



POP HEALTH CENTRAL

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POPULATION HEALTH IN ACTION

PHOENIX Rises Again: Rutgers Health Service Corps Summer Program Inspires High School Students

Contributing Authors: Jack Hemphill, Program Manager, Office of Clinical and Health Affairs/Population Health; Vince Silenzio, Professor, Department of Urban-Global Public Health, Rutgers School of Public Health; Parth Shah, Program Support Coordinator, Department of Radiology, New Jersey Medical School; Ethan Halm, Vice Chancellor for Population Health, Office of Clinical and Health Affairs/Population Health; Alex Ruiz, Executive Director, Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety; Humaira Chaudhry, Chair and Chief of Service, Radiology, New Jersey Medical School.

The Rutgers Health Service Corps (RHSC) hosted its second high school summer program, PHOENIX (Population Health Outreach for Next generation Impact and eXcellence), introducing students to public and population health, health professions, community service, and the Service Corps. Twenty-four students from Essex, Hudson, Union, Bergen, Morris, Somerset, and Middlesex Counties were selected from nearly 500 applicants for the five-day program from July 22-26 at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in Newark, NJ. Thanks to tuition assistance and waivers, all selected students were able to attend.

Edited by: Donna Meeker-O'Rourke, Horacio Hernandez, Kithmy Wickramasinghe & Mary O'Dowd (RBHS)

For recommendations on future newsletter topics or to be a contributing author, reach out to us.

Contact us at:



vcpherbhs.rutgers.edu

Throughout the week, students heard from Vice Chancellor [Ethan Halm](#), Professor [Vince Silenzio](#), and Executive Director [Mary O'Dowd](#) about public and population health. They learned about various career paths from Rutgers faculty, including Associate Dean [Donna Feudo](#) ([Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy](#)), Professor [Merlene Fredericks-James](#) ([School of Public Health](#)), Associate Dean [Rosa Chaviano-Moran](#) ([School of Dental Medicine](#)), Professor [Mary Beth Ali](#) ([School of Social Work](#)), Professor [Sharon Anderson](#) ([School of Nursing](#)), and Professor [Melissa Eiseman](#) ([School of Health Professions](#) and the [Physician Assistant Program](#)). They also heard from [University Hospital Newark](#) CEO [Ed Jimenez](#).



The students visited [The Hatchery](#), part of the Rutgers New Brunswick Innovation, Design, and Entrepreneurship Academy (IDEA), where Director [Veronica Armour](#) guided them through an experiential team-learning game called "Friday Night in the ER." They also visited the Rutgers Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy for a live, immersive simulation exercise led by Director of Simulation [Les Barta](#).

Students engaged in team-based activities to learn about population health and social determinants of health, led by our Office of Population Health Interns from the [Institute for Health's Summer Research Internship Program](#). They also volunteered at the [Community Food Bank of New Jersey](#), helping package over 1,700 meals for distribution to food pantries across New Jersey.



The program concluded with students creating and presenting infographics on public and population health topics such as vaping cessation, food insecurity, nutrition, and breast cancer screening. They also proposed service-based passion projects for these topics.

Student feedback was extremely positive, with many suggesting the program should last an additional week. The team eagerly anticipates hosting the PHOENIX program again next summer. The 24 students will now join the Rutgers Health Service Corps as members, collaborating with RHSC college students on service projects throughout the year.



UPCOMING HEALTH OBSERVANCES

August

- National Breastfeeding Month
- OSHA's Safe and Sound Week (8/12-8/18)
- National Immunization Awareness Month
- International Overdose Awareness Day (8/31)

September

- Food Safety Education Month
- Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
- National Sexual Awareness Month
- National Preparedness Month

October

- National Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Health Literacy Month
- Mental Health Awareness Week (10/6-10/12)

Advancing Health Equity: CHIBPS' Groundbreaking Research on LGBTQ+ Mental Health and Care

Contributing authors: Kendra Lewis, MPH, Center for Health, Identity, Behavior and Prevention Studies, Kristen Krause PhD, MPH, Center for Health, Identity, Behavior and Prevention Studies, Michelle Edelstein, MPH, Marketing and Communication



The Rutgers School of Public Health Center for Health, Identity, Behavior, and Prevention Studies (CHIBPS) is a nationally recognized research center studying LGBTQ+ health disparities, with a focus on infectious diseases, mental health burden, and substance use.

