The FSU Center on Better Health and Life for Underserved Populations (BHL Center) focuses on developing and testing model higher education and community-based programs to address health disparities in underserved populations.

Why the BHL Center?

- Community-based interventions such as health promotion programs provide a mechanism to deliver evidenced-based knowledge to community populations. Used in conjunction with experimental and clinical approaches, health promotion programs are an important component in the research continuum to ultimately impact human health.

- Mentoring the current generation of higher education students is an important contributor to eliminating health disparities, giving the small percentage of students from underserved backgrounds currently in the health professions (e.g., 9 percent of nurses, 6% of medical doctors and 5% of dentists). Developing a cadre of allied health professionals who are well-prepared and committed to underserved populations will provide the human capital needed to tackle health disparities.

Mission and Goals

The BHL Center will address the issues of health and life development for underserved populations. Specifically, the mission of the BHL Center is to help underserved populations have better health and life through transdisciplinary research and program development. The specific goals of the BHL Center are to:

1. Develop, implement and evaluate community-based programs to address health disparities in underserved populations.
2. Conduct research on health disparities and underserved populations that informs the program development process.
3. Develop, implement and evaluate higher education programs to create a pool of educated and qualified graduates for the health professions who desire to work with underserved populations.
Activities

Listed below are current projects that serve as the base activities of the BHL Center. Future projects will expand on these efforts and also provide new venues for exploration.

1. **Implement and continue to develop model mentoring programs with diverse students.**  
   - Mentoring Multicultural Students for the Health Professions (MEMS)  
   - Strengthening Scientific Preparation of Undergraduate Students in the Human Sciences (SciencPrep)

2. **Continue to develop and evaluate health promotion programs for community-based populations.**  
   - Community Wellness Program (CWP)  
   - Nutrition Education Initiative (NEI)

3. **Conduct research on health disparities and underserved populations.**  
   - Factors Influencing Dietary Quality of Elderly Blacks  
   - Other Relevant Research

For more information, please contact:

Penny A. Ralston, Ph.D., Professor and Director  
Center on Better Health and Life for Underserved Populations  
Institute of Science and Public Affairs  
Florida State University  
C2200 University Center  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2641  
(850) 644-2007  
(850) 644-7360 (fax)