Collaborative research to advance healthy communities.
The Prevention Sciences Research Center (PSRC) houses programs that serve a common mission to expand Morgan State University’s involvement in research pertinent to drug use and prevention. One vigorous and visible example that illustrates Morgan State’s involvement in community research is CEASE: Communities Engaged in Advocating for a Smoke Free Environment. Morgan’s PSRC research scientists, faculty fellows, and community members (or in partnership with community organizations) conduct innovative and interrelated research that advances knowledge, solidifies infrastructure, and augments resources for research within the community.

Working together to build stronger, more equitable communities.
Since 2001, the Prevention Sciences Research Center (PSRC) has been a productive and sustainable research infrastructure serving Morgan State University (MSU) and the community. The Center’s mission is to help create and sustain community programs while educating and training students from under-represented cultures and backgrounds.

PSRC is housed under MSU’s School of Community Health and Policy and collaborates with other schools and programs across campus. Partnerships on and off campus are core to PSRC’s mission, and PSRC has developed relationships with local community groups as well as national and international institutions. As a result, many high-profile community oriented projects have been successfully implemented. One example is CEASE (Communities Engaged and Advocating for a Smoke-free Environment), a community based smoking cessation program with impressive outcomes.

PSRC has also collaborated with MSU’s ASCEND Center for Biomedical Research and initiated a Small Grant Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) program. Ten small projects were funded, and community and academic researchers engaged in collaborative research. PSRC has also developed relationships with research centers at Johns Hopkins University, including the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR) and Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC). PSRC has also established a strategic partnership with the International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research (ICPHR) and has engaged in important international projects.

PSRC has an exciting future, and I am honored to be part of it.

Dr. Payam Sheikhattari

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members. — Coretta Scott King

Morgan State University is proud to have created a well-researched and accessible support system for those who want to get started living a healthier life. We are working to improve the health of Baltimore’s communities.
Researchers at Morgan State University’s Prevention Sciences Research Center (PSRC) have been studying the context within which habitual smoking occurs, and as a result, have succeeded in addressing some of the more persistent barriers that smokers face on the road to cessation. Their success is fostered by unique partnerships that involve community stakeholders who have many skills and one mission — to improve the health of less advantaged communities.

PSRC focused on smoking cessation as one viable — and achievable — intervention that was likely to have a positive impact on the health of local communities. They partnered with community members to create a sustainable prevention and cessation program model known as CEASE: Communities Engaged and Advocating for a Smoke-Free Environment. CEASE partnerships were formed based on the principles of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR). Through CBPR, university and community researchers take advantage of the existing strengths and resources within a community and work together to enhance local capacity to address local problems. For PSRC-sponsored programs, community involvement and academic research are equally critical in achieving desired outcomes.
Lighting up a cigarette is part of the fabric of many peoples’ lives. Millions rely on smoking for comfort during stressful times or to enhance social activities. Despite health warnings, tobacco use is still pervasive and disproportionately affects minority and low-income populations. Economic status and cultural influences make these populations especially vulnerable to external factors, such as the targeted marketing from tobacco companies. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, tobacco use is a major contributor to the three leading causes of death among African Americans — heart disease, cancer, and stroke.

Impact of lifestyle: 23% of Baltimore City residents live below the poverty line. This 23% includes a diverse population with significant needs: 32% of all children, 28% of all African Americans, 22% of all Hispanics or Latinos. Jobs and education are fundamental issues. Baltimore has an 11.8% unemployment rate, and 34% are without a high school education or GED.

Income and smoking correlates: 31.2% of Baltimore City residents with income levels under $15,000 self-report as smokers, while only 5.4% of residents with an income over $75,000 identify as smokers.


CEASE Initiative
Fighting Nicotine Addiction in Baltimore Communities

Income and smoking correlate: 31.2% of Baltimore City residents with income levels under $15,000 self-report as smokers, while only 5.4% of residents with an income over $75,000 identify as smokers.


A Community Action Board (CAB) oversees planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of CEASE projects, and CAB subcommittees work on needs assessments, asset mapping, outreach, and information materials. From its inception in 2008, CEASE and the Community Action Board have worked toward the following goals:

- Provide programs for cessation
- Provide programs for prevention
- Increase community understanding of tobacco use
- Provide relevant, useful, and powerful information to the community
- Strengthen policies related to smoke-free environments
- Partner with organizations for sustainability
- Create and disseminate a replicable model for smoking cessation

CEASE is a community-driven smoking cessation initiative that evolved through a collaboration between Morgan State University and residents of the Southwest Baltimore communities with a mission to educate, encourage, and support individuals to choose a smoke-free lifestyle. CEASE especially focuses on underserved and low-income populations that lack affordable, consistent, or accessible community health-related resources.

The Community Walk Through Theater on Monroe Street is the School of Community Health and Policy’s engagement project, in collaboration with Ground Root, Inc., that uses a high powered projector to screen movies, messages, and provides a safe place for community activities.

The Community Walk Through Theater on Monroe Street is the School of Community Health and Policy’s engagement project, in collaboration with Ground Root, Inc., that uses a high powered projector to screen movies, messages, and provides a safe place for community activities.
CEASE Initiative: Fighting Nicotine Addiction in Baltimore Communities

INTO THE COMMUNITY: PHASES 1 AND 2
CEASE began as a traditional smoking cessation program offered through local health clinics. In Phase 1 of the research, 404 clients were randomly assigned to receive either individual counseling from a medical doctor or group counseling from a nurse or social worker. In both cases, the intervention program was based on an expanded version of the American Cancer Society’s Fresh Start smoking cessation curriculum. At the clinic, in addition to counseling, participants received over-the-counter or prescription medications as necessary and earned monetary incentives for reaching specific goals. At the end of the program, 94% quit smoking, and 13.8% were retained in the program, meaning they attended six or more of the twelve sessions offered.

Feedback from Phase 1 clients helped shape program improvements for Phase 2 of the research project. CEASE researchers discovered that many clients felt stigmatized by the clinic setting. Smokers objected to the implication that they were sick and were uncomfortable with exposure to patients who were ill. They also felt that some health care providers lacked sufficient cultural competency to relate to their situations. In response, Phase 2 changed the delivery intervention to community settings instead of clinics and used trained peer motivators instead of medical personnel. Peer motivators were former smokers from the community who had been smoke-free for at least a year. They were trained and certified on the CEASE curriculum and methods of group facilitation. During their tenure, they recruited participants, then educated, motivated, and supported their group members towards smoking cessation.

CEASE added two-week motivation enhancement and six-week relapse prevention modules to the Fresh Start curriculum. At the end of Phase 2, of the 398 clients, 21.1% had quit smoking, and 51.9% were retained in the program.

TAILORED OPTIONS: PHASES 3 AND 4
CEASE intervention expanded further for Phase 3 of the project and included a diverse group of participants from faith-based organizations, drug recovery centers, mental health facilities, homeless shelters, and more. CEASE created a unique curriculum and added a resource toolbox that allowed peer motivators to tailor class content to meet individual needs. Program options were increased to offer motivation enhancement, smoking cessation, and relapse prevention modules. Importantly, the relapse prevention module addressed tobacco use through supporting changes in lifestyle and not just physical health. Participants could choose from

SMOKING INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1: Traditional Clinic-Based Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained in Program: 15.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quit Smoking: 9.4%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2: Community-Based Setting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained in Program: 51.9%</td>
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<td>Quit Smoking: 21.1%</td>
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<tr>
<th>Phase 3: Expanded Community-Based Setting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Retained in Program: 67.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quit Smoking: 30.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Phase 4, three approaches were tested. Participants self-selected into one of the following options:

**Self-Help Group**
Designed for participants who could not attend group sessions, 472 members were provided with a self-help “quit packet” that included a one week’s supply of Nicotine Replacement Therapy with instructions for use, a list of local organizations that provided cessation services, and a sample quit plan. The goal was to motivate smokers to quit and provide them with quit smoking resources for independent use. In this group, 2.3% quit smoking.

**Single-Session Group Counseling**
One hundred sixty-three participants attended a two-hour class based on a compressed version of the 12-session approach. The session was facilitated by an experienced peer motivator. This option was best for participants who wanted structured support but were unable to attend more than one session. In this group, 6.1% quit smoking.

