



**Center for Community
Health Education,
Research and Service**

716 Columbus Avenue
Suite 398
Boston, MA 02120
tel 617/373-4591
fax 617/373-8797

PARTNERS

Boston Medical Center
Boston Public Health Commission
Boston University
Bowdoin Street Health Center
Brookside Community Health Center
Codman Square Health Center
Dimock Community
Health Center
Dorchester House
Multi-Service Center
East Boston Neighborhood
Health Center
Geiger-Gibson Community
Health Center
Greater Roslindale Medical
& Dental Center
Harvard Street Neighborhood
Health Center
Mattapan Community
Health Center
Neponset Health Center
Northeastern University
South Boston Community
Health Center
Southern Jamaica Plain
Health Center
Uphams Corner Health Center
Whittier Street Health Center



Community Partnerships
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Community Health Activist Appointed to Board of National Institutes of Health (NIH)

October 24, 2007, Boston, MA – The Office of the Director of the National Institutes of Health announced the appointment of Elmer Freeman, Executive Director of the Center for Community Health Education Research and Service at Northeastern University along with five others as new members to the Director's Council of Public Representatives, the advisory committee to the NIH Director on issues important to the public.

"These new members bring a wealth of knowledge and professional experience in the areas of rural and community health, patient advocacy, health policy, nursing education, and communications, along with a strong commitment to enhancing public participation in the biomedical and behavioral research enterprise," said NIH Director Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D. "I am delighted to welcome them to the council and greatly value the significant advice I receive from COPR." New COPR members will participate as confirmed members at the next COPR meeting, scheduled for late October at which time they will be discussing such topics as Researcher-Community Engagement, NIH Pioneer and Innovator Awards, NIH Peer Review Process, and Director's Council Member reports. Dr. Zerhouni will chair the meeting.

Freeman, a longtime community health activist in the community health center movement since 1972, first became focused on the Boston research enterprise when, as he says, "I read the front page story, above the fold, in The Boston Globe on February 18, 2002, in which they reported that Boston had become the number one city in the country for capture of NIH research dollars," he recalls, "and I thought immediately how little difference that made in the lives of the patients of community health centers, the residents of public housing in the communities they served, and the health status of underserved racial and ethnic minority populations of the city." Those most impacted by disparities in health and health care, leading to decreased life expectancy, increased infant mortality, high morbidity from all chronic diseases, and unnecessary excess deaths.

Under his leadership CCHERS has focused on development of a community derived and directed research agenda in partnerships with researchers from universities, academic medical centers, industry and government to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in health in Boston and Massachusetts. Freeman refers us to a report he advised on, that was released this summer by The Boston Foundation and New England Healthcare Institute, *The Boston Paradox: Lots of Health Care, Not Enough Health*, for grounding in the issues. It lists 30 critical indicators of health, health care and competitiveness in Greater Boston and shows how the system is failing us as a city, state and nation.

A recognized expert in community-based participatory research, Freeman says "I am looking forward to my tenure on the Council where I will play a significant role in enhancing the public's understanding of NIH and its participation in NIH activities. For me, this ranges from increasing public participation on advisory boards of the 27 institutes and centers that comprise NIH; to creating a role for the public in the "peer" review process; and holding NIH accountable to the public for its mission of improving the Nation's health."