CHIBPS has been on the front line advocating for policies, interventions, and programs that can help achieve more equitable health outcomes for sexual and gender minority (SGM) populations. Founded more than 25 years ago by Rutgers School of Public Health Dean, Dr. Perry N. Halkitis, CHIBPS has conducted research on numerous mental health topics, including the minority stress model and substance use, resilience and HIV, and other psychosocial barriers such as stigma and discrimination and their impact on mental health.

SGM populations face myriad mental health concerns that stem from daily experiences with discrimination and stigma. The SGM community also receives mental health treatment and care at a higher proportion than the general population. Underrepresented SGM groups also experience mental health burdens at a higher rate due to the intersection of many psychosocial factors. CHIBPS has helped lead research on different psychosocial factors to help create evidence-based solutions and interventions to help lessen the mental health burden on the SGM community.

Currently, CHIBPS is conducting a research study focused on transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming populations (TGNC) and their mental health needs. Research has shown that TGNC people may face many barriers, including lack of culturally competent care, transphobia, and other biases when attempting to receive mental health care. These barriers can also delay one's access to gender-affirming care. Given the recent increase of proposed legislation attempting to ban or restrict gender-affirming care, it is important that TGNC people have access to physical and mental health care services. The CHIBPS research hopes to explore how psychosocial factors (including gender-based minority stress and medical mistrust) impact the experiences that TGNC people experience seeking mental health care. These findings, in turn, will assist CHIBPS in translating the research findings into potential practice or policy solutions for medical professionals and community centers to support their TGNC patients.

To learn more about CHIBPS, please visit: <https://sph.rutgers.edu/chibps>.

POPULATION HEALTH NEWS

Branching Communities Together Through Sustainability

Contributing author: Jeana Wirtenberg, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Professional Practice & Executive Director, Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation, Rutgers Business School

The Rutgers Institute for Corporate Social Innovation (RICSI) was formed in 2018 with the purpose of developing the next generation of Corporate Social Innovation leaders and becoming a leading academic partner in addressing society's most pressing issues. The Institute was recently awarded \$225,000 by the Rutgers Equity Alliance for Community Health (REACH) for its proposal "Expanding the Impact of Newark Community Food Systems." The project's purpose is to address the social determinants of health with an emphasis on food access and food security in economically disadvantaged communities in Newark.



To carry out the project, RICSI partnered with Newark Science and Sustainability Inc. (NSAS), a non-profit organization led by Founder and Managing Director Tobias Fox, who is also facilitator for Newark Community Food Systems. The project is currently providing healthy food access and nutrition education to 100 families living in Newark.

It also supports 40 stakeholders in receiving a food safety manager certification; runs a [Women's Health & Wellness Workshop Series](#) for families with expectant mothers or newborn babies; and impacts 1,800 community members through community engagement events to promote healthy food access, community green development, and pathways to green jobs. The project is also hosting a series of workshops and Farm-to-Table community meal events to encourage healthy eating, healthy living practices, and environmental education. This grant runs for two years from January 1, 2024-December 31, 2025.

In June, RICS, in collaboration with NSAS, hosted an Annual Sustainable Living Empowerment Conference - "Branching Communities Together Through Sustainability," with 114 participants. Funded by the [REACH grant](#), the conference had panel discussions focused on 'Creating Better Health and Wellness for our Communities and our Environment' and roundtables focused on 'Sustainability through the Lens of Community and Economic Development.'

