

2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT



1st
College of
Public Health
in Virginia



College of
Public Health



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School/Departments

SON – School of Nursing
GCH – Department of Global and Community Health
HAP – Department of Health Administration and Policy
NFS – Department of Nutrition and Food Studies
SW – Department of Social Work

Front cover photo: Learn more about the students in the Child Welfare Stipend Program on pages 10-11. Participants pictured on the cover are Joshua Valentine, Jessica Yun, Melissa Alba, Waseema Khan, Sarah Conner, Jessica St. John. Also pictured on page 10 are (far left) Lorraine Abarca and Stephanie Marine, and on page 11, (far right) Sarah Taylor.

College Leadership

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Dean

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Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Kimberly M. Holmes
Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Catherine J. Tompkins
Associate Dean for Faculty and Staff Affairs

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2021-2022 Annual Report

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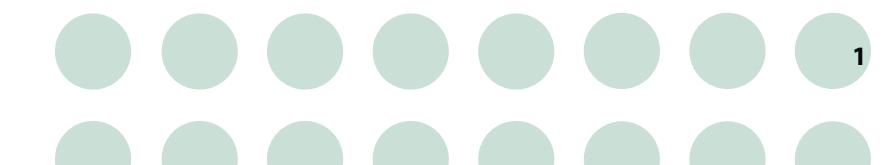
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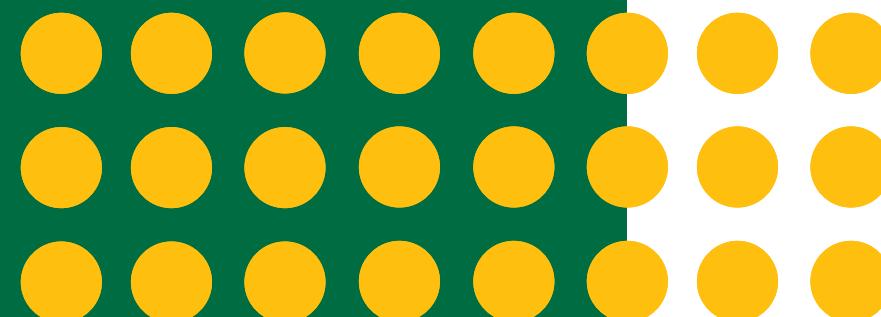
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TOGETHER, WE CAN DO THIS



DEAN'S LETTER

Thank you to the Mason community and everyone at the College of Public Health for the warm welcome in August 2022. And what a time it was to join the College ... together, faculty, staff, students, and alumni achieved many significant milestones, including officially becoming a College of Public Health. I want to thank former Dean Dr. **Germaine Louis**, who retired in 2022, for her many contributions to the College and for laying a firm foundation on which to build in the coming years.

I joined the College of Public Health because I believe in the University's open access mission and commitment to inclusive excellence, and I am proud of our central role in regional workforce development, research of consequence, and delivering clinical care.

While it's impossible to capture all the amazing work the College has done in a single report, we seek to highlight select accomplishments in our key areas of focus, including prevention and treatment of infectious and chronic diseases, inequalities and marginalized communities, environmental health and climate change, nutrition, violence, mental and behavioral health, informatics, and health technologies.

Students play a central role in our success, and their perspectives are captured throughout the report as a visible reminder of our "why." The student body of the College is diverse and high-performing—with more than 60% identifying as non-white and graduation rates well above the national average.

Our work is just beginning, and we see great opportunities for collaboration and leadership in the years to come. I am excited to meet more members of the Mason community and remain confident that, together, we can do this.

I encourage you to follow us on LinkedIn and other socials @MasonPublicHealth (or on Twitter: @MasonPubHealth) and sign up for our newsletter to remain informed of College news and events throughout the year.

Melissa J. Perry
Dean
College of Public Health



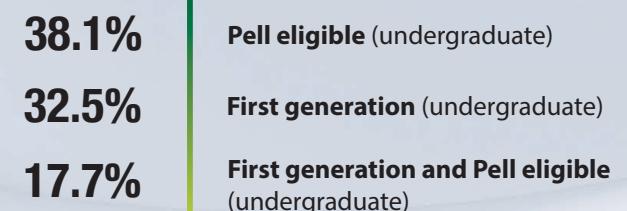
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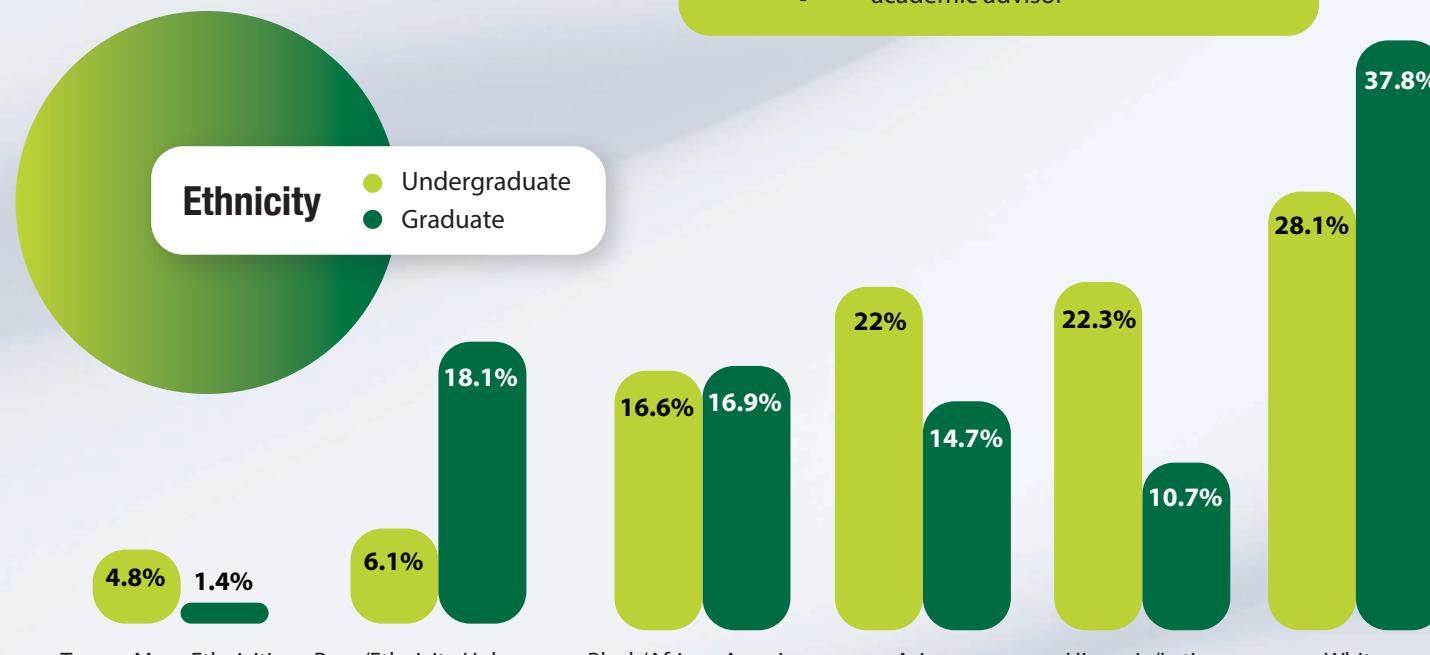
POSITIONED FOR IMPACT

2021-22 Student Demographics for the College



Our students come from:
(undergraduate and graduate)

35 States plus Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico
8 Countries



Source: Fall 2021 census numbers from Mason Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning

Our high-performing, diverse student body represents the multidisciplinary, multicultural, and multisector public health and health care environments in which they serve—looking beyond the numbers, they are the future of public health.



