



Center for Health Equity, Education, & Research

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Center for Health Equity, Education, & Research Launches at Boston Medical Center

(Boston) – The new Center for Health Equity, Education, & Research (CHEER) launched in May 2017 at Boston Medical Center (BMC).

CHEER will act as the umbrella organization for the ongoing, multi-year CHAMPS (Communities and Hospitals Advancing Maternity Practices) Initiative, as well as for funded projects prevention of opioid misuse in tribal communities; community breastfeeding support; community health assessments, and prevention of diabetes and of domestic violence. CHEER partners include ROSE (Reaching our Sisters Everywhere); the Rocky Mountain Tribal Epidemiology Center, and the Blackfeet tribe in Montana.

“Our scope has expanded dramatically in the last few years,” said Anne Merewood PhD MPH IBCLC, an Associate Professor at the Boston University School of Medicine, and Executive Director of CHEER, which is housed within the Department of Pediatrics at BMC. “We have expanded from breastfeeding and Baby-Friendly™ work, to opioid prevention, work with tribal communities, and many other areas. CHEER will incorporate our CHAMPS and Breastfeeding Center programs, and our work will aim to achieve health equity for all.”

CHAMPS, a major focus of CHEER, has operated for 3 years in the Southern US, and recently received \$1.5 million in new funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (www.wkkf.org). These funds will allow CHAMPS to work with 32 hospitals in Mississippi to provide technical assistance to hospitals navigating Baby-Friendly™ hospital designation. This grant will help hospitals meet the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding, and promote community-based support to increase breastfeeding rates, reduce disparities, and improve maternal child health. Currently, CHAMPS is working in Alaska, Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas, with a joint focus on the South and on hospitals that serve American Indian/Alaska Native populations.

CHEER also partners with tribal nations and with the Rocky Mountain Tribal Epidemiology Center on a range of projects in Montana and Wyoming, including preventive work in diabetes, drug use, and domestic violence, and community health assessments. CHEER has a new website at www.cheerequity.org.

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About Boston Medical Center

Boston Medical Center is a private, not-for-profit, 487-bed, academic medical center that is the primary teaching affiliate of Boston University School of Medicine. It is the largest and busiest provider of trauma and emergency services in New England. Committed to providing high-quality health care to all, the hospital offers a full spectrum of pediatric and adult care services including primary and family medicine and advanced specialty care with an emphasis on community-based care. Boston Medical Center offers specialized care for complex health problems and is a leading research institution, receiving more than \$117 million in sponsored research funding in fiscal year 2016. It is the 13th largest recipient of funding in the U.S. from the National Institutes of Health among independent hospitals. Boston Medical Center and Boston University School of Medicine are partners in the Boston HealthNet – 14 community health centers focused on providing exceptional health care to residents of Boston. For more information, please visit <http://www.bmc.org>.

