

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



**FIGHTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY**  
WITH EASY NUTRITIONAL RECIPES & EXERCISE

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY College of Health and Human Services

MAKING  
**HEALTH**  
VISIBLE

GEORGE  
**MASON**  
UNIVERSITY

Outreach

Education

Testing

ALTERNATIVE  
BREAKS

ALTERNATIVE  
BREAKS

ALTERNATIVE  
BREAKS



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# Greetings

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This year, it's difficult to capture the full range of experiences and emotions in words and pictures. I am appreciative for and impressed by the work of our community in making health visible during an unprecedented time.

I am delighted to share the College of Health and Human Services' Annual Report with a few of our many highlights for the 2019–2020 academic year. For example, we:

Recruited world-class students, faculty, and staff

- Recruited 24 new faculty and 8 staff, of which 48% of faculty and 40% of staff are underrepresented minorities.
- Completed recruitment of the College's leadership with the director of Nursing (Martha Kubik) and chairs in Global and Community Health (Carolyn Drews-Botsch) and Social Work (Emily Ihara).
- Increased student enrollment and credit hour registration by 6.4% and 3.6%, respectively.

Brought together practice, research, and academic excellence for our students and the community

- Opened the Population Health Center on October 18, 2019.
- Established the ASTHO-Mason Collaborative to create innovative academic programs and training opportunities.

Launched academic programs to prepare students for in-demand careers

- Finalized the new PhD in Public Health that will offer two concentrations—Epidemiology and Social and Behavioral Sciences.
- Developed two new degree programs: the BS in Health Informatics and the online version of the MSN, Family Nurse Practitioner program.

Achieved important research milestones

- Became a research site for the national Environmental Influences on Childhood Health (ECHO) study and launched the first transdisciplinary student cohort study, Mason: Health Starts Here.
- Grew our research footprint with an increase in grant submissions, total awards, and research expenditures by 23%, 43%, and 19%, respectively.

Helped flatten the curve at Mason and beyond

- Developed and implemented Mason's COVID Health Check™ for monitoring symptoms.
- Assisted Mason with the development, implementation, and monitoring of its Safe Return to Campus plan.
- Served our community with interprofessional care in our Mason and Partner Clinics and by communicating trusted public health information through media interviews, articles, and webinars including those on COVID-19.



Established a foundation for the College's ongoing success

- Increased philanthropic giving by 75%.
- Launched our College's brand of "Making Health Visible" with more than 20 published research releases (56k page views) translating our faculty's research discoveries.

We are proud of our majority-minority student body, our five nationally ranked programs and array of exciting degree opportunities, and our faculty's commitment to engage students in research and practice opportunities. Read about our research discoveries and the many ways our faculty and students serve our communities, both regionally and globally, in a year that demanded sacrifice and resilience from all.

We look forward to advancing Mason's mission, now in the hands of our new president, and welcome the involvement of colleagues, partners, and communities. Please do reach out with any ideas or opportunities you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Germaine M. Louis'.

Germaine M. Louis  
Professor and Dean



# 2019–20 Student Profile

## STUDENTS ENROLLED

**1,916** Undergraduate

**1,136** Graduate

## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

**46%** First Generation

**35%** Pell Grant Eligible

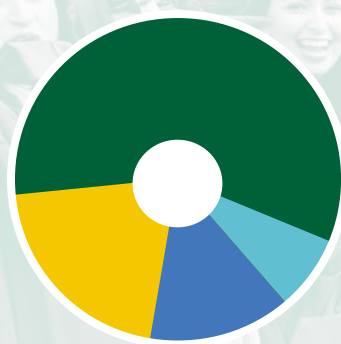
**TOTAL  
DEGREES  
903**

## DEPARTMENTS



267	Nursing
247	Global and Community Health
197	Health Administration and Policy
145	Social Work
24	Rehabilitation Science
23	Nutrition and Food Studies

## DEGREES



554	Bachelor's
271	Master's
43	Doctorate
35	Certificate

## GENDER



768	Female
135	Male

## ETHNICITY



346	White American
160	Asian American
147	African American
55	Non-Resident
28	Two or more races
20	Not reported



# 2019–20 Highlights



## 2019 Graduates

**81%** positive career outcomes among undergraduate students  
(**63%** employed, **17%** graduate/professional school,  
**1%** volunteering)

**77%** positive career outcomes among graduate students  
(**74%** employed, **3%** graduate/professional school)



## Flexible Pathways

**331** students enrolled in fully online degree programs

**233** in-person course sections shifted to virtual learning  
environment for COVID-19 in spring 2020



## Giving Back

More than **\$2.1 million** raised to support student scholarships,  
faculty and department support, research, and clinical care

**82%** increase in dollars raised

**\$570K** raised for student support



## Faculty

More than **\$7.2 million** in research expenditures

More than **20** new faculty in academic year 2019–20

More than **20** research releases published with **56K** views

## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

# Milestone in Our Transition to a College of Public Health: The College Launches New PhD in Public Health with Concentrations in Epidemiology and Social and Behavioral Sciences

**O**n August 25, the College announced that a new PhD in Public Health degree program with concentrations in Epidemiology and Social and Behavioral Sciences was approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). This is Virginia's first doctoral degree in public health. The College will enroll the inaugural cohort of doctoral students in Spring 2021.

SCHEV's approval of the PhD program represents the most significant milestone yet in the College's overarching goal to become an accredited college of public health.

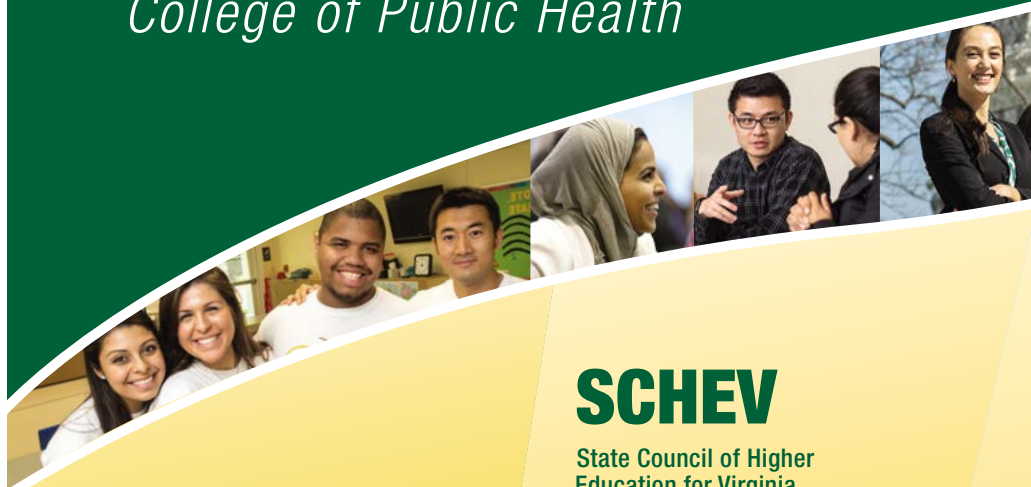
Following a successful external site review held in June 2020, SCHEV granted approval for the new PhD in Public Health degree, a program that will prepare career-ready graduates for academic and research careers in public health. The external reviewers praised the new degree program, particularly the quality of the College's faculty and their commitment to research mentoring; the curriculum's interdisciplinary focus on the social determinants of health; and the hands-on approach for ensuring student success. The reviewers also noted the

existing infrastructure and resources to support the degree program at Mason and within the College, including the Peterson Family Health Sciences Hall and the Population Health Center.

"Our College is well-positioned to deliver an innovative public health curriculum that will prepare our doctoral-level graduates for academic and research careers so that they have both the knowledge and skillset to

## MAKING HEALTH VI

### *Becoming a College of Public Health*



## Mason

Mason's PhD in Public Health

- ✓ Department approved
- ✓ College approved
- ✓ Graduate Council approved
- ✓ Board of Visitors approved

## SCHEV

State Council of Higher  
Education for Virginia

- ✓ PhD proposal submitted
- ✓ External site visit completed
- ✓ PhD approved

deliver health and ensure its equity for all,” said Germaine Louis, professor and dean of the College. “The COVID-19 pandemic is one example of the need for public health research and evidenced-based practice, but our mission goes further to understand other exposures that affect health and the design of interventions to minimize risky behaviors or to improve disease detection. We have the winning combination of expert faculty and motivated students who learn in a transdisciplinary environment. Our majority-minority student body


positions us to understand health from the shared lens of many.”

The College is already hard at work on the next steps in the transition to becoming a Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited college of public health in the next few years, including recruiting the first cohort of students. Once this cohort completes its coursework, the College will apply for its initial CEPH accreditation as a college of public health.

This accomplishment reflects the hard work of many. Thank you to

those who participated in the PhD Task Force (Larry Cheskin, Cara Frankenfeld, Randy Keyser, Yiota Kitsantas, Jenna Krall, Anna Pollack, Margie Rodan, Matt Rossheim, Ana Stoehr, Bob Weiler, Ali Weinstein, Janusz Wojtusiak) and the College of Public Health Working Group (Kelly Beckwith, Charlene Douglas, Lilian de Jonge, Cara Frankenfeld, Constance Gewa, Matthew Hicks, Kim Holmes, PJ Maddox, Denise Osborn-Harrison, Laura Poms, Margie Rodan, Ana Stoehr, Amanda Stokes, Cathy Tompkins, Ivette Valenzuela-Yu, Bob Weiler, and Ali Weinstein). ■

➔ Read more: [bit.ly/NewPhD20](https://bit.ly/NewPhD20)



**SIBLE**

**CEPH**  
Council on Education  
for Public Health

- Initial application submitted
- Initial application accepted
- Self-study submitted
- External site visit completed
- Accreditation approved

**College of  
Public Health**



## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

# Making Health Visible at Mason's Population Health Center—The Intersection of Academics and Practice

On October 18, 2019, the College opened the Population Health Center, an essential and bold intersection of academics and practice. To celebrate the much-anticipated opening on Mason's Fairfax Campus, the College hosted a dedication and reception for more than 200 advocates of public health, including faculty, staff, and students, as well as legislators, sponsors, and community partners.

