**ENVIRONMENT**

*School of Medicine*. The mission of the UCR School of Medicine (SOM) is to expand and diversify the physician workforce for Inland Southern California and to be a catalyst for training health care leaders with an orientation to prevention, wellness and cost effectiveness, as well as an understanding of the needs of an increasingly diverse society and the impact of health care disparities. As a community-based medical school, our students have extensive clinical training experiences in a variety of healthcare settings, including the Kaiser Permanente system and Riverside University Health System, comprised of the county public hospital and 10 Federally Qualified Health Centers serving Medicaid-covered and indigent patients. The medical school’s research enterprise focuses on population health, as well as the biomedical sciences and translational/clinical research.

*Center for Healthy Communities.* In 2013, the medical school leadership made a strategic decision to begin building community-based and population health research and considers this type of research central to the SOM mission. In April 2014, Greer Sullivan, MD, MSPH, was recruited to develop and lead the CHC. Dr. Sullivan has developed and/or directed other research centers previously and has a history of leading community-based research including projects funded by PCORI, the VA, NCATS, and NIMH. CHC leadership has made significant progress in building bridges with community groups, reaching out to UCR faculty outside of the SOM (especially those in health-related disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, economics, psychology, education, and political science), hiring staff and faculty, and re-establishing collaborations with other nearby research institutions such as UCLA and RAND. The CHC mission statement reads, “*The CHC will lead and facilitate innovative research to improve the health of the culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse communities in the region, especially those that are medically under-resourced. Our goal is to build collaborations between researchers and communities through education and research that addresses our communities’ needs and promotes health equity.”*

The CHC includes faculty members with backgrounds in anthropology, epidemiology, psychology, sociology, pediatrics, and , psychiatry who are members of the Department of Social Medicine and Population Health, chaired by Dr. Sullivan. All faculty members have experience in community-based research. The faculty are also strong in qualitative and quantitative methods as well as broad in their specialization areas which range from health disparities, social determinants of health, metal health, children’s health, substance abuse, HIV/STI, to cancer. The faculty have worked with a variety of community groups, including Latinos, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, African Americans, military veterans, and rural residents.

The CHC provides support for community based research by providing an infrastructure to assist with developing grant applications, including assistance with budgeting, technical writing, literature reviews, preparing letters of support, and drafting human subjects sections. All IRB applications are supported by the CHC regulatory specialist.