

About Dr. Marshall Chin



Dr. Marshall Chin, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Marshall Chin is a Professor of Medicine in the Section of General Internal Medicine at the University of Chicago. Dr. Chin's research focuses on improving the care of vulnerable patients with chronic disease. He has been funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and

Quality (AHRQ), National Institutes of Health, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to improve the quality of diabetes care in community health centers that serve the indigent.

Dr. Chin's current projects include improving diabetes care and outcomes on the South Side of Chicago, and implementing the patient-centered medical home in safety-net clinics. Dr. Chin was a member of the Institute of Medicine Committee on Future Directions for the National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Reports. He is currently a member of the National Quality Forum Measure Applications Partnership Clinician Workgroup and the NQF Healthcare Disparities and Cultural Competency Consensus Standards Steering Committee.

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Department of Medicine, Division of Biological Sciences, and Finding Answers

The Department of Medicine has provided \$700,000 to the *Finding Answers* project to enhance health care disparities research at the University of Chicago. These funds have brought expert visiting scholars to the University, provided travel stipends for trainees and junior faculty to attend national meetings, and supported the Campus and Community Health Disparities Pilot Grants Program. The pilot grants program supported nine innovative projects that created and evaluated health disparities reduction efforts including a disparities-focused medical school course required for all first year students. The highly rated course is led by Monica Vela, M.D. and has drawn national attention.

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

FINDING ANSWERS:
Disparities Research for Change



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Department of Medicine

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A NATIONAL PROGRAM OF THE
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION
WITH DIRECTION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
PROVIDED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Background

Across America, there are significant gaps between the health care that people should receive and the care they actually receive. Although the quality of health care is poor for many Americans, patients from specific racial and ethnic groups continue to experience lower-quality health care compared to White patients. This is unacceptable. We cannot improve the quality of health care in America without also closing these gaps. Health care systems need better tools to address racial and ethnic disparities in care. Identifying and testing specific interventions to improve quality—and then measuring the impact of these interventions—can help determine what works best for specific racial and ethnic groups.



Overview

In 2005, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation launched *Finding Answers: Disparities Research for Change*, a national initiative focused on discovering and evaluating innovative interventions to move the disparities field beyond the documentation of racial and ethnic differences in health care to actually implementing efforts to eliminate them. *Finding Answers* focuses specifically on reducing disparities in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and depression; diseases for which the evidence of racial and ethnic disparities is strong and the recommended standards of care are clear.

The national program office is located at the University of Chicago and is led by Marshall H. Chin, MD, MPH, FACP. *Finding Answers* awards and manages research grants totaling \$8 million to healthcare organizations implementing interventions aimed at reducing disparities. The funds are used to evaluate the interventions and their potential for broad dissemination. With this source of funds, project leadership hopes that health plans, hospitals, and community health centers will be encouraged to focus on racial and ethnic disparities as a priority in their quality improvement agendas.

During the first five years of the program, *Finding Answers* awarded grants to 33 organizations around the country to test a variety of quality improvement strategies and their impact on racial and ethnic disparities. Funded projects target improvement strategies at every level of the health care system from patient education to policies like pay-for-performance incentive programs.

While awaiting evaluation results, the national program office conducted systematic reviews of existing published literature regarding racial and ethnic health care disparities interventions. In October 2007, seven papers written by University of Chicago faculty, staff and students were published as a special health disparities supplement to *Medical Care Research and Review*. The studies reviewed journal articles that outline interventions that have the potential to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the areas of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression and breast cancer. Additionally, the research surrounding two specific approaches—cultural leverage and pay-for-performance incentives—was also examined. A second set of literature reviews focusing on disparities interventions in asthma, cervical cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer and HIV will be published in 2012.



Finding Answers: Disparities Research for Change Team
From left to right—(Back Row): Scott Cook, Ammon Johnson, Kevin McCullough; (Middle Row): Hui Tang, Alicia Casey, Robert Nocon; (Front Row): Amanda Clarke, Marshall Chin, Anna Goddu

A searchable database of all the journal articles included in the systematic reviews is available on the *Finding Answers* website.

In 2010, *Finding Answers* became a technical assistance provider to Aligning Forces for Quality, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's signature effort to lift the overall quality of health care in targeted communities, reduce racial and ethnic disparities and provide models for national reform. With findings from the grants program and systematic reviews, *Finding Answers* is poised to help with tools, resources and best practices to inform their efforts and increase their chances of success.

To learn more about *Finding Answers* visit:
www.SolvingDisparities.org.