"The Population Health Center isn't just another center," CHHS Dean Germaine Louis said in her remarks. "Rather, it is designed to be where academics and

practice meet so that each may inform the other. We need good science, empirical evidence, and practice insight to effectively deliver public health."

"I applaud [George Mason University] for focusing on interprofessional workforce development in this space," said Daniel Carey, Virginia secretary of health and human resources, at the opening ceremony. "When we make quality health services more accessible, we give people more choices when it comes to how they manage their own personal health and the health of their families," said Carey.

The health of Northern Virginia is at a crossroads and has been since before COVID-19. Changes in the profile of residents' health and demographics reveal populations at risk. More than 16% of residents live in "islands of disadvantage," and nearly 8% are uninsured. Demographic shifts coupled with changes in Medicare and the mandate to reduce hospital readmission rates are transitioning the point of care delivery from hospitals and emergency departments to community providers.





The Center addresses this transformation in how we access and deliver care, particularly for underrepresented and uninsured populations, while providing students with hands-on opportunities for research and clinical care. “Experiential learning opportunities are available for all involved, with the goal of moving the needle on the health of the populations we serve,” said Dean Louis.

The Population Health Center facilitates partnerships between academia and community and houses state-of-the-art facilities for telehealth, research, and clinical care. The Claude Moore Scholars Workforce Development Program, an initiative to build a career-ready workforce of students who are pursuing higher education health career pathways, is located in the Center and was

made possible by a gift from the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation. The Center also houses the Kaiser Permanente Community Wellness Hub, where co-located community partners will provide resources to address determinants of health such as access to housing, food, and affordable prescriptions.

The College received naming gifts from a number of generous donors and transformational gifts from Kaiser Permanente and the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation—both of which named workspaces in the Center. ■

➔ To learn more about the Population Health Center, visit: [bit.ly/PopHealthCtr](https://bit.ly/PopHealthCtr).



**Thank you to the many generous donors to the Population Health Center. Donors listed below made gifts of named spaces.**

Claude Moore Charitable Foundation

Kaiser Permanente

O'Shaughnessy Hurst Memorial Foundation

Yoshie Davison and Michael Davison

Rosemarie Kormanec\* and Jeffrey Kormanec

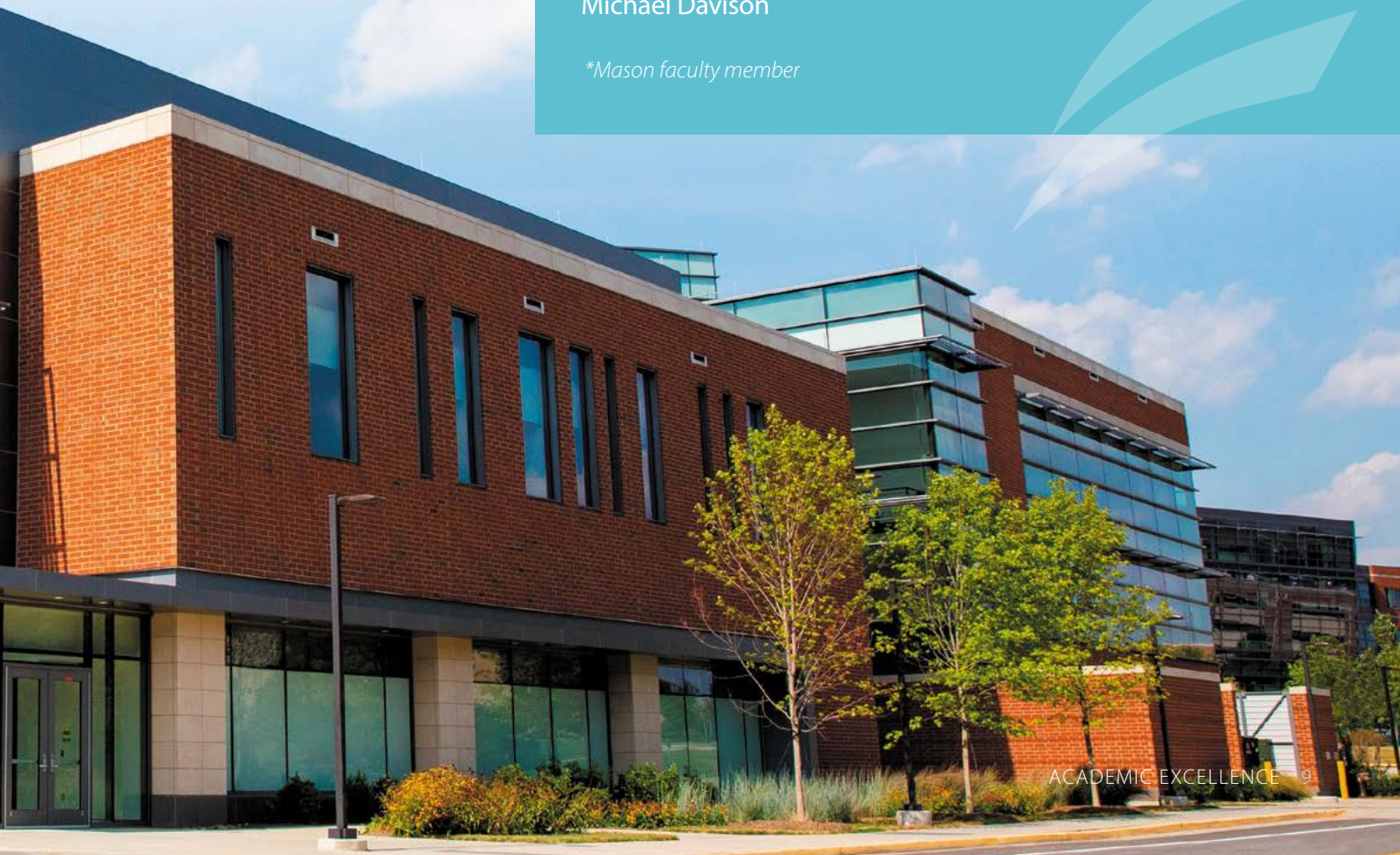
Cheryl Oetjen\*

Rebecca Sutter\*

Caroline Sutter\*

Faye Taxman\*

*\*Mason faculty member*



## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

# Five College Graduate Programs Rank in the Top 100 According to *U.S. News & World Report*

Five of the College's graduate programs are ranked within the top 100 of their disciplines, as recognized in the most recent *U.S. News & World Report* rankings of graduate programs.

The Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs remain in the top 60 of their discipline, ranking #51 and #40 respectively.

The Master of Health Administration (MHA) maintains its ranking at #33, and the Master of Public Health (MPH) debuted at #78, ranking higher than seven fully accredited standalone schools of public health.

The Master of Social Work (MSW) remains in the top 100 programs, tied with 24 other schools at #96.

"Strong, transdisciplinary master's and doctoral programs help our

College, students, faculty, alumni, and community partners advance our mission to improve the health and well-being of all populations. Rankings are recognition of our ongoing commitment to offering the best graduate education," says Dean Germaine Louis. ■



Read more:  
[bit.ly/CHHSRanking2020](https://bit.ly/CHHSRanking2020)

## Master of Science in Global Health Receives Accreditation by Council on Education for Public Health



The College's Master of Science (MS) in Global Health has been accredited by the Council on

Education for Public Health (CEPH). With this announcement, the College's CEPH-accredited program of public health now includes its existing Master of Public Health (MPH) with six highly specialized concentrations, a Bachelor of Science in Community Health, and the newly accredited MS in Global Health. The MS in Global Health is a research-based degree that prepares students to conduct multidisciplinary research on health issues of global importance.

The accreditation process includes a multilevel review to ensure the program meets the nationally recognized standards and provides students with a set

of core competencies developed by public health academics and practitioners. The curriculum is aligned to the current workforce and public health needs so that students graduate well-prepared for a fulfilling career. According to CEPH, certain employment, fellowship, and credentialing opportunities may only be available to students earning their public health degree from an accredited program. ■



Read more:  
[bit.ly/MSGlobalCEPH](https://bit.ly/MSGlobalCEPH)

**The Master of Health Administration (MHA) Program received full reaccreditation in fall 2019 for another seven years from the Commission on Accreditation of Health Management Education (CAHME).**

### NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS



- The School of Nursing now offers an online Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner concentration with fully online coursework and in-person practicum experiences.
- The Department of Nutrition and Food Studies will pilot the Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for its Master of Science-Registered Dietitian program. This program is designed for students seeking the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist credential. The first cohort will begin the fall of 2021.
- The fully online Bachelor of Science in Health Administration has been approved by Mason and will begin with their first class in the fall of