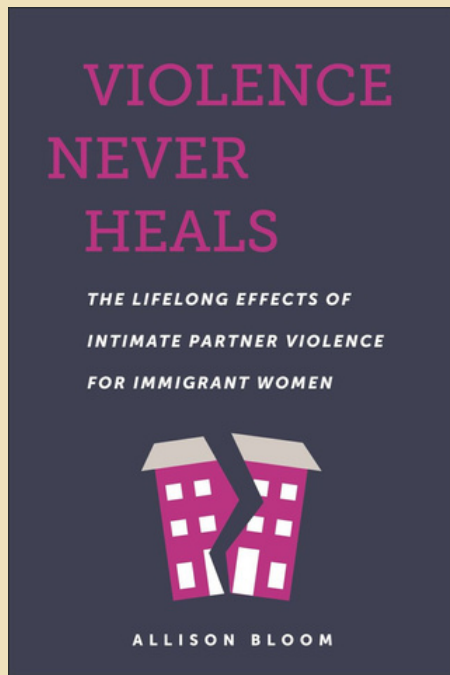
The roundtables were led by 15 expert facilitators and explored barriers and opportunities in preparing for an equitable green economy, pathways to green jobs, extending philanthropy to grassroots-led initiatives, healthy food access, and community green development integrating sustainable agriculture with green technology and ecological infrastructure. The conference also featured four well-attended vendor tables on Clean and Renewable Energy, Wind Power, and Mental Health & Wellness Peer Support.

By the conclusion of the conference, 92 percent of the participants said they were "inspired to take further action on the topics discussed" and 90 percent of the participants said they were "committed to continuing the work discussed and being part of the Newark community network going forward."

The event program can be viewed [here](#) and some highlights from the conference and photo collection are [here](#).

Click the pictures below to watch videos from the event:





WHAT WE ARE READING

Review of Violence Never Heals: The Lifelong Effects of Intimate Partner Violence for Immigrant Women

Contributing author: Donna Meeker-O'Rourke, MPH

Violence Never Heals: The Lifelong Effects of Intimate Partner Violence for Immigrant Women by Allison Bloom examines intimate partner violence (IPV) from an anthropological viewpoint, considering cultural norms and social structures that contribute to violence. Bloom uses life course theory, which examines how events and experiences across an individual's life span influence their health and behavior, to explore intimate partner violence (IPV), focusing on the experiences of Latina immigrants in a Connecticut crisis center. Her perspective combines both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) views, offering deep insights into the IPV movement.

Bloom's book stands out in family science, providing actionable recommendations for professionals. She integrates life course theory and critical disability studies to show how violence impacts survivors throughout their lives, emphasizing the need for educators, service providers, and researchers to consider these perspectives in their work. The book highlights the importance of comprehensive frameworks and culturally sensitive methodologies in addressing IPV, especially among marginalized populations.

The book concludes by emphasizing the need for a life course perspective in IPV research and practice. It calls for a more inclusive approach that accounts for the intersecting identities and experiences of survivors, particularly those from marginalized communities. By highlighting the long-term effects of violence and the importance of cultural humility, Bloom's work offers valuable insights for developing more responsive and inclusive IPV support systems.

CONSORTIUM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Featured speakers at Rutgers Population Health Consortium September 2024 meeting

For this newsletter edition, we would like to introduce you to two members of our Rutgers Population Health Consortium who will be presenting at our next meeting.

Meet Frank A. Ghinassi, PhD, ABPP

Frank A. Ghinassi, PhD, ABPP is President and CEO for Rutgers Health University Behavioral Health Care (UBHC). As CEO, he is responsible for a statewide system of academically based mental health and addiction services across New Jersey. UBHC, one of the largest providers of behavioral and addictions healthcare in the country, offers a wide range of clinical services across all diagnoses, and across the lifespan, including inpatient units, partial hospitalization programs, intensive outpatient programming, case management, traditional outpatient treatment, correctional health care, a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center, peer operated helplines for service members, veterans, mothers of children with special needs, law enforcement officers and child protection workers, a statewide suicide prevention hotline and a clinical research and training institute, as well as an array of specialty and peer support services.

Additionally, Dr. Ghinassi is a Professor at Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology; an Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; an Adjunct Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine; and a Core Faculty Member at Rutgers Global Health Institute. Frank will be presenting at the next Population Health Consortium meeting on September 16th. His presentation is entitled, "Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care (UBHC): An In-Depth Look at Services, Training and Research."



