

The UHAND Program is a long-term, collaborative partnership between the University of Houston and The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center that supports and stimulates excellence in educational programming and innovation in research designed to affect health equity among racial/ethnic groups disproportionately affected by cancer disparities.

Our Scholars

New Scholar

In January, we excitedly onboarded new scholar-in-training [Sara Flores](#), a University of Houston junior studying Human Development & Family Studies, as a UHAND Scholar, her mentor is [Dr. Karen Basen-Engquist](#), Professor in the Department of Behavioral Science at MD Anderson. Sara says that her experiences raised as a Latina in rural South Texas have influenced her dedication to health equity. She seeks to advocate for under-represented communities and to address the social determinants correlated with cancer health inequities so that good health may be attainable for all.



Education

This past semester, our UHAND Scholars have attended and participated in discussions with leading researchers during the Komen-UHAND Cancer Disparities Seminar as well as Grand Rounds and Brown Bag Lunches at MD Anderson Cancer Center. Our Komen-UHAND Health Disparities Seminar for the spring semester kicked off in January with [Dr. Hilary Ma](#) who spoke to our scholars about disparities in cancer-related clinical trial participation. In addition, scholars have started their "Elevator Speeches" workshop, a training to prepare scholars to effectively communicate their research to community members in 90-seconds.

Community

UHAND participated in the [2019 Health and Resource Fair](#) organized by [Councilwoman Cisneros](#), the [Health Research Institute](#), and the [United Health Foundation/Project TOUCH](#) on January 25th to discuss our program with community members.

In addition, our post-doctoral fellow, [Dr. Chisom Odoh](#), has been placed with [Susan G. Komen@Houston](#) for her service learning while our undergraduate scholar, [Sara Flores](#), has been placed with [Manos Abiertas a la Comunidad y a las Naciones Inc.](#)



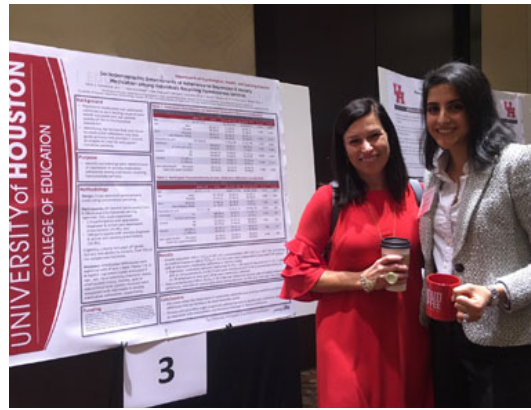
From left to right: Amanda Holmes (Operations Coordinator), Dr. Chisom Odoh, and Ginny Kirklin (Senior Director of Community Programs and Partnerships at Susan G. Komen Houston).

Research

Our Scholars have also been conducting research and communicating their research findings at events such as the [Humana Integrated Health System Sciences Institute Kick-Off Event](#). Furthermore, some of our Scholars have had their abstracts accepted for upcoming national conferences, including the [American Academy of Health Behavior](#) conference, at which [Dr. Hernandez](#), a UHAND Early Stage Investigator, is serving as the Research Review Chair.

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON Humana

*Humana Integrated Health System Sciences Institute
Kick-Off Event*



Sahar Eshtehardi (right) presents her research at the Humana Kick-Off with the support of UHAND mentor Dr. Lorraine Reitzel (left).



Sahar Eshtehardi (right) presents her research at the Humana Kick-Off with the support of UHAND mentor Dr. Lorraine Reitzel (left).



Dr. Lorraine Reitzel, co-PI and mentor of UHAND, supports UHAND scholars Dr. Chisom Odoh, Ashley Taylor, and Sahar Eshtehardi as they present their research at the Humana Kick-Off.

Our Early Stage Investigators

Professional Development

UHAND, in cooperation with the [Health Research Institute \(HRI\)](#), is hosting a professional development seminar series throughout 2019 for our Early Stage Investigators and affiliates focused on "Women in Leadership." A big thank you to [Dr. Vanessa Patrick-Ralhan](#), Lead Faculty for the Bauer Executive Women in Leadership Program at the University of Houston, who kicked off our series with a fantastic and empirically-based talk on Work/Life Balance.

[Dr. Dalnim Cho](#), a UHAND Early Stage Investigator, has recently been promoted to Instructor in the [Department of Health Disparities](#) at MD Anderson.



Dr. Vanessa Patrick-Ralhan presenting on Work/Life balance. Pictured (from left to right): Dalnim Cho, Shahnjayla Connors, Melissa Markofski, Kamisha Escoto, Daphne Hernandez, Vanessa Patrick, Chisom Odoh, Natalia Heredia, Rosenda Murillo, Lorraine Reitzel

Research

[Dr. Rosenda Murillo](#), a UHAND Early Stage Investigator, is currently working to recruit additional participants for her [administrative supplement](#) which focuses on an examination of perception and barriers related to physical activity experienced in childhood and adulthood as a modifiable cancer risk factor in adulthood among Mexican immigrants.

