Overview
Nationally, Black and Latinx communities are bearing disproportionate COVID-19 morbidity and mortality. At Duke University Health System (DUHS) in June 2020, Latinx individuals were thirteen times more likely to test positive for COVID-19 than non-Hispanic whites, yet were 20% less likely to be tested relative to their proportion of the population.

In Durham and nationally, COVID-19 services have largely been implemented within existing health service infrastructure and networks that exclude Black and Latinx communities, an approach that predictably led to the current disparities and resulting inability to mitigate the pandemic in the U.S.. Without new, community-based models of care delivery, this problem will continue to worsen.

Approach and Activities
Community Engagement
We learned that collaborative Partnerships and developing opportunities for bidirectional learning were key to facilitating access to testing and vaccination resourcing.

Clinical Operations
Our initial scope was to plan and implement a community-based mobile testing unit to expand access to COVID-19 testing. This was not possible due to limited resources. However, we collaborated with Advance Community Health in Wake County, to bring testing resources to the Latinx Community in partnership with La Semilla.

Research and Policy Solutions
- Center anti-racism
- Encourage community engagement
- Fund mobile testing
- Incentivize equitable testing
- Translate lessons learned to vaccine distribution

Our Objective
We implemented an interdisciplinary project spanning medicine, community health, nursing, and public policy to meet urgent needs with the overall goal of reducing health disparities in Durham. COVID-19 has exposed a need for rapid, accessible testing and clinical assessment in our community’s most vulnerable groups in the immediate-term and a need for sustainable effective care management that reaches the community in the longer-term.

Partners
Coalition-building with local health partners and community-based organizations was instrumental to our efforts. Thank you to our partners!

Sources: