

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

September 23, 2019

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Tricia Piechowski, University of Michigan, Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research,
(734) 998-7632, kwikwi@med.umich.edu

Jamie Racklyeft, University of Michigan, Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research,
(734) 998-7693, jracklye@med.umich.edu

Trust Study Town Hall to Share Community Voice Stemming from Flint Water Crisis

FLINT, Mich. – Today several groups will present findings from a research study that examined trust and mistrust in Flint before and during the various phases of the Flint Water Crisis. As the city moves from the disaster phase to chronic, the findings, new community-based theory, and lessons learned from this project will help rebuild trust and guide future clinical research.

Participating groups include Community-Based Organization Partners (CBOP), National Center for African American Health Consciousness (NCAAHC), University of Michigan's Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research (MICHHR), Michigan State University (MSU), and stakeholders in Flint, including faith- and community-based organizations.

The Trust Study Town Hall will be held this evening, September 23, 2019 from 6-8 p.m. at the Genesee County Community Action Resource Department, 601 Saginaw St. Flint, MI 48502. Learn more and register here: FlintSpecPristownhall.splashthat.com. Public and media are welcome.

Communities of color, especially those overwhelmingly impacted by the socio-economic reality of marginalized communities, often experience poor health outcomes, disregard for their human rights, and exclusion from sharing their voices on platforms shaping community decision-making and action. The Flint Water Crisis represents the systemic breakdown of democracy, a loss of human and citizen's rights, environmental injustice, and racism. Conscious decisions were made by the governor-appointed emergency manager to switch the city's water source to the Flint River, which has a history of contamination, from Lake Huron through Detroit, as a way to reduce the budget deficit in Flint, Michigan.

Although the community exercised its voice when the switch was a planning option, and again during the onset of the crisis, their voice was ignored when it could have averted the disaster. Narratives on how and why the Flint Water Crisis happened have been broadcast across the globe, but many people in Flint do not believe they are accurately represented in the majority of these narratives. Thus, an empowered community has come together to share their story in a project that utilized deliberative democracy, community-based participatory research, and

trust as an ethical construct. This report highlights the findings and lessons learned through formative research, which involved examination and documentation of the community's experience during all phases of the crisis. Furthermore, a mixed methods approach explored residents' perceptions of mistrust, rebuilding trust in Flint, and strengthening public health.

This effort, which began in 2016, was led by a community-academic partnership including representation from Community-Based Organization Partners (CBOP), National Center for African American Health Consciousness (NCAAHC), University of Michigan's Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research (MICHHR), Michigan State University (MSU), and stakeholders in Flint, including faith- and community-based organizations. The project was informed by the concepts evident in the theory and practice of trust, community engagement, resiliency, social justice, citizen and team science, and deliberative democracy. This project rigorously documented and analyzed levels of trust and mistrust in Flint before and during the various phases of the Flint Water Crisis. As the city moves from the disaster phase to chronic, the findings, new community-based theory, and lessons learned from this project will help rebuild trust and guide future clinical research. The collaborative research approach involving residents and study participants in all phases of the project demonstrated resiliency, empowered a call-to-action, and will contribute to existing literature and theory on topics related to the study. The community's recommendations will help other communities in crisis and those battling environmental injustices.

#