

POP HEALTH CENTRAL

RUTGERS POPULATION HEALTH CONSORTIUM NEWSLETTER



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RUTGERS POPULATION HEALTH CONSORTIUM LAUNCH

On June 7, 2022, the Rutgers Population Health Consortium held its initial kickoff meeting. Over 30 faculty and staff across Rutgers campuses, schools, and institutions along with representatives from RWJBarnabas Health and University Hospital Newark came together for this convening.

The kickoff began with a presentation by the joint Consortium leaders, Dr. Ethan Halm (*Vice Chancellor for Population Health at RBHS*) and Mary O'Dowd (*Executive Director of Health Systems and Population Health Integration at RBHS*). They described the background and achievements of the former Population Health Working Group and how the Consortium expands upon that prior work through collaboration with a broader membership of population health experts and leaders. Additional presentations included Dr. Colette Barrow (*Executive Director for Community and Population Health at University Hospital*) who gave an overview of the various population health initiatives implemented at University Hospital including the Familiar Faces program, Hospital-based Violence Intervention program, among others. Margaret Koller (*Executive Director for the Rutgers Center for State Health Policy*) shared information about the [NJ Integrated Population Health Data \(iPHD\) Project](#) covering the key research priorities, approved data sets, and the application process for data access.

The establishment of the Consortium provides a forum for sharing and amplifying population health initiatives in the Rutgers community and affiliated health system partners. It also serves as a platform for collaboration in research, education, and community engagement. The next Consortium meeting is in October.

Do you have any recommendations for future newsletter topics? Contact us at:



vcph@rutgers.rbhs.edu

POPULATION HEALTH NEWS

Event Highlights from Rutgers

"Nurse Leadership Through Crisis: Examining COVID-19, Health Equity, and Care"

The Rutgers School of Nursing hosted this webinar on May 5, 2022. The panelists included Judith Persichilli (*NJ Commissioner of Health*), Linda Flynn (*Dean of the Rutgers School of Nursing*), and Carl Kirton (*Chief Nursing Officer at University Hospital in Newark*). During the webinar, the panelists shared their experiences in nursing leadership and practice, addressing topics such as equity in the healthcare space, peer support, and shaping the future for a more equitable and resilient health workforce. The event was moderated by Mary O'Dowd (*Executive Director of Health Systems and Population Health Integration at RBHS*). More information and a recording of the webinar can be found using this [link](#).

"Monkeypox: A Conversation with Scientists, Clinicians, and Community Leaders"

The Rutgers School of Public Health hosted a virtual seminar on August 5, 2022 to share information about the current monkeypox outbreak in the United States. The presenters included leaders from the Rutgers School of Public Health – Perry Halkitis (*Dean*), Rafael Pérez-Figueroa (*Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Public Health Practice*), and Leslie Kantor (*Professor and Chair of the Department of Urban-Global Public Health*) – along with the following community leaders – Quincy Bell-Viljoen (*Statewide LGBTQIA Prevention Manager at Hyacinth AIDS Foundation*) and Bobby Lowry (*Harm Reduction Coordinator at the Visiting Nurse Association*). Several topics were covered during this seminar such as the epidemiology of monkeypox, its transmission and prevention approaches, addressing stigma, among other key topics. More information and a recording of the seminar can be found using this [link](#).



Check it out! Population Health in Action

"Mental Health, Suicidality, and Connectedness Among High School Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic – Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, United States, January – June 2021"

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected several areas of our lives. Some examples include family loss or illness, barriers in health care access, social isolation, and school closures. This study focuses on the impact of the pandemic on young people, specifically high-school aged adolescents in the U.S. Using the 2021 Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey as the data source for this analysis, two main questions were assessed:

1. What is the status of high school students' mental health and suicidality during the pandemic?
2. Is mental health and suicidality associated with connectedness – within the context of feeling close to persons at school and virtual connectedness to family, peers, and the community during the pandemic?

The study results showed that 37.1% of students in this sample experienced poor mental health during the pandemic. Twelve months before the survey, 44.2% had persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, 19.9% seriously considered attempting suicide, and 9.0% had attempted suicide. Students who felt more connected with others at school and virtually fared better than their counterparts in mental health and suicidality. These results highlight the need to consider comprehensive interventions and strategies for youth that address improving feelings of connectedness with others.

