

# PROFILE

## Location

Clarkston, Georgia

## Populations of Focus

children, migrant people,  
refugees

## Topic Areas

addressing the health  
and well-being of  
migrant children

Dr. Michael Eriksen noted the importance of GSU PRC's **“decades of experience in working collaboratively with community groups to conduct meaningful applied research projects.”** This experience helps broaden the reach of GSU PRC's collaborations with local partners and the PRC Network. It is also a relationship that the PRC GSU team and Dr. Eriksen consider to be a valuable factor in maintaining community respect, trust, and input for effectively **“addressing community health challenges together.”**



**PRC GSU's SafeCare model provides training to strengthen parents' skills in promoting the social and emotional health of their children.**

The [Prevention Research Center at Georgia State University \(PRC GSU\)](#) is one of 26 Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the 2019–2024 funding cycle. Each PRC is funded to establish and maintain its center and to conduct a core research project. PRCs may receive supplemental funding to conduct additional research projects and activities.

PRC GSU's vision is to conduct applied research to understand how to address health disparities in diverse populations through culturally and linguistically competent interventions. PRC GSU collaborates with local ethnic organizations, residents, resettlement agencies, clinics, municipal and county government, and other service providers to prioritize needs, develop studies, and provide technical support and guidance.

Specifically, PRC GSU and its partners develop effective health programs and design research methods that can increase access to health-promoting education, tools, and quality health care services. They also work to ensure that information is easily understood by community residents, who speak more than 50 languages. Half are foreign-born and came to the United States with a wide range of health concerns.

PRC GSU's mission and vision guides its approach in Clarkston, Georgia, which is sometimes called "the most diverse square mile in America." Refugees come to the United States with compounded trauma or trauma from various life events, high rates of exposure to violence and human rights violations, and deficits in access to education and health care. They are often resettled into communities with limited resources to help them respond to these challenges.

PRC GSU aims to address these issues and promote migrant health through its long-standing partnerships with academic staff and affected community members. One of PRC GSU's core strategies is to create useful, culturally appropriate, health-promoting resources and programs in many languages.

## CORE RESEARCH

Each PRC uses a community-engaged approach to conduct one primary applied public health prevention research project called a core research project. Project activities include design, development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. PRCs use at least 50% of their CDC funding to conduct the project in partnership with communities.

### Clarkston SafeCare

PRC GSU's core research project for the 2019–2024 funding cycle is conducted in partnership with the community and addresses the health and well-being of migrant children. It seeks to adapt



**PRC GSU collaborates with community partners to distribute COVID-19 testing kits and provide COVID-19 education and resources to community members.**

and use the evidence-based parenting program [SafeCare](#) in migrant and refugee families with young children in Clarkston, Georgia. Parenting programs lead to more positive social, emotional, and behavioral development and can reduce children's risk of developing chronic illnesses or diseases in the long term.

Applying proven parenting programs to address early toxic stress—including abuse, neglect, extreme poverty, violence, household dysfunction, and food scarcity—has been recommended broadly for refugee populations).<sup>1</sup> It is specifically recommended for refugee families because such programs can be key to reducing health disparities.<sup>2</sup>

"We are proud to have the opportunity to work together with the refugee community in Clarkston, Georgia...one of the largest refugee resettlement communities in the country," said Michael Eriksen, ScD, co-principal investigator of GSU PRC.

<sup>1</sup> Franke H, Toxic stress: Effects, prevention and treatment. *Children*. 2014;1(3):390–402.

<sup>2</sup> Whitaker DJ, Self-Brown S, Weeks EA, et al. Adaptation and implementation of a parenting curriculum in a refugee/immigrant community using a task-shifting approach: a study protocol. *BMC Public Health*. 2021;21(1):1084.

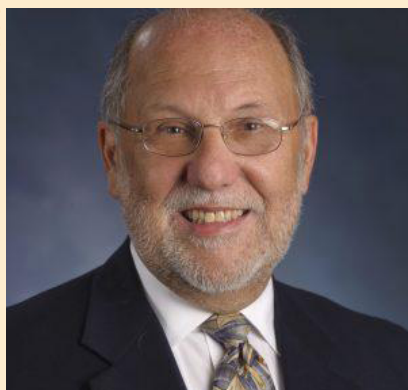
## HIGHLIGHTED PUBLICATIONS

[Adaptation and implementation of a parenting curriculum in a refugee/immigrant community using a task-shifting approach: a study protocol](#)

[Public health crisis in the refugee community: little change in social determinants of health preserve health disparities](#)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Principal Investigator



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For more information on PRC GSU and ways to get involved, visit [PRC Home Page — Prevention Research Center](#).

## ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

PRCs may receive supplemental funding to work on additional research projects each funding cycle. These Special Interest Projects (SIPs) focus on a variety of health topics or gaps in scientific evidence. PRCs can also conduct additional research as part of SIP [Thematic Research Networks](#), which are groups of PRCs working together on related health topics.

## 2021

### PRC Vaccine Confidence Network (PRC VCN)

In April 2021, CDC funded a 12-month award to all 26 PRCs to form the PRC VCN in support of the agency's [Vaccinate with Confidence](#) strategy for COVID-19. As part of this network, [PRC GSU's VCN](#) is examining vaccine hesitancy to find ways to promote vaccine confidence, increase vaccine uptake, and reduce disparities in refugee, immigrant, and migrant communities and the African American community in Clarkston, Georgia. The goal is to reduce the incidence of COVID-19 in the United States.

PRC GSU's strategy includes the use of Clarkston COVID-19 Community Ambassadors as trainers for local communities. It is also collaborating with community organizations to improve logistics and remove barriers for residents and to develop culturally appropriate communication strategies.



CDC Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) conduct innovative public health research at the community level. The PRC Program is a network of academic research centers in the United States that work with their communities to identify public health problems and develop, test, and evaluate solutions that can be widely shared and applied within the public health system. PRCs research a wide range of health topics and focus on populations experiencing health disparities.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRC PROGRAM

Visit [www.cdc.gov/prc](http://www.cdc.gov/prc) or contact [prcprogram@cdc.gov](mailto:prcprogram@cdc.gov).



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