



Center for Collaborative Research in Health Disparities

CCRHD-RCMI PROGRAM

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ADMINISTRATION

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RESEARCH LEADERSHIP

Jorge Duconge, Ph.D.
Pablo Vivas, Ph.D.
Cristina Palacios, Ph.D.
Maribel Campos, M.D.
Carmen Vélez, Ph.D.
Irene Lafarga, Ph.D.
Carmen Cadilla, Ph.D.
Gregory Quirk, Ph.D.
Loyda Meléndez, Ph.D.
Mark Miller, Ph.D.
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José G. Conde, M.D., M.P.H.

COVID-19

Puerto Rico/Jan 31, 2022

Cumulative Number of Cases:

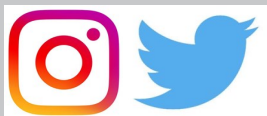
260,990

Cumulative Number of Deaths:

4,032

% Fully Vaccinated People

89.3%



WEB NEWS

January 2022

RCMI-CCRHD LEADERSHIP MEETING



On January 31, 2022, the Center for Collaborative Research in Health Disparities at the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus (UPR-MSC) held a virtual meeting with the leaders of the RCMI research projects and cores. During the meeting, participants discussed issues related to the renewal application of the RCMI Center for Collaborative Research in Health Disparities (CCRHD), which was submitted on January 25, 2022. In addition, preliminary information related to the 2022 RCMI National Conference was shared with the leadership. This virtual event is scheduled for March 16-18, 2022. RCMI investigators were encouraged to submit abstracts and register for the different sessions. Details for organizing data and information in preparation for the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) were also part of the agenda.

NIH-SEPA AWARD



Congratulations to Dr. Maribel Campos, RCMI Research Project Leader, for receiving the NIH Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA-R25) "Semilla - planting the seeds of change for Puerto Rico". As stated by Dr. Campos, "Semilla is an innovative collaborative project between the UPR Medical

Sciences Campus and Mayo Clinic with the goal of engaging children in the science of their own well-being". The expected broader impact of *Semilla* is a healthy community brought by children as agents of change for their own health, then that of their family and community. This change will be brought about by stepwise strengthening and iteration of relationships between education, science, medicine, and the community.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS



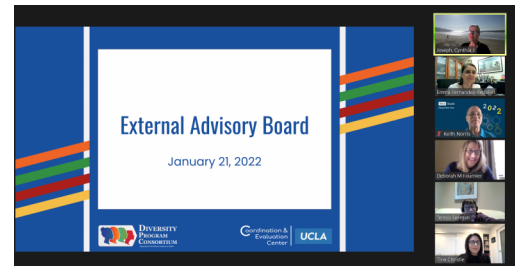
Dr. Pablo Vivas-Mejia and colleagues studied the role of the RNA binding protein with multiple splicing (RBPMS) in ovarian cancer. They interrogated available Internet databases and found that ovarian cancer patients with high RBPMS levels live longer compared to patients with low RBPMS levels. Similarly, immunohisto-

chemical studies showed that serous ovarian cancer tissues showed weaker RBPMS staining when compared with normal ovarian tissues. The results of the studies suggest that RBPMS acts as a tumor suppressor gene and that lower levels of RBPMS promote the cisplatin resistance of ovarian cancer cells. Dr. Vivas is the Lead Investigator in the RCMI-supported research project "Upstream Regulation and Downstream Effectors of c-MYC in Ovarian Cancer".

Citation: Reduced RBPMS Levels Promote Cell Proliferation and Decrease Cisplatin Sensitivity in Ovarian Cancer Cells. *Int J Mol Sci* 2022, 23(1), 535; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms23010535> PMID: 35008958

DIVERSITY PROGRAM CONSORTIUM

The NIH Diversity Program Consortium focuses on how to best create an environment across an array of Colleges and Universities, and key partnerships that can stimulate and



support diverse students with potential to become outstanding scientists and/or clinicians. The Coordination and Evaluation Center (CEC) at the University of California Los Angeles is responsible for the evaluation of the Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) sites across the nation. The BUILD program is supported by the NIH Diversity Program Consortium. On January 21, 2022, the CEC held a virtual conference with members of the External Advisory Board (EAB) focusing on the evaluation of the BUILD program. Student, faculty and institutional logic models, as well as interventions and surveys were presented during the conference. Major student, faculty and institutional hallmarks and outcomes were also discussed. In addition, CEC publications were highlighted and shared with the members of the EAB. Dr. Emma Fernandez-Repollet serves as a member of the CEC External Advisory Board.

PR-CEAL COVID-19 SURVEY



The PR-CEAL project is conducting online survey on vaccination, testing and attitudes towards COVID-19. Those interested can access the questionnaire through the QR code using the camera of their mobile device or through this link: <https://redcap.link/7ekgcp1t>

2022 RCMI NATIONAL CONFERENCE

RCMI Grantees Meeting | Research Infrastructure Core | Investigator Development Core | Community Engagement Core

2022 Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Consortium National Conference
Virtual Event

Wednesday, March 16 – Friday, March 18, 2022
1:00-7:00 PM EST

SAVE-THE-DATE!



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