UHAND is soliciting applications for its third pilot project and has benefitted from collaboration with [MD Anderson's Duncan Family Institute](#) to provide a combined \$100,000 [seed funding opportunity!](#) In January, Dr. Lorna McNeill and Dr. Lorraine Reitzel hosted a webinar to address program and application questions. We are excited about the response we received from UH and MDDA investigative teams; the review process will begin soon.

UHAND Principal Investigators, [Dr. Lorraine Reitzel](#) and [Dr. Lorna McNeill](#), have been meeting with each UHAND Early Stage Investigator regularly to review progress and to facilitate their success.

New Members

Program Coordinator

UHAND. She graduated from the University of Houston with a Bachelor in Science. She previously served ten years with Child Protective Services where she gained experience in program management and operational support. She is currently supporting and coordinating logistics for our Health Disparities Seminar Series for the UHAND scholars.



Social and Behavioral Research Scientist

[Kathy Le](#) serves as a Social and Behavioral Research Scientist for the UHAND. She is a recent graduate from Rice University where she received her Bachelor's in Biochemistry and Cell Biology. Through her time at Rice, she worked at Ben Taub hospital to connect underserved patients with social resources in order to improve patient health outcomes post-discharge. As an alumnus of Rice's Community Bridges Fellowship Program, she worked with Air Alliance on an anti-idling ordinance and implementation program to improve air quality in the City of Pasadena. With her analytical background and her passion for health equity, she is working with the UHAND to improve healthcare for minority populations.



Community Education/Outreach Coordinator

[Imarogbe Stokes](#) serves as the Community Education/Outreach Coordinator for UHAND. He has experience in behavioral health, civic engagement, community revitalization, and non-profit

management, previously serving as a Program Support Coordinator at a local non-profit in Third Ward. He's earned a Master's in Public Health from Tennessee State University and a Bachelor's in Biology from Fisk University. He is passionate about public health and community building and believes he has found the perfect place to intertwine the two. By working with the UHAND he looks to eliminate health disparities in minority populations and inform the Houston community and beyond about leading healthy and active lifestyles.



UHAND in the News

- [Powerhouse Team Fights Cancer](#)

Recent UHAND Publications & Presentations

Hernandez, D. C., Daundasekara, S. S., Arlinghaus, K. R., Tobar, N., Reitzel, L. R., Kendzor, D. E., and Businelle, M. S. (in press) Cumulative risk factors associated with food insecurity among adults who experience homelessness. *Health Behavior Research*.

Hernandez, D. C., Daundasekara, S. S., Arlinghaus, K. R., Sharma, A.P., Reitzel, L. R., Kendzor, D. E., & Businelle, M. S. (in press). Fruit and vegetable consumption and emotional distress tolerance as potential links between food insecurity and poor physical and mental among homeless adults. *Preventive Medicine Reports*.

Vasquez, E., Murillo, R., Echeverria, S. (in press). Neighborhood social cohesion and walking limitations in ethnically diverse Latinos in the United States. *Ethnicity & Disease*.

Wrighting, Q., Reitzel, L. R., Chen, T-A.,
Kendzor, D. E., Hernandez, D. C., Obasi, E. M.,
Shree, S. Businelle, M. S. (accepted).
Characterizing Discrimination Experiences by
Race Among Homeless Adults. *American
Journal of Health Behavior*.

Cho, D., Armeli, S., Weinstock, J., & Tennen, H.
(In press). Daily- and person-level
associations between physical activity and
alcohol use among college
students. *Emerging Adulthood*.

Cho, D., & Kim, S. (In press). Interplay between
self-efficacy and perceived availability at home
and in the school neighborhood on adolescents'
fruit and vegetable intake and energy-dense,
low-nutrient food and sugary drink
consumption. *Journal of Nutrition Education and
Behavior*.

Park, C. L., Cho, D., & Moore, P. J. (In press). How
does education lead to healthier behaviors? The
roles of perceived control, health literacy and
social support. *Psychology & Health*.

Steers, M-L. N., Chen, T-A., Neisler, J., Obasi, E.
M., McNeill, L. H., & Reitzel, L. R. (in press). The
buffering effect of social support on the
relationship between discrimination and
psychological distress among church-going
African-American adults. *Behaviour Research
and Therapy*.

Escoto, K. H., Milbury, K., Nguyen, N., Cho, D.,
Roberson, C., Wetter, D., & McNeill, L. H. *Use of
complementary health practices in a church-
based African American cohort. The Journal of
Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. doi:
10.1089/acm.2018.0076

For the full list of UHAND-supported publications
and presentations, please visit
[https://www.uhandpartnership.com/
publications](https://www.uhandpartnership.com/publications)

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A partnership to address cancer disparities*

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Our email address is:
UHANDpartnership@mdanderson.org