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# CORE NEWS

Community Outreach, Research and Engagement

## CORE: THE BIG PICTURE

We are the [Community Outreach, Research and Engagement \(CORE\)](#) team. We support community-academic partnerships, gather community input for academic research, and increase research in community settings that is responsive to the pressing health concerns of residents in Oregon.

CORE connects established academic community outreach programs from Oregon Clinical Translational Research Institute (OCTRI) and Knight Cancer Institute to transform research from a scientist-subject interaction into a collaboration. The success of this work depends on researchers and community members being engaged, connected, equipped with the resources they need, and informed of new opportunities to work together toward the goal of improved human health.

Contact us at [communityresearch@ohsu.edu](mailto:communityresearch@ohsu.edu) for more information.



# Community Partnership Program Virtual Grantee Gathering



The OHSU Knight Cancer Institute held the 2021 [Community Partnership Program](#) (CPP) Virtual Grantee Gathering on May 19, 2021. The event provided an opportunity for grantees to share best practices, gain skills, and network with peers from across the state in an effort to address local public health and cancer issues. Language interpretation was available in Spanish.

The gathering was open to active grantees and project team members, including Tiered, Community Action Model, and COVID-19 Special Call grant cycles. In total, 36 grantees and project team members participated.

One of the highlights was an inspiring presentation on Crook County Health Department's Community Action Model grant, primarily delivered by high school students who are Community Leaders on the project.

**Watch the students' six-minute presentation in [English](#) or in [Spanish](#)** of their findings of HPV vaccination rates, barriers and learnings from surveys of Crook County parents and youth. You may be watching the next generation of public health leaders in Oregon!

## Knight Scholars Program

The summer of 2021 included an opportunity for high school students to participate in cancer research training programs conducted by members of the CORE team. Two virtual sessions (a one-week and a ten-week program), trained a total of 50 high school students across the state, including scholars from Portland, Woodburn, Klamath Falls, Madras, Warm Springs, Culver, and Eastern Oregon (more local details starting on [page 5](#)). The National Cancer Institute and the Kuni Foundation fund this mentored training program for three years. Led by Drs. Jackilen Shannon and Brian Druker, the program engaged a total of **153 scientists, health professionals, and community partners** – including 21 for the one-week program and 143 for the 10-week immersion program (some professionals participated in both programs).

The online format did not detract from the success of these programs. Students were fully engaged in learning. Actively assisting with the trainings were five undergraduate peer mentors participating in Portland State University's [BUILD EXITO](#) program. Mentors included one science teacher, five community research and educational liaisons, and three staff. Scholars will return next summer to continue their training as future scientists, health professionals, and community leaders.

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## Research Advocates: Give and Give

[Knight Scientific Research Advocates](#) are a trained group of cancer survivors and caregivers who work with Knight Cancer Institute investigators to ensure that research at OHSU reflects the needs and interests of the cancer community. The Knight Scientific Advocate program is doing very well this fiscal year with five placements since July 1, 2021. **In FY20 we had 18 placements**, despite being in the middle of the pandemic response.

In July the Advocates program said goodbye to two long-standing Advocates who recently retired – Dottie Waddell and Marilyn McWilliams. Combined Dottie and Marilyn supported 77 research projects since the inception of the Scientific Advocates program. This is truly a testimony of their commitment to this program.

*"My advice is for researchers to keep patients in mind when writing the **Impact Section** of grants including clear and defined acronyms," says McWilliams. "Whenever possible, researchers should streamline the clinical trial qualification process in order to make the content understandable for a person without the same knowledge, or limited time, and money."*

If you or someone you know would like to be an Advocate or to learn how Advocates could assist your research, please contact [knightadvocates@ohsu.edu](mailto:knightadvocates@ohsu.edu) for more information and to get involved.



Marilyn McWilliams,  
Knight Scientific Research Advocate



## Environmental Health Research Project

Kim Brown has been working closely with the CORE Liaison Team and Diana Rohlman, Ph.D., with the [Pacific Northwest Center for Translational Environmental Health Research](#) to understand and support community priorities around environmental health (air & water quality, wildfire smoke, pesticides, toxic waste, etc.). In August, Kim and Diana conducted two [Community Engagement Studios](#) on Zoom with community-based environmental health groups to learn more about the types of resources and research expertise these stakeholders want to understand and mitigate exposures and to move their work forward. Together they will conduct more engagement sessions over the next nine months with different types of environmental health stakeholders (e.g., public health, healthcare, regulatory, industry) to guide their strategies. This work is supported by a five-year National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) grant that funds “The Center”.

