

The UHAND Program is a long-term, collaborative partnership between the University of Houston and The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center funded by the National Cancer Institute that supports and stimulates excellence in educational programming and innovation in research designed to affect health equity among racial/ethnic groups disproportionately affected by cancer disparities.

UHAND General Updates

In November, [Sara Flores](#) (UHAND Scholar) shared information about the UHAND program with students at the [University of Houston](#) Public Health Fair as part of our efforts to recruit a new cohort of scholars. To that point, the UHAND program is currently accepting applications for the 2020 year! To learn more and apply, please visit the [UHAND website](#) or the online [application](#). The deadline to apply is **February 10, 2020**.

During this quarter, we welcomed [Dr. Chakema Carmack](#) as a UHAND mentor. Dr. Carmack is an Assistant Professor of Health in the [Department of Psychological, Health, & Learning Sciences in the College of Education](#). Her research focuses on culturally competent programs aimed at reducing human immunodeficiency virus and sexually transmitted infection incidence, including cancer-causing HPV infections, in African American and Latinx communities.

We would like to congratulate [Dr. Kayce Solari Williams](#) (UHAND Education Program co-director) on her appointment as the [American School Health Association](#) (ASHA) President, for which she took office on January 1, 2020. The mission of ASHA is to transform all schools into places where every student learns and thrives. In particular, Dr. Solari Williams' priority as President is to "advocate for policies that create healthier, more supportive environments in schools across the nation." To learn more about her role, read her [feature](#) written by the University of Houston's College of Education.

Additionally, [Dr. Lorraine Reitzel](#) (University of Houston Principal Investigator) was recently designated as a [Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco](#) (SRNT) Fellow. This distinction is conferred to SRNT members who have made outstanding contributions, such as through scientific research and dissemination of science.

In December, UHAND celebrated the holidays with a team dinner attended by UHAND leadership, staff, pilot and supplement investigators, and scholars. In January, the UHAND [Administrative Core](#) and [Education Program](#) team met with the scholars to share program updates and kick off the new semester.



The UHAND team met with scholars to share program updates. From left to right: Sean Reuven (UHAND Scholar), Krystal Christopher (UHAND Scholar), Ashley Taylor (UHAND Scholar), Dr. Lorna McNeill (MD Anderson Principal Investigator), Dr. Kayce Solari Williams (UHAND Education Program co-director), Basant Gamal (UHAND Scholar), Dr. Lorraine Reitzel (University of Houston Principal Investigator), Sara Flores (UHAND Scholar), Paulina Linares Abrego (UHAND Scholar), Sahar Eshtehardi (UHAND Scholar), Shreya Desai (UHAND Scholar).



From left to right: Sara Flores (UHAND Scholar), Eileen Garza (UHAND staff), Rana Banton (UHAND staff), Sean Reuven (UHAND Scholar), Krystal Christopher (UHAND Scholar), Dr. Kamisha Escoto (UHAND staff), Dr. Lorna McNeill (MD Anderson Principal Investigator), Dr. Lorraine Reitzel (University of Houston Principal Investigator), Ewune Ewane (Komen Scholar), Shreya Desai (UHAND Scholar), Dr. Rosenda Murillo (UHAND Early Stage Investigator).



Sara Flores (UHAND Scholar) pictured sharing information about the UHAND program to University of Houston students at the Public Health Fair.

Our Scholars

Scholar Achievements

In December, [Sahar Eshtehardi](#) (UHAND Scholar) proposed her master's thesis, a major milestone of her doctoral program requirements. Sahar also served as a Faculty Mentor Awards Review Committee Member at the [University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center](#) where she read, scored, and discussed nominations for the 2020 Leading Mentor in Cancer Prevention Award.

[Shreya Desai](#) (UHAND Scholar) recently received the [Provost's Undergraduate Research Scholarship](#) for Spring 2020. Through this scholarship, Shreya received additional funding to conduct research with her UHAND mentor, [Dr. Rosenda Murillo](#) (UHAND Early Stage Investigator).

In January, Sara Flores attended the [11th International Conference on the Health Risks of Youth](#) in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, with Dr. Kayce Solari Williams. At this conference, Sara presented the research that she conducted as part of her [Global Health Learning Abroad](#) trip in a roundtable session.



Sahar Eshtehardi (UHAND Scholar) pictured after presenting her master's thesis.

Education

In November, we concluded the Fall 2019 Komen-UHAND Seminar Series with a talk from [Dr. Larkin Strong](#) and [Dr. Margaret Goetz](#) on "Promoting Healthy Lifestyles in Latino Family Dyads."

During this quarter, we also closed out the 2019 [Professional Development Series](#) attended by [UHAND Early Stage Investigators](#) and [HEALTH Research Institute](#) affiliates. [Dr. Elizabeth Travis](#) spoke to the group on “Sponsorship: What? Why? How?” This talk focused on the different roles that mentors and sponsors serve in trainee academic and professional development. We are excited to roll-out the second year of the Professional Development Series in January, which will feature both new and returning speakers presenting on novel topics of interest to our attendees.

Community

In October, [Dr. Shahnjayla Connors](#) (Assistant Professor at the University of Houston-Downtown and UHAND affiliate) led a panel titled “It Takes All of Us to Keep Us Well! Engaging in Transdisciplinary & Community-Engaged Research to Reduce Health Disparities in Our Communities,” which focused on the multi-level determinants of health disparities, at the [Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science](#) (SACNAS) meeting in Long Beach, California. While at the conference, Dr. Connors also served as a Conversation with Scientists mentor and a Mentor Judge for the undergraduate poster session. Dr. Connors is a member of the [Linton-Poodry SACNAS Leadership Institute 2015 Cohort](#) and serves as a SACNAS conference abstract reviewer.



Dr. Shahnjayla Connors (UHAND affiliate) pictured leading a panel at the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science meeting.

In November, [Dr. Lorna McNeill](#) (MD Anderson Principal Investigator) participated in a panel at the [Mentoring to Medicine and Biomedical Research](#) event sponsored by [100 Black Men of Metropolitan Houston Inc.](#) – an organization that seeks to improve the quality of life of their communities and enhance educational and economic opportunities for all African

Americans. This event connected Houston-area students in grades 6-12 and college with medical professionals and researchers from MD Anderson and [Baylor College of Medicine](#).



Dr. Lorna McNeill (MD Anderson Principal Investigator) pictured with other event mentors, members of 100 Black Men of Metropolitan Houston Inc., Sylvester Turner (Houston mayor), and Dr. Peter Pisters (President of MD Anderson).

Research

[Dr. Dalnim Cho](#) (UHAND Early Stage Investigator) was awarded the [Department of Defense Health Disparity Fellowship Award](#) to pursue her research titled “Quality of Life among African American Prostate Cancer Survivors and Their Partners: A Multi-level Perspective.” Dr. Cho has also received an R21 award from the [National Cancer Institute](#) for her research “One Plus One Can Be Greater than Two: Ecological Momentary Assessment for Black Prostate Cancer Survivors and Partners.”

In the last quarter, our pilot investigators, supplement investigators, and alumni have published papers in the following journals: [Ethnicity & Health](#), [Health Behavior Research](#), [American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine](#), [Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities](#), and [Journal of Physical Activity and Health](#) (citations below).

Select UHAND Publications

*denotes co-first authors

Markofski M., Jennings K., Dolan C., Davies N. A., LaVoy E. C., Ryan E. J., Carrillo A. E. Single-Arm 8-Week Ad Libitum Self-Prepared Paleo Diet Reduces Cardiometabolic Disease Risk Factors in Overweight Adults. *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*.

Murillo, R., Agrawal, P., Berenji-Jalaei, S., Vasquez, E., & Echeverria, S. (in press). Frequency of Seeing People Walk and Aerobic Physical Activity among Latino Adults. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*.

Murillo, R., *Ayalew, L., & **Hernandez, D. C.** (in press). The Association between Neighborhood Social Cohesion and Sleep Duration in Latinos. *Ethnicity & Health*.

Odoh, C., Vidrine, J. I., Businelle, M. S., Kendzor, D. E., Agrawal, P., & **Reitzel, L. R.** (in press). Health Literacy and Self-rated Health among Homeless Adults. *Health Behavior Research*.

Odoh C., Businelle M. S., Chen T-A, Kendzor D. E., **Obasi E. M.**, **Reitzel L. R.** Association of Fear and Mistrust with Stress among Sheltered Homeless Adults, and the Moderating Effects of Race and Sex. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*.

For the full list of UHAND-supported publications and presentations, please visit <https://www.uhandpartnership.com/publications>.



UHAND

A partnership to address cancer disparities

UNIVERSITY OF
HOUSTON

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
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