# New Faculty, Administration, and Staff

**Wayne Adams**

Senior Academic Affairs Coordinator,  
Dean's Office

**Lynda Ashie**

Research Projects Administrator, ECHO

**Sapna Batheja**

Assistant Professor, Nutrition and  
Food Studies

**Michael Beasley**

Research Manager, Claude Moore  
Charitable Foundation Grant

**Lee Black**

Assistant Professor, Health  
Administration and Policy

**Michael Bloom**

Associate Professor, Global and  
Community Health

**Jeanne Booth**

Assistant Professor, Social Work

**Suzanne Carmack**

Assistant Professor, Global and  
Community Health

**Danielle Catona**

Assistant Professor, Global and  
Community Health

**Xiaolu Cheng**

Postdoctoral Fellow, Health  
Administration and Policy

**Helen Chin**

Assistant Professor, Global and  
Community Health

**Carolyn Drews-Botsch**

Professor and Chair, Global and  
Community Health

**K. Pierre Eklou**

Assistant Professor, Nursing

**Joshua Fleck**

Senior Grants Administrator,  
Dean's Office

**Daniel Brian Freedman**

Associate Professor, BSW Program  
Director, Social Work

**Alma Fuller**

Research Manager, ECHO

**Claudia Giliberti**

Human Resources Coordinator,  
Dean's Office

**Beth Glicker**

SBIRT/Implementation Coordinator,  
Nursing

**Kenneth Griffin**

Professor, Global and  
Community Health

**Raven-Brittany Green**

Academic Advisor, Student Affairs

**Michael Hammer**

Data Analyst, Dean's Office

**Melissa Hensley**

Field Work Coordinator, Social Work

**Matthew Hicks**

Director of Information Technology  
and Cybersecurity, Dean's Office

**Denise Hines**

Associate Professor, Social Work

**Kathi Huddleston**

Associate Research Professor, Nursing

**Tammie Jones**

Research Manager, Claude Moore  
Charitable Foundation Grant

**Ibrahim Kargbo**

Academic Advisor, Student Affairs

**Daphne King**

MSW Online Coordinator, Assistant  
Professor, Social Work

**Marti Kubik**

Professor and Director, Nursing

**Sally Lahm**

Research Associate Professor, Global  
and Community Health

**Grace Lawrence**

Research Manager, ECHO

**Bruna Mayen**

Research Projects Administrator, ECHO

**Kanako Okuda**

Director of Field Education, Social Work

**Ziaul Hasan Rana**

Postdoctoral Fellow, Nutrition and  
Food Studies

**Amira Roess**

Professor, Global and  
Community Health

**Jennifer Sturgis**

Administrative Assistant to Associate  
Deans, Dean's Office

**Evelyn Tomaszewski**

Assistant Professor/MSW Program  
Director, Social Work

**Kara Touscany**

Research Projects Administrator/  
Scheduler, ECHO

**Katherine Warner**

Intake and Community Liaison,  
Population Health Center

**Cara Weidinger**

Research Project Administrator, ECHO

**Christopher Williams**

Academic Advisor, Student Affairs

**Michelle Williams**

Assistant Professor, Global and  
Community Health

**Ivette Valenzuela-Yu**

Assistant Professor, Nursing

**Hong Xue**

Associate Professor, Health  
Administration and Policy

2020. Both the online program and the on-campus programs participate in the Mason ADVANCE degree program that facilitates degree completion for students beginning at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA).

■ The Bachelor of Science in Health Informatics had been approved by Mason and the Board of Visitors. The first cohort is expected to begin the fall of 2021, pending approval from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV).

■ The College now offers a new PhD in Public Health degree program with concentrations in Epidemiology and Social and Behavioral Sciences. The inaugural cohort of doctoral students will enroll in spring 2021. Read more on page 6.

## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

# Inaugural Dean's Seminar Series

In November of 2019, the College launched its inaugural Dean's Seminar Series, which was made possible through the generous contributions of an anonymous donor. The Dean's Seminar Series brings leading experts to discuss important issues and the state of the research in their fields with the Mason community.



### **Data Science for a Learning Healthcare System of Systems**

**Scott Zeger**

John C. Malone Professor of Biostatistics  
and former Chair, Department of Biostatistics  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health



### **The Rapid Decline in Adolescent Mental Health in the 21st Century: Magnitude, Causes, and Public Health Implications**

**Kerry Keyes**

Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology and  
Co-Director, Psychiatric Epidemiology Training Program  
Mailman School of Public Health  
Columbia University



### **Integrated Nutrition Approach to Improving Personal, Population, and Planetary Health**

**Frank Hu**

Fredrick J. Stare Professor of Nutrition and Epidemiology  
Chair, Department of Nutrition, Director of Boston Nutrition  
Obesity Research Center  
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health



### **Precision Discovery of Neuroimaging Biomarkers for Parkinson's Disease**

**F. DuBois Bowman**

Professor and Dean  
School of Public Health  
University of Michigan



### **Risky Breathing and Policy: Lessons Learned from Smoking and Air Pollution**

**Jon Samet**

Professor and Dean  
Colorado School of Public Health  
University of Colorado, Colorado State University, and  
University of Northern Colorado



### **How the Zika Virus Response Improved our Public Health Approach to Protecting Mothers and Infants**

**Coleen Boyle**

Adjunct Professor, School of Public Health, Georgia State  
University, Former Director, National Center on Birth Defects  
and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention



Read more: [bit.ly/DeansSeminar20](https://bit.ly/DeansSeminar20)



# Faculty Receive Curriculum Impact Grants

This year, several faculty from CHHS were awarded the Provost's Curriculum Impact Grants to support transdisciplinary curriculum development. CHHS faculty will collaborate with colleagues across the university to develop academic courses and programs that prepare students to make a substantive impact on the world and deepen their engagement with Mason and their communities.

## Physical Activity in Health

CHHS faculty Ali Weinstein and Laura Poms will collaborate with other Mason faculty to develop curriculum that equips students with skills to combat the increasing rate of obesity in the United States and associated chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes by increasing physical activity.

## From Exploring Pathways to Developing Opportunities for Community Engagement and Social Justice in an Interprofessional Microcredential Program

CHHS faculty Caroline Sutter and Molly Davis will collaborate with other Mason faculty to develop an interprofessional microcredential program that addresses health disparities and social inequities experienced by ethnic and linguistic minority communities in the United States.

## STEM in Society Minor

Laura Poms will collaborate with other Mason faculty to develop a STEM in Society minor, which will help students in diverse majors across Mason, both technical and nontechnical, develop strategic and critical thinking capabilities to better understand how science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as medicine, impact the human experience.

## Enhancing Cross-Cultural Engagement and Collaboration at Mason through Explorations of Global Health Challenges

Megumi Inoue and Laura Poms will collaborate with other Mason faculty to develop curriculum that fosters cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary dialogues about global health challenges such as vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks, increasing rates of obesity and drug addiction, the impacts of environmental pollution and climate change on health, and aging populations. ■

➔ View a complete list of collaborators: [bit.ly/ProvostCIG20](https://bit.ly/ProvostCIG20)

## Celebrating Culture Through the Culinary Arts

In November, the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies held an event to celebrate diversity and culture through Latin American food. Participants met in the Dr. Camille Barry Nutrition Kitchen to taste dishes such as ensalada de repollo (a cabbage salad from Nicaragua), pupusas (Salvadoran stuffed flatbread), alfajores (a Peruvian dessert), salsa verde (a well-loved Mexican recipe for salsa), and mojito water (a Cuban beverage).



*Celebrating Culture Through the Culinary Arts in the Dr. Camille Barry Nutrition Kitchen*

## PROFESSIONAL AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

# ASTHO and George Mason University Innovate to Improve Public Health Through a New Academic and Practice Collaborative



**A**s a student aspiring to earn a Master of Public Health at Mason, Joselyn Carballo wanted to explore public health careers and hone the skills required to protect communities from public health threats like climate change and toxic chemicals in our environment.

**I**n November 2019, the College and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) launched the ASTHO-Mason Collaborative for Applied Public Health Practice, a groundbreaking initiative to prepare the next generation of research and practice leaders in public health. The collaborative exemplifies the intersection of academia and practice through interprofessional and transdisciplinary applied research, workforce training, and executive leadership education.

Together, ASTHO and Mason will create innovative academic programs and training for undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree students from various disciplines. In addition, the initiative will help develop the next generation of public health leaders in Virginia and across

the country through the ASTHO-Mason Collaborative Scholars program, which will be located at ASTHO's headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.

The collaborative builds upon the strengths of both ASTHO and Mason to ensure that the next generation of public health professionals is prepared to advance health equity and protect and promote health nationwide. ■

// This partnership is innovative, and I'm pleased to see the first of its kind in the state of Virginia. //

**Norman Oliver, state health commissioner of the Virginia Department of Health, and ASTHO board member.**

➔ Read more: [bit.ly/ASTHOMason20](https://bit.ly/ASTHOMason20)

## Meet the Inaugural ASTHO-Mason Scholar: Joselyn Carballo

As the inaugural ASTHO-Mason Scholar, Carballo has joined ASTHO's Environmental Health team, which focuses on matters such as food and water safety, vector borne diseases, and climate change.

"In just the past two months, my time at ASTHO has helped me better understand what public health officials

do. Now, I can explore the facets of being a public health official and a staff member at a membership organization. A fellowship like this is beneficial to anyone going into an MPH program," says Carballo. ■

➔ Read more: [bit.ly/ASTHOScholar1](https://bit.ly/ASTHOScholar1)



# College Is Home to Collaborative Health Workforce Research and Development Initiatives

Addressing gaps in the health care workforce pipeline requires building a skilled workforce through flexible yet well-defined pathways to health care degrees. The Claude Moore Charitable Foundation and the College are collaborating to advance this goal. The College is overseeing initiatives to:

- Evaluate the Claude Moore Scholars program to identify exemplars and measure their community impact. The evaluation seeks ways to enhance efficiency, build stakeholder support for expanding pipeline development programs, and develop more standardized pathways toward progressive health degrees and certifications.
- Customize and enrich a learning management system (LMS) with content that fosters a community of practice and facilitates more standardized pathways for health care workers' training and professional development. The LMS will help Claude Moore Scholar programs standardize curriculum and program instruction through online learning throughout multiple program sites in Virginia.
- Deliver programming in partnership with the Northern Virginia Area Health Education Center (NVAHEC), which is housed in the College, to develop local health care professionals' skills in areas such as telehealth, cultural literacy, and career readiness.



The Claude Moore Charitable Foundation has provided grant funding to the College to support the work being carried out through this collaboration. Additionally, the Foundation made a \$500,000 gift to the Dean's Excellence Fund to support the academic, clinical, and research practice of the College. ■

➔ Read more:  
[bit.ly/ClaudeMoore20](https://bit.ly/ClaudeMoore20)

## Evidence-Based Interventions to Tackle the Opioid Epidemic: Case Competition

Each day, an estimated 130 people die from opioid-related overdoses in the United States. As part of a capstone case study competition, 11 Global and Community Health students developed and presented

evidence-based programs to address this alarming statistic. Three groups of students presented their programs to a panel of judges with firsthand experience working with opioid addiction in their professional lives.

The judges included David Goodfriend, Department of Health director for Loudoun County; Sameet Mehta, emergency room doctor, Loudoun Inova Hospital;

and Sarah White, Opioid Taskforce Coordinator for Fairfax County.

"Experiential learning is a way of connecting the classroom to the world. This particular project allows students to synthesize everything they have learned while at Mason to develop a program which addresses a current public health issue," says Adjunct Instructor Sara Hoffman who mentored two teams. ■

➔ Read more:  
[bit.ly/GCHCaseOpioid20](https://bit.ly/GCHCaseOpioid20)



# Community-Based Nursing at the Mason and Partner Clinics Sets Mason Apart

“Getting involved in the Mason and Partners (MAP) Clinics first solidified my passion for working with underserved populations and gave me hands-on experience that I wouldn’t otherwise have. Working with the patients at the MAP Clinics is an incredibly eye-opening experience and provides a lens that students don’t get elsewhere,” explains Megan Harvey, a recent graduate from the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program.