**Four-Session Group Counseling**
Members attended weekly sessions with an appropriately compressed curriculum. This option provided more consistent support for participants. In this group of 207, 12% were able to quit smoking.

In each phase, as community members became more involved and curricula became more relevant, smoking cessation and retention in the CEASE program increased. Peer motivators proved to be effective trainers, motivators, and supporters for smokers who wanted to make healthier lifestyle choices. They served as positive role models for individuals who envisioned a smoke-free future. In some communities, peer motivators were regarded as superheroes who saved lives.
CEASE Initiative: Sponsoring Innovative Community Projects

CEASE researchers listen to many voices. The perceptions of middle-school students offer as much insight as the suggestions of public housing residents and shop owners. CEASE projects focus on the strengths and knowledge of academic and community experts to shape future health initiatives. Listening to many perspectives increases the creativity and approachability of the projects offered.

CEASE partners recognize that tobacco use is the result of a multitude of social and economic influences — influences that especially impact our youth. The array of cigarette advertising, bursting with primary colors and easy to read type, is attractive to a youth market and is pervasive in their everyday lives. Family members and peers who smoke serve as unwitting models for the normalization of tobacco use.

Would it be possible to create a meaningful interruption to the perceived “normacy” of smoking that would resonate with young people? That challenge led CEASE to collaborate with the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) to create Photovoice, an innovative, immersive project that encouraged young people to portray the effects of smoking in their own communities through photographs and narratives.

In this project, students from partner middle schools were enrolled into two Photovoice projects following a seven-week leadership training program. Students took photos of real-life situations related to tobacco use and described their feelings about the impact on their community. Students were thoughtful and precise, covering a wide range of issues from corner store advertising to litter and third-hand smoke. Photovoice exhibitions were held in each of the schools, and participants presented their insights on the harmful effects of nicotine addiction to parents, teachers, and community members.

START AT HOME, QUIT AT HOME

The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Smoke-Free Housing initiative for federally assisted buildings enabled CEASE to implement its innovative peer motivator approach in a Baltimore City public housing community, the Monument East Apartments. As with other CEASE projects, the overall goal was a reduction in the rate of tobacco use among residents with the aim of reducing their risk for tobacco-related health problems.

Experienced peer motivators from CEASE were employed to recruit and train three former smokers from Monument East Apartments. The three former smokers then recruited thirty current resident smokers. Peer motivators began with a single smoking cessation counseling session with mentees, followed by regular individual interactions. Twelve weeks after the mentoring phase, mentees received a follow-up survey and a carbon monoxide breath test to determine their smoking status.

The peer motivator model was successfully implemented, and tobacco smoking among residents of Monument East Apartments was significantly reduced.
Policies and Conferences

CEASE has been instrumental in developing public health policies that encourage the permanent adoption of healthier lifestyles. For example, CEASE partners and other policy activists advocated for policies that banned tobacco use in public parks, created a five-block buffer zone around schools for the sale of flavored tobacco, and included e-cigarettes in clean indoor air laws. CEASE helped pass a comprehensive tobacco-free campus policy at Morgan State University and provided cessation services to faculty, staff, and students.

Change is more likely to occur when activism is persistent, inclusive, and accessible to a wide variety of constituents. CEASE leadership believes that one of the best ways to engage diverse groups of stakeholders is to bring them together to share ideas and discuss applicable research results. In that spirit, CEASE sponsored three annual conferences open to community residents, scientists, activists, elected officials, organizations, and students. Hundreds of participants attended scientific presentations, panel discussions, workshops, and guest lectures where comprehensive prevention initiatives and tobacco-related health disparities were discussed.

2014 CEASE Conference

Many Voices, One Goal: Communities Partnering Against Tobacco

Twenty-five scientists from across the country and Mexico presented their research to more than 200 researchers, students, and community leaders at the inaugural CEASE conference on tobacco cessation. The conference celebrated the decade-long partnership between Morgan State University and Baltimore City.

