and September to get community input, and 28 people attended at least one of the meetings. If we receive the award, the new grant will start on September 30, 2009.

The application proposes a brand new core research project. The project involves taking an existing program to help people lose weight and be more active, and adapting it for the Deaf Community. The program was developed by North Carolina Prevention Research Center. The program has worked well there, and the NCDHR wants to find out if it can also work with Deaf Community.

The first step will be to take written

program materials and convert them into ASL. Next, Deaf Community members will be trained as program "coaches." Then, about 180 program participants will be recruited from the Deaf Community to take part in a test of the program. The Deaf Community Coaches will lead the program. Half of the community members will start the program right away. The other half will start 6 months later. NCDHR researchers will collect data throughout the test to find out if the program works as intended. The test will begin sometime in 2011.

The application also includes plans for building **community partnerships**, **communicating** research results to the community and to the academic world, for **training programs** for community members and students, and **evaluating** the center's success over time. Finally, the application includes organizational plans and a staffing plan.

The NCDHR thanks everyone that helped us with the application. It was truly a community effort!

NCDHR Happenings

Steve Barnett, MD and **Mike McKee, MD** went to the annual American Public Health Association conference held last month at San Diego, California. A poster presentation on the adaptation of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to the Deaf Health Survey was given. We were able to get a number of interesting and positive feedbacks from public health researchers who were mostly unaware of the barriers that deaf people face with many current health data collection methods.



On October 30, 2008, **Deirdre Schlehofer** gave a 1-hour

presentation to a diversity class with 75 first year students from Wegmans School of Pharmacy at St. John Fisher College. The topic covered personal and professional experience with healthcare access from a Deaf consumer who has immediate family members undergoing treatments. The use of complex technical jargon of prescriptions and their side effects and how to interpret the accuracy and clarity of information is confusing for deaf patients (also for hearing patients too!). Assistant Professor Jennifer Mathews and her team have expressed enthusiasm in collaborating closely with NCDHR in the near future to better prepare the

pharmacy students to work with deaf patients



The NCDHR just started a new e-mail listserv for people that care about the NCDHR. It's called the NCDHR-News. **What is a listserv?** A long list of e-mail addresses. When we send a message to the listserv, it goes to everyone on the list. **What sort of messages will we send?** We'll send this newsletter, and occasionally other announcements. **How often will we send messages?** 2 or 3 times each month. Every message will be interesting and important. **How can I sign up?** Just ask! Send us a note at NCDHR@urmc.rochester.edu.

Summer Interns Adam Weiss and Barbara Spiecker



During summer internship at NCDHR, I helped with many events including our survey efforts at NTID's reunion weekend, our "Hot Talk" series at the Deaf Club, and the "Youth Health Fair" at RSD. I also helped contact local religious leaders of the Deaf and did some preliminary data analysis. Prior to my internship, I majored in Biology with a minor in ASL. My summer experience was tremendously valuable to me. I am proud to know that I played a role in the effort towards improving the health information available to the Deaf community. I really learned the value of community participation. NCDHR's efforts have the potential to significantly affect health in the Deaf community. Now, I am studying at the U of R School of Medicine. Thank you for the opportunity!



Working at NCDHR last summer was an amazing experience. There were abundant things I learned that I wouldn't get in the classroom. I learned that research involves a lot of effort, dedication, and hard work. I was involved in numerous projects at NCDHR, and this experience was the best way for me to learn about the research world. I get great pleasure from seeing and understanding the research results, and knowing it has made contribution to the Deaf community. I applaud NCDHR's efforts in improving the health of Deaf community. I also enjoyed the work environment at NCDHR. Overall, I could not have asked for a better summer internship experience and I appreciate NCDHR staff taking their time to teach me and allow me being a part of their team. Thanks!

Deaf Health Pathways Heidi Thompson



Medical students at the University of Rochester now have a unique opportunity to work with and learn from the local Deaf community, through a Medical Humanities class called Deaf Health Pathway. Better understanding of Deaf culture in health settings is the objective of this class. The students also learn ASL at a basic level, emphasizing on medical signs that they will continue to use throughout their clinical practice.

The Deaf Health Pathway was started by students interested in learning more about the Deaf community here in Rochester. They wanted to know how they could better communicate with their Deaf patients, and what issues are important to the Deaf community. The Pathway is now in its 4th year with 13 students.

Feedback from the students and Deaf community members involved has been positive and encouraging. The ASL instructor is **Pam White**, who has taught ASL at the University of Rochester for several years. Other members of the Deaf community presented different topics to the students and participated in role-plays as "patients" in order to help the students improve their ASL skills.



Deaf Health Pathway students in Class of 2011, with Pam (second from right, first row).