Harvey credits her work in the MAP Clinics for broadening her lens of the role nurses can play in improving community and individual health. “Nurses build connections and relationships in the community so we can truly understand and empathize with our patients. We see their roadblocks and challenges and we join coalitions to help address those obstacles,” says Harvey.

Interdisciplinary care is a hallmark of the College and the MAP Clinics, where social workers, nurses, and public health workers partner to deliver holistic care. Harvey has had the opportunity to learn about the families she serves, hear their stories, and connect them with the resources they need, including school physicals, housing, medication, transportation, and social services.

While COVID-19 disrupted any plans for a big graduation celebration, the pandemic did offer Harvey an opportunity to further demonstrate her leadership capabilities in implementing the policies and protocols for the MAP Clinics’ telehealth initiative. “The goal of the telehealth initiative was originally to extend our reach to rural clinics—but COVID-19 created urgency to expand the scope of our implementation. I had developed policies and protocols for our rural implementations and needed to quickly adapt them for COVID-19 testing. Using Rapid Cycle Improvement, we’ve been able to improve the experience for our patients and expand the Clinic’s reach during the pandemic.” At the time of her interview, the MAP Clinics had tested more than 430 individuals, with 66% of those tested returning positive results.

Now that she has graduated, Harvey has officially joined the MAP Clinic staff as the telehealth lead and research scientist, where she will be the main point of contact for all telehealth initiatives as well as work on developing training and future certifications. In her new role, Harvey will provide clinical care as well as work closely with undergraduate and graduate level students to build their telehealth competency. ■



Read more: [bit.ly/DNPHarvey20](https://bit.ly/DNPHarvey20)





# “Tell Me Your Story”: How to Provide Health Care in a Culturally Diverse Environment

The Northern Virginia Area Health Education Center (NVAHEC) works to increase diversity among health professions and to support interdisciplinary training for practicing professionals and students in health-related academic programs. As a leading source of workforce development in the region, NVAHEC, which is housed within the College, offered the first module in their Cultural Competency Training Series on November 8, 2019.

“Everyone has biases—implicit or otherwise—and we need to better understand what these are in ourselves and in our health care system. Recognizing that and understanding how it affects patient care, raising the awareness of how



it impacts outcomes, and the importance of the whole patient and patient-centered care, that’s what the heart of this really is,” says Rachel Lynch, director of community health improvement at Inova Health System, who helped develop the training.

The curriculum for the Cultural Competency Training Series is grounded in the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards, developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. ■



Read more: [bit.ly/TellStory20](https://bit.ly/TellStory20)

## Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment for Substance Misuse

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is an evidence-based public health approach for the early identification and intervention of substance misuse and co-occurring problems. Through a partnership with Virginia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the College houses the VA-SBIRT team, which focuses on helping health care providers and organizations implement SBIRT in their facilities.

This year, VA-SBIRT developed three new partnerships to support integration of SBIRT into a family practice, an urgent care clinic, and an emergency department. New



partner sites include Rutherford Family Practice and Valley Health Urgent Care in Winchester, Virginia and Bon Secours Southside Regional Medical Center Emergency Services Department in Petersburg, Virginia. The VA-SBIRT team continues to support statewide requests for SBIRT training and technical assistance and coordinates closely with regional and state-level stakeholders in support of SBIRT sustainability in the Commonwealth. ■



For more information, visit their website: [bit.ly/VASBIRT](https://bit.ly/VASBIRT).

# Research Discoveries

### RELATIONSHIPS AND CAUSES

#### Adults with Undiagnosed Celiac Disease Have Lower Bone Density Than Those Without It

Lara Sattgast,\* Margaret Slavin, Cara Frankenfeld, Sina Gallo  
See “Nutritional intake and bone health among adults with probable undiagnosed, untreated celiac disease: What we eat in America and NHANES 2009–2014” in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* (July 2019).

#### Children Are More Likely to Miss School When Their Mothers Experience High Physical Violence and Injuries from Intimate Partner Violence Than if Their Mothers Experience Low Physical Violence and Injuries

Anna Scolese,\* Jhumka Gupta  
See “Intimate partner violence against low-income women in Mexico City and associations with child school attendance: A latent class analysis using cross-sectional data” in the *Maternal and Child Health Journal* (March 2020).



#### Women Commuting During Rush Hour Are Exposed to Higher Levels of Pollutants Than Women Driving in Other Settings

Jenna Krall, Nada Adibah,\* Leah Babin,\* Anna Pollack  
See “Estimating exposure to traffic-related PM<sub>2.5</sub> for women commuters using vehicle and personal monitoring” in *Environmental Research* (June 2020).

### PRACTICE

#### Alternate Light Is Five Times More Effective Than Traditional Methods at Detecting Bruises on Victims of Color

Katherine Scafide  
See “Detection of inflicted bruises by alternate light: Results of a randomized controlled trial” in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* (February 2020).

#### Grandfamilies: New Study Uncovers Common Themes and Challenges in Kinship Care

Catherine Tompkins  
See “Compounding Complexity: Examining multiple factors leading to challenges within grandfamilies” in *The Gerontologist* (February 2020).

#### Primary Care Physicians Experience More Burnout and Anxiety Than Other Health Care Professionals

Debora Goetz Goldberg, Tulay Soylu\*, Panagiota Kitsantas, Len Nichols  
See “Indicators of workplace burnout among physicians, advanced practice clinicians, and staff in small- to medium-sized primary care practices” in the *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine* (March 2020).

#### Racial Disparities Found in Timing and Type of Treatment in Colorectal Cancer Patients

Cara Frankenfeld  
See “Racial disparities in colorectal cancer time-to-treatment and survival time in relation to diagnosing hospital cancer-related diagnostic and treatment capabilities” in *Cancer Epidemiology* (April 2020).

#### Updated Tool Provides Range of Possible Outcomes for Infants Born Extremely Preterm

Rosemary Higgins  
See “Assessment of an updated NICHD Neonatal Research Network extremely preterm birth outcome model in the Vermont Oxford network” in *JAMA Pediatrics* (March 2020).



## INTERVENTIONS

### Digital Intervention Reduces Depressive Symptoms in People Living with HIV

Y. Alicia Hong

See “Effect of a WeChat-based intervention (Run4Love) on depressive symptoms among people living with HIV in China: Randomized controlled trial” in the *Journal of Medical Internet Research* (February 2020).



Learn more about CHHS Research at [bit.ly/MasonCHHSResearch](https://bit.ly/MasonCHHSResearch).



View a list of college publications from January through December 2019. Publication lists are updated each winter at [bit.ly/MasonCHHSPubs](https://bit.ly/MasonCHHSPubs).

*Collaborators from the College are listed.*

*\*CHHS student author.*

## POLICY

### Four Loko Continues to Wreak Havoc Among Young Drinkers

Matthew Rossheim

See “The Federal Trade Commission’s mandated Four Loko labeling fails to facilitate accurate estimation of alcohol content by college students” in the *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* (October 2019) and “Underage drinkers’ first experience consuming a popular brand of supersized alcopop” in the *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* (August 2019).



## RESEARCH

# Grants and Contracts for Research and Practice

## —NEW AWARDS IN FY20—

### **CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY RESEARCH AND ETHICS**

#### **Using Sustainable Local Investments to Support Integrated Health and Social Services: A Feasibility Study**

Principal Investigator (PI): Len Nichols  
Commonwealth Foundation (Award No. 20192227), Episcopal Health Foundation (Award No. n/a), California Health Care Foundation (Award No. G-30338), and Missouri Foundation for Health (Award No. n/a)  
\$500,000

### **CENTER FOR STUDY OF CHRONIC ILLNESS AND DISABILITY**

#### **Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC)**

PI: Ali Weinstein  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Primary Awardee: American Institute for Research;  
Award No. PO 0418100003)  
\$14,753

### **DEPARTMENT OF GLOBAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH**

#### **Gut Microbial Polyphenol Degradation and Intraindividual and Interindividual Endocrine-Disrupting Chemical Exposure in Premenopausal Women**

PI: Cara Frankenfeld  
College of Health and Human Services,  
George Mason University (Internal Award;  
Award No. 215042)  
\$50,000

#### **A High School Program to Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse**

PI: Kenneth Griffin  
National Health Promotion Associates  
(Award No. 3273-0320)  
\$156,581

#### **Hierarchical Source Apportionment for Exposure to Traffic-Related Air Pollution**

PI: Jenna Krall  
Jeffress Memorial Trust (Award No. n/a)  
\$120,000

### **COVID-19 and Partner Violence**

PI: Jhumka Gupta  
College of Health and Human Services,  
George Mason University (Internal Award;  
Award No. 223677)  
\$22,876

#### **Investigating Mixtures of Pollutants and Endometriosis in Tissue (IMPLANT) Study**

PI: Anna Pollack  
National Institutes of Health  
(Award No. 1R01ES031079-01)  
\$339,796

#### **Ecology of MERS-CoV in Camels, Humans, and Wildlife in Ethiopia**

PI: Amira Roess  
National Science Foundation  
(Award No. 2025693)  
\$2,308,746

#### **A Longitudinal, Source Attribution Study of Campylobacter Emergence and Transmission in Rural Bangladesh to Inform Intervention Development**

PI: Amira Roess  
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation  
(Award No. OPP1204794)  
\$1,159,830

#### **Impact of COVID-19 on Young Adults**

PI: Amira Roess  
College of Health and Human Services,  
George Mason University (Internal Award;  
Award No. 223670)  
\$35,022

#### **The Tobacco-Free Mason Project**

PI: Matthew Rossheim  
American Cancer Society  
(Award No. 63658)  
\$20,000

#### **Vector Mapping of Ticks and Tick- Borne Pathogens of Mongolia**

PI: Michael von Fricken  
U.S. Navy (Primary Awardee: Vysnova  
Partners Inc.; Award No. N6264518D5058-  
N6264519F0235)  
\$78,150

