

# COMMUNITY BASED PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL

## Executive Summary

The University of Minnesota's Program in Health Disparities Research's Community-Academic Advisory Board (PHDR) worked alongside the Somali, Latino, and Hmong Partnership for Health and Wellness (SoLaHmo – a program of West Side Community Health Services, Inc.) to create the PHDR/ SoLaHmo Partnership Protocol in 2016. The purpose of this protocol is to promote effective and efficient Community-based Participatory Action Research partnership relationships between academic researchers and community researchers/organizations/members.

Before community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) was introduced to the research community, research studies- from topic choice to dissemination- were driven by the academic researcher's professional interests. Often times the communities and community partners involved had little to no say in the process. CBPAR is a way of doing research in which community members and academic researchers are equal partners in all stages of the research process. CBPAR has many benefits for both communities and for research itself, including: increasing community trust in research, increasing the likelihood that research results will lead to effective programs and products that communities want and can use, increasing validity of research results, increasing skills, connections and opportunities for growth for all partners; and creating connections between community organizations, clinics, and researchers that support partnerships and that share effective and relevant growth for all partners.

PHDR and SoLaHmo both understand that successful CBPAR projects depend on strong partnerships. Partnerships across organizations that have differences in goals, priorities, and access to resources are not always easy to build. The purpose of this Community Based Participatory Action Research Partnership Protocol is to support partnerships to be ready and able to do CBPAR effectively. The content in this document is the result of varied perspectives from both community members and academicians. This document may be used for a number of purposes including; sharing a set of expectations for how to collaborate that potential community and university partners can discuss early on as the partnership is taking shape, establishing a base for training individuals new to CBPAR, and setting standards that may reduce disagreements or resolve conflicts between partners. This protocol can also be adapted to non-research focused partnerships between institutions, practitioners, and community.

The protocol includes three sections. The **first section** outlines the eight key principles of CBPAR that define how partners work together:

1. Recognize that members of a community may have a shared identity that requires ethical protections in research
2. Answer research questions that are important to the community, and that create solutions built on existing community strengths and resources
3. Create pathways for the collaborative, equitable involvement of all partners in all phases of the research
4. Create a balance between gaining knowledge and creating action for the benefit of all partners
5. Empower partners to actively learn from each other and to pay attention to social inequalities
6. Address how both social and environmental contexts affect health



7. Share findings and knowledge gained with all partners and with communities, in a way that can be used to improve community health
8. Involve long-term commitment by all partners

The **second section** includes a detailed description of each CBPAR principle, activities, and ethical considerations that SoLaHmo has identified through multiple research partnerships. The ethical considerations are linked to the lifespan of a CBPAR research project. Project lifespan stages are:

Project Stage 1: Partnership Development

- Partnership Exploration Phase
- Collaborative Planning Phase

Project Stage 2: Implementation

Early Implementation Phase

- Recruitment/Data Collection Phase
- Data Analysis Phase

Project Stage 3: Dissemination/Next Steps

- Sharing Research Findings Phase (Community/Academic)
- Planning Next Steps or End of Project Phase

The **third section** is a checklist for key steps in partnership building across the lifespan of a research project. This checklist can be used early in partnership development to make sure that all partners are on the same page in terms of expectations for how to collaborate at each step of the project. It can serve as a planning tool as the project moves forward.

