

Sandi Pruitt, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Sandi Pruitt, Ph.D., M.P.H., is the Associate Director for Community Outreach, Engagement, and Equity at the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center and an Associate Professor in the Peter O'Donnell Jr. School of Public Health at UT Southwestern.

In her work as a cancer epidemiologist, Dr. Pruitt studies health inequities across various populations, with the goal of guiding policies and programs that promote optimal health for everyone.

Dr. Pruitt has spent the last ten years at UT Southwestern building strong community-academic partnerships such as the [Community Assistance Research Initiative](#) (CARE), which she co-leads with Tammy Leonard, Ph.D., Professor of Economics at the University of Dallas. CARE uses evidence-based research to improve the lives of low- and middle-income populations in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. In collaboration with the North Texas Food Bank and Crossroads Community Services, CARE recently demonstrated that small changes to food pantry practices can result in statistically significant improvements in the health and food security of food pantry clients.

Dr. Pruitt is also directing two cancer epidemiology research projects funded by the National Cancer Institute. One project is generating observations of underserved patients with multiple primary cancers. The second is quantifying whether residence within an ethnic enclave contributes to breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer disparities among Hispanic or Latino and Asian American populations in five U.S. states.

In 2019, Dr. Pruitt led a group of UT System researchers in mapping life expectancy for Texans. [The study](#) revealed dramatic differences in lifespan based on gender, race/ethnicity, and where a person lives, down to the ZIP Code level.

“My passion has always been about those who are underserved,” notes Dr. Pruitt, “and doing research that actually changes policy or practice, rather than research for the sake of research. I can honestly say the work I’ve done directly with stakeholders and community members has been the most impactful work of my entire life. That’s why I’m so excited for this opportunity to lead the Office of Community Outreach, Engagement, and Equity and to work with community partners to reduce the cancer burden in Dallas-Fort Worth.”