3,213

Total students enrolled

● 57% – Undergraduate
● 43% – Graduate

23.6%

Total enrolled in
fully online degrees

100%

Undergraduate students met with an
academic advisor

2021 Graduates

924

Total graduates



“I was initially set on [studying] infectious diseases. Mason’s first-year classes helped me get my foot in the door with public health. I found my aspirations in epidemiology and analyzing data overlap in public health.”

COLIN TRAN
MPH '22



87%

of all graduates report positive career outcomes (employed or graduate school)

of undergraduate students employed in a position related to their career goals

82%

of graduate students employed in a position related to their career goals

464 graduates represented in 2020-21 Career Plans Survey



“I am dedicated to being an influential member of society by supporting and advocating on behalf of those who represent the future of our communities—children.”

ALONDRA ORTEGA
BSW '22

**STUDENT
VIEW**

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Together, we see public health in a whole new light

Introducing the College of Public Health at George Mason University—
inclusive, interprofessional public health education for all.

The first and only College of Public Health in Virginia

In addition to being the first College of Public Health in Virginia, we are part of one of the most diverse universities in the country and the most diverse and largest research university in Virginia. Mason is an ideal location for researching, teaching, influencing, and improving public health. We are located at the heart of a dynamic region that is home to leading organizations focused on improving the public's health and well-being, including public health, policymaking, and community services organizations; health systems; and global consulting firms.

Interprofessional advantage

The College is comprised of the School of Nursing and the Departments of Global and Community Health, Health Administration and Policy, Nutrition and Food Studies, and Social Work. Few colleges of public health have this distinct combination of departments, and it allows us to see public health differently and creates an interprofessional advantage for learning, research, and practice. Our students leave here ready to champion public health practice and research that is increasingly multidisciplinary,



“I commend George Mason University for establishing the Commonwealth’s first College of Public Health to help train this critical workforce. The College’s work on important issues such as mental health, suicide prevention, opioid misuse, and providing health services to the underserved is vital to our region’s future health.””

TIM KAIN

U.S. Senate, Virginia

multicultural, and multisector—just like us.

Our interprofessional research and experiential learning fosters knowledge-sharing to improve translation, implementation, and outcomes. We prepare professionals committed to delivering health and well-being for all through competency-based curriculum and national workforce growth initiatives.

Inclusivity is our strength

The College sees inclusivity as one

of our biggest strengths and as the way to achieve access, equity, and representation in public health. More than 60% of our student body is from historically underrepresented identities and reflects the rapidly diversifying communities we serve.

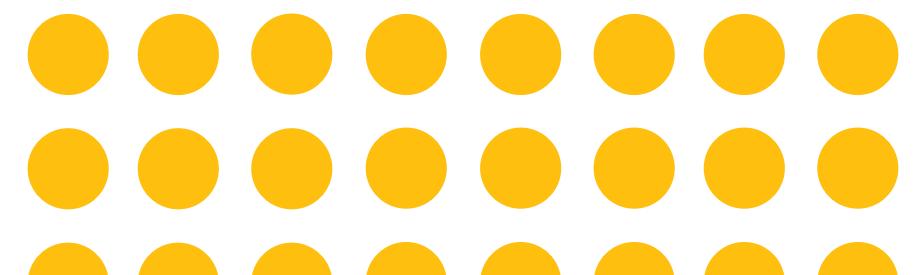
Our commitment to inclusive excellence ensures that we are preparing the best and the brightest workforce who understand and can work effectively in cross-cultural environments to advance the public's health and well-being.



“Mason’s long-standing commitment to inclusive excellence fosters an environment where diverse perspectives are welcome and nurtured to thrive. The interprofessional nature of the College further strengthens collaboration and inspires new approaches to inquiry. Mason is the ideal location for establishing the first College of Public Health in Virginia.””

LAURA MAGAÑA

President & CEO, Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH)



EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

Associate professor's research featured in the 2022 Economic Report of the President

The 2022 Economic Report of the President cited Associate Professor (HAP) **Priyanka Anand's** research on the impact of state-paid family leave policies on labor supply and caregiving decisions following a spousal disability or health shock. Anand explains the impact of her research:

Q: How does paid family leave positively affect families and the labor supply?

A **Anand:** Workers without paid family leave often face the tradeoff between staying at work to earn income or leaving their job to provide care for their family member. Our research found that paid leave mandates reduce the likelihood of decreasing paid work hours to provide caregiving after a spouse's health shock. However, paid leave mandates also reduce employment if they are not provided together with job protection. For caregivers who may not have job protection, paid leave mandates increase the likelihood that they will leave their job to care for their spouses.

Learn more at
go.gmu.edu/PresEconReport

Our faculty serve as experts in their fields. Whether it's an elected service role for a national organization, a federal policy advisor, or offering nationally-ranked programs, our faculty members deliver.

Exceptional talent, research, and generosity

Faculty



43 new faculty & staff

218 total faculty & staff (full and part time)

Research

64 awards

30% increase from FY21

\$9.9 million

in research awards

47% increase from FY21

Giving Back

\$2.2 million

to support student scholarship, faculty research, and clinical care

\$515,055

raised for student scholarship support

Thank you to all of our generous donors.

Faculty elections & appointments

Michael S. Bloom
Associate Professor (GCH)
Elected Fellow of the American College of Epidemiology and Appointed to Editorial Board of *Fertility and Sterility*

Helen B. Chin
Assistant Professor (GCH)
Elected Secretary of the Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research

Katherine N. Scafide
Associate Professor (SON)
Appointed to the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science

*In the Social Determinants of Health class, students, including **Aya Laoufir**, explore the many social justice factors that affect health and consider which community systems and social change approaches may decrease or eliminate health inequities.*



SHINING A LIGHT

In 2022, intimate partner violence (IPV) was front and center in the media with high-profile events such as the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and the Johnny Depp-Amber Heard trial. Faculty and students provided expertise to raise awareness about IPV, help those affected by violence, and reduce the stigma associated with IPV.