Introducing the new Director of the Office of Workforce Planning and Professional Development at the New Jersey Department of Health

Medha Havnurkar, MBBS, MPA, CHW, FACHE is the founding Director, Office of Workforce Planning and Professional Development at the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) where she spearheads efforts to transform the public health workforce. Her office aspires to nurture a strong, future-ready, and resilient workforce that ensures equitable health outcomes for all New Jerseyans. One of her key initiatives is focused on building cross-sector partnerships on workforce development and wellbeing. Prior to her current role, Medha served as the Program Management Officer for DOH's Community Health Worker Hub.

With over 25 years of health industry experience, Medha has held senior leadership positions at Hackensack Meridian Health (HMH) and served as a practicing primary care physician in India. As the former Director of Hackensack UMC's Clinical Education department, she led the accelerated upskilling and reskilling of clinical and non-clinical employees to meet the care delivery demands of the pandemic.



She holds a medical degree from Mysore University, India, and a Master of Public Administration from New York University's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. She is also certified by multiple professional boards in healthcare and HR. A passionate advocate for community health and social determinants of health, Medha volunteers on the board of Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative, Hackensack, New Jersey.

Where is she now? Inaugural Population Health Fellow accepted into Doctor of Public Health program at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health



In January 2024, the Rutgers Office of Population Health graduated its inaugural population health fellow Kathryn Corpuz, MPH. "I am grateful to have been a part of this population health fellowship. I have learned so much over the past two years because of the mentorship and opportunities established by the Office of Population Health team, my project rotation sponsors, and colleagues to make meaningful contributions to projects and research that impact our Rutgers and local communities." Kathryn leveraged her fellowship experience to explore a variety of population health community-oriented projects and began to specialize in health communications. Notable projects that shaped Kathryn's portfolio in this field included contributing to research with Dr. Yonaira Rivera at the Rutgers School of Communication and Information that seeks to explore the use and engagement of health information among U.S. Latino populations; supporting Dr. Colette Barrow Adams at the Community and Population Health Department at University Hospital in developing a communications plan and educational materials about the social determinants of health; and working with Dr. Leslie Kantor and the Believe in a Healthy Newark social media team to create and share health messages for the Newark community.

Kathryna has also strived to continue her academic pursuits during and after her fellowship. With the support of the fellowship's professional development funding, she began her graduate certificate program in Visual and Digital Health Communication at Boston University Metropolitan College in the summer of 2023 and recently completed this program in June 2024. Kathryn also began her Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) program at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in June 2024. She is a student in the custom concentration and will be focusing her education, research, and practical experiences on efforts to improve and advocate for culturally sensitive health communications in healthcare settings. "This fellowship also gave me the chance to build a foundation for my professional portfolio in the health communications field, which I intend to focus on in my DrPH program. I will be applying the lessons I have learned through this fellowship throughout my career."

NEW FACES IN THE POPULATION HEALTH OFFICE

Meet our new Population Health Fellow, Horacio Hernandez, MPH, CHES

Horacio Hernandez joined the Office of Population Health as its third Population Health Fellow this summer. Before joining Rutgers, he served as a Member Life Coach in the Community Health Program at Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey and as an Outreach Coordinator for the Hopewell Township Health Department. He holds a Master of Public Health (MPH) with a concentration in Global Health, and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Sociology and Public Health from The College of New Jersey (TCNJ). He is also a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). As an undergraduate, he was a Bonner Community Scholar at TCNJ and his professional interests include immigrant and migrant populations, occupational health, food insecurity, and health education and literacy.



Meet our new Office of Population Health Interns:

Kithmy Wickramasinghe (Summer 2024 Rutgers Health Service Corps Leadership Intern)

Kithmy Wickramasinghe is an intern for the Office of Population Health, where she contributes to health communication and promotion efforts and the development of the Rutgers Health Service Corps. She is a 2024 graduate of Rutgers University–New Brunswick’s Honors College, where she earned a Bachelor’s degree in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry. She previously served as president of the American Preventive Screening and Education Association (APSEA) at Rutgers, where she raised awareness for preventable chronic illnesses via holding free health screenings in the community.

