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NIH-Funded Research Taps Community Creativity for Public Health Strategies

ANN ARBOR, Mich. – The [Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research \(MICHHR\)](#), Michigan Medicine, [U-M School of Public Health](#), and 32 community leaders throughout the state partnered to form **Michigan Communities Conquering COVID**. Together they launched “**The Fierce Urgency of Now’: Communities Conquering COVID (C3)**” to reduce health disparities experienced by African-American and Latino populations in **Wayne, Genesee, Kent, and Washtenaw** Counties, which became more pronounced with the pandemic’s onset. They were awarded nearly \$1.4M by the [National Institutes of Health](#) as part of a new initiative called [Community Engagement Alliance \(CEAL\) Against COVID-19 Disparities](#). See our public announcement for [full details](#).

“**Take the Mic**” is the first in a series of [community-engaged research](#) studies being conducted by Michigan Communities Conquering COVID. The contest will be made available to the public on Thursday, December 17. The study is an open contest that invites community members to submit ideas for recognizing and positively reinforcing COVID-19 safety practices (e.g. social distancing, mask wearing, and getting vaccinated). Prompts are posted online at takethemic.org. Community members are encouraged to respond in a variety of artistic mediums, particularly multimedia and the written word.

“Take the Mic” focuses on the actions of everyday people. Submissions are unlimited, but participants will only be compensated \$10 for up to two submissions (one per category). Participants must be 18+ years of age and residents of Wayne, Genesee, Kent, or Washtenaw County. Finalists will be chosen by a panel of community leaders. Winners will be selected by community and announced publicly. Prizes range from \$100 to \$500. Submissions close on Monday, January 25.

“We are tapping into the strength and creativity of our community partners to find new ways to deliver old messages about the importance of COVID safety practices this winter,” said Dr. An, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and Director of the Center for Health Communications Research. “These behaviors will be critical to limit COVID-19 cases and deaths in the upcoming months.”

Check out our [media kit](#) for more materials, including el anuncio en español, and share the challenge with your networks!

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