Address at the Research Center in Minority Institutions (RCMI) NIH Grant Celebration

Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on November 20, 2017.
Good evening.

You’ve seen the headlines. You know the challenges this community faces… First, the opioid crisis… This is an issue that has severely impacted this community. It has taken far too many lives. Last year, more than 1,700 people died of overdoses in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade. That’s mothers and fathers leaving children behind. That’s mothers and fathers losing their children. That’s families being ripped apart and forever changed.

Then, there is the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Last year, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report announced that Florida led the nation in new HIV cases. In Miami-Dade County, more than 27,000 people are living with HIV. Again, the story is the same… Too many futures are changed forever. Too many are faced with incredible obstacles to overcome.

Both of these issues have something in common… You see, both substance abuse and HIV/AIDS hurt everybody, but especially our more impoverished communities. That’s because these communities face barriers that stand in the way of effective prevention and intervention services.

And that’s why we’re here today!

Our FIU has always known your ZIP code is a better predictor of your health than your genetic code! That’s why we never turn our back on this community…

Our FIU family is brought together by a shared sense of responsibility. We’re leveraging the blessings of our talents to help the communities we serve become stronger, better and healthier places.
As you know, local is global. The issues that we face are more acute, because we’re a global city – but they’re still issues that communities across this country face.

That means our FIU plays a major responsibility in being a solutions center for this community – and our world. Now, we can embrace this mission – and ramp up research because of this grant… This grant that is the largest National Institutes of Health grant in FIU history!

With the NIH behind us, our talented faculty and researchers from across our FIU – and many of whom are right here in this room. They are going to work together to promote health equity for everyone in South Florida!

And they are going to be working closely with community-based organizations to partner with underserved and underrepresented communities to alleviate health disparities and inequities.

Through this initiative, we will also hire three additional senior researchers to expand the university’s capabilities in health disparities. It will also sustain five new fellows each year and bring more postdoctoral talent to FIU. The core research team will also support and train dozens of masters and doctoral students at the center.

This is impactful and meaningful work! We should all be proud our FIU is leading the charge. Thank you, again, for being here.