Responding to the Current Youth Mental Health Crisis and Preventing the Next One: Proceedings of a Workshop – In Brief

In May 2022, the National Academies' Forum for Children's Well-Being held a workshop to explore opportunities to improve systems and programs for children and youth support by better incorporating prevention and promotion strategies. This is especially important following the rise in mental health concerns for youth during the pandemic. The [report](#) summarizes the topics addressed at this workshop.

[Take Action with Policy Making: "How do you think the opioid settlement money should be spent?"](#)

Are you looking for an opportunity to engage in the health policy space? Do you want a say in how New Jersey uses Opioid Settlement Funds? The State of New Jersey will be receiving \$300 million in opioid settlement funds over the next two decades and is seeking ideas to help those most impacted by the opioid crisis. Ideas can be submitted by the general public including treatment providers, residents with substance use disorders and their loved ones, advocates, and social service organizations, among others. Submitted proposals will be considered in the development of spending plans, programs, and evaluations for the funds. The deadline for initial submissions is October 31, 2022. The period for submissions will be reopened yearly.

CONSORITUM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Lawrence Kleinman: COVID-19 & Children

Dr. Lawrence Kleinman - a professor and vice chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and a professor of global public health at Rutgers School of Public Health - is the lead investigator for the Collaborative Long-term Study of Outcomes of COVID-19 in kids (CLOCK). This project is part of the National Institutes of Health funded research initiative called RECOVER, which aims to study the long-term and delayed impacts of COVID-19 in children. We spoke with Dr. Kleinman to learn about the current progress of this project and get his thoughts on the status of COVID-19 and its impact on children.

Q: In February of this year, you spoke about the CLOCK study in the ["On the Pandemic" Rutgers podcast](#). You had noted that this work will contribute to our knowledge of the persistent symptoms experienced by those with long COVID, how frequent these symptoms happen, and how much is attributable to COVID-19 compared to other means. What are some of the key observations you have seen since the start of your research?

A: CLOCK in RECOVER is up and running and we are enrolling children and young adults up to age 25 years, ([CLOCK-RECOVER.rutgers.edu](https://www.rutgers.edu/clock-recover) for those interested in participating). Even as the so called "COVID fatigue" is real, there remains a keen interest in long COVID, which seems to impact both children and adults. While we all are very eager to know results, we are still early in our overall recruitment and expect the first look at RECOVER data to begin sometime next spring at the earliest. Such information will be preliminary and we hope that it will give us important clues on what to expect and how to improve the work that is ongoing.

Q: In August, [Governor Murphy signed an executive order](#) lifting routine COVID-19 testing requirements for school districts, child care settings, and state contractors in New Jersey. How do you see this change impacting children's potential exposure and risk for COVID-19, especially with the new school year starting?

A: My experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has been that every time we feel like we are moving forward to a better plateau, something new requires us to adapt once again. My hope is that as more and more children are vaccinated and boosted, the illness will be less severe and maybe we will find that long COVID will become less common and that looser mitigation practices will prove safe or something that we can agree is safe enough. That said, I remain concerned that we will see additional surges in infections and potentially new variants that can cause more trouble. So I am cautiously



optimistic, realistically alert to signs of trouble, and hopeful that we will be able to provide care, comfort, and education for all of New Jersey's children moving forward. Let me say too that I hope that we modify and adapt our approach to education and early childhood education in a way that listens to our children and their families with an eye to catching up and reducing the future impacts of the losses that many children have suffered.

Q: Based on the current situation with COVID-19 and thinking beyond the CLOCK study, are there other key research questions that should be investigated with regards to COVID-19 and children?

A: I think we need to think about long COVID as the onset of a new chronic disease of childhood. Impacts of COVID-19 may be readily apparent and observable, latent in a way that emerges later, or only apparent at times of emotional or physical stress. All of these considerations need to be built into future research. Beyond that, we need to think of the direct effects of COVID-19 on the child's body, the impact of family members sick or dead on the child's life, and the indirect impacts of the various experiences of the pandemic independent of individual infections. We need to learn how to incorporate an appreciation of the life course - the journey from conception through adulthood - both in our understanding of the impacts of acute and long COVID and on how to develop intervention to mitigate deleterious effects on children and families.

