



CASE FOR SUPPORT

Facing Health Disparities in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. is a city that suffers from significant health disparities. Health outcomes and access to care are distinctly worse among the District's poor and ethnic or racial minorities when compared with other groups. These vulnerable groups face severe disadvantages in achieving health and well-being equal to other populations.

Consider the following:

- The poorest District residents are three times more likely than the average District resident (9.1% versus 2.8%) to report ever having a heart attack or being told they have a heart disease.
- The overall incidence of cancer mortality is 54% higher among black residents compared to white residents.
- The District's HIV prevalence is 2.7%, a rate comparable to many developing countries. More than 4% of black District residents have HIV, more than double the prevalence among Hispanic residents and more than triple the prevalence among white residents.
- Residents living in Ward 8, which has one of the city's highest rates of poverty, are nearly twice as likely as those District-wide to be obese.

While many dedicated health care providers currently care for these vulnerable populations, much more must be done to achieve health equity. We need a comprehensive strategy to give health care providers the knowledge and tools to treat diverse groups and meet their challenges. By providing health learners with important health equity knowledge and experience, we give them the power to tackle problems of the future. That is why the Rodham Institute seeks to develop an educational model that addresses this need. The goal is to implement such a model into training and practices at health care-related education programs throughout the nation.

The Rodham Institute at the George Washington University

Founded in 2013 in honor of the late Dorothy Rodham, the Rodham Institute seeks to partner with the local Washington, D.C. community to achieve health equity by cultivating the next generation of community-oriented health care providers, and training them in innovative strategies to improve health care for all. As a part of the George Washington University (GW) School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the Rodham Institute is ideally situated to harness the existing resources of academia,

government, and the community in a coordinated fashion to promote health equity and foster new innovations to address health disparities in D.C. Because health disparities are not exclusive to the District of Columbia, the Rodham Institute hopes to support and promote the expansion of similar health equity efforts in communities throughout the country.

The Vision and Mission

The Rodham Institute seeks sustainable solutions to health disparities in D.C. and throughout the nation. The mission of the Rodham Institute is to promote the training of health care providers who are equipped to promote health equity and improve community health. To achieve this mission, the Rodham Institute hopes to advance a five-part plan to create a model curriculum for health care provider education; advocate for policies that promote health equity for all; integrate better clinician training practices into the community; expand the health care workforce “pipeline”; and disseminate best practices nationwide.

1. Improve interdisciplinary health equity education

With an innovative curriculum that focuses on health equity and the social determinants of health, students will have the opportunity to participate in a community-based, experiential model, and experience first-hand the true impact of serving vulnerable communities. **When we succeed**, health professional students will be prepared with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to contribute to health equity in the D.C. area and more broadly.

2. Community-based health equity research and evaluation

By stimulating interdisciplinary community health quality improvement programs, learners will gain experiential learning opportunities while generating and disseminating best practices to eliminate health disparities. **When we succeed** there will be an increase in financial and volunteer support for front-line efforts focused on improving the health of the citizens of Washington, D.C.

3. Advance workforce development

By nurturing minority youths and youths in at-risk communities, we will promote careers and opportunities in health care early, and create a future health care system led by dedicated, equity-aware professionals. **When we succeed** we will see a higher number of clinicians from underrepresented minorities entering health careers and serving communities in D.C.

Partnering with the Rodham Institute

We invite you to partner with us as we seek sustainable solutions to health disparities in D.C. and throughout the nation.

The goals of the Rodham Institute are long-term. Therefore, sustainability and longevity are vital to our mission. Philanthropy is critical to ensuring the growth and successful implementation of Institute activities and to providing the flexibility to pursue new and innovative projects.

Please consider a tax-deductible gift supporting the Institute as it seeks to achieve health equity in D.C. and the entire nation. Below are examples of the many ways in which your gift will be extremely valuable:

Health Equity Education

- Funding a community-centered telemedicine partnership with health centers serving high-risk populations in Washington, D.C. to make possible patient consultations and education for community-based primary care providers and patients with or at risk for diabetes, heart disease, and renal failure.
- Providing resources for the research into and development of a model curriculum for healthcare providers emphasizing training in health disparities, as well as for pilot programs to test and assess the curriculum.

Community-Based Health Equity Research and Evaluation

- Support small grants through the Rodham Academic-Community Collaboration for Health. These grants will fund innovation or service projects that are collaborations between a GW-based faculty/student AND community member/organization.
- Provide Community-Engaged Research Training and Mentorship Sessions to GW faculty and students, and community-based organizations. The goal of the training is to increase community-based capacity for health research and innovation projects including: grant proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation, research design, IRB processes, leadership skills, and survey administration.

Advance workforce development

- Funding for the Health Education Leadership Program (HELP) will enable the Institute to engage underserved middle and high school students in an experiential learning program focused on health disparities in their communities, as a vehicle to expose them to medical and allied health careers, and to increase their health literacy and self-advocacy. The Institute offers a six-month program for approximately 25 middle and high school students. Up to 10 GW medical and allied health professions students will serve as mentors for the HELP students. Additionally, several community organizations and content experts will assist with the program.

The Rodham Institute is seeking funding to support individual HELP participants and to build capacity to continue the program into future years. Philanthropic support will help underwrite program costs, including student travel, meals for student attendees, and faculty and speakers.

- Launch Rodham Institute Scholars Program for health learners for students committed to studying issues related to health disparities. The scholars will receive financial support to offset the costs of their education at George Washington University. There will be four types of scholars: 1) rising undergraduates, 2) graduate students, 3) medical residents or post-doctoral fellows, 4) current community clinicians interested in leading projects focused on health equity education and community service.

Please consider supporting the Institute as we seek to achieve health equity in D.C. and the entire nation by equipping current and future providers with the necessary training and skills to address health disparities.