Associate professor's alternate light source research receives national attention

Associate Professor (SON) **Katherine Scafide**'s alternate light source (ALS) research has been recognized on a national scale, with recent attention from filmmaker and humanitarian Angelina Jolie, national news coverage, and funding from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Scafide's research helps identify hard-to-see bruising in darker skin tones where it may be otherwise difficult or impossible to detect.

Jolie, an advocate for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), sought to learn more about Scafide's research and view a demonstration of the ALS technology. Following the reauthorization of VAWA, Scafide's research was featured on *NBC Nightly News* with Kate Snow.

Scafide is furthering her research with a \$1 million grant from DOJ to pair forensic bruise analysis with machine learning. Law enforcement and legal professionals often rely on the accuracy and interpretation of injury documentation to inform their decisions; however, current bruise assessments provide little reliable data that can be used. Scafide will work with Director of the Machine Learning and Inference Laboratory **Janusz Wojtusiak** and Associate Professor (Engineering) **David Lattanzi** on the project.

"Our new study seeks to use deep learning to help improve our understanding of how bruises appear over time on diverse skin tones. The results will have broad implications for forensic clinical practice, criminal justice response, and future research," said Scafide. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/ScafideALS2022

Large photo: Filmmaker and humanitarian Angelina Jolie learns about Associate Professor **Katherine Scafide**'s alternate light source (ALS) research in Peterson Hall.

Small photo: Scafide speaks with reporter Kate Snow about her research on ALS for *NBC Nightly News*.



STUDENT
VIEW

The future of forensic nursing

“I decided to get my nursing degree so I can become a forensic nurse. This funding will allow me to focus my attention on the program and receive my degree in one year of full-time study, meaning I will be able to start my specialization sooner. I am excited to make an impact by joining this field and supporting victims of violence.”

ASHKAN ABOUSAEDI

Accelerated second degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing student '23, Mason Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science '17, Helene Fuld Health Trust Endowed Scholarship recipient

» Support student success at publichealth.gmu.edu/give

Correcting misconceptions about IPV

As a leading scholar in intimate partner violence (IPV) and underreported populations such as men, **Denise Hines**, associate professor (SW), offered commentary and expertise to help clarify misconceptions about male victims of abuse and educated the public about false allegations of abuse throughout the Johnny Depp-Amber Heard trial. Though Hines was not directly involved in the trial, her expertise was featured as a resource in national publications.

PIPELINE BUILDERS

Word has spread about Mason's reputation as a university that thinks and researches differently—just one of the reasons that when organizations like the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and AmeriCorps tackle critical health care workforce shortages, they turn to us. In 2022, the College received several \$1 million+ grants to deliver major workforce initiatives.

Training public health informaticists to connect patients with care

The Mason Data and Technology Driven Public Health AmeriCorps Training Program will improve patient referrals to both health and social determinants of health needs using data analytics and community-based relationships.

The program is funded through a three-year \$2.6 million grant from the Public Health AmeriCorps program and is led by **Rebecca Sutter**, professor (SON) and director of the Mason and Partners (MAP) Clinics, and **Janusz Wojtusiak**, associate professor (HAP) and director of the Center for Discovery Science and Health Informatics. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/AmeriCorpsGrant22

Child Welfare Stipend Program student participants

The program builds a pipeline for working with this vulnerable population. The Department of Social Work partners with the Virginia Department of Social Services to prepare social work students for a career in public child welfare.

“Our Mason AmeriCorps trainees will be the next public health leaders, and we are excited to prepare them to use data to guide public health strategy and create stronger connections to underserved Northern Virginia families.”

REBECCA SUTTER
Professor (SON) and Director, MAP Clinics

Trusted partner for large-scale workforce initiatives in the region

The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has tapped the College as a leading partner in building the talent pipeline with funding for three major workforce development initiatives:

Preparing Nursing students to care for underserved populations

A \$1.15 million HRSA grant helped create an interprofessional Learning Laboratory for Community Health that prepares students to work in medically underserved communities in inner cities and rural areas and with underserved populations, such as aging adults and patients of color. Students design and implement evidence-based solutions and examine population health solutions for communities.

Rebecca Sutter, professor (SON), leads the program. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/HRSAwellbeing

Building workforce resiliency and well-being

A \$2 million three-year cooperative agreement with HRSA supports the mental health and well-being of current and future health care workers through in-person and virtual education and training activities. The program supports nurses, social workers, public health professionals, and practitioners in rural and underserved communities.

Debra Goldberg, associate professor (HAP), leads the program. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/HRSAwellbeing

Building the behavioral health workforce and improving access

The \$1.9 million four-year HRSA Behavioral Health Workforce and Training grant is helping improve access to behavioral health services for underserved and rural populations through the Mason Community-Academic Partnerships in Behavioral Health (CAP-BH) program, led by the Department of Social Work. The program provides yearly stipends for Master of Social Work students and expands the existing partnership with the Mason and Partners (MAP) Clinics. Associate Professor **Denise Hines** co-directs the project with Associate Professor and Department Chair **Emily Ihara**. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/CAP-BHgrant

Tomorrow's public health leaders

“The College is well-positioned to implement high-quality education and workforce initiatives that are tailored to the needs of our unique region and to health agencies nationwide.”

MICHAEL R. FRASER, PHD, MS, CAE, FCPP
Chief Executive Officer, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

The crown jewel of each student's College experience is getting hands-on training through internships, research, practicums, or clinical practice. The College's reputation as a trusted partner in the DC area provides students with unlimited opportunities to practice in their field. They leave Mason with their degree or certificate and the confidence and skills to make a difference in the health of people and populations. That's the Mason difference.

Interprofessional behavioral health clinic provides real-world experience

To combat the growing need for affordable mental health services, the College opened the first-of-its-kind interprofessional clinic where Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) students and Clinical Psychology doctoral students deliver services in collaboration with licensed faculty.

