

Contact: eqbmed@skdknick.com

Yale School of Medicine, Morehouse School of Medicine, the Research Centers in Minority Institutions Coordinating Center at Morehouse School of Medicine, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center Launch *Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development*, an Initiative to Increase Diversity in Clinical Trials

Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development is a first-of-its-kind, community-based collaboration supported by grant funding from PhRMA

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, **Yale School of Medicine, Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM), the Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Coordinating Center at Morehouse School of Medicine, and Vanderbilt University Medical Center** launched *Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development*, an innovative collaboration to increase diversity in clinical trials and address systemic barriers to participation by communities of color. *Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development* will help underrepresented patients be more involved in the research and development of potential life-saving medical treatments. Funded by a grant from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), *Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development* will work over the next 18 months to bring together diverse communities, patients, providers, health partners, community organizations and academic institutions, along with individual clinical trial sponsors, to pilot a network of sustainable, connected, community-based trial sites.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significantly more awareness to the lack of diversity in clinical trials, the work to make meaningful change is not new. Patient and community organizations, academia, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the biopharmaceutical industry have been working with underrepresented communities to break down barriers to participation in clinical trials for decades. *Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development* is different because it will bring pharmaceutical companies, academic institutions and providers together with community groups and leaders to help ameliorate health disparities with a specific focus on mentorship for staff at clinical trial sites, sustainable support for local community-based sites and partnership with communities of color that have historically been underrepresented.

The goal is to build a sustainable, community-based infrastructure that tears down the systemic barriers underserved patients often face when it comes to clinical trials, including a lack of outreach, a lack of available sites in underserved communities, and patient mistrust. At every stage of this work, the patient community will be the most important partner.

Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development's community-based trial sites will:

- Partner with trusted messengers and community leaders to raise education, awareness, and support for clinical trial participation.
- Provide the resources and technical support for local sites to be successful, sustainable, and thrive.
- Build training opportunities and mentorship for investigators and staff.

“Addressing health inequities—including increasing the participation of diverse populations in clinical trials—is a priority of Yale School of Medicine,” said **Nancy J. Brown, MD, Jean and David W. Wallace Dean of Medicine and C.N.H. Long Professor of Internal Medicine at Yale School of Medicine**. “We

have made inroads in this area over the past decade and are eager to partner with our colleagues to continue to find ways to have an impact on the health of communities of color.”

“Morehouse School of Medicine and the RCMI Consortium are committed to increasing diversity and inclusion in clinical trials as we lead the creation and advancement of global health equity,” said **Elizabeth Ofili, MD, MPH, FACC, Professor of Medicine and Principal Investigator of the RCMI Coordinating Center at Morehouse School of Medicine** “While this level of comprehensive collaboration is a first-of-its-kind initiative, it’s important to recognize that MSM and others have been working tirelessly on this issue for decades. We are honored and excited to be partnering with the community systems, providers, and the patients they serve, who are and always have been committed to inclusive clinical trials and medicine development. Their questions, feedback, insight, participation, and leadership will be crucial to creating and maintaining a sustainable proof of concept.”

“To ensure that clinical trial results are relevant and applicable across diverse populations, we must find new ways to ethically and effectively improve participation by people from diverse backgrounds,” said **Peter Embí, MD, MS, FACP, FACMI, FIAHSI, Professor of Biomedical Informatics and Medicine, Chair of Biomedical Informatics, and Senior Vice-President for Research and Innovation at Vanderbilt University Medical Center**. “At VUMC, we are focused on advancing personalized health care for everyone and enabling equitable participation in clinical trials is essential to that mission. As a physician, researcher, and proud member of the Hispanic-American community, I recognize that we face many challenges in overcoming disparities in clinical trials and health care, and I am excited to partner with my colleagues on this critically important initiative. Through our collaboration, I’m confident that we will learn and implement new ways to overcome systemic barriers and improve the pace of ethical research for those who have been historically under-represented.”

“Our goal is to make sure all people, regardless of geography, socioeconomics, race, ethnicity, or gender identity, who want to participate in a clinical trial have the opportunity to do so,” said **Ramona Sequeira, President of Takeda’s Global Portfolio Division and Chair of the PhRMA Board of Directors**. “*Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development* will help make this goal a reality by meaningfully addressing local, long-standing barriers to clinical trial participation. Through this initiative, we’ll continue to work to earn the trust of vulnerable and underserved communities through a community centered network of locally based trial sites. By enabling clinical-trial sponsors to reach more diverse and representative populations, we aspire to positively impact clinical trial diversity and health equity.”

“This new initiative builds on the industry’s continued effort and commitment to working toward more equitable access to clinical trials, so they better reflect the patients intended to be served,” said **Stephen J. Ubl, President and Chief Executive Officer of PhRMA**. “Supported by a grant from PhRMA, the initiative will be a sustained effort in partnership with community leaders to provide pilot sites with the resources they need to break down barriers and build successful, trusted clinical trial sites.”

Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development’s initial pilot sites will begin opening this summer in the Southeast and Southwest and will serve as an anchor from which further engagement and work in communities will grow, including mentorship and training opportunities for a diverse clinical trial workforce, as well as ongoing engagement and dialogue with the patient community on the benefits of being a part of clinical trials.

Stay updated on our progress and learn more about *Equitable Breakthroughs in Medicine Development* at PhRMA.org/Equity.

###

About Yale School of Medicine

Yale School of Medicine (YSM) is one of the world's leading centers for biomedical research, advanced clinical care, and medical education. YSM's research ranges from basic science research on the molecular mechanisms and underpinnings of diseases to translational and clinical studies aimed at improving diagnosis and treatment. More than 1,500 Yale physicians provide care to patients from across the region and around the world through Yale Medicine, the school's clinical practice. With its emphasis on critical thinking and independent student research, YSM has produced leaders in every field of academic medicine. For more information visit www.medicine.yale.edu.

About Morehouse School of Medicine

Founded in 1975, Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) is among the nation's leading educators of primary care physicians, biomedical scientists, and public health professionals. An independent and private historically-Black medical school, MSM was recognized by the Annals of Internal Medicine as the nation's number one medical school in fulfilling a social mission—the creation and advancement of health equity. MSM faculty and alumni are noted for excellence in teaching, research, and public policy, as well as exceptional patient care. MSM is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award doctoral and master's degrees. To learn more about programs and donate today, please visit www.msm.edu or call 404-752-1500.

About Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) is one of the nation's leading academic medical centers and is one of the most comprehensive research, teaching and patient care health systems in the Southeast. The most heavily utilized quaternary, referral healthcare facility in the Mid-South, VUMC sees over 2.4 million patient visits per year in over 160 locations, discharging 67,000 inpatients and performing 70,000 surgical operations. The Medical Center is the largest non-governmental employer of Middle Tennessee citizens, with nearly 29,000 staff, including nearly 3,000 physicians, advanced practice nurses and scientists appointed to the Vanderbilt University faculty. For more information and the latest news follow VUMC on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and in the VUMC Reporter.

About PhRMA

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) represents the country's leading innovative biopharmaceutical research companies, which are devoted to discovering and developing medicines that enable patients to live longer, healthier and more productive lives. Learn more about PhRMA's Equity Initiative at PhRMA.org/Equity, where we seek to take a leadership role in the places we can drive real change: putting a health equity lens on the policies we touch, leaning in on an industry-wide initiative to enhance clinical trial diversity and opening new pathways between underrepresented communities and the hiring managers at our member companies.