Kithmy aspires to be a physician and is a first-year medical student at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. She is broadly interested in population health, health communications, community service, and healthcare equity.

Brithany Andrade (Summer 2024 IFH Research Intern)

Brithany Andrade is an intern for the Office of Population Health and the Rutgers Health Service Corps, where she is engaging in community health initiatives, including a student patient navigator breast cancer screening study and other projects in New Brunswick and Newark. She is a rising senior attending Rutgers University–Newark and is majoring in Neuroscience with minors in Chemistry and Social Justice.

Brithany Andrade is a scholar in the Honors Living Learning Community, a Garden State LSAMP Scholar, and a BOLD Women’s Leadership Network Scholar. Aspiring to become a physician and attend medical school after her undergraduate studies, Brithany is deeply committed to population health and community service. She is also passionate about addressing language barriers in medicine and plans to work on initiatives to improve communication and healthcare accessibility for non-English-speaking patients.



Abigail Puszkina, Summer 2024 IFH Research Intern

Abigail Puszkina is an intern at the Office of Population Health, where she is helping manage the social media account for the Rutgers Health Service Corps, and other communications efforts, as well as supporting the PHOENIX High School Summer Program. She is pursuing a bachelor’s degree from American University, double majoring in Public Health and Journalism.

While in school, Abigail is a member of the school’s television station, ATV, and in the dance club AU in Motion. Outside of school, Abigail was one of the first staff members of Camp Soar, a summer camp in Franklin Township dedicated to giving kids from under-resourced families a chance to attend day camp.

Mindfulness Moment

Guided Meditation

ULCA Mindful is a free app that provides basic meditations in English and other languages such as Russian, Farsi, and Spanish. It also provides information on the importance of mindfulness and makes it accessible and easy to practice mindfulness meditation anywhere.



Funding Opportunities



National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities

Community Level Interventions to Improve Minority Health and Reduce Health Disparities (R01- Clinical Trial Optional)

This effort helps research develop and test community-level interventions to improve minority health and reduce health disparities. The office of National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) provides support to various projects, research, training, infrastructure development and outreach that are related to NIMHD's mission by using grants, cooperative agreements and contracts. The deadline to apply is October 5, 2024. For additional information, please click [here](#).

Interventions to Reduce Sleep Health Disparities (R01- Clinical Trials Optional)

This initiative's overall objective is to promote sleep health by addressing behavioral, environmental, or structural determinants of sleep deficiencies. This may include the development and testing of non-pharmacological interventions conducted across multiple domains to promote good sleep health, reduce sleep health disparities, and treat sleep disorders. The deadline to apply is October 5, 2024. For additional information, please click [here](#).

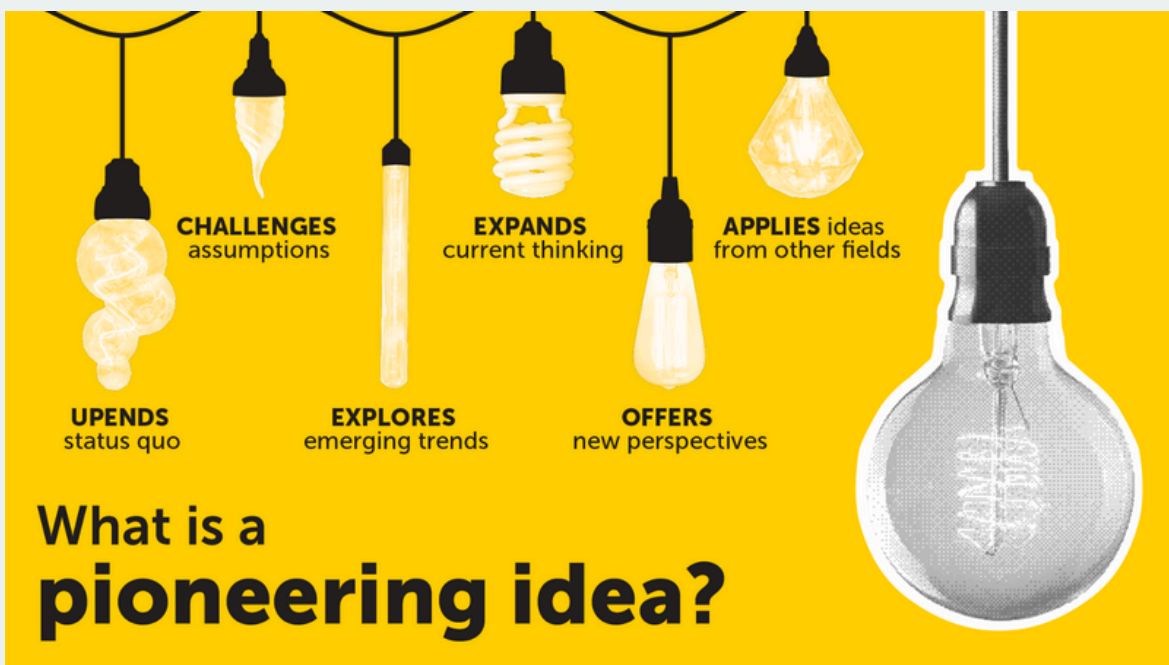
Funding Opportunities

Patient-Clinician Relationship: Improving Health Outcomes in Populations that Experience Health Care Disparities (R01-Clinical Trials Optional)

This funding opportunity aims to support behavioral, biological, environmental, or social multi-level research projects to involve patients, clinicians, and community members to understand how improving patient-clinician communication can affect health care outcomes for patients from populations with health disparities. The deadline to apply is January 8, 2025. For additional information, please click [here](#).

Leveraging Health Information Technology (Health IT) to Address and Reduce Health Care Disparities (R01- Clinical Trials Optional)

This opportunity seeks to identify and support research projects that study the effect of health information technology in reducing healthcare disparities, specifically regarding healthcare accessibility and health outcomes for minority populations. The deadline to apply is May 7, 2025. For additional information, please click [here](#).



Pioneering Ideas: Exploring the Future to Build a Culture of Health

This funding opportunity seeks proposals to impact health equity in the areas of the Future of Evidence, Social Interaction, Food, and Work, as well as unique approaches outside these areas that advance health equity and progress toward a Culture of Health. It invites ideas from scientists, anthropologists, artists, urban planners, community leaders, and anyone with new or unconventional ideas to improve health equity and wellbeing for generations. Achieving these changes requires diverse perspectives and collaboration across multiple sectors. The deadline to apply is October 1, 2024. For additional information, please click [here](#).



UPCOMING EVENTS

SOPHE Advocacy Summit

Saturday, October 19, 2024 to Monday, October 21, 2024
Hilton Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.

SOPHE hosts advocacy summit in Washington DC

This Summit focuses both on providing a learning environment for all levels of knowledge and experiences, with also provides public health leaders to share advocacy training and opportunities for participants to take skills learned back into their communities. Some of the tracks being offered at this summit are Advocacy Skill Building (Beginner and Advance), Research & Practice in Advocacy & Grassroots work, and Poster Track Health Advocacy. To register, please click the link [here](#).



NJAAP (NJ American Academy of Pediatrics) 33rd School Health Conference

October 16th, 2024

The Palace at Somerset Park
333 Davison Ave, Somerset, NJ, 08873

The 33rd School Health Conference is focused on providing the opportunity to learn of new best practices within pediatrics and current pediatric resources and innovations in the event's exhibition hall. This conference also provides opportunities to obtain continuing education credits (CNE/CME). To register, please click the link [here](#).

New Jersey Chapter

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Save the Date for the second Rutgers Hackathon

The second Rutgers Health Hackathon will be held from October 25th to October 27th at RWJ University Hospital, New Brunswick. The Hackathon brings together multidisciplinary teams to collaborate and solve healthcare problems by leveraging technology and innovation. Prize money is awarded to the teams with the most innovative and impactful solutions. Please save the date and stay tuned for more information.