It is the only clinic in the country for psychiatric medication management

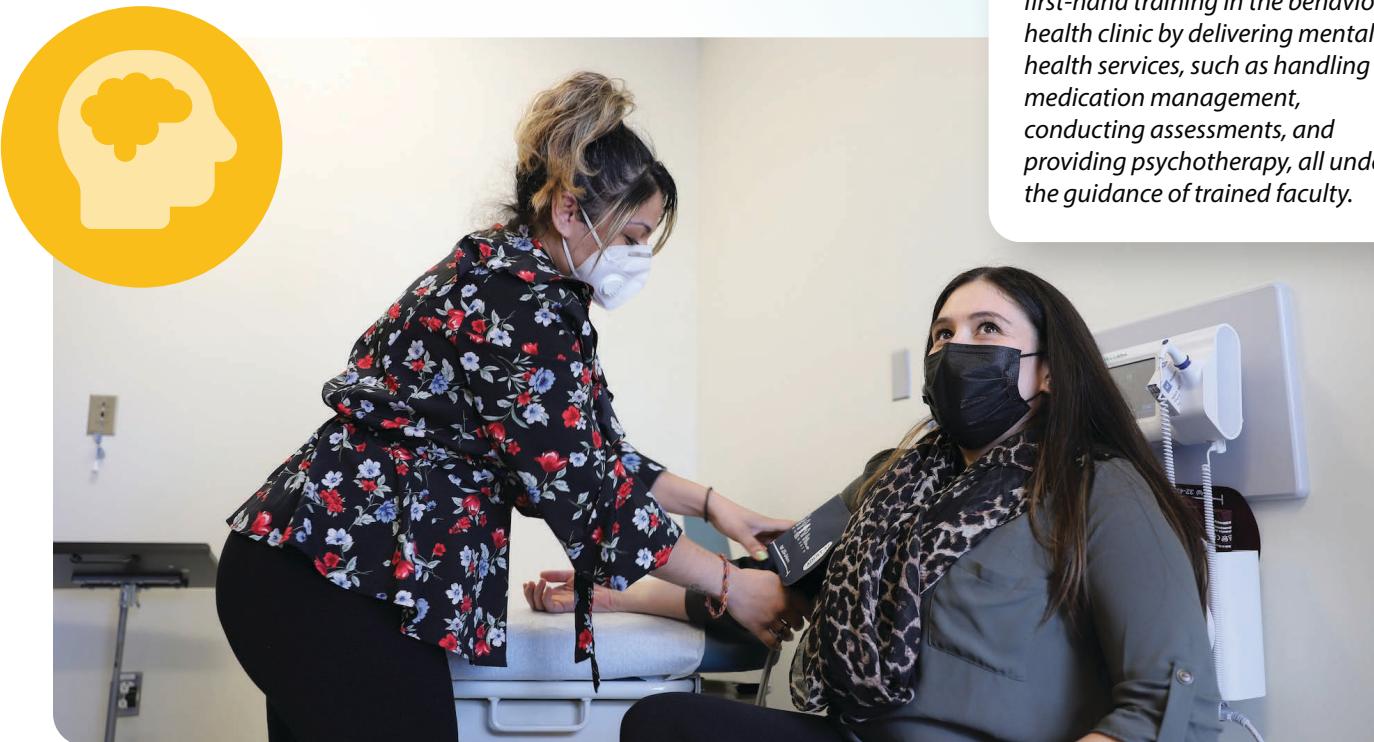
services that is affordable for all and serves as an experiential learning environment for students. The clinic is a sliding scale model, meaning the cost is income-based and affordable for those who have limited resources.

Students working in the clinic are licensed registered nurses enrolled in their clinical practicum. The on-campus clinic provides valuable clinical experience and helps to build

students' confidence and skills in providing quality care for patients. Gaining all these skills while on-campus and with Mason's world-class faculty makes this a distinctively "Mason experience" for students.

Learn more at go.gmu.edu/BHclinic

*As a student in the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) certificate program, **Hiba Masood, RN**, (left) receives first-hand training in the behavioral health clinic by delivering mental health services, such as handling medication management, conducting assessments, and providing psychotherapy, all under the guidance of trained faculty.*



Cultivating pathways for professional development

“Health care is an industry that is constantly evolving. [In my capstone practicum,] I learned that adaptability is crucial for health care professionals because in times of crisis we have to respond and provide concrete solutions to deliver the best care possible.”

STUDENT VIEW



JOSE VAZQUEZ-VILLATE

MHA '21, Capstone Site: U.S. Office of the Assistant Secretary of Preparedness and Response

Learn more at go.gmu.edu/MHACapstone22

Nutrition clinic to provide hands-on dietitian training

Thanks to the new nutrition clinic at the College's Population Health Center, Mason dietetics students have an additional source of hands-on learning, all while helping meet the public health and nutritional needs of the community. The clinic will train students in the new Master of Science in Nutrition concentration in Dietetics under the supervision of faculty who are registered dietitians or MDs. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/NutritionClinic2022



Student scholarships help make practice possible

“With your generosity, a lot of my financial burdens with hiring a caregiver for my child and spending money for gas to go to my field practicum are released. I am currently working in foster care/independent living. As I am more embedded in this field of social work that Ms. Miller contributed to, I feel that your scholarship is not only changing my life, but also the lives of many children and families.”

STUDENT VIEW



JESSICA YUN

Master of Social Work student, Amy Leachtenauer Miller Endowed Scholarship recipient

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INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Establishing a firm foundation for the College's Inclusive Excellence Plan



Creating an inclusive environment where all faculty, students, and staff can thrive is a priority for Mason and the College of Public Health.

As one of the most diverse universities in the nation, Mason continually strives to create a welcoming and academically engaging experience for all. During the 2021-22 academic year ("Year Zero" of the plan), the College's Inclusive Excellence working group established a firm foundation to inform the Inclusive Excellence Plan.

The College submitted its three-year Inclusive Excellence Plan to the Office of the President at Mason in April 2021, and a College working group was formed later that summer to develop the plan. During the 2021-22 school year, there were more than 20 faculty, staff, and administrators in the working group, with student fellows joining in spring 2023.



The Inclusive Excellence team continues to develop the College's plan focusing on the following five areas:

1. Recruitment and retention;
2. DEI best practices in hiring and admissions;
3. Equitable hiring, promotion, and student admission procedures and processes;
4. Curriculum review; and
5. Training and education.

The College's Inclusive Excellence Leadership Team is made up of **Jeanne Booth**, **Terri Ann Guingab**, **Kim Holmes**, and **Cathy Tompkins**. Learn more about the plan at go.gmu.edu/CPHIclusive



INNOVATE FOR GOOD

Faculty are embracing technological innovation in its many forms to improve public health and well-being. Explore how technology such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and personal apps are improving health outcomes.

Managing caregiver stress with a phone

Emily Ihara, chair (SW), and **Cathy Tompkins**, professor (SW), are working with developers to evaluate an app that helps caregivers for people living with dementia organize and manage both the patient's and their own care to reduce stress.

The app allows caregivers to log information about the patient's care plan as well as receive reminders and helpful tips. Caregivers can create a care plan and collaborate with others, plus access self-care plans, a journaling option, and insights that provide feedback.

The project, "Managing Mental Health through Technology: Examining the Effects of Collaborative Care Management Technology Application," is funded by a Virginia Center on Aging, Alzheimer's, and Related Diseases Research Award Fund grant. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/CaregiverStress2022

Post-pandemic student support: there's an app for that

College researchers developed an early intervention tool to address students' ongoing struggles related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The predictive mobile app is designed for students from underserved and underrepresented backgrounds, who have shown a higher need for pandemic-related interventions.

Machine learning and artificial intelligence algorithms in the app can detect inconsistencies in participants' survey responses when students encounter academic and mental health challenges that require intervention. The app then connects students to appropriate resources, such as Mason's Counseling and Psychological Services or their academic advisor.

