

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
WESTERN RESERVE STUDIES SYMPOSIUM

BUILDING A MEDICAL COMMUNITY IN THE WESTERN RESERVE

October 12-13 2001

Allen Memorial Medical Library
Ford Auditorium

Breaking the Cycle of Health Care Disparities

Rachel R. Chapman

In response to a national call for new approaches to help break the cycle of poor health care and marked health disparities among racial/ethnic minorities in urban America, particularly in Greater Cleveland, the Case Western Reserve University Department of Anthropology is expanding its curriculum in medical anthropology to create a Program on Anthropology, Urban Health, and Racial/Ethnic Disparities. It is the first in this country to place faculty research priorities and student training in the service of community-based health interventions in urban settings through partnerships among the university, health providers and community affiliates. By integrating academic based research and training with community identified health needs and priorities, this initiative will enable the community to design and implement new, strategic approaches to improve health outcomes and decrease racial/ethnic health disparities in metropolitan Cleveland.

Over the next three years the goals of the program are:

- To make "culturally appropriate" assessments in order to improve existing health programs by better understanding and explaining the forces that create and perpetuate serious racial/ethnic health disparities in Greater Cleveland.
- To mount new and modified health interventions to reduce or eliminate health disparities through a program of ethnographic research conducted in partnership with Greater Cleveland community health organizations.
- To raise awareness about racial/ethnic health disparities in this region and enhance the skills of professionals already committed to improving health outcomes, by means of focused training and a series of workshops, guest speakers, and certificate programs for graduate students, community practitioners, and other interested Cleveland community health providers and consumers.