In addition, CORE and OCTRI’s Evaluation Core have a sub-award to develop a close partnership with OSU regarding this environmental health research project. The CORE team members who will have key roles on this project are:

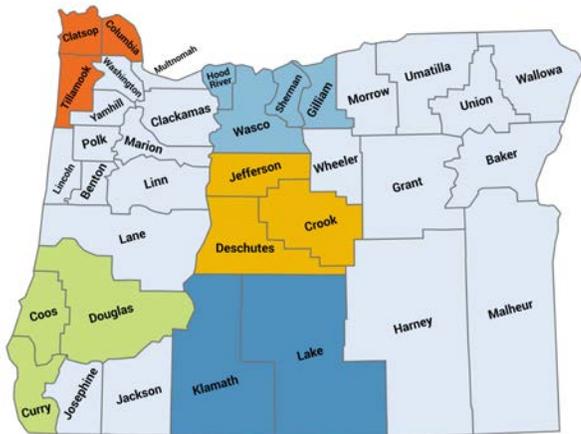
- Jackie Shannon is the deputy director of the OSU Community Engagement CORE for the Environmental Health Research Project
- Kim Brown is the Program Manager and co-leader the Stakeholder Advisory Board
- Laura Campbell oversees the liaison team who will conduct interviews to learn more about this topic and the partners in their regions

# Community Research Liaisons

A [Community Research Liaison](#) is a key player in the research process who helps bridge the gap between OHSU and the geographical area of interest.

The liaison's key roles include:

- Assisting with and helping enhance research projects
- Ensuring that the Project Assistance Program is available to their region
- Supporting their regional Community Research Coalition



## North Coast

[Steven Blakesley](#) partnered with three organizations in Clatsop County to gather input from the Hispanic community regarding their thoughts about money coming to the community from the American Recovery Act for COVID relief and how it should be prioritized and spent. The organizations were Consejo Hispano, Public Health, and Wellville. The Hispanic community faces disproportionate health and economic impacts from the pandemic, and the partnering organizations wanted to help the county government reach out to the Hispanic community for feedback.

To get as much feedback as possible, with only a ten-day window in which to work, the partners went to two soccer games where the Latino families regularly congregated. The partners created an activity that included 10 jars, each labeled in Spanish with a different spending priority, e.g. housing assistance, broadband, access to health care, etc. Consejo Hispano volunteers distributed \$100 dollars to over 50 participants. The participants were then asked to use their play money to vote on their priorities. **The top two votes were for Assistance with Childcare and then good Paying Jobs.** The findings were then submitted to the Board of County Commissioners and county government management.

## CENTRAL OREGON

### *Knight Scholars Program*

The [Knight Scholars Program](#) was entirely online this summer and went off beautifully after the team worked tirelessly to create and execute meaningful online experiences for both the Introduction and [Immersion Programs](#). The students worked hard, learned amazing things, and went away with memorable experiences. In [Central Oregon](#), four students completed the ten-week Immersion Program; two from Culver High School and two from Madras High School. Here titles of the community research projects the four students chose to present: Neuroblastoma in Newborns and Children, HPV and Cervical Cancer, Access to Healthcare in Native American Communities, and Rural vs Urban Women & Cancer. Very proud of all the students and wishing two of them good luck as they head off to college this fall! Looking forward to seeing them all again next summer!

### ***Mothers and Babies***

[Mothers and Babies](#) is an evidence-based program that has been highlighted as one of the most effective interventions for the prevention of postpartum depression and has a proven record of success. It is guided by cognitive behavioral therapy and attachment theory and is being scaled throughout the U.S. and internationally. Before COVID-19 Central Oregon hosted a training (led by our own Laura Campbell!) for 58 facilitators who would then take the Mothers and Babies program and host it in their own communities. This summer a grant was secured through the Oregon Community Foundation creating the opportunity to host Mothers and Babies trainings for the first time in Central Oregon since the pandemic began. **The groups will be online/virtual and support up to 40 mothers in the tri-county area.** These groups will be especially important to help support mothers in Central Oregon who may be experiencing postpartum depression during the very isolating COVID-19 pandemic. We are excited to potentially touch the lives of so many mothers in Central Oregon during this extremely challenging.



### *Knight Scholars Shine in Southern Oregon*

High school students from Klamath Falls participated in the Knight Scholars Program. Two of the students presented on mental health issues in cancer patients. The students reflected that “The patient’s mental health is not something looked at right away but should be”. The students found one out of three cancer patients are diagnosed with mental illness during or after their treatment. In addition, the students learned that doctors warn patients about the physical side effects, but not always about the mental health side effects. Statistically, they found that “cancer patients are twice as likely to die from suicide”. In conclusion, these Scholars suggested that “the next steps for the future” is to encourage oncologists or the cancer care team to address mental health issues as a side effect of the disease with patients “because everyone wants to provide the best care and the best survival”.