The research team leveraged data from the ongoing Health Starts Here research project to refine the machine learning analytics. **Lawrence Cheskin**, chair (NFS), and **Hong Xue**, associate professor (HAP), serve as co-principal investigators. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/supportapp22

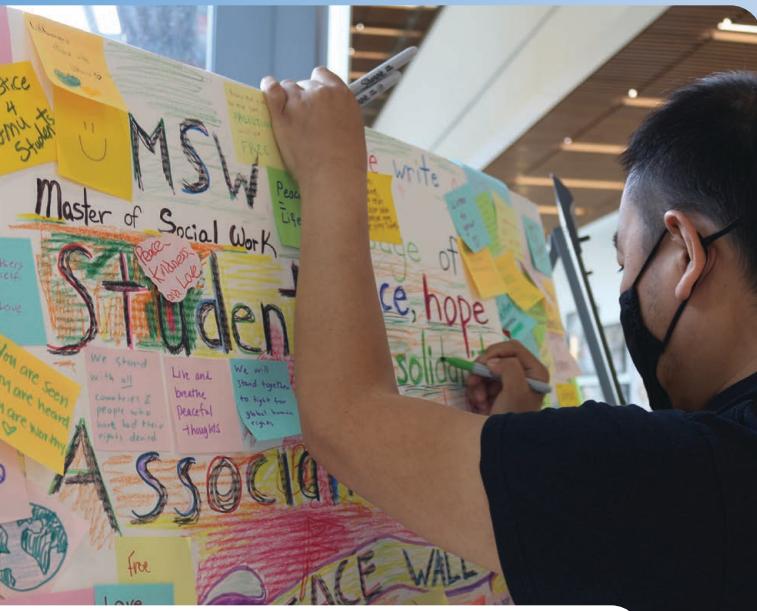
Understanding palliative care misconceptions through artificial intelligence

Megumi Inoue, associate professor (SW), is quick to correct misconceptions that the term "palliative care" does not necessarily mean end-of-life care. Palliative care is about symptom management and anyone can use it, according to Inoue. An interdisciplinary team led by Inoue is using artificial intelligence information mining to scour the internet, to learn what is being said about palliative care. Once the team analyzes the data, the next step will be to conduct focus groups to further understand how misinformation is spread. The team's goal is to help health care organizations strategically communicate about the benefits of palliative care to work with patients and their families more effectively. The team received a 2021 seed grant from Mason's Institute for Digital Innovation for this project. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/palliativecare2022



ADVOCATES FOR HEALTH EQUITY

We are champions for health and well-being for all and incorporate that mission into everything we do. Our faculty and students study health disparities, seek to reduce stigmas, improve care among underserved populations, and advocate for social justice for all.



The Master of Social Work Student Association hosted a Peace Wall in Peterson Hall during spring 2022 to promote peace, fairness, and equity.

Improving access to care in Virginia with telehealth

Alison Cuellar, professor (HAP), and Leah Adams, assistant professor in Psychology and the Women and Gender Studies Program, received a grant from the National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation for their study on health equity and the impact of Medicaid's telehealth policy.

Two studies will evaluate how expanding telehealth services can improve health equity across diverse populations in Virginia. The quantitative study focuses

“I will work with the LGBTQIA+ community to give affirmative treatment that supports the identities and experiences of the persons after graduating. This scholarship will help me to accomplish my goals and dreams, including creating a safe environment for the community to talk about important issues.”

CHANTEL RICHARDSON
Master of Social Work student,
Dr. John Hughes Scholarship recipient

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**STUDENT
VIEW**

on Medicaid claims data, and the qualitative study focuses on barriers, facilitators, special concerns, and overall effectiveness of providing services via telehealth.

The findings are expected to inform federal and state policymakers as they consider whether and how to extend telehealth policies and to identify remaining policy gaps—particularly among marginalized communities. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/MedicaidTelehealth

Using social media to promote hepatitis B screening among Korean Americans

Foreign-born Asian Americans face tremendous barriers to hepatitis B (HBV) screening, vaccination, and treatment because of lack of HBV-related knowledge, stigma, and limited access to health care due to language barriers and immigrant status. There are limited culturally tailored, linguistically appropriate interventions available to this disproportionately affected population.

To address this public health need, a team of interdisciplinary Mason researchers, led by **Alicia Hong**,

professor (HAP), and the Korean American Outreach Group developed “Let’s talk about liver cancer,” the first social media-based liver cancer prevention program specifically for Korean Americans. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/HongHBV

50% of all hepatitis B cases are among Asian Americans, who make up only 7% of the U.S. population

Understanding racial disparities in endometriosis

In 2014, **Julia Mandeville** was diagnosed with stage 4 endometriosis, an enigmatic condition that is typically defined by the presence of “endometria-like” cells found outside the uterus. Her condition led her to co-found the Barbados Association of Endometriosis and PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome) to raise awareness, support, and research efforts. It has also led to her doctoral research in public health at Mason.

Originally from Barbados, Mandeville immigrated to the United States in

2019 and set the audacious goal of earning her PhD in 2021. “I was determined to find out more about endometriosis and how it affects Black women,” she said.

Although it is considered a gynecological disorder, endometriosis can be found anywhere in the body and can only be diagnosed through exploratory surgery. The condition also affects trans men and men who have undergone hormone therapy.

Mandeville’s educational outreach experience has helped her



understand the stigmas and misconceptions associated with the disease. She is now learning more about its cause with researchers and associate professors (GCH) **Jhumka Gupta** and **Anna Pollack**. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/Mandeville

Studying health disparities in breastfeeding

“By looking more carefully at breastfeeding rates among African Americans and Black immigrant populations, we can see that combining the data on these two groups can hide important health disparities since Black immigrant populations tend to have higher breastfeeding rates. Without detailed breastfeeding initiation data by more nuanced race/ethnicity definitions, the potential for poorly targeted interventions and policies exists, and opportunities to improve breastfeeding may be missed.”

AMIRA ROESS Professor (GCH)  Learn more at go.gmu.edu/RoessBreastfeeding

SAFEGUARDING THE NEXT GENERATION

What do Snapchat, vaping, and fast food have in common? These are just some of the areas that faculty and students studied related to children, youth, and adolescents this year. Learn more about the College's research with this growing population.

Reducing teen substance use with hybrid learning and prevention program

Professor (GCH) **Kenneth Griffin** found that a hybrid school-based substance abuse prevention program proved highly effective among middle school students in significantly reducing the use or misuse of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, and drugs when compared to students who received standard health education.

Students in the hybrid program, which combined online e-learning modules and in-class sessions, also reported improved skills in decision-making, coping with anxiety and anger, effective communication, social skills, assertiveness, and conflict resolution.

The program successfully addressed barriers for in-class only programs like the amount of class time required and implementing programs with fidelity to their original design.

