Welcome to the Center for Disability Health & Wellness (CDHW) at the University of Michigan School of Medicine.

Individuals with disabilities represent a diverse group of individuals who experience significant disparities related to health access and outcomes, employment and participation. Individuals from racially marginalized communities are also represented among those with disabilities and experience more negative health outcomes.

The CDHW was established in 2019 and its members come from diverse departments, schools and campuses within the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and Flint. The CDHW, in partnership with Investigating Disability factors and promoting Environmental Access for Healthy Living Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (IDEAL RRTC), is committed to recognizing both the strengths and challenges faced by individuals with disabilities.

MISSION

Develop and apply innovative research, clinical and educational strategies to address inequities in healthcare access, quality and outcomes experienced by individuals with physical, sensory and developmental disabilities across the lifespan.

VISION

To work in partnership with members of the disability community to ensure that all people, regardless of type or severity of disability, have full access to quality health care and to wellness activities personalized to their background, strengths and needs.

CDHW KEY ACTIVITIES

In its first year of existence, the CDHW has been heavily involved in exciting and topical research and activities that address the inequities in healthcare for those with disabilities. Members also have set guidelines promoting patient and family safety at Michigan Medicine, particularly with regards to the coronavirus pandemic:

- Members have collaborated with faculty in the U-M Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation to develop COVID-19 guidelines for patients with disabilities and their caregivers. This was intended to provide internal guidelines as the health care system and their patients continue to navigate the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

- Members developed a novel survey instrument, called the COV-DIS Survey, to record data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the experiences of people with disabilities. The data collected will provide critical insights into how the pandemic and pandemic response are affecting the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities in the region.
EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

• CDHW and the U-M Department of Family Medicine MDisability program held a Facebook Live event in the summer of 2020, using American Sign Language to answer COVID-19 health and safety questions from a global online audience.

• Disability Health Research Symposium -- CDHW held its inaugural research event, bringing together medical researchers from across the university to discuss their disabilities-focused studies.

• University of Michigan Medical School Disability Health Elective – Beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year, CDHW and MDisability faculty worked with the medical school to create a two-week disability health elective for third and fourth year medical students. The elective is designed to teach students about best clinical practices in disability health from a variety of disability health experts.

CLINICAL WORK

CDHW recognizes the importance of tailoring care to the needs and abilities of individuals with disabilities. It recognizes and works to foster innovative clinical care and best practices such as the ones developed in the clinics led by CDHW members:

• The University of Michigan Deaf Health Clinic
• The University of Michigan Low Vision Clinic
• Von Voigtlander Women’s Hospital Gynecology and Sexual Health Clinic
• Delta Dental Integrated Special Care Clinic
• C.S. Mott’s Children’s Hospital Pediatric Dentistry
• Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Specialty Clinic
• Michigan Adapted Cognitive Assessment Clinic (MACAC)
NUMBERS & FACTS IN THE UNITED STATES

**DISABILITIES STATISTICS, ACCORDING TO THE CDC**

61 million people are living with a disability

1 in 4 people in the United States have a disability

**PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WITH FUNCTIONAL DISABILITY TYPES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Living</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Care</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISABILITY IS ESPECIALLY COMMON IN THESE GROUPS**

2 in 5 adults 65 and older have a disability

1 in 4 women have a disability

2 in 5 Non Hispanic American Indians/Alaska Natives have a disability

**HEALTHCARE ACCESS BARRIERS**

1 in 3 adults with disabilities (18-44 years old) do not have a usual health care provider

1 in 3 adults with disabilities (18-44 years old) have an unmet healthcare need because of cost in the past year

1 in 4 adults with a disability (45-64 years old) did not have a routine checkup in the past year
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

- We supported members of the disability community in Detroit to petition for the inclusion of an Office of Disability Affairs in the Detroit City Charter.

- We partnered with Warriors on Wheels of Metropolitan Detroit to obtain a grant from the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation to support their COVID-19 related activities, including providing practical assistance to individuals with spinal cord injuries and other disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- We developed and maintained the National Resource Center for Aging with a Disability, which connects people with information about programs and organizations that can help them live healthier and more enjoyable lives.

- We held a Facebook Live event this past summer using American Sign Language (ASL) to answer COVID-19 health and safety questions from a global online audience. The live broadcast attracted 2,600 views in two days, with more than 3,500 individuals viewing the one-hour ASL event.

CDHW Community Partners:

- AARP
- National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC)
- Center for Healthcare Research and Transformation (CHRT)
- Warriors on Wheels of Greater Detroit
- The Arc of Western Wayne County
- Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
2021-2022 OUTLOOK & GOALS

- Build on the inaugural Disability Health Research Symposium, held in October 2020, making it an annual event that attracts University of Michigan researchers across the professional continuum
- Implement a CDHW Research Registry and engage people living with disabilities from across the United States
- Initiate a regular webinar series for patients and families, as well as one for clinicians and researchers
- Enhance existing training programs to provide additional opportunities for graduate students and healthcare trainees and increase awareness of disability health
- Develop programming to support and engage disability organizations in the community to include mentorship, education and training with the implementation and evaluation of programming related to disability health
- Plan for and submit grants for NIH funded Center related to Aging with a Disability

OPEN CDHW MEETINGS

- Individuals on the M-Community email group can sign up to receive more information on our monthly meetings. Please use the contact information below to be included on the list.

WEBSITE

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