2015 CEASE Conference

The Ripple Effect: Communities Making Waves Through Tobacco Control

The second annual conference included national and regional health and policy leaders along with a slate of program options that ranged from limiting youth access to menthol and flavored tobacco products to discussions with more effective women policy makers in the tobacco control field.

Youth Health Sciences Conference

In 2015, the CEASE Conference was preceded by an ASCEND-sponsored event that focused on youth. Nearly 200 students and youth advisers were invited to attend and engage with young scientists who presented research on public health, nutrition, kinesiology, nursing, and medicine.

2016 CEASE Conference

Trending Now: Community Health Challenges and Solutions

For the third annual conference, CEASE joined forces with Morgan State’s student-centered entrepreneurship development program, ASCEND. CEASE’s steady efforts to improve community-based research and cessation interventions combined with ASCEND’s success at attracting $23.3 million in funding created a powerful partnership that allowed Morgan State to elevate its research infrastructure and train outstanding students for careers in the biomedical sciences. The conference served as a showcase for best practices in public health. The science and health leaders of tomorrow were challenged to expand and implement those practices to reverse the trends that threaten the health of Baltimore citizens.

Engaged for Good

The commitment to engaging citizens, communities, researchers, and students is evidenced in the scope of CEASE’s activism and the diverse program offerings of its conferences. Community is central to the work of CEASE, and CEASE has become an influencer for good within Baltimore communities.

The ultimate goal of community activism is positive change. For years, CEASE researchers have worked with Baltimore communities to implement constructive change, to improve health conditions, and to enhance health-related resources in underserved neighborhoods.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ARE PRIORITY

Morgan State’s Prevention Sciences Research Center has been steadfast in its belief that strong partnerships between local communities and academic research programs are essential to develop effective services that address the root causes of health disparities. Looking ahead, PSRC and CEASE will continue to expand and sustain partnerships between Morgan State University and local communities to:

- Design and implement community engaged research related to urban health disparities
- Generate and market community-based health and wellness interventions by using peer motivators as trainers, counselors, and mentors
- Provide training and technical assistance to disseminate and implement CEASE smoking cessation programs to other communities with high smoking rates
- Introduce CEASE 2.0, a plan to roll out a web version and an interactive app of the CEASE Today Tobacco Cessation Curriculum.

Recognizing that smoking is a lifestyle behavior that increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer, PSRC and CEASE researchers created special training modules and a support system to encourage participants to lead active, healthy lives. The CEASE model is an excellent example of how the PSRC is working to make sustainable improvements in Baltimore communities.

The Prevention Sciences Research Center has accomplished much in its relatively short history. Moving forward with ambitious plans to expand its offerings to other struggling communities, PSRC will continue to explore innovative delivery systems, cutting-edge technology, and the needs of community partners to create a healthier future for Baltimore.
Growing and sustaining community relationships is a high priority for Morgan State University, and MSU researchers have found some innovative ways to collaborate with and improve Baltimore communities.

Morgan State’s Prevention Sciences Research Center (PSRC) and the ASCEND Center for Biomedical Research worked together on an initiative to build more capacity for conducting Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR). When communities participate in researching solutions to their own problems, the solutions are more likely to be implemented.

**FUNDING PROCESS**

The ASCEND CBPR Small Grant program provides funds to co-investigators from Morgan State and the community to design, implement, evaluate, and refine community interventions to improve health. PSRC supports the process with in-kind contributions including physical space and academic expertise. To date, the program has had ten funded projects from two cohorts.

Two principal investigators, one from Morgan State and one from the community, jointly apply to be considered for a CBPR Small Grant. The applicants must involve at least one undergraduate student in their project as well. PSRC and ASCEND staff are proactive with logistical and technical assistance. They also help the investigators conceptualize ideas, develop the proposals, and implement the research projects. In addition, the staff assist both academic researchers and community investigators in finding appropriate partners and submitting applications.

Jane Buccheri (left), CEASE Action Board member and Southwest Baltimore resident, reviews a Small Grant program with Jummai Apata (right), the Morgan State University principal investigator and doctoral student.
Candidates for the grants gain a better understanding of the funding requirements through attendance at technical assistance workshops offered by PSRC and ASCEND. Topics range from basic community assessments and project evaluations to more specific areas such as health literacy, healthy diet, smoking cessation, and using medical technologies to reduce health disparities.