The study was published in *Frontiers in Digital Health* and was funded by the National Institutes on Drug Abuse. National Health Promotion Associates, where Griffin is a consultant, developed the program. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/GriffinHybrid

College freshmen exceed many U.S. dietary guidelines

Mason: Health Starts Here, a longitudinal cohort study, found that most college freshmen exceed U.S. dietary guidelines for added sugar, refined grains, sodium, and saturated fat, which are all nutrients that should be limited. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/FreshmenNutrition

College Freshmen Nutrient Intake

U.S. dietary guidelines



Sugar, Refined Grains, Sodium, and Saturated Fat

Understanding risk of homelessness or incarceration among foster youth with disabilities

Youth transitioning out of foster care often lack social and financial support, which means they face a greater risk of socially isolating outcomes. Youth with disabilities are more at risk than those without disabilities.

Associate Professor (SW) **JoAnn Lee** and Associate Professor (HAP) **Gilbert Gimm** found that youth with emotional disabilities are more likely to experience homelessness and incarceration than those with other disabilities. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/FosterYouth

Type of disability

6.3% emotional

6.3% visual or hearing

4.3% intellectual/developmental

1.1% physical

46.5%

of youth aging out of foster care were diagnosed with a disability



The Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) study is a seven-year initiative funded by the National Institutes of Health to assess how various environmental exposures impact children. Mason is one of nearly 70 cohorts across the country participating and students across all departments receive first-hand research experience.

More Snapchat = college students more likely to vape

After one hour, each additional hour per day spent on Snapchat is associated with a 4.61% increase in the probability of lifetime e-cigarette use, according to a study by Associate Professor (HAP) **Hong Xue**, Professor (HAP) **Alison Cuellar**, and Chair (NFS) **Lawrence Cheskin**. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/XueSnapchat

4.61%

increase in lifetime e-cigarette use in college students per each extra hour on Snapchat

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



As a UN Commissioner for the International Federation of Social Work, Assistant Professor **Evelyn Tomaszewski** builds partnerships with social workers across the world to increase the visibility of social work's role in the UN's global public health initiatives.

Assistant professor represents social workers at the United Nations

Evelyn Tomaszewski, Master of Social Work program director and assistant professor, was appointed to a four-year term as a United Nations (UN) commissioner for the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW). As one of five commissioners for North America, she brings a social work perspective to the UN and the UN agencies. This includes working toward joint action based on social work principles and highlighting social solutions that can be achieved by applying social work principles as a framework for achieving social justice, inclusive participatory democracy, sustainable peaceful societies, and social transformation for equality and rights.

"The appointment to represent IFSW as a United Nations commissioner provides a unique opportunity to connect with and build partnerships and collaborations with social workers from across the globe," said Tomaszewski. "My role as a commissioner allows me to increase the visibility and importance of social work on an international scale and tie social work into the UN's global public health work. As a faculty member, I am equally excited about the real-time learning opportunities for students interested in the social worker's role and leadership in promoting global human rights." Learn more at go.gmu.edu/IFSW_UN

Through research, volunteering, and action, students, faculty, and alumni take what they learn at Mason to think globally to solve problems and improve the lives of populations far and wide.

GCH alumna awarded Fulbright Scholarship

Magaly Cabrera-Ortiz, BS Global and Community Health '22, received a Fulbright Scholarship to be an English Teaching Assistant (ETA) at Nursing School Jindrichuv Hradec in the Czech Republic.

Fulbright Scholars are expected to be leaders, and, as a Mason student with spirit and determination, Cabrera-Ortiz is already a natural. Prior to her May 2022 graduation, she was president of Patriots for Health Assistance, a health care volunteer, and a program organizer of the Honors College Recruitment Team. She also worked at the Aquatic and Fitness Center and served as a tutor and an assistant cross-country coach at a local high school.

After serving in the Czech Republic, Cabrera-Ortiz plans to attend medical school to become an orthopedic surgeon. Based on her experiences growing up in the Hispanic culture, she wants to be a role model for the youth in her hometown and work to address health disparities among low socioeconomic populations. "Being a doctor is more

than giving a prescription," she said. "With my childhood experiences, my mission is to use my voice as a provider and advocate for our communities and treat each person as an individual."

Cabrera-Ortiz encourages her peers to take risks and reach outside their comfort zone as well. "When you come across an opportunity, apply for it, and do not automatically eliminate yourself from the opportunity without even having strived for it."

Cabrera-Ortiz was chosen from among thousands of applicants to the Fulbright U.S. Student Program, which offers students the chance to conduct research, pursue graduate studies, or serve as English Teaching Assistants in one of 140 countries. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/Cabrera-Ortiz

Students gain global perspective on HIV/AIDS health care

Students from across the College traveled to Amsterdam to understand how policies and access to care affect HIV/AIDS from a global public health perspective. Students learned about reducing stigmas associated with sexual transmitted infections as well as sexual health policy and culture in Amsterdam compared to the United States. This immersive experience provided an opportunity to expand perspectives and bring new insights into U.S. public health and health care.

Learn more at go.gmu.edu/Amsterdam2022

On the "Turning the Tide on HIV and AIDS: Washington, D.C., and Amsterdam" alternative summer break trip, **Blythe Dellinger**, **Yusuf Hakeem**, and **Osmar "Oz" Flores Castillo** learned about the differences in HIV and AIDS treatment and prevention between the two countries.



OPENING DOORS

Mason's location just outside the nation's capital enables us to offer students with distinguished career development opportunities, including networking with top public health officials, health care executives, government agencies, as well as College alumni who have been in their shoes. Three-minute thesis, career fairs, clinics in a lab: students benefit from career development through courses, student organizations, internships, and research.

Alumni mentors prepare students for public health careers

The Mason Public Health Mentor Program is designed with career-readiness and student engagement in mind. The pilot program paired GCH graduate students with GCH alumni mentors, who provided professional guidance and career advice in the public health field.

"The program is designed to connect Mason students with a Mason alum who has been in their shoes and can provide guidance on an individual level," said **Kelly Beckwith**, assistant director of academic programs (GCH). "The program provides

our accomplished alumni with an opportunity to connect with current students, which strengthens the Mason Nation and the field of public health."

Students reported increased confidence in their academic and professional endeavors, while alumni valued the chance to give back to their Mason community by sharing insight into the public health field.

