



Houston Health Care Council Features Dr. Jennifer Herricks

The Partnership's Health Care Council met on Tuesday, April 5 and featured speaker Jennifer R. Herricks, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow in Disease and Poverty at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy and Baylor College of Medicine's National School of Tropical Medicine. Dr. Herricks' presentation focused on bringing awareness to all neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) that affect the greater Houston region apart from the Zika virus, which has received much media attention lately.

Dr. Herricks began her presentation by defining NTDs—often defined incorrectly and often misunderstood—and discussed theories on the correlation between NTDs and poverty levels. She has studied the relationship between diseases and impairment to physical and intellectual child development in poverty stricken areas. She also discussed various proposed legislation to help fight NTDs and the health outcomes for those affected. Currently, Texas is the only state that has a law directed specifically for at fighting NTDs; HB 2055, sponsored by Representative Sarah Davis (R-West University Place), passed the 84th Legislature and established sentinel surveillance for emerging and neglected tropical diseases in Texas. Through her research, Dr. Herricks hopes to bring awareness to all NTDs that are prevalent in the U.S. and specifically in the Houston area.

Dr. Herricks received a Bachelor of Science in biology from Louisiana State University and a Ph.D. in microbiology and molecular genetics from The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. During her graduate work she received a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award from the National Institutes of Health and a Robert D. Watkins Graduate Research Fellowship from the American Society for Microbiology.