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Georgia Southern University

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Georgia Southern University Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health doctoral students Ms. Maria Olivas and Mr. Sean Bear, along with fellow master student Mr. Abraham Johnson and faculty mentor Dr. Stacy Smallwood examined the House Ball Community (HBC). “The House Ball Community is a vibrant and dynamic part of the LGBTQ+ community, particularly among communities of color. HBCs have made amazing contributions not only to LGBTQ+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning and others] culture, but also to our larger national culture. It’s important that we pay attention to the full range of strengths and needs of the House Ball Community in order to promote a more comprehensive approach to health and well-being.” said Dr. Smallwood.

Although the HBC has been the focus of extensive human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-related research and intervention, a more holistic view of HBC member health is important. The purpose of this systematic review was to identify health- and wellbeing-related research studies among HBC members to inform future practice. A systematic review of literature published between 2006 and 2016 was conducted.

The review yielded 19 peer-reviewed full-text articles. Studies of house structures and of HIV prevention were most common, followed by supportive social networks and structures, HIV interventions and new prevention approaches, and partnerships and collaborations. Three studies specifically identified stigma, resilience, and access to health care as factors contributing to the health status of HIV-positive individuals. The majority of HBC health research has focused on HIV prevention in urban areas. Future research should examine other health issues (e.g., mental health and substance use) to develop a more robust understanding of HBC health and foster opportunities for developing a variety of health interventions for the HBC.