### **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY**

#### **Impact of Community Factors on Geographic Disparities in Diabetes and Obesity Nationwide**

PI: Farrokh Alemi  
Centers for Disease Control (Primary  
Awardee: New York University;  
Award No. 1U01DP006299)  
\$109,066

#### **Secure Integrated Data Approach— Opioid Crisis**

PI: Alison Cuellar  
U.S. Department of Justice (Primary  
Awardee: Fairfax County;  
Award No. 4400009242)  
\$261,074

#### **Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center**

PI: Naomi Lynn Gerber  
U.S. Department of Health and Human  
Services (Primary Awardee: American  
Institute for Research;  
Award No. 90DP0082)  
\$65,000

#### **Development and Delivery of a Web- Based Training Evaluation System**

PI: Peggy Maddox  
Claude Moore Charitable Foundation  
(via George Mason University Foundation;  
Award No. 080110)  
\$291,190

#### **Systems Modeling and Simulations for Effective Tobacco Control and Prevention Policies Among Youth**

PI: Hong Xue  
Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth  
(Award No. 8521294)  
\$233,191



## DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND FOOD STUDIES

### **Vidas Activas, FamaLias Saludables (VALÉ): A Multidisciplinary Childhood Obesity Treatment Program for Latino Communities**

PI: Sina Gallo

Potomac Health Foundation (Award No. n/a)  
\$127,176

### **A Pilot Study of Third-Grade Children's Dietary Recall Accuracy: Body Mass Index and Quantified vs. Non-Quantified Interviews**

PI: Sina Gallo

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
(Award No. n/a)  
\$10,000

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

### **Title IV-E Child Welfare Stipend Program (CWSP)**

PI: Michael Wolf-Branigin

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Primary Awardee: Virginia Department of Social Services;  
Award No. FAM-19-055)  
\$267,675

### **Virginia Geriatric Education Center Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP)**

PI: Emily Ihara

Health Resources and Services Administration (Primary Awardee: Virginia Commonwealth University;  
Award No. 2U1QPH28744-04-00)  
\$57,001

## SCHOOL OF NURSING

### **ECHO Consortium on Perinatal Programming of Neurodevelopment**

PI: Kathi Huddleston

National Institutes of Health  
(Primary Awardee: Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai;  
Award No. 5UH3OD023337-04)  
\$1,457,607

### **Enhancing Quality with Culture-Sensitive, Patient-Center Assessments and Care Planning**

PI: Robert Mallinson

Alliance for Home Health Quality and Innovation (Award No. n/a)  
\$14,700

### **Empowering Communities for a Healthier Nation**

PI: Rebecca Sutter

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Primary Awardee: Virginia Department of Health;  
Award No. CPIMP171154)  
\$314,968

### **Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Point of Service Maintenance and Enhancement for the Northern Virginia AHEC Program**

PI: Caroline Sutter

Health Resources and Services Administration (Primary Awardee: Virginia Health Workforce Development Agency;  
Award No. U77HP26289)  
\$101,955

### **Development and Delivery of a Web-Based Learning Management System**

PI: Caroline Sutter

Claude Moore Charitable Foundation (via George Mason University Foundation;  
Award No. 080110)  
\$532,657

### **Nurse, Education, Practice, Quality and Retention—Registered Nurses, in Primary Care**

PI: Rebecca Sutter

Health Resources and Services Administration (Award No. 1UK1HP31716)  
\$696,737

### **The Virginia Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (VA-SBIRT) Project**

PI: Panagiota Ferssizidis

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Primary Awardee: Virginia Department of Behavioral Health;  
Award No. 5H79TI026665)  
\$2,315,904

### **Improving the Forensic Documentation of Injuries through Alternate Light: A Researcher-Practitioner Partnership**

PI: Katherine Scafide

U.S. Department of Justice  
(Award No. 2019-NE-BX-0008)  
\$398,719

### **Integrating Services to Improve Social Determinants of Health**

PI: Rebecca Sutter

Potomac Health Foundation (Award No. n/a)  
\$137,700

### **Mason and Partners Clinic**

PI: Rebecca Sutter

Potomac Health Foundation (Award No. n/a)  
\$75,000

### **Directly Observed Medication-Assisted Therapy for High-Risk Opioid Use Patients**

PI: Rebecca Sutter

Northern Virginia Health Foundation  
(Award No. n/a)  
\$100,000

### **Bridging the Behavioral Health Gap-GPWCHC/GMU Preceptorship Pipeline**

PI: Rebecca Sutter

Potomac Health Foundation  
(Primary Awardee: Greater Prince William County Health Center; Award No. n/a)  
\$29,514

### **Population Health Center Operation Support**

PI: Rebecca Sutter

Kaiser Permanente (via George Mason University Foundation, Award No. n/a)  
\$200,000

### **George Mason University Rural Opioid Telehealth Project (ROTP)**

PI: Rebecca Sutter

U.S. Department of Agriculture (Award No. VA0723-A58)  
\$500,000

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

# College Launches New Student Cohort Research Study “Mason: Health Starts Here”

**I**n September 2019, the College kicked off “Mason: Health Starts Here,” a first-of-its-kind transdisciplinary student cohort study to understand and improve the health of university students.

The project, led by Larry Cheskin and Alison Cuellar, is a longitudinal study of students’ physical and behavioral health, experiences and perspectives, and a variety of factors that may affect college success. A unique feature of this study is that students in the cohort will be informed about their health status along the way and given guidance for maximizing their health.

The study is central to the tri-part mission of the newly opened Population Health Center: delivering interprofessional clinical care for underserved populations; conducting research of consequence to improve the



public’s health; and providing learning and development opportunities for practitioners and students.

It is supported by the College as well as Mason’s Institute for Biohealth Innovation (IBI), Department of Psychology, and Equipment Trust Fund. ■



Read more: [bit.ly/MasonHSH20](https://bit.ly/MasonHSH20)

# College Joins Longitudinal Study on the Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes

**I**n late 2019, the College became a collaborator in and study site for the Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) Program. ECHO comprises research teams across the country that investigate the impact of different types of environmental exposures on five key pediatric outcomes: pregnancy and birth, breathing, body weight, brain development, and well-being.

A seven-year initiative funded by the National Institutes of Health, ECHO aims to understand the effects of environmental exposures on children’s health and development. ECHO teams across the country investigate the impact of different types of environmental exposures on adverse pregnancy and birth outcomes; airway function; obesity; neurodevelopment, and health and well-being. The Icahn

School of Medicine at Mount Sinai leads the research and Mason serves as one of three collaborating sites, focusing exclusively on the pediatric population.

“The mission of ECHO is to enhance the health of the generations to come,” says Kathi Huddleston, principal investigator of Mason ECHO. Huddleston joined the College faculty in November 2019.

Learn more about how they adapted their work during the COVID-19 pandemic on page 40. ■



Read more: [bit.ly/CHHSECHO20](https://bit.ly/CHHSECHO20)





## Anna Pollack to Study Link Between Environmental Pollutants and Endometriosis with \$1.6 Million NIH Grant



Anna Pollack, associate professor of global and community health, has received a \$1.6 million grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), an institute within the NIH,

to study the link between endocrine-disrupting chemicals and endometriosis. These chemicals are commonly found in humans' diets and household products.

Endometriosis affects 6-11% of women of child-bearing age. The disorder can cause pain and infertility, and the annual cost of endometriosis-related health care has reached billions of dollars in the United States. Little is known about its cause.



The study—the first to measure concentrations of endocrine disruptors both inside and outside the uterus—seeks to answer two questions: first, whether levels of these endocrine disruptors inside the uterus are associated with endometriosis, and second, if these chemicals in endometrial tissue found outside the uterus are associated with the severity of the disorder. ■



Read more: [bit.ly/PollackEndo20](https://bit.ly/PollackEndo20)

## Katherine Scafide Receives National Institute of Justice Grant to Develop Protocol and Curriculum for Bruise Identification Using Alternate Light



Katherine Scafide has received a \$398,719 National Institute of Justice (NIJ) grant for bruise

identification using alternate light sources (ALS). The funding will enable Scafide to advance her work with ALS and develop training protocols to translate the ALS technology into practice. "Our studies have found that ALS works in helping to identify hard-to-see bruising or bruising on darker

skin. However, there is no established protocol on its use."

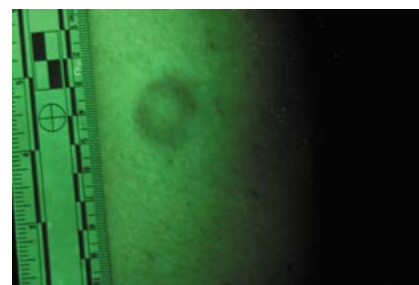
The grant allows Scafide and collaborators to develop a program to implement ALS into forensic nursing practice and evaluate its feasibility.

"Developing this protocol is an amazing example of partnership between researchers and practitioners," says Scafide, who is working in collaboration with researchers from Georgia State University and University of Nevada, forensic nursing units at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital and

Inova Health System, and consultants from the Montgomery County Police Department and Maryland State's Attorney's Office. ■



Read more: [bit.ly/ScafideBruise20](https://bit.ly/ScafideBruise20)



## COMMUNITY IMPACT

# Creating a Shared Vision for the Mason Population Health Center and Improving Health in Northern Virginia

Faced with new missions and expanding mandates, community health providers, hospitals, and educators are seeking bold new ways to meet changing requirements related to delivering community-based health care.

With community stakeholders' evolving needs in mind, the College held an initial community visioning retreat in the Kaiser Permanente Community Wellness Hub at the Population Health Center to build strong bridges between academia and the local community.

Participants in the visioning session shared ideas for improving health in the region. (Pictured to the right, from left to right: Joy Reyes (NOVA Scripts Central), Bridget Jennison (CHHS), Karen Brown (NVAHEC), Carrie Sutter (CHHS), Becki Sutter (CHHS), Rachel Lynch (Partnership for Healthier Kids), Donney John (NOVA Scripts Central), Silvia Nakasone (Partnership for Healthier Kids), Ondrea McIntyre-Hall (Northern Virginia Family Service).

