Overview: July 2015, the American Heart Association, under the auspices of its Strategically Funded Research Network Initiative, funded the Center for American Indian Cardiovascular Disease Disparities. Our center addresses the contribution of racial discrimination, subsequent stress, increased risk of cardiovascular disease, and related discontinuities in care to the burden of this condition among urban American Indians. It supports three research projects – focusing on basic, clinical, and population level inquiry into this subject area – that capitalize on a long, productive history of collaboration among a large, nationwide network of community partners. The scientific and training environments draw upon an extensive array of relevant, high quality professional, program, and institutional resources. Our mission is to build upon, enhance, and broaden a research enterprise of growing importance to this and other underserved populations, especially racial and ethnic minorities.

The Center’s research projects include a basic science study. “Discrimination and Allostatic Load among American Indians,” led by Irene Blair, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of Colorado Boulder. A social psychologist, her project seeks to understand how perceived racism influences indicators of the body’s stress response that are known to be associated with heart disease. Specifically she and her colleague, Dr. Mark Laudenslager, Professor of Psychiatry, University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus, are examining links between repeated experiences of racism, increased allostatic load, chronic activation of the stress response, and accumulated effects on cardiovascular disease risk.

The clinical science project. “An Intervention to Increase Engagement with Hypertension Care for American Indian Patients,” is directed by Edward Havranek, M.D., Professor and Director, Adult Component, Adult and Child Center for Health Outcomes Research and Delivery Science, School of Medicine, University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus. Dr. Havranek, joined by Stacie Daugherty, M.D., Associate Professor, Division of Cardiology, Department of Medicine at the UCD School of Medicine, evaluates a novel intervention to reduce the detrimental effects of negative, race-based stereotypes on American Indian patients’ adherence to hypertension treatment and control.

Our population science project. “Improving Hypertension Care of American Indians through Interactive Voice Response Technology,” is guided by John Steiner, M.D., M.P.H., Senior Director of the Institute for Health Research, Kaiser Permanente Colorado, as well as Professor, School of Medicine, University of Colorado Denver. This study assesses the use of innovative, culturally informed health communication technologies to more fully engage urban American Indians in systems of care dedicated to treating their hypertension.

The Center and its training component are led by Spero M. Manson, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor of Public Health and Psychiatry, Director of the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health, and Associate Dean for Research at the Colorado School of Public Health on the Anschutz Medical Campus of the University of Colorado Denver. The above interdisciplinary projects serve as training vehicles for research fellows within and across the Center.
The AHA SFRN Research Fellowship: Center for American Indian Cardiovascular Disease Disparities

The Center supports three (3) fellowships over its initial four years of support. This solicitation announces availability of the second Fellowship, to begin July 1, 2016. The award period is two years. The Fellowship is a competitive award intended to develop the research competencies of early-stage investigators through a series of intensive didactic and experiential instructional opportunities, ranging from advanced methodologies, statistics, research design, and grant proposal preparation as appropriate to the fellow’s career development. In addition, the fellow will be expected to participate in one of the three basic, clinical, or population-level research projects. One outcome of his/her participation shall be a scientific manuscript submitted to an appropriate peer-reviewed journal. Additional expectations include participation in bi-weekly Center-wide meetings, an annual conference that convenes AHA SFRN Center directors, principal investigators, and other fellows. Other leadership building activities may also require fellow participation.

The American Heart Association requires that fellows of the Center must have one of the following designations: U.S. citizen, Permanent Resident, Pending Permanent Resident, E-3 Visa, H1-B Visa, O-1 Visa, TN Visa, J-1 Visa, F-1 Visa, G-4 Visa. All awardees must meet the citizenship criteria throughout the award period.

Named fellows of the Center must hold a Ph.D., M.D., D.O., D.V.M. or equivalent doctoral degree and commit 75% effort to research training. Center fellows may commit a minimum of 70% effort if justification is accepted by the AHA Oversight Advisory Committee. A named fellow may not hold another fellowship award, although the institution may provide supplemental funding. Fellows may not hold a faculty or staff appointment, with the exception of M.D.s or M.D./Ph.D.s with clinical responsibilities. These fellows may hold a title of instructor or similar due to their patient care or practice responsibilities, but must devote at least 75% effort to research training. A named fellow may have been a recipient of an AHA fellowship, but may not hold an AHA affiliate fellowship or AHA Fellow-to-Faculty Transition Award at the same time as an AHA Strategically Focused Disparities Research Network fellowship.

Fellows will receive $50,000.00 annually for salary and fringe benefits for the duration of the two-year award. Physical residence on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus is required. No funds are available for relocation.

The application consists of the following:
1. A one-page cover letter agreeing to the guidelines, activities and deliverables stated in this solicitation.
2. A current curriculum vitae.
3. A letter not to exceed 3 pages, single space, employing Arial 12 with 0.5 inch margins, that describes:
   a. your preparation to engage in a research fellowship of this nature;
   b. your interest in understanding the complex interplay of racial discrimination, subsequent stress, increased risk of cardiovascular disease, and related discontinuities in care to the burden of this condition among urban American Indians, and
   c. your vision for the next 5-7 years of your career, and the role of research in achieving this vision.
4. A writing sample, preferably unpublished, that exemplifies your writing abilities.
5. Two letters from professional colleagues familiar with your work, and able to speak to the relevance that a research fellowship of this nature holds for your career development.
6. If a member of the University of Colorado faculty, a letter of support from your department chair that confirms your organizational unit’s understanding of the terms and conditions of award, and willingness to comply with same.

Applications should be sent in an electronic format, preferably as a PDF, to Ms. Judy Sandoval, at judy.sandoval@ucdenver.edu.

**DEADLINE:** All application materials must be submitted on or before May 15, 2016. Applicants will be notified of the committee’s decision by June 1, 2016.

**QUESTIONS** about the Fellows program can be directed to Spero M. Manson, Ph.D., at spero.manson@ucdenver.edu.