

Community-Engaged Researcher

Greta Oftedal

bit.ly/Persona-download



"I am committed to improving the health and quality of life of all people."

Bio

Early on, Greta focused her career on research that has the greatest potential to lead to improvements in health inequalities through direct community partnership in research. Her full schedule is spent leading investigations, teaching classes, writing, and working with the community. Her work requires her to be able to lead, to listen, and to communicate in different styles depending on her audience. She considers relationship building with the community no less important than grant writing, study initiation, or mentoring students.

Greta is focused on building dynamic and productive patient-focused research teams. Her responsibility as PI or co-investigator on peer-reviewed grants is significant and she has learned when she must delegate important tasks to her team. Despite this she makes sure she is up to date on clinical trial menus so that she can educate patients and her community partners on their options for treatment. She reads blogs and peer-reviewed journals and is constantly looking for ways to share the important research her team conducts with the world outside academia.

Education: Master's, Public Health; MD, PhD, Epidemiology

Years of experience: 25+

Work location: Have laptop, will travel

Goals

- Create equality, whereby administration acknowledges community partners as sources of information and learning
- Support community partnerships through strong local infrastructure and robust, well-trained staff
- Translate research findings to direct improvements in the community



Software attitude & use

- Open to any tools that help her better engage with her community
- Communicates mainly via email
- Uses social media to engage community-based partners
- Statistical software: Some R, SAS
- Research and collaboration: NIH RePORTER, REDCap, EndNote, PubMed, Slack, video conferencing software
- General: Microsoft Office Suite

Scholarly Outputs



- Articles/manuscripts, published nationally and frequently written with community partners
- Conference talks and posters
- Lectures to public health groups
- Online communications to community groups

Pain Points

- Limited staffing and fiscal capacity
- Constant grant applications
- More competition for less grant funds
- Ethical challenges in establishing the control arms of community-based trials

Motivators

To respect her colleagues' skills in science, policy, activism, and engagement, both in the institution and the community

To collaborate with basic scientists to translate laboratory findings into new treatments

To bridge the advocacy gap inside and outside academia

To build analytical tools focused on new research for community hospital doctors to employ

Wants/Needs

- Administration to appreciate the value of community-based research
- To do more to make community partners part of the academic team
- Streamline IRB and the study initiation process
- Tools to maximize recruitment for clinical trials
- Could use ways to grant community partners access to university-sponsored resources
- Better collaboration between healthcare providers, scientists, and journalists on addressing public health crises in a way that best helps communities

Professional Development

Department supports travel to conferences and workshops, and purchasing informational resources

Provides information and training to medical students, residents, and fellows in community-based research

Participates in groups through the Association for Clinical and Translational Science