"By having a diversity of voices at the table that helps to inform this vision, it begins the work it takes to breakdown our silos and the fragmentation that occurs as we often are serving the same populations of people," says Ondrea McIntyre-Hall, director of health and nutrition services at Northern Virginia Family Service.

Participants brainstormed future opportunities to collaborate in the areas of professional development, research, and clinical care. ■



*The Kaiser Permanente Community Wellness Hub is a new and innovative center based out of the Population Health Center where college faculty and staff collaborate with community partners to provide resources and address social determinants of health.*



Read more:  
[bit.ly/SharedVision20](https://bit.ly/SharedVision20)



## Alternative Spring Break

In spring 2020, students in the Department of Global and Community Health under the leadership of Adjunct Instructor Shannyn Snyder (pictured to the right) opted to participate in an alternative break, a week-long opportunity to engage in direct service to the community and focus on a particular social justice topic. One group of students worked with persons living with HIV in Washington, D.C. with the goal of addressing stigma barriers and to help identify programs that meet the needs of the community. Long before, the students learned to



investigate the root causes of social issues in a way that allows them to engage compassionately and think critically. The students' foundational knowledge of community health, disease, social determinants of health,

ethics and advocacy, STDs, and social justice prepared them to think critically about the ways stigma, policy barriers, and the social determinants intertwine. Alternative break is hosted by Mason's Social Action and Integrative Learning (SAIL). ■

## Mason and Partners Clinic Hosts Rep. Jennifer Wexton to Discuss Medication-Assisted Treatment Program



Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton is a champion for improving access to treatment for addiction. In her first year, the congresswoman successfully achieved a major legislative victory when the House passed her bill, H.R. 3153, the EFFORT Act, which directs the National Science Foundation to support research on the science of opioid addiction.

Wexton visited the Manassas Park Mason and Partners (MAP) Clinic February 19, 2020, to see firsthand how this unique Medication-Assisted Treatment Mobile Clinic (MAT MOBILE) has helped her congressional district fight opioid addiction.

As part of the MAT program, the MAP Clinic in Manassas Park delivers free suboxone treatment using a peer recovery specialist model one day a week.

"I'm so glad to have Mason and Partners in the community," Wexton said as she toured the facility and met the staff.

The Manassas Park Clinic is one of a growing number of MAP Clinics located across Northern Virginia. ■



Read more:  
[bit.ly/WextonMAPvisit](https://bit.ly/WextonMAPvisit)

## STUDENT AND ALUMNI PROFILES

### Nesibe Sumeyye Kutahyalıoglu

Student, PhD Nursing



This year, Nesibe Sumeyye Kutahyalıoglu received an award of \$2,500 from the National Association of Neonatal Nurses (NANN) for her dissertation. She will use the funding to study neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) nurses' practices of family-centered care and implementation barriers.

"Family-centered care is not yet practiced in Turkey, but I hope it will be in the future. I'm studying this model and other best practices so I can implement them when I complete my PhD next spring and return to Turkey," said Kutahyalıoglu.

When asked to sum up her Mason experience in one word, she said, "Supportive. My program is small and everyone knows everyone else. They always help me, always support me in my academic, professional, and personal life. They are my second family."

### Constance Owens

Student, PhD Health Services Research



Constance Owens received one of six national scholarship awards from the American Public Health Association (APHA) this year, which provided each student with a \$1,000 stipend to cover registration and travel expenses to present research findings at the APHA meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in November 2019.

Her poster presentation on Health Care Access was titled "Addressing Disparities in Health Care Access for Adults with Disabilities: Early versus Late Medicaid Expansion States." The study is co-authored with Gilbert Gimm, associate professor in the Department of Health Administration and Policy. Owens is passionate about promoting health equity as well as improving access to care and reducing disparities for adults and children with disabilities.

### Justin Palpallatoc

Student, BS Community Health



Justin Palpallatoc is a student who plans to attend an accelerated nursing program and to pursue his dreams of becoming a nurse after graduation. "Nothing compares to the feeling of helping people, and I want a career that is challenging, interesting, and makes an impact on others."

"Mason helped me be both open-minded and a more well-rounded individual," he explained. "The diversity of students definitely contributed to my overall personal growth. In addition, being active in a student organization enabled me to make life-long friends while broadening my career network."



## Gabrielle Jackson

Alumna, BS Community Health '20



"During freshman year, I was enrolled in a college success 101 course that asked us to write down three goals to strive for during our college career," Jackson remembers. "Right then I decided I wanted to write well, think critically, and win a Fulbright."

When awarded a Fulbright, Jackson chose to be a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Colombia based on her background in Spanish, past teaching experience at Mason, and her love for Latino culture.

When asked what she hopes to accomplish, Jackson said, "I always wanted to help others, but now I have a better idea of how I can do that. I believe in providing people with the right resources and encouraging them to take charge of their own lives."

## Anna Scolese

Alumna, MPH '19



Anna Scolese earned a Master of Public Health at Mason while working as a researcher at the Fors Marsh Group researching military health and well-being. As a graduate research associate at Mason, Scolese worked closely with her mentor Jhumka Gupta in studying social epidemiology.

"Dr. Gupta has really helped shape my career and my time here at Mason," Scolese explains. "Before I thought epidemiology was only infectious disease, and she opened my eyes to social epidemiology and this whole new world of how health impacts people. She has always been so supportive in pushing me in a different direction that I originally thought and has really made the experience wonderful."

## Nicole M. Sekel

Alumna, MS Nutrition '19



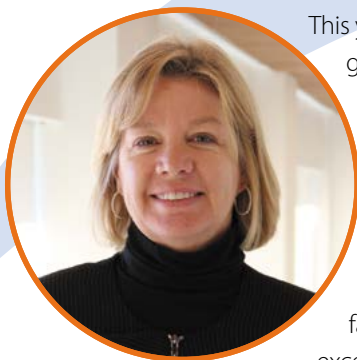
Nicole M. Sekel's research, which has been published in the journal *Nutrients*, focuses on vitamin D deficiency among collegiate athletes and members of the military.

"The Nutrition faculty at Mason is top-tier," explains Sekel. "As a collective whole, they care about your development both as a student and as a professional, which is truly unique to Mason. As a master's student, my desire to get involved was always met with enthusiasm and possibilities, ultimately lending to a well-rounded CV and a definitive advantage when applying to doctoral programs."

Sekel is now in a PhD program at the University of Pittsburgh focusing on bone health and the optimization of athletic performance through nutritional intervention.

## GIVING

# A Message from the Director of Development Laura Walsh



This year, more than 400 donors gave over \$2.1 million in a demonstration of unprecedented support for the College. This generosity provided gifts for scholarships to deserving students who expressed need, support for faculty and student academic excellence, innovative health

research, and clinical care for vulnerable populations. These gifts were from engaged alumni, friends, volunteers, businesses, foundations, faculty, and staff—with more than 25% of gifts coming from first-time donors. What's inspiring about this outpouring is that more people are coming together to support the College's mission and join our work to become the first college of public health in Virginia.

Thank you to both our new and long-standing donors for your help making health visible through philanthropy.

## Donors (\$500 or more: July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020)

### INDIVIDUALS

Anonymous donors

Jessica and  
Wayne Adams

Camille T. Barry

Virginia Sitar Blair

Robert Blancato

Christine T. Blasser

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### CORPORATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS

American Academy of  
Pediatrics

AT&T

Clark-Winchcole Foundation

Community Foundation for  
Northern Virginia

Culpeper Wellness Foundation

CVS Health Foundation

Dunn Loring-Merrifield Rotary  
Advised Fund

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Kaiser Permanente

Lettie Pate Whitehead  
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Memorial Foundation Inc.

Pan American Round Table DC

Peterson Family Foundation II

Potomac Health Foundation

Raymond James Charitable  
Endowment Fund

The Claude Moore Charitable  
Foundation

The Hearst Foundations Inc.

The Robert Wood Johnson  
Foundation

The Rotary Foundation

Thieme Medical Publishers Inc.



Gifts can be made to  
support the College  
and our students  
and faculty at  
[bit.ly/CHHSgive](https://bit.ly/CHHSgive).



# Student Emergency Fund Campaign

The College's Student Emergency Fund was established in 2019 in response to the increase in food insecurity and financial need among CHHS students. What began as a source of financial support for struggling students became a lifeline to the growing number of students in critical need of help due to COVID-19.

Support for this fund was raised during Giving Day 2020 and throughout the spring semester. With the support of generous faculty, staff, alumni, and other donors, CHHS was able to distribute more than \$55,000 in emergency funds to 45 CHHS students by the end of the spring semester. Students received the support they

needed for food, rent, textbooks, and educational supplies, and to address urgent health-related needs.

COVID-19 continues to impact the CHHS community and contributions are still needed to for ongoing student support. ■

➔ To make a gift to the fund, visit [bit.ly/CHHSgive](https://bit.ly/CHHSgive).

## Giving Day 2020 Contributions

Giving Day is an annual event to encourage gifts for high priority Mason initiatives. This year, donors gave support to the college through the student emergency fund and others.

Total Dollars Raised

**\$30,943**



Total Number of Donors

**171**



Percent of Faculty and Staff Who Gave

**45%**



## Meet Kayla Thompson

**BSN '20    Recipient—Lettie Pate Whitehead Scholarship**



As an accelerated nursing degree student, I will be doing in one year what most do in two... this doesn't leave me much time to pick up extra shifts at work to cover tuition and the extra costs associated with this degree. I truly don't think words will be able to adequately express how excited and relieved I was regarding this scholarship. The Lettie Pate Whitehead scholarship has literally been a godsend. I was extremely concerned about how to pay tuition plus all life's normal bills as I felt as if I was barely scraping by before adding in tuition costs. Without the scholarship, I probably would not have been able to afford normal life plus tuition. With the scholarship, I will be able to achieve a lifelong goal of mine, becoming a nurse. ■

## GIVING

# Why I Give: CHHS Faculty and Staff Give Back

Faculty and staff are a critical component of the Mason community. Year after year, CHHS faculty and staff give back to the College through philanthropic contributions to initiatives of their choosing.

