

About Dr. Marshall Chin



Dr. Marshall Chin, MD, MPH

Dr. Marshall Chin is an Associate 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. In addition, Dr. Chin is performing the national evaluation of the Bureau of Primary Health Care's Health Disparities Collaboratives. This multifactorial, community-based intervention includes rapid quality improvement, chronic disease management, provider training in behavioral change, and patient empowerment interventions. Dr. Chin also focuses on geriatrics issues, and he has been funded by the National Institute on Aging to assess the treatment preferences of older patients with diabetes. Dr. Chin is a member of the Institute of Medicine Forum on the Science of Health Care Quality Improvement and Implementation. Most recently, Dr. Chin leads the Center for Health and the Social Sciences' new Program in Health Disparities Research and Training along with colleagues in the School of Social Service Administration and Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture.

Contact Information

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

Joe "Skip" Garcia, MD, Lowell T. Coggeshall Professor and Chairman of the Department of Medicine, has been a tremendous supporter of efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in health care and has provided \$700,000 to the *Finding Answers* project to enhance health care disparities research at the University of Chicago. Funds have brought expert visiting scholars to the University, provided travel stipends for trainees and junior faculty to attend national meetings, supported the Campus and Community Health Disparities Pilot Grants Program that has funded six projects designed to create and evaluate innovative health disparities research projects, created a highly rated course on disparities for all first year medical students led by Monica Vela, MD, and supported innovative research partnerships between the University of Chicago and the surrounding community. Additionally, James Madara, MD, Dean of the Biological Sciences Division and the Pritzker School of Medicine, has allocated significant financial support and space for *Finding Answers* and the Center for Health and the Social Sciences.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

FINDING ANSWERS:
Disparities Research for Change



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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Overview

In 2005, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation launched *Finding Answers: Disparities Research for Change*, a national program led by researchers at the University of Chicago, to award and manage research grants totaling \$6 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 pool of funds, project leaders hope 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. Led by Marshall H. Chin, MD, MPH, the team will also seek to inform the field about best practices going on with respect to quality improvement strategies specifically targeted at reducing racial and ethnic disparities. *Finding Answers* is focusing on cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and depression, areas where the evidence of racial and ethnic disparities is strong and the recommended standards of care are clear. To learn more about *Finding Answers* visit: www.solvingdisparities.org.



Finding Answers: Disparities Research for Change Team
Front Row: Mona McCormick, (Program Administrator), Marshall Chin, MD, MPH (Director), Monica Vela, MD (Health Care Disparities Course Director), Hui Tang, MS, MS (Programmer)
Back Row: Amy Walters, MPH (Research Assistant), Joe G.N. Garcia, MD (Chairman, Department of Medicine), Scott Cook, PhD (Deputy Director)

The Program

Finding Answers seeks to improve the quality of health care provided to patients from racial and ethnic backgrounds likely to experience disparities. To meet its goals, *Finding Answers* will:

- **Grant funds to discover and evaluate practical and replicable solutions designed to reduce and eliminate racial and ethnic health care disparities.** Eleven sites with innovative and promising interventions were selected to receive evaluation funding in December 2006. The second round of grantees will be announced in May 2008. To learn more about our grantees visit www.solvingdisparities.org/grantees.
- **Conduct 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 more than 200 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 examined and provides insight for future intervention development.
- **Disseminate results from the research efforts and the systematic reviews to encourage health care systems to address racial and ethnic gaps in care.** In order to make the systematic review findings more accessible to health care researchers and practitioners, *Finding Answers* created an online article database that is searchable by health topic, racial/ethnic population, organizational setting, and intervention strategy and will provide a customized list of interventions based on user interest. The *Finding Answers* Intervention Research (FAIR) Database can be found at: www.solvingdisparities.org/fair_database.

Background

While the existence of racial and ethnic health care disparities has been firmly established, health care systems have not found a practical blend of strategies and interventions that work to measurably reduce these differences. Without better knowledge about practical steps to reduce disparities in care, health care organizations are often unable to address the gaps. Furthermore, recent research tends to indicate that most past efforts to close these gaps have either failed or led to limited improvements. We need answers to move beyond documenting the existence of health care disparities to finding solutions that will eliminate them. *Finding Answers* will seek and evaluate projects or initiatives that are underway in different health care settings.



Lessons learned from projects that attempted but did not successfully eliminate disparities are equally important and the program will share that information too. For example, what incentives encourage doctors, nurses, hospitals and health plans to reduce gaps in care? How can hospitals and clinics redesign systems to improve the quality of care for patients affected by racial and ethnic disparities? What types of partnerships can hospitals and community-based organizations form to reduce differences in care?

For more information about the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and its focus on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country, visit www.rwjf.org.”