

Environmental exposures across urban and rural communities in the Deep South

Birmingham Community Advisory Board

June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013

3:30-4:30 PM

West End Library (1348 Tuscaloosa Ave ., Birmingham AL)

### **Meeting Minutes**

Members in attendance: Keisha Brown (Harriman Park VP), Mary Evans (UAB), Julia Gohlke (UAB), Matt Lacke (JCDH), Stacie Propst (GASP), Sheila Tyson (FoWE)

Observers in attendance: Tiffany Smith (JHU Earth Sciences Department), Molly Bernhard (UAB SOPH)

Discussions:

Role of the CAB: The role of the CAB was confirmed by members. Specifically the CAB will design research that evaluates the effects of environmental exposures on community health in Birmingham, ensuring that it is in line with community priorities. In addition, the CAB will design and conduct a yearly workshop. The workshops will be used as one tool to ensure bi-directional communication between community members and researchers. Workshops will be used to educate researchers on community needs, priorities, and culture and to discuss research design, implementation and results, eliciting opinions of community members on utility and relevance to their needs.

Decision-making process: Any CAB member can raise an issue to be voted upon. Decisions will be made by a simple majority vote of the full membership.

Regular meetings: A quarterly in person meeting schedule was agreed upon. This decision will be revisited at least annually.

Reporting: Monthly reporting of all relevant activities to the CAB members from the Chair was agreed upon. Reporting will be communicated via email.

Membership: Members decided total membership will initially be limited to nine, with balance between: 1) researchers (3 total), 2) Birmingham community-based organizations/community members (3 total), and 3) governmental or non-governmental issue-based organization representation (3 total). Additional members and/or vacancies in each category will be filled via nomination by any current member and will be voted upon by the CAB with simple majority rule. Stacie Propst suggested representation from the American Lung Association as a possible candidate for an additional member in the third category. Sheila Tyson suggested an additional member with clinical experience for an

additional member in the 1<sup>st</sup> category. It was decided that limitations on terms were not appropriate right now, but will be re-visited in the future.

Officers: Julia Gohlke was appointed as Chair and Sheila Tyson as Co-chair. A transition to a rotating chairmanship and co-chairmanship was agreed upon. Term limits and election procedures will be decided upon within one year.

At-risk populations of interest: Several potential at-risk populations for heat-related illness were discussed as a possible focus for research. Stacie Propst mentioned multiple sclerosis and noted the MS Society reports at least 4,000 cases in Alabama. Keisha Brown brought up sarcoidosis and systemic lupus erythematosus and its prevalence in African American populations and heat sensitivity associated with both. Persons with diabetes, the elderly, occupationally exposed, and pregnant women were also discussed. Pregnant women were eliminated due to the need for summer exposure periods and relatively short duration of pregnancy leading to difficulty in recruitment. The relatively low prevalence of MS, lupus and sarcoidosis were also mentioned as a possible negative in terms of broader community relevance and recruitment when compared to diabetes. Sheila Tyson mentioned FoWE's ongoing work in diabetes education in communities across Birmingham. It was determined that the Chair would provide further analysis of these potential at-risk populations to the CAB to determine the most appropriate at-risk population for the research study.

Yearly workshops: Several ideas to increase capacity of both researchers and community members were discussed. A workshop run by community partners to train UAB researchers in community needs and priorities, a grant-writing workshop, community based research designs, and focus group workshops to determine opinions on potential community-based research designs. These ideas received a positive reception by CAB members.