Tracy Shevlin is an office administrator for the Department of Health Administration and Policy, known for always supporting students and faculty who seek her out for guidance. "This year I gave to the CHHS Emergency Fund because of the overwhelming need of our students," says Shevlin. "As the pandemic set in, the sheer volume of students needing assistance was staggering. As someone who cares

about students and takes pride in their successes, I was compelled to help to the extent that I could."

In her own words, Shevlin gives back to the College because "I like to think of work like family, and the students as part of that family. You do what you can for family."

Naomi Lynn Gerber has been a professor of health administration at Mason since 2006 and is a nationally recognized and esteemed chronic disease researcher. She believes in supporting student scholarship, including the student emergency fund, "because our students need our help,

academically and financially, in order to pursue their education. They are our future." Gerber generously supported establishing the first student research scholarship for the college in honor of her colleague and Mason alumnus, physician, and internationally recognized researcher Zobair Younossi. This endowed scholarship supports a student interested in health-related research, particularly biomedicine. ■



Gifts to CHHS can be made through payroll deduction or online at [bit.ly/CHHSgive](https://bit.ly/CHHSgive).

## CHHS Hosts Virtual Cooking Class with Executive Chef of Washington's NFL Team

On June 14, CHHS hosted a virtual cooking class with the Executive Chef of Washington, D.C.'s NFL Team, Chef Connor McGuire. Mason alumni, students, faculty, and community members tuned in virtually to follow his live demonstration and cook alongside the celebrity chef from their own home kitchens. Attendees gained expert insight about the meal prep, enjoyed a delicious meal, and learned about the life of an NFL chef along the way. ■



View the recording and ingredients list for seasoned chicken breasts, quinoa, and broccoli at [bit.ly/ChefMcGuireCHHS](https://bit.ly/ChefMcGuireCHHS).



# Hearst Foundations Award Scholarships

The College was honored to receive \$100,000 from national philanthropic entity, the Hearst Foundations, to support scholarships for undergraduate students demonstrating financial need and seeking a career in health fields. Founded in 1946, the Foundations' goal is to ensure that all people have the opportunity to build healthy, productive lives and that students are provided with equitable access to higher education. The Hearst scholarship program helps students focus on their academic success and experiential learning while alleviating

some of the financial burdens associated with pursuing education. In the summer of 2020, for its inaugural distribution year, the scholarship was awarded to nine student recipients from several undergraduate disciplines in the College.

"For the longest time, I have aspired to become a health advocate for our community as a nurse," says Hearst Scholarship recipient Savina Yang, a nursing undergraduate. "With the scholarship, I can turn my goals and ambitions into a reality and demonstrate to other first-generation students to never give up on their dreams."

"Being an independent student responsible for education and living expenses, life has offered me financial challenges and barriers at every step," says Nazia Kazim, a Hearst Scholarship recipient studying health administration. "Through this scholarship I will successfully be able to continue working toward my degree and achieving my goal. My educational pursuit would have been very difficult without the generous support from the Hearst scholarship. I am appreciative of their support of my education."



// Through this scholarship I will successfully be able to continue working toward my degree and achieving my goal. //

**Nazia Kazim**  
**Health Administration**

// For the longest time, I have aspired to become a health advocate for our community as a nurse. //

**Savina Yang**  
**Nursing**



// The Hearst Foundations have long recognized the importance of higher education and we are pleased to support George Mason University with the provision of scholarships to attract and support a diverse student population pursuing aspirations of entering the health care fields; and that will ultimately help address the health care workforce shortage across our country. //

**Donna Kalajian Lagani**  
**Senior Program Officer**  
**The Hearst Foundations**



## COVID-19 RESPONSE

### Stats

More than

19,000



students, faculty, and staff have completed assessments

More than

2,000



symptoms and exposures have been detected and tracked

March 2020



started using COVID Health Check™

## College Faculty Develop COVID Health Check™—First-of-Its-Kind Screening Assessment to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

To prepare for fall instruction, universities across the Commonwealth of Virginia deployed the COVID Health Check™, a College-developed COVID-19 symptom and exposure tracking tool. The tool was developed by a team at the College, led by Amira Roess, professor of global health and epidemiology.

Roess and collaborators were the first in the country to develop and launch a COVID-19 symptom and exposure tracker that collects real-time data, specifically to allow for rapid response. Roess and colleagues created the tool in March 2020, within days of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declaring COVID-19 a global pandemic. The team from the College included Rosemary Higgins, associate dean for research; Dean Germaine Louis; Cheryl Oetjen, associate professor of nursing; Carol Urban, associate dean for practice and strategic initiatives; and Janusz Wojtusiak, associate professor of health informatics and director of the Machine Learning and Inference Lab.

Since its launch at Mason, the tool has helped the university detect early cases by tracking symptoms and possible exposure to the virus. Members of Mason's community complete an assessment of symptoms and exposure using the Health Check™, which provides a recommended course of action. Users also complete a Daily Symptoms Journal to provide ongoing outbreak tracking, which can help the university trace contacts when a member of the community tests positive. Since the tool's launch, more than 19,000 students, faculty, and staff have completed the assessment and more than 2,000 symptoms and exposures have been tracked through September 30, 2020.

The tool received great interest throughout Virginia and by June the Virginia Council of Presidents tapped Roess to lead efforts to share her team's tool so that all Virginia universities could adopt Mason's COVID Health Check™.

Screening—as provided through the Health Check™—is an essential first step to outbreak management.

Without screening, early signs of cases might go undetected leading to a high risk of widespread outbreaks and likely closures. ■



Read more:  
[bit.ly/COVIDCheck20](https://bit.ly/COVIDCheck20)



After more than 28 years of service to the College, Carol Urban will lead Mason's COVID surveillance and testing as the director of surveillance and testing for the university. Urban will oversee the many operational details of testing, sampling for testing, surveillance, and any follow-up efforts of the university.

# Mason and Partners Clinics Extend Free COVID-19 Testing for Uninsured and Low-Income Populations

COVID-19 tests are now delivered for free for low-income and uninsured members of the community thanks to support from the Virginia Department of Health.



Credit: Delia Engstrom, Prince William Times

The MAP Clinics previously had limited access to personal protective equipment and testing kits and were able to significantly expand the number of tests administered with the supplies and testing kits provided by the commonwealth. On a typical day, the MAP Clinics can now test nearly 40 patients in a 2.5-hour time frame.

The MAP Clinics have expanded services for vulnerable populations through an extensive telehealth initiative that reaches homeless populations, rural residents of the state, and others who might not otherwise receive access to care. ■



Read more:  
[bit.ly/MAPCOVIDTest20](https://bit.ly/MAPCOVIDTest20)

## Mason and Partners Clinics Expand Telehealth Capabilities to Meet Growing Demand for COVID-19 Care

By expanding the MAP Clinics' telehealth capabilities, they can now directly combat the pandemic by screening for COVID-19 while helping patients battle chronic conditions, treat substance use disorders, and address behavioral health issues.

The nurse-managed MAP Clinics rapidly deployed HIPAA-compliant telehealth units to meet the demand of underserved communities in our region.

Telehealth visits, combined with in-person care, allow staff to connect

with patients regularly to see how their medications are working and provide support, especially during this stressful time. In addition to providing life-saving care for patients, the MAP Clinics provide Mason students with experience in serving rural populations and in deploying a fully operational telehealth unit.

The MAP Clinic telehealth initiative is made possible by a \$500,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture Telehealth grant and a \$25,000 gift from AT&T. ■

### **\$500,000 USDA Grant Helps Expand Rural Telehealth Capabilities Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic**

The College received a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement the Rural Opioid Telehealth Project, which will serve rural, low-income residents of Virginia and West Virginia. The project will train medical professionals on how to appropriately prescribe opioids, screen for and identify the risk of opioid use disorder, and deliver treatment.

### **\$25,000 Community Foundation for Northern Virginia Grant Helps Fund COVID-19 Response**

In response to COVID-19, the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia awarded \$25,000 to help deliver health care through the MAP Clinics, support COVID-19 testing to deliver results within 45 minutes, and to provide emergency food supplies.



Read more:  
[bit.ly/MAPTelehealth20](https://bit.ly/MAPTelehealth20)



Support the MAP Clinics:  
[bit.ly/CHHSgive](https://bit.ly/CHHSgive)

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

# Nursing Alumna Briefs White House on State of COVID-19 Care

On March 18, three-time Mason nursing alumna Theresa M. Davis (BSN '98, MSN '01, PhD '13) represented the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses at the White House to brief the Coronavirus Task Force on the state of COVID-19 care. ■

➔ Read more at [www.aacn.org/newsroom/aacn-at-the-white-house](http://www.aacn.org/newsroom/aacn-at-the-white-house) or view the video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYmDrxjDKMU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYmDrxjDKMU).



Theresa M. Davis is pictured in blue across from the president.  
Credit: Official White House Photo

## Spring 2020 Virtual Celebration of Graduates

Spring 2020 graduation occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders, and like many events during this time, required some flexibility and creativity. Mason and the College hosted virtual celebrations of graduates that featured personalized slides to recognize each graduate as well as videos to congratulate the seniors

from Dean Germaine Louis, graduating senior Rachel Picon, alumna Misky Sharif (BS Community Health '19), department chairs, the College Advisory Board, faculty, and staff. The celebration and slides for graduates can be viewed online on the Spring 2020 Graduates website: [bit.ly/CHHSpring20Grad](https://bit.ly/CHHSpring20Grad). ■

## Despite Physical Distancing, We Can Stay Socially Connected

Finding connection during a global pandemic can be challenging—especially for those in long-term care facilities. Seeking to help those who may feel disconnected, the Department of Social Work implemented the Mason Creative Arts for Relational Engagement (MasonCAREs) Initiative: Creatively-Engaged; Socially-Connected; Physically-Distant.

The MasonCAREs initiative helped the residents and staff at long-term care facility Birmingham Green stay socially connected while staying physically distant during the pandemic. They invited the Mason community to share a “creative communication” such as inspirational messages, pieces of artwork, poems, inspiring photographs, and songs, which they shared with Birmingham Green through videos and a Facebook Group. ■





# Social Work Students Join a Telehealth Pilot Program Serving Vulnerable Populations During Pandemic

Early in the pandemic, Molly Davis, associate professor in the Department of Social Work, identified that the loss of in-person clinical opportunities would be problematic for students and patients.