### **Wildfire Impact on Maternal Child Health in Klamath County**

We are planning a new project with Klamath County Public Health and the Pacific Northwest Center for Translational Environmental Health Research. This project is aimed at developing a study on the impact of wildfire smoke on maternal-child health. The Klamath County Public Health’s Infant Mortality Work Group has identified infant health as a priority, given that the infant mortality rate is consistently higher than the state of Oregon, with a rate of 10.1 deaths per 1,000 live births in Klamath, compared to 5.4 in Oregon (data as of 2017).

At the present, we are forming a community member and expert committee to formulate this research study. The committee will review and discuss:

- Current efforts and challenges
- Ideas around study design
- Data collection tools
- Associated data sets
- Data analysis
- Potential interventions

The committee will meet monthly through March 2022 then launch the pilot project thereafter.

### **Food Deserts in Tribal Health Patient Populations**

[Lynda Crocker-Daniels](#) works with Tribal Health on a variety of health improvement issues. Earlier this year, a new partnership was formed with a local farmer, Sweet Union Farm owned and operated by Katie Swanson, and Tribal Health. Aislyn Ukpik, the Diabetes Management Program Coordinator, leads this project for Tribal Health. A local chef, the owner of Terra Veg, Liz Arraj, provides recipes for the project’s weekly newsletters based on the week’s produce selection. A local RD from Sky Lakes has also created YouTube cooking videos the participants can view. Lynda continues to assist with vegetable storage tips, as well as overseeing the newsletter content for relevance and applicability to the target population.

Sweet Union Farm provides a food basket of fresh seasonal, locally grown vegetables to federally enrolled Tribal Members who have been referred to the Veggie RX program by the Medical Provider, Registered Dietitian, or YFGC Prevention Counselor. Sweet Union Farm delivers to the Klamath Tribal Administration offices. These boxes are either picked up or delivered to tribal members enrolled in the Veggie RX program. 40 families are participating in this CSA/Veggie RX project. The partners will conduct a project evaluation as this project comes to an end, but feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants not only using and enjoying the produce, but some have also developed their own recipes!

# Knight Tobacco Cessation Treatment Program



After three years of development and several setbacks, the Cancer Center Cessation Initiative (C3I), funded in part by the NCI Cancer Moonshot Initiative, has gone live in 17 OHSU and CHO oncology clinics. Deb Howes and Amy Palma completed training through MD Anderson to become Tobacco Treatment Specialists (TTS) and have been meeting with Knight oncology staff in several clinics throughout the OHSU community to introduce the Knight Tobacco Cessation Treatment Program. The short-term goal is to **address tobacco cessation with cancer patients**. The long-term goal is to **develop a sustainable tobacco cessation treatment program within the Knight Cancer Institute**. Stated simply, we want to make sure every cancer patient using tobacco products and being treated at the Knight is offered counseling and resources to quit.

This program has included many initiatives:

- Implement program in Epic
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures
- Create patient engagement and marketing materials
- Educate clinic staff

Since the program started at the end of June 2021, over 130 cancer patients have been identified and referred to the program. Amy and Deb make three phone attempts to contact patients to enroll them in the Program. **In the last three months, we have enrolled over 35 patients in the Program.**

In addition, Amy and Deb provide:

- Telephone counseling sessions
- Connection to resources
- E-referral to the Oregon Quit Line
- Connect patients with the Knight Ambulatory Oncology Pharmacy for prescriptions to aid with tobacco cessation

## Learn more about the Knight Tobacco Cessation

**Treatment** at this [website](#) and the email address is ([quittobacco@ohsu.edu](mailto:quittobacco@ohsu.edu)). Stay tuned for updates as this project continues to take shape!

## HOP's Participant Milestone

The **Healthy Oregon Project (HOP)** celebrates **20,000 participants!** The research study led by Drs. Paul Spellman and Jackie Shannon combines genetic cancer screening with lifestyle and environment surveys at no cost to Oregonians.

At the launch of the study, HOP Kits for genetic risk screening were distributed through onsite vending machines at healthcare centers but soon shifted to mailed at home kits due to COVID restrictions. With this shift HOP has sent kits to every region in the state and has even received an increase in Frontier and Rural County participants. The accessibility of the mailed kits has allowed for social media and word-of-mouth recruitment efforts to remain a complimentary method for reaching Oregonians across every demographic.

HOP will continue with mailed at home kits for the immediate future but look forward to reinstating vending machine HOP Spot locations when appropriate. The expansion with HOP Spanish will offer the opportunity for more Spanish speakers to enroll in cancer early detection research in as early as 2022.

**Explore more about the study at [www.HealthyOregonProject.com](http://www.HealthyOregonProject.com).**