



## **Vision and Mission**

The Health Equity Alliance of Tallahassee (HEAT) is a community-academic partnership for health equity in Tallahassee, FL. We envision **equal health for all**. Our mission is to bridge the gap between research and action to explain and eliminate the causes of social inequalities in health.

## **Objectives**

We aim to increase scientific knowledge and raise community consciousness about the causes of health inequities; create equitable partnerships between researchers and community members; promote community capacity building and empowerment; and translate research into policy to change the unequal social and economic conditions that harm people's health.

## **Principles**

- HEAT strives to translate research into policy to change the unequal social and economic conditions that cause social inequalities in health.
- HEAT values the integration of research and action for the mutual benefit of all partners.
- HEAT fosters mutual respect, trust, accountability, and learning among all partners.
- HEAT promotes research and action that are responsive to local needs, strengths, and resources.
- HEAT believes that active collaboration between researchers and community members enhances the validity of scientific research.
- HEAT promotes community capacity building, empowerment, and ownership of research.
- HEAT recognizes that a meaningful partnership requires an enduring commitment and long-term relationships.
- HEAT emphasizes the multiple determinants of population health, including the influence of unequal social, economic, and political resources.
- HEAT is committed to disseminating knowledge to partners, policy makers, and the community in ways that are meaningful and accessible.

## **Partners**

Our current partners include researchers from Florida A&M University, Florida State University, and the University of Florida; community-based organizations such as the Greater Frenchtown Revitalization Council and the TMH Faith Community Health Ministry; the Leon County Health Department and Florida Department of Health; and concerned community members.

## **Projects**

HEAT is an umbrella organization that fosters community-based participatory research (CBPR). We are currently involved in two research projects with policy implications for public health.

### **Food Environment and Childhood Obesity**

Childhood obesity is one of the most pressing public health problems in the United States. Childhood obesity is often treated as a matter of individual choices about diet and exercise, but there is growing evidence that access to healthy foods and physical activity are constrained by environmental factors, such as the location of grocery stores, transportation, and safety. We are collecting evidence about the food environment in Leon County to advocate for policies that will reduce childhood obesity.

### **Stress, Social Environment, and Hypertension among African Americans**

Hypertension, or chronic high blood pressure, is the single most important cause of early death among African Americans. Yet the causes of excess hypertension among African Americans are not well understood. We are conducting research to identify the contribution of stress related to racial inequalities in the social environment (e.g., social networks, racial residential segregation, racial discrimination in the workplace). The results, which will be available in 2010, are likely to have significant clinical and policy implications for reducing racial inequalities in health.

**For more information about HEAT, please visit [www.healthequity.us](http://www.healthequity.us)**

Clarence C. Gravlee, Ph.D., Dept. of Anthropology, University of Florida, [cgravlee@ufl.edu](mailto:cgravlee@ufl.edu), 352-392-2253 x240