Davis and Clishia Taylor, adjunct instructor and director at the Global Health Access (GHA) Institute, launched the first-ever Interprofessional Telehealth Mobilization Model. In partnership with Howard University and American Health Care Professionals, they developed a pilot program to deliver screening and patient education for vulnerable populations. The pilot brought together teams of nursing, social work, and nutrition students.

Two master's-level social work students from Mason, as well as 30 nursing students and a doctoral-level nutrition student from Howard University, received comprehensive telehealth training and preparation for the project.

All patients reported that they benefited from services and gave the team the highest possible rating. Students also



reported an excellent learning experience and valued having an immediate impact on the community. Davis wishes to further expand the pilot and is seeking funding to do so. ■



Read more: [bit.ly/SOCWTelehealthPilot](https://bit.ly/SOCWTelehealthPilot)



**Sabrina Hansen** was one of the social work students selected to participate in the collaborative telehealth pilot program and was able to complete her practicum hours as a result. “The interprofessional nature of the program is a benefit to students and patients—everyone caring for the patient is on the same page, at the same time, where traditional care is much more specialized and may get different results,” says Hansen. “We learn the lingo of the different specialties and everyone is focused on the patient experience, while advocating for a plan of care that meets the patient’s needs. This broadens how we approach patient care.”

# COVID-19 WEBINAR SERIES



In May 2020, as COVID-19 disrupted every aspect of our lives, faculty across disciplines in the College sought to share relevant insights and expertise with the community. The College launched the COVID-19 Webinar series with four initial events in the spring semester, convening more than 500 participants and distinguished experts from across Mason, the community, and the nation. The series examined timely topics such as how to safely “reopen” the economy in Northern Virginia and the implication of COVID on front-line workers in fields such as child care and retail. Faculty also disseminated information to help understand the disease itself and its impact on neonatal and maternal health and rural populations. Invited speakers represented community organizations and universities.

Topics and speakers included:

### **COVID-19—Implications for Fetal, Neonatal, and Maternal Health**

#### **Rosemary Higgins**

Associate Dean for Research,  
College of Health and Human Services  
George Mason University

#### **Uma M. Reddy**

Professor,  
Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology,  
and Reproductive Sciences  
Yale School of Medicine

### **Weighing the Decision to Safely “Reopen” Northern Virginia**

#### **Victor Hoskins**

President and CEO, Fairfax Economic  
Development Authority

#### **Dan Houser**

Chair, Economics Department  
College of Humanities and  
Social Sciences  
George Mason University

#### **Sean O’Connor**

Professor of Law and Executive  
Director, Center for the Protection of  
Intellectual Property  
Antonin Scalia Law School  
George Mason University

#### **Emanuel (Chip) Petricoin III**

University Professor and Co-Director,  
Center for Applied Proteomics and  
Molecular Medicine (CAPMM)  
College of Science  
George Mason University

#### **Amira Roess**

Professor, Department of Global and  
Community Health  
College of Health and Human Services  
George Mason University

### **Rural Populations and Infectious Disease Transmission: Implications for COVID-19**

#### **Cara L. Frankenfeld**

Associate Professor, Department of  
Global and Community Health  
College of Health and Human Services  
George Mason University

#### **Caterina M. Scologio**

LeRoy and Aileen Paslay Professor of  
Electrical and Computer Engineering,  
Kansas State University

#### **Srini Venkatramanan**

Research Scientist, Network Systems  
Science and Advanced Computing,  
Biocomplexity Institute and Initiative  
University of Virginia

### **Social Justice: The Shifting Landscape of Essential Work During COVID-19**

#### **Debra Evans**

Division Chief, Sexual Assault Center  
and Domestic Violence Program  
City of Alexandria

#### **Ami Gadhia**

Chief of Policy, Research, and Programs,  
Child Care Aware of America

#### **Courtney Riggie-van Schagen**

Director of Behavioral Health,  
Neighborhood Health

#### **Kay Halverson**

Executive Director,  
Mary Marshall Assisted Living,  
Volunteers of America

#### **Moderator: Emily Ihara**

Chair, Department of Social Work  
College of Health and Human Services  
George Mason University

Recordings and slides from all the  
webinars in the series can be found on  
the COVID-19 Webinar Series page: [bit.ly/CHHSCoVIDWebinars](https://bit.ly/CHHSCoVIDWebinars). The series has  
continued into the fall semester.

# Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics

## Health Policy Seminar Series

The Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics (CHPRE) held a summer lecture series on health policy issues amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The panels featured a variety of experts that shape public policy from the state and federal levels as well as the public and private sectors. The webinars covered a broad range of topics including the effect of COVID-19 in policy making during an election year, drug development and pricing in a pandemic, and the public health lessons learned from the early stages of the coronavirus outbreak. Recordings from the webinars can be found on the CHPRE Webinar Series page: [bit.ly/CHPREWebinars20](https://bit.ly/CHPREWebinars20).

### COVID 19: Where Are We Now?

#### MODERATOR

##### Alison Cuellar

Professor and Director, CHPRE,  
Department of Health Administration  
and Policy  
George Mason University

#### PANELISTS

##### Edward Maibach

University Professor, Department of  
Communication, and Director,  
Center for Climate Change  
Communication  
George Mason University

##### Amira Roess

Professor, Department of Global and  
Community Health  
George Mason University

##### Ashley Thompson

Senior Vice President for Public Policy  
Analysis and Development,  
American Hospital Association

### Policy Making in a Post COVID Election Year: What's Happening Now?

#### MODERATOR AND LEAD ISSUE PRESENTER

##### Len Nichols

Emeritus Professor of Health Policy,  
George Mason University  
Non-Resident Fellow  
Urban Institute

#### PANELISTS

##### Shawn Martin

Executive Vice President and  
CEO Designee,  
American Academy of Family Physicians

##### Stuart Portman

Health Policy Advisor, Majority Staff  
Senate Finance Committee

##### Audrey Smith

Legislative Assistant to Senator  
Joe Manchin

##### Hemi Tewarson

Division Director, Center for  
Best Practices  
National Governors Association

### Drug Development and Pricing in COVID-19 and Beyond

#### MODERATOR

##### Alison Cuellar

Professor and Director, CHPRE,  
Department of Health Administration  
and Policy  
George Mason University

#### PANELISTS

##### Peter Bach

Director of the Center for Health Policy  
and Outcomes,  
Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, NY

##### Mary Kosinski

Chief of Staff and Deputy Vice President  
for Science and Regulatory Advocacy,  
PhRMA

##### Marta Wosinska

Director, Margolis Center  
Duke University

### Public Health, Lessons Learned from COVID: Future of State and Federal Public Health Planning

#### MODERATOR AND LEAD ISSUE PRESENTER

##### Michael Fraser

CEO, Association of State and Territorial  
Health Officials

#### PANELISTS

##### Ned Colange

President and CEO,  
The Colorado Trust

##### Elena Marks

President and CEO, Episcopal Health  
Foundation, Houston, TX

##### Reuben Varghese

Public Health Director, Arlington, VA

### Health Insurance in the Current Crisis and Beyond

#### MODERATOR

##### Alison Cuellar

Professor and Director, CHPRE,  
Department of Health Administration  
and Policy  
George Mason University

#### PANELISTS

##### Linda Blumberg

Institute Fellow, Health Policy Center  
Urban Institute

##### Ellen Montz

Chief Deputy, Chief Health Economist,  
Department of Medical Assistance  
Services, Virginia, Department of  
Medical Assistance Services, Virginia

##### Jeanette Thornton

Senior Vice President, Product,  
Employer, and Commercial Policy,  
America's Health Insurance Plans



# Students and Alumni

### How a Hobby Can Ease Human Suffering



**Kendall Barrett**  
MSW '21

When the pandemic began, Kendall Barrett had an impressive stash of cotton fabric at her disposal, and so she started sewing fabric masks for long-term care residents, individuals experiencing homelessness, kinship support groups, friends, family, and neighbors. Working with her adult children who were quarantining with her, they made and distributed hundreds of fabric masks.

"I have a skill that is useful and I cannot fathom watching members of my human family suffer without doing whatever I am able to do to help. This is not a time to only take care of yourself," says Barrett. "The pandemic has shown me how important it is to work together for the safety of all humanity."

### Improving Lives, Improving Public Health Programs: Pandemic Offers Lessons Beyond Classroom Walls



**Kelly Williams**  
BS Community Health '20

Due to the sudden economic recession, local food banks quickly became overwhelmed, and Kelly Williams wanted to put her public health training to good use. She helped a pastor convert a church into a temporary food bank where she helped assemble packages of paper products and food for delivery to families in need.

Williams credits Adjunct Instructor Shannyn Snyder for helping her understand how community systems and social justice issues can shape one's health.

"For example, many families we serve spoke only Spanish. To overcome this language barrier, we coordinated Spanish-speaking volunteers to call these households in advance to let them know that they did not need to be in contact with the delivery drivers to receive their supplies."

### "What I've Learned (from DNP Essentials) Has Been Essential—Even After Graduation."



**Peter Bizon**  
DNP '20

Peter Bizon signed up to volunteer at the Loudoun County Health Department as soon as its call center opened to address residents' questions about COVID-19 in March. Three weeks into his tenure, Bizon was appointed supervisor of fielding inbound calls. During any pandemic, people seek factual information and can be uncertain or afraid. Bizon worked five-hour shifts every weekday answering questions on topics ranging from housing assistance to quarantine guidelines.

He encourages all qualified individuals to join the Medical Reserve Corps in their counties if they have not already. The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program at Mason requires at least 400 hours of DNP Essentials, which includes volunteering in a nurse practitioner role.

## Social Work Students Take Action Amidst Pandemic to Connect Community with Needed Supplies



Rachel Picon and Maricza Hinnah  
BSW '20

Rachel Picon and Maricza Hinnah created a supplies exchange Facebook group on March 13, 2020, to support the community of Northern Virginia and “to be a resource and safe place during this time.” The group quickly grew to more than 10,000 members within a few weeks.

They have standard rules that maintain order and restrict wrongdoings, such as price gouging, hate speech, political posts, and spam. Fair trades, resale of items, and donations of