"I am so thankful for this program. The mentorship allowed me to ask questions and gain honest feedback

—specifically on what to expect during my practicum, after graduation, and when working in the public health field. I had several concerns about job searching after graduation, and my mentor addressed my concerns with open and honest advice, which genuinely helped me succeed in finding a job," said **Reena Rhim**, MPH '22. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/PHmentor22



Social Work lab supports career development

The Social Work integrative Research Lab (SWiRL) is led by faculty with a range of research interests and a shared focus on skill development among students. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/SWIRLreadiness

93.8% of SWiRL alumni report that participation provided valuable career-readiness skills including:

confidence and patience
taking responsibility for tasks
written communication
integrating research into practice
leadership development
accepting direction from others
creative problem solving

Students network with local leaders — encouraging the next generation of health care executives

Students in HAP 704 Contemporary Issues in Health Systems Management gained valuable insight from local executives who shared their expertise, experience, and advice on becoming leaders in the health administration field. HAP faculty organized the guest speaker series, including leaders from:

- DocTalker Family Medicine
- Frederick Health
- Healthcare Leadership Council
- Inova Fairfax Medical Campus
- Inova Health System
- Novant Health UVA Health System, Haymarket Medical Center and Prince William Medical Center
- SOC Telemed
- Sunrise Senior Living
- Virginia Hospital Center

*President of student-run organization Rising Healthcare Leaders @Mason **Rehan Saeed**, a December 2021 MHA graduate, organized networking and professional events to provide aspiring health care leaders opportunities to enhance their personal, academic, and professional skills.*



Academic research communications competition winner

6 "I learned how to present scientific knowledge tailored to an audience outside of my field, a skill that will benefit me as I enter my professional career." **99**

R. JAMIL PUGH
PhD in Rehabilitation Science and
2022 Mason 3-Minute Thesis winner

Learn more at
go.gmu.edu/Pugh

STUDENT
VIEW

PREVENTION FIRST



“Studying and preventing chronic illnesses is personal for me. I have family members who have medical conditions, and I want to be able to help them and others by giving them advice on nutrition that would help address their medical conditions.”

BLESSING SEIDU
Master of Nutrition student

Seidu studies personalized nutrition and education to prevent diabetes and chronic diseases in the lab of Assistant Professor (NFS) Raedah Basiri.

**STUDENT
VIEW**

Research and prevention of chronic and infectious diseases are at the core of a college of public health. Faculty, alumni, and students know that prevention is the best way to keep the public healthy for the long term and are using research and preventative care to help the community.

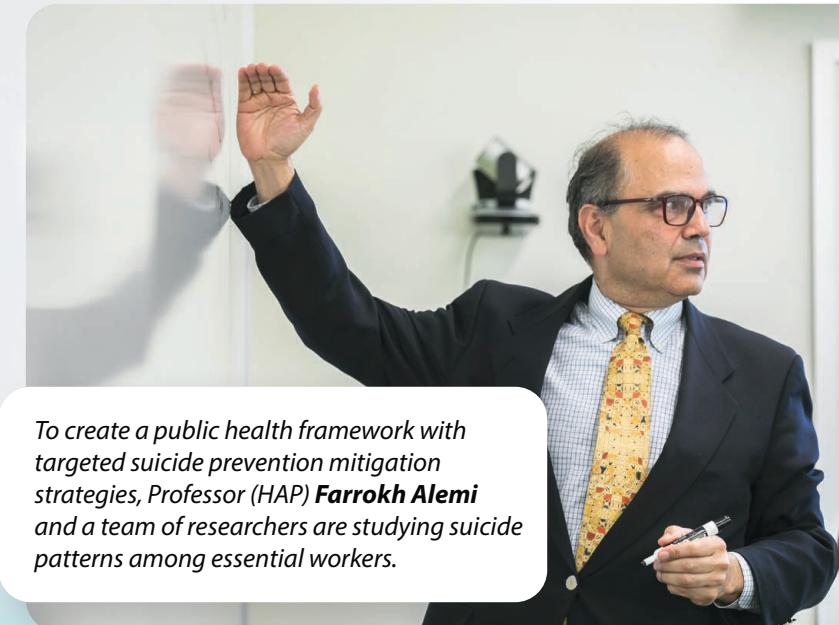
Preventing suicide among essential workers

Professor (HAP) **Farrokh Alemi** and a team of researchers are studying how gender, racial/ethnic, medical history, and socioeconomic status affect suicide patterns among essential workers and whether COVID-19 contributes to suicide beyond these factors. The study aims to provide evidence-based policy recommendations to improve essential workers' mental health and reduce suicidal ideation.

"We seek to build research-policy and public-private collaborations to advocate for more equitable policies for improving mental health and preventing suicide among essential workers," said Alemi.

The team plans to offer a public health framework with targeted mitigation strategies, medical interventions, and other recommendations to reduce sociodemographic disparities in suicide during the COVID-19 pandemic for patients, essential workers, and health care systems.

The Gates Foundation, Healthcare Cost Institute, and Cornell University are funding this study. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/AlemiPreventSuicide



*To create a public health framework with targeted suicide prevention mitigation strategies, Professor (HAP) **Farrokh Alemi** and a team of researchers are studying suicide patterns among essential workers.*

**100,000
Vaccinated**

**53
Days**

College Alumna of the Year

Michelle Vassallo, vice president, Clinical Platform Service Line at Inova and MHA alumna, led efforts to vaccinate 100,000 people for COVID-19 in just 53 days. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/Vassallo

Saving lives with free screenings

To assess if free cancer screenings can improve outcomes in underserved communities, **Michelle Williams**, associate professor (GCH), evaluated the See, Test & Treat Program implementation with women who do not have insurance in the Jacksonville, Mississippi, area.

The program provides access to free mammograms, Pap tests, pelvic exams, and oral cancer exams. Williams and her colleagues evaluated the effects of the program on participants' knowledge about cancer, self-efficacy for obtaining health care, and intentions to change their health behaviors.

Women received exam results within two hours and those with abnormal results then scheduled a follow-up appointment at a Federally Qualified Health Center. Participants also took part in cooking demonstrations, yoga, and Zumba while they waited. Most participants reported that the program had a positive effect on their knowledge of cancer screenings, the need for regular check-ups, their general health, nutrition, and exercise knowledge. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/SeeTestTreat



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

At Mason, we tackle grand challenges by looking at public health differently. From zoonotic and infectious diseases to the impact of chemicals in our water and airways, we are advocates and problem solvers for our environment. Through research and policy, College faculty and students seek to understand and address the harmful impacts of environmental exposure.

Studying environmental influences on childhood health outcomes

STUDENT VIEW

“The ECHO study is all about how the environment affects the health of children. We look at children as a whole [including] behavioral, cognitive, environmental exposures. We’re looking at one participant for each visit and we take their information and we compare with all of the other participants’ data to see on the population level what’s happening and find correlations between exposures and disease.”

CHLOE CHAET

Community Health, Pre-Med Research Assistant, Environmental Influence on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO)

Examining commuter characteristics effect on exposure to pollution

Assistant Professor (GCH) **Jenna Krall** examined commuter characteristics to better understand how factors such as departure time, commute length, and number of trips are associated with exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from various traffic-related sources.

As COVID-19 infection rates decline in many areas and employers weigh whether to continue remote work policies, studies such as this provide important insight into the role that daily commutes can play in personal air pollution exposure and the public's health.

Krall's ongoing research seeks to distinguish between similar sources of traffic pollution and to develop statistical methods to better estimate exposure to pollution sources. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/KrallCommuter



Large photo: 13 graduate and undergraduate students traveled to Kenya over spring break to study and participate in ongoing mosquito and tick vector-borne disease surveillance and water filtration efforts in Kenya.

