



# Kellogg Health Scholars

*Connecting Academe, Community, and Policy*

M E E T   T H E   K E L L O G G   H E A L T H   S C H O L A R S

## **Kellee White, Ph.D., M.P.H.**

Kellee White says she often draws upon the words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to guide her work: “Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhumane.” Specifically, her research seeks to understand how factors outside of the health care system affect health status, health risk, and health disparities. White traces the origins of this interest to undergraduate training, when she received a bachelors’ degree in sociology from Vassar College. She then received her masters’ in sociomedical sciences and her doctorate in epidemiology from the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Most recently, White has continued to develop her research in advancing equity in health through a postdoctoral fellowship with the Kellogg Health Scholars Program at the Harvard University School of Public Health.

### **Research and Results**

White believes that the neighborhoods and communities where one lives, works, and learns have a tremendous influence on health. In a recent study, she found that regardless of their own race/ethnicity, individuals who lived in highly segregated black neighborhoods were more likely to rate their health as poor. She attributes these findings to the concentration of economic and social disadvantages and the absence of neighborhood resources that promote opportunity. Increasingly, she says, “the literature shows evidence to demonstrate that neighborhood environments play a critical role in health promotion and disease prevention.”

### **Policy Implications**

White’s research leads her to support a broad agenda to improve population health. “Health policy should be inclusive of social and public actions which oftentimes have an indirect, yet

important influence on health status, health risk, and health disparities,” she contends.

One strategy might be coordinated public health planning at the local, state, and federal level. Another is the use of health impact assessments to evaluate the consequences of decisions by various agencies and highlight the salience of social determinants for individual and community health.

Further, her work encompasses fair housing issues, which can be particularly important in addressing neighborhood environment and health. White has presented and collaborated with advocacy groups such as the Fair Housing Councils of San Diego, California and Grand Rapids, Michigan to address the health implications of housing discrimination. Specifically, enforcing housing discrimination laws and supporting community development projects could help to intervene in the processes that sustain neighborhood disadvantage.

To learn more about **Kellee White, Ph.D., M.P.H.** and her work, contact her at [kwhite@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:kwhite@hsph.harvard.edu) and/or consult the following selected publications:

**White, K.**, Wong, D.W., Borrell, L.N. Racial/ethnic residential segregation and self-reported high blood pressure among US- and foreign-born blacks in New York City. (under review: *Social Science & Medicine*).

**White K.**, Borrell, L.N. Racial/ethnic residential segregation: framing the context of health disparities. (under review: *American Journal of Public Health*).

Schillinger, J.A, McKinney, C.M., Garg, R., Gwynn, C, **White, K.**, Lee, F., Blank, S, Thorpe, L., Frieden, T. (2008) Seroprevalence of herpes simplex virus type 2 and characteristics associated with undiagnosed infection; New York City, 2004. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. 35(6):599-606.

**White, K.**, Borrell, L.N. (2006) Racial/ethnic neighborhood concentration and self-reported health in New York City. *Ethnicity and Disease*. 16(4):900-8.

Dallo, F., Borrell, L.N, **White, K.** (2006) Diabetes, education, and race/ethnicity. *American Journal of Public Health*. 96(9):1637-42.

Abraido-Lanza, A.F., **White, K.**, Armbrister, A.N., Link, B.G. (2006) Health status, activity limitations, and disability in work and housework among Latinos and non-Latinos with arthritis: an analysis of national data. *Arthritis Rheumatism*. 5; 55(3):442-50.

To learn more about the Kellogg Health Scholars Program, contact Barbara Krimgold of the Center for Advancing Health at [bkrimgold@cfah.org](mailto:bkrimgold@cfah.org) or visit [www.kellogghealthscholars.org](http://www.kellogghealthscholars.org).