Meet the Vice Chancellor for Population Health: Ethan Halm



Ethan A. Halm, MD, MPH, MBA joined Rutgers as the inaugural Vice Chancellor for Population Health at Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS). In this role, he aims to advance Population Health initiatives in research, education, and clinical care across the Rutgers schools of medicine, public health, nursing, pharmacy, health professions, dentistry, and graduate studies, and our affiliated clinical partners. He is also the Deputy Chief Population Health Officer for the RWJBarnabas Health System (RWJBH), a 12-hospital regional healthcare network that is the leading academic health system in NJ. Dr. Halm is a general internal medicine physician who is an experienced clinical and scientific leader, researcher, and mentor.

As one of his early initiatives, he and Mary O'Dowd, MPH, the Executive Director of Health Systems and Population Health Integration, have established the Rutgers Population Health Consortium (termed the Consortium) to serve as a cross-bridging entity across Rutgers, RBHS, RWJBH, University Hospital Newark and other partners to bring together scientists, clinicians, educators, and community engagement experts to advance Population Health. The Consortium is off to a great start with members from all Rutgers Chancellor-led units, RWJBH and University Hospital Newark.

Dr. Halm is very interested in catalyzing bidirectional interactions between the academic researchers and the health system so that: 1) scientific advances can be implemented into actual clinical practice, and 2) real world data from and challenges in practice can stimulate research. To help advance these goals, he is co-chairing a new Learning Health Systems Innovation and Implementation Committee in partnership with David Arnold, PhD, the Chief Data & Analytics Officer for RWJBH, that is bringing together scientific and health system leaders to help drive innovation to improve the care of our patients. The roll out of the Epic electronic medical record system at RWJBH will expand opportunities to conduct observational and interventional studies with large, diverse patient populations and in real world practice settings. Dr. Halm is also co-chairing the Equity and Population Health Quality Improvement Working Group at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH), which is charged with helping to measure and reduce health disparities and improve patient outcomes for patients cared for in the academic medical center in New Brunswick. His co-chair in this initiative is Franck Nelson, MSN, RN, the Assistant Vice President for Health Equity at RWJUH.

Reflecting on his first few months on the job, Dr. Halm said, "I am very excited to be joining Rutgers to help create and foster collaborations to improve the outcomes of patients and populations we serve. There is a wealth of amazing, diverse talent across all of our schools and clinical partners, so I look forward to working with the Deans, Directors, and health system leaders on this important work." His personal research focuses on: 1) understanding patient, provider, and system factors that influence the quality, efficiency, equity, patient-centeredness, and outcomes of care; 2) implementing and evaluating interventions to improve the health and healthcare of individuals and populations; and 3) using predictive analytic techniques to identify and reduce the risk of adverse outcomes. His work has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and many other public and private organizations.

Meet the Population Health Fellow: Kathryn Corpuz

In March 2022, the RBHS Office of Clinical and Health Affairs hired and onboarded the first population health fellow, Kathryn Corpuz. Before joining RBHS, she was a Senior Associate at The Palladium Group working with the USAID Health Policy Plus (HP+) Project for five years. In that role, she provided technical assistance for the project's family planning portfolio and monitoring, evaluation, and learning efforts. One of her main projects was the development and execution of Costed Implementation Plans for Family Planning in several countries including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Jordan, South Sudan, and Guatemala. She also held positions as a Program Associate at the Brookline Department of Public Health in Massachusetts and as a Research Assistant Intern at The Palladium.

Kathryna graduated from Boston University School of Public Health with her Master of Public Health degree with concentrations in Global Health and Epidemiology. She was also awarded as the 2016 recipient of the Rex Fendall Award for Excellence in Public Health Writing.



Kathryna is now halfway through the first year of her fellowship and during this time, she has contributed to several population health projects. Some examples include the launch of the Population Health Consortium, student health improvement initiatives at Rutgers, and participation in a statewide Healthy New Jersey 2030 planning initiative. An area of interest for her is health communications and how messaging can be used to build one's knowledge and drive improved health actions. One of her fellowship rotations is with the [Believe in a Healthy Newark Initiative](#) (BHN) and the Rutgers School of Public Health, which aims to address the social determinants of health in the areas of food and fitness, healthy homes, adverse childhood experiences, and more recently COVID-19 support. In partnership with the Rutgers School of Public Health, Kathryn's rotation with BHN has enabled her to explore her interest in health communications further through the creation and dissemination of relevant health messages for the Newark community through the BHN social media platforms.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Alpha Phi Foundation: [Heart to Heart Grant](#). As a women's organization, Alpha Phi Foundation places special emphasis on women's heart health. In 1993, Alpha Phi Foundation designed an annual grant—the Heart to Heart Grant—to encourage research and education to lessen the impact of heart disease in women. Alpha Phi Foundation announces a single recipient of the \$100,000 Heart to Heart Grant every year. To request more information on the Heart to Heart Grant, [contact the Program Manager](#).

