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CES4HEALTH.INFO: A MECHANISM FOR PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATION OF INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS OF COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

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CES4Health.info, celebrating its first anniversary in November 2010, is an online mechanism for rigorous peer-reviewed publication and dissemination of innovative products of community-engaged scholarship (CES) that are in forms other than journal manuscripts. CES4Health.info focuses on products related, broadly speaking, to health. Topics may include physical or mental health, community health, social determinants of health (such as education, housing, environmental hazards, poverty), health sciences, or health professions and workforce issues. Broadening the reach of peer-reviewed, cutting-edge CES to diverse audiences that can then apply that knowledge or tool, is a critical link in improving community health.

Journal articles are an important communication mechanism to reach academic audiences. However, they are inappropriate and insufficient venues for broadly disseminating more practical tools intended for varied audiences, including community organizations, activists, diverse communities, policymakers, philanthropy organizations, faith communities, instructors and researchers who seek high quality, free resources to address health issues. As a result of scholarly and genuinely collaborative and reciprocal research, educational, programmatic, policy and other types of efforts, academic and community partners often produce products such as documentaries, online tools, curricula, training manuals, videos, guidelines, websites, and policy briefs.

Because CES products that are in new media or other non-conventional formats are usually not peer-reviewed, published or widely distributed, they may be perceived by faculty review or promotion and tenure committees as being of less significance, quality, credibility and value than peer-reviewed journal articles. Further, as a result of a lack of dissemination outlets, the impact of these forms of CES is often limited beyond the community within which the work was conducted or produced.

CES4Health.info fills an important gap. CES4Health.info was created to enhance the impact of and encourage the recognition of the wide range of scholarly work that is conducted in partnership with communities. The seed for CES4Health.info was planted by the WK Kellogg Foundation-funded Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions, which recommended in its 2005 report, "Linking Scholarship and Communities," that such a mechanism be established.

Peer review through CES4Health.info mirrors conventional peer review processes used in academic journals, with a few important innovations. A product peer-reviewed and published through CES4Health.info is comparable to an article published through a peer-reviewed print journal. CES4Health.info maintains an editorial staff and follows a rigorous peer review process based on accepted standards of scholarship. However, eight review criteria are specifically and concretely articulated in a quantitative and qualitative reviewer rating form. Another distinctive feature of this process is that every product submitted to CES4Health.info is reviewed by both community and academic reviewers. Faculty members who author products that are published through CES4Health.info can note them in the peer-reviewed publications section of their curriculum vitae and describe them as peer-reviewed scholarly products. CES4Health.info also provides authors with a measure of impact by tracking how often each product is accessed or downloaded. Evaluation of CES4Health.info includes solicitation of feedback from users of the site, including impressions of utility and quality of the products downloaded. This information will be communicated to authors.

A variety of products are available through CES4Health.info. Three examples illustrate the diversity of topics and product formats represented. "Developing and Sustaining Community-Based Participatory Research Partnerships: A Skill-Building Curriculum" (The Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research Group) is an evidence-based online curriculum designed as a tool for use by community-institutional partnerships that are using or planning to use a CBPR approach to improving health. "Toolkit to Establish and Sustain Year-Long Walking in Rural Communities" (Anna Zendell, Mary Riley-Jacome) is a document created to provide guidance for rural communities to create year-long walking programs that address safety, motivation, and sustainment. The Toolkit consists of a Walking Program Guidebook, a Walking Club Leader Manual, and a Survey that was created to evaluate efficacy of the program. "In Harmony: Reflections, Thoughts, and Hopes of Central City, New Orleans" (Caricia Catalani et al.) is a community-based participatory film produced using videovoice methodology to document a community assessment identifying concerns about the health impacts of the built environment in post-Katrina New Orleans, including housing, education, and employment.

We encourage readers of the Global Journal to submit their CES products for peer review. We are also seeking peer reviewers from community and academic settings with diverse areas of expertise. Instructions for submitting a product and applying to be a reviewer are available at <http://www.CES4Health.info/>. To receive regular email updates about CES4Health.info, including periodic theme "calls for products", sign up for Community-Campus Partnerships for Health's monthly E-News at <http://www.ccpf.info/>.

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