The CBPR Small Grants initiative is designed to help grantees be successful in their individual projects and also to create a local network of CBPR researchers who support one another by sharing ideas, resources, and assets.

A VALUABLE PARTNER

Fusion Partnership Inc. supports grassroots community programs and has served as a community liaison and fiscal sponsor to both CEASE and the ASCEND CBPR Small Grants. Fusion has helped more than 70 local community groups in their projects over the past 20 years. Morgan State’s arrangement with Fusion is designed to ensure equal representation and power sharing among the partners. Through Fusion, two advisory boards oversee each step of the projects including planning, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of the results.

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**FIRST COHORT OF CBPR SMALL GRANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT TITLE</th>
<th>MSU / ACADEMIC PI</th>
<th>SCHOOL / DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>COMMUNITY PI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving smoking cessation in public housing community in Baltimore City: Engaging former smokers as peer mentors</td>
<td>Jummai Apata</td>
<td>SCHP</td>
<td>Erica Goldman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-entry health needs of former convicts assessment project</td>
<td>Sabriya Dennis</td>
<td>SCHP</td>
<td>Nicole Hanson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of a community-based literacy project</td>
<td>Minli Liao</td>
<td>SSW</td>
<td>Lisa Bleich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and translation of medical technologies to reduce health disparities</td>
<td>Halaevalu Vakalahi</td>
<td>SSW</td>
<td>Alice Delaney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A new day for Midtown-Edmondson with community based participatory research</td>
<td>Fernando Wagner</td>
<td>SCHP</td>
<td>Raynard Baylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Nutrition Outcomes in Head Start programs</td>
<td>Lurline Whittaker</td>
<td>SEUS</td>
<td>Olutunde Clarke Rebecca Horner</td>
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</tbody>
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**SECOND COHORT OF CBPR SMALL GRANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT TITLE</th>
<th>MSU / ACADEMIC PI</th>
<th>SCHOOL / DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>COMMUNITY PI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teen Talk: Tackling obesity via youth-led community based participatory research</td>
<td>Kimberly Warren</td>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Yolanda Hancock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting healthy adoptive parents and adopted child well-being</td>
<td>Charlene Chester</td>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Dariel Harris</td>
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<tr>
<td>The relationship between mental health and levels of persistence in community college students</td>
<td>Natasha Otto</td>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Janice Goldwater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The healthiness of churches</td>
<td>Laurence Howell</td>
<td>SCHP</td>
<td>Alisa Diop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLA: College of Liberal Arts; SCHP: School of Community Health and Policy; SEUS: School of Education and Urban Studies; SSW: School of Social Work.
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Farin Kasmaeeghi, MD, PhD
Professor and Associate Dean for Research | SCMS
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Associate Professor | SCHP
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Assistant Professor; Portland State University Oregon
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PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

Baltimore City Health Department
Fusion Partnership, Inc.

Baltimore City Public Schools
Drug Abuse (MDA) Intramural Research Program

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control

PARTNERING SCHOOLS

Charles Carroll Barister Elementary School
Regional F. Lewis High School

Franklin Square Elementary/Middle School
Southwest Baltimore Charter School

George Washington Elementary School
Tusbridge Middle School

ACADEMIC & INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

ICPHR (International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research)

Johns Hopkins Institute for Global Tobacco Control (JHTC)

The Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR)

SMOKING CESSATION COMMUNITY VENUES

29th St. Community Center
Transfiguration Catholic Church

Allendale
Turek House

Baltimore Behavioral Health
Wayman Memorial AME Church

Bon Secours
West Baltimore Cares

Family Support Center
Morgan State University

Concerted Care Group
School of Community

Baltimore
Health and Policy, Prevention Science Research Center

Paul’s Place
Morgan State University

People’s Community
School of Computer,

Health Center
Mathematical and

Recovery In Community
Natural Sciences

St. Jerome’s Head Start, Sterrett
Morgan State University

Total Health Care
School of Social Work

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PROJECTS AND STAFF

Projects
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