BACKGROUND

The Geographic Management Program (GMap) is a regional strategy to build critical “hubs” for the support and management of cancer health disparities research, training and infrastructure programs.

The NCI’s Region Five Geographic Management Program/ Biospecimens Management Program (GMaP/BMaP) Network is a regional partnership currently representing eighteen NCI funded institutions. The Region Five GMaP/BMaP Network covers the states of Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New Jersey (Figure 1 below).

COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE

To actively engage the leadership and institutions of the Region 5 GMaP/BMaP network, a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNAT) was implemented March – April 2011. The objective of the CNAT was to:

- Acquire information relating to current practices, resources and needs of each participating GMaP institution
- Evaluate capacity building to conduct cancer health disparities (CHD) research
- Assess collaborative potential amongst the region for conducting CHD research
- Assess minority Biospecimens collections and biobanking practices

RESULTS

Figure 2 depicts the distribution of increasing effort focused on CHD programs and research. Only 39% (5/13) of investigators focus 50-100% of efforts of CHD programs. Roughly half (6/13) of investigators focus 50-100% of efforts on CHD research.

METHODS

The CNAT was developed by the Evaluation Core Leader and a 11-person evaluation committee of researchers from across Region 5. A mixed methods approach was utilized to capture program level and institutional level data:

- Principal Investigator (PI)
  - 48 question Principal Investigator (PI) Online Survey
  - PI key informant interview
- Pathology/Biospecimen Facility Survey
  - 14 question Biospecimens Facility Administrator Online Survey
  - Biospecimen facility key informant interview

Here we report on the PI survey that covered seven core areas:

- Cancer Health Disparities Research/Community
- Minority Biospecimens Collection
- Clinical Trials Recruitment and Retention
- Bioinformatics/Advanced & Emerging Technology
- Training
- Visioning the Future
- Network Analysis

The online surveys was available for a six week period. The key informant interviews will be conducted in July 2011.

SAMPLE

- PI Online Survey was completed by 13 of 18 institutions, a 72.2% completion rate.
- Grant programs held by institutions: 2 PNRP, 4 CNP, 3 P20, 8 U54, 4 CHE, 1 P50
- Type of institutions: 6 cancer centers, 1 academic institutions, 3 mixed (Academic and Hospital) & 3 minority serving institutions

CONCLUSIONS

Implications: Region Five has significant experience conducting community-based research and community education programs to increase minority/medically underserved population’s participation in research and biospecimens collection.

Next steps: Region Five has established a formal network called the Cancer Disparities Research Network (CDRN) and is establishing a network website. Region Five is exploring ways to share expertise in collaborative research pursuits. We anticipate implementing Cancer 102 education and training on research participation, biospecimen donation/biobanking and genetics across our institutions.