Small photo: GCH students work with a water filtration system to learn firsthand about transmission pathways for emerging zoonotic diseases.

Students seek to prevent emerging zoonotic diseases

Undergraduate and graduate students spent spring break 2022 in Kenya studying mosquito and tick vector-borne diseases and water filtration in East Africa. They collected leeches, ticks, water, and soil samples from shared waterholes on ecologically protected grasslands using a One Health approach. By sampling at the human/wildlife/environmental interface, they learned about transmission pathways for emerging zoonotic diseases while participating in ongoing surveillance efforts. Their work contributed to ongoing research of **Michael von Fricken**, assistant professor (GCH), which is conducted with partners in the Kenya-based Mpala Research Centre and at the Smithsonian Institution Global Health Program. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/CPHAltBreak22

COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS



The College's students, faculty, staff, and alumni are an integral part of the Northern Virginia community, and they make a direct impact on the health and well-being of individuals and populations in the region through outreach, clinical practice, volunteering, and more. Together, they exhibit the determination, perseverance, and bold thinking that the Mason community is known for, locally and nationally.



Mason Community Engagement Medallion winners

Congratulations to **Blythe Dellinger**, **Sarah Osman**, **Calvin Jones**, and **Christopher Dorham** (not pictured). Mason's Social Action and Integrative Learning honored the four Global and Community Health students with a Community Engagement Medallion for their leadership, service, and activism through partnerships with organizations on and off campus. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/2022Medallion

College convenes transforming public health workshop

In March 2022, the College convened local academic, health department, and philanthropy leaders to discuss current public health priorities and opportunities to partner in transforming the region's public health infrastructure.

Three panels brought together the stakeholder groups to discuss the role of data and technology, workforce development, and philanthropy in addressing the critical issues.

The discussions included preparing for future pandemics and the effects of climate on health; ensuring public health workforces receive the necessary training; forming new partnerships to tackle systemic and structural factors that impede social and health equity. Learn more at go.gmu.edu/2022PHworkshop

Recognizing community contributions

Mason Nurses **Ashley Frese**

(BSN '04, MSN '12), **Anna**

Norwood (MSN '18), and

Kadija Conneh-Barrat

(BSN '09, DNP '15)

were honored for all they do to support the health and well-being of the Northern Virginia community and beyond. The College's Honoring Mason Nurses event on April 28 at Fairfax Country Club recognized the achievements and impact of Mason School of Nursing graduates. Thank you to event sponsors AARP (platinum), Inova (gold), and Kaiser Permanente (silver). Read more at go.gmu.edu/HMNAwardees



Partnership to promote healthy aging

The College and ServiceSource Inc. have established the Northern Virginia Center on Aging. The center will provide services, programs, and activities for older adults and workforce development and continuing education for the health care professionals who support them.

At the center, students across the college's departments will have access to practicums, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities on how to effectively work with older adults. Additionally, the center will partner with other

community organizations to provide continuing education and training for frontline workers and licensed professionals.

The center is housed at the Wellness Center for Older Adults near Mason's Fairfax Campus and is a recognized satellite center for the statewide Virginia Center on Aging.

Learn more at go.gmu.edu/AgingCenter



Post-doctoral student **Hyun Kang**, Associate Dean of Faculty and Staff Affairs and Professor (SW) **Cathy Tompkins**, Assistant Professor (SW) **Michelle Hand**, and Chair (SW) **Emily Ihara** at the opening of the Northern Virginia Center on Aging.

LEADING THE WAY

Public health degrees for the future

The College developed three new concentrations that allow Mason students to explore in-demand and dynamic areas of health and well-being.

Master of Public Health, Health Equity and Social Justice

Students learn to become champions for health equity and social justice by evaluating the social determinants of health, analyzing the root causes of structural inequities, and developing a range of interventions and strategies.

Master of Health Administration, Health Care Quality

Value-based care models are the future of health care delivery, and students enrolling in this cutting-edge concentration will understand and evaluate the quality of care being delivered.

Master of Science in Nutrition, Dietetics

This program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). In 2024, a master's degree will be required to become a registered dietitian. This new concentration allows Mason to help raise standards across the field and meet an urgent public health need.

MAKE AN IMPACT

Strengthen the future of public health by supporting the education, research, and practice of College of Public Health students across all disciplines.

A gift of any amount makes a big difference.

Make a gift today at publichealth.gmu.edu/give

Mason and the Department of Social Work celebrate 50 years of excellence

Congratulations! From Mason's humble origins to its current status as Virginia's largest, most inclusive, and most innovative university, Mason has experienced 50 remarkable years of growth and achievement. Throughout those 50 years, Social Work Department has remained steadfast in its focus on preparing students to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities by directly impacting social change at the local and national levels.



ADVISORY BOARD

The College welcomed two new members to the Board in 2022 and said farewell to Maureen Dempsey and long-time member Mary Ann Friesen. We thank them for their service. New members are denoted with *

Janet Hinchcliff, Chair
The MITRE Corporation
Principal, Health Program Strategy,
Health Innovation Center

Gloria Addo-Ayensu
Fairfax County Health Department
Director of Health

Alison Ansher
Prince William Health District
District Health Director

Anton Arbatov
SOC Telemed
Vice President of Revenue Cycle
Management and Compliance

Robert Blancato
Matz, Blancato & Associates, Inc.
President

Yoshie Davison*
Mental Health Advocacy
Strategic Partnership Leader

Eleanor Dehoney
Research!America
Vice President of Policy and Advocacy

Michael Fraser
Association of State and
Territorial Health Officials,
Chief Executive Officer

Paula Graling*
Surgical Services at the Inova Hospital
System, Vice President of Nursing

Patricia Haresign
Coaching Wellness for Life
Health & Wellness Coach, Founder

Praduman Jain
Vibrent Health
CEO and Founder

Sharon Lamberton
PhRMA
Deputy Vice President

Robin Mockenhaupt
Robin Mockenhaupt Consulting, LLC
Managing Member

Carolyn Taylor
Taylor-Oden Enterprises
Corporate Operations Officer

ALUMNI CHAPTER BOARD

The College's Alumni Chapter Board serves as ambassadors for the College by enhancing diverse student, faculty, and alumni experiences to improve public health.

Mary Alemayehu
MS Health Informatics '15

Christine Blasser
BSN '93, MSN '97

Joni Brady
DNP '15

Saber Chowdhury
BS Community Health '15

Theresa Davis
BSN '98, MSN '02, PhD '13

Betty Ann Duffy
MSN '08

Susan Durham
PhD Nursing '13

Kathi Huddleston
PhD Nursing '08

Lisa Hunter
BSW '09

Christopher Miller
BSN '15

Riddhi Shah
MHA '17

Inclusive, interprofessional public health education, research, and practice

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