



## Center for Community Health

The Center for Community Health is a partnership between the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth and the J. McDonald Williams Institute of Dallas. Our vision for the Center is to foster healthy, vibrant communities through community partnerships, policy-relevant health research, and improvements in community capacity for prevention. We desire to translate research into practice and policy and create replicable models of change to improve population health and eliminate health disparities in the North Texas area.

Although only in its inaugural months, the Center for Community Health has several ongoing projects with community partners. For the Aintie-Tia project, we train peer community volunteers to provide assistance to pregnant women with no support system. At Jubilee Park, we administer baseline surveys with regard to food frequencies, health knowledge, and levels of physical activity in order to measure the impact of the Healthy Children, Stronger Community summer program. We also conduct a needs assessment for the Dallas Family Access Network Women's Health Initiative, which serves HIV positive women. Finally, the Center for Community Health and the J. McDonald Williams Institute are in the process of an ongoing mental health needs analysis and data collection for the Mental Health Transformation, which encompasses all seven counties in the NorthSTAR area.

At the heart of all of our projects is the concept of health equity through *community empowerment*.

### ***What is community?***

A community is defined by more than just geographical boundaries. Members of a community derive a sense of belonging from their association with the community from at least one shared characteristic. This characteristic can be religious, social, political or economic in nature. Community organization is an effort to define and reach the goals of a community.

### ***What is empowerment?***

Empowerment is the ability of a community to engage in social action process in order for the community and the members of the community to gain control over their community and their individual lives. Empowerment allows individuals to generate positive changes in their lives and environments.

For more information on the Center for Community Health, please contact Kathryn Cardarelli, PhD, Director for the Center for Community Health at 817-735-5192.