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- ▶ Priscilla A. Barnes, M.P.H., C.H.E.S.
- ▶ Annjeanette Elise Belcourt-Dittloff, Ph.D.
- ▶ Thema S. Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.
- ▶ Marah A. Curtis, Ph.D.
- ▶ Robert L. Dunigan, Ph.D.
- ▶ Dawnovise N. Fowler, Ph.D., A.M.
- ▶ Lisa C. Gary, Ph.D.
- ▶ **Melody S. Goodman, Ph.D.**
- ▶ Wrenetha A. Julion, D.N.Sc., M.P.H.
- ▶ Naa Oyo Kwate, Ph.D.
- ▶ Tamara G.J. Leech, Ph.D.
- ▶ Arlesia L. Mathis, Ph.D.
- ▶ Anna Adachi-Mejia, Ph.D.
- ▶ Diana R. Romero, Ph.D.
- ▶ Sunny H. Shin, Ph.D.
- ▶ Shakira Franco Suglia, Ph.D.
- ▶ Daphne C. Watkins, Ph.D.
- ▶ Eunice Wong, Ph.D.

### Melody S. Goodman, Ph.D.

Stony Brook University Medical Center - Graduate Program in Public Health

Junior Investigator, Public Health

Project Title: *Stony Brook University Medical Center - Graduate Program in Public Health Utilizing National Data to Obtain Local Health Disparity Estimates*

*"The New Connections award has been a great first step in my professional development. It was the first grant I received after graduate school and has allowed me to begin my career as an independent researcher. The protected time and grant funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has validated my research interest, allowing me to work on research that I am truly passionate about. The coaching and training clinics sponsored by the Foundation have also helped to better prepare me for my role as an independent junior researcher at a large research university."*



#### Project Description

Health disparities associated with race have been consistently observed in mortality, morbidity and other indicators of health. Despite heightened national attention of health disparities, progress in reducing these disparities has been slow. Part of the problem may be that the agenda to reduce disparities in health have been set on the national and state levels and are based on national and state level data. This is potentially problematic because these levels are far removed from the individual level where health outcomes are realized.

Goodman is developing statistical models that allow for the extrapolation of national data to obtain county, town, zip-code and other smaller geographic area estimates of the prevalence of five chronic diseases asthma, hypertension, diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease by race. She intends to build a multi-level model to estimate local health disparities using social, demographic and behavioral risk factors contributing to the prevalence of the disease and modeled on three levels: state, county and individual. She is developing separate models for each disease outcome.

Readily available data on the differences in health status, exposure to risk factors and access to care between different populations on the local level is necessary for local governments and health departments to determine priority areas and pertinent interventions. The lack of data limits the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of public health policy, local public health programs and public health interventions.

The development of the proposed models will provide local public health agencies with estimates of prevalence for chronic disease and the differences in prevalence by race, despite a lack of data collection at this level. These models provide a unique and affordable way for local public health agencies to obtain data that are not readily available.

#### Biography

Melody S. Goodman, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of preventive medicine in the division of evaluative sciences at the graduate program in public health at Stony Brook University Medical Center. In June 2006, at the age of 27, she received her Ph.D. from the department of biostatistics at Harvard University with minors in theoretical statistics and the social determinants of health disparities.

She was a National Institutes of Health minority predoctoral fellow. Her doctoral work focused on statistical methods for community-based cancer interventions and racial/ethnic health disparities research.

Goodman has also assumed the role of director for the Center for Public Health & Health Policy Research. This center was developed through a memorandum of understanding between the graduate program in public health at Stony Brook University and the Suffolk County Department of Health Services with the mission to improve health and health care for the residents of Suffolk County, Long Island. Goodman is a promising young researcher and has received a New York State Assembly citation for her commitment to academic excellence.

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