- American Cancer Society: [Investigating the Role of Policy and Insurance in Improving Cancer Prevention Outcome](#). ACS is keenly interested in supporting rapid learning research to study the effects of health policy changes on patients, providers, and health systems. This includes but is not limited to: (1) Facilitators and barriers to care; (2) Unintended consequences; (3) Differential experiences and outcomes of patients seeking or receiving care; (4) Best practice models for quality care; and (5) Economic Impact. Grant applications are due on October 15, 2022. For questions about this mechanism please contact [Julian James-Burke](#), Research Program Manager of the Clinical and Cancer Control Research program, at julian.jamesburke@cancer.org.
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): [Early Career Researcher Innovation Grants](#). AFSP's research grants support studies that will increase our understanding of suicide or test treatments and other interventions that save lives. There are several grant opportunities to be awarded including the Distinguished Investigator Innovation Grant, the Standard Research Innovation Grant, the Early Career Researcher Innovation Grant, the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Innovation Grant, and the Pilot Innovation Grant. For specifics about each grant opportunity, refer to [the AFSP site](#).



- [CitrusBits Cultivator 2022](#). CitrusBits is inviting founders looking for the right opportunity to transform ambitious ideas into innovative products, to win a grant of up to \$100,000 toward mobile app design/development, for qualified projects.
- [New Jersey Health Foundation, Inc. Grants Program](#). [NJHF's Grant Programs](#) support exciting research projects in the very early stages of development as well as a segment of funding for community health, social service issues and education projects. Grants of up to \$35,000 each for research projects with exciting potential are available.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: [Evidence for Action - Innovative Research to Advance Racial Equity](#). Evidence for Action prioritizes research to evaluate specific interventions that have the potential to contribute to dismantling and counteracting the harms of structural and systemic racism and improving health, well-being, and equity outcomes. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

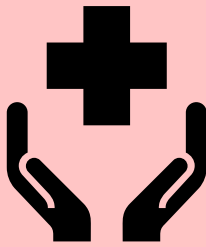
STAY TUNED



Rutgers Global Health Institute awards [Global Health Seed Grants](#) to faculty conducting collaborative, interdisciplinary activities that address health inequities in New Jersey and around the world. Our aim is to help faculty pursue new ideas and seed expanded research and funding. Grants are awarded in one of two categories: 1) Education, Training, and Capacity Building or 2) Research. The Global Health Seed Grants program is designed to address health disparities anywhere in the world, including Rutgers' surrounding communities.

The application will be opened in October and the deadline to submit a proposal will be on November 30, 2022. More information to come. For any questions, send an email to info@globalhealth.rutgers.edu with "Global Health Seed Grants" in the subject line.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Rutgers Population Health Consortium October Meeting

- Monday, October 3, 2022, 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM
- Zoom (details provided via email to Consortium members)



Adult Mental Health First Aid Training

- Thursday, October 13, 2022, 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM
- This training teaches participants how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis, specifically mental illnesses and substance use disorders.



Research Incubator in Climate and Health Fall Symposium

- Wednesday, October 19, 2022, 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- This Symposium is part of the Research Incubator in Climate and Health, a new initiative of the Rutgers Office for Research aiming to support researchers at Rutgers in developing new projects in the areas of climate and health. Rutgers faculty are invited to submit applications to participate in the upcoming symposium.



iPHD Governing Board Meeting

- Friday, October 21, 2022, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
- This is an open session iPHD meeting and will be conducted by videoconferencing. Please email Oliver Lontok (olontok@ifh.rutgers.edu) for registration and login instructions.



Rutgers University Center for Autism Research, Education, and Services (RUCARES) Annual Symposium

- Wednesday, October 26, 2022, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- The RUCARES Annual Symposium will provide autism researchers with a day of engaging and networking over presentations and poster sessions, including a keynote presentation by nationally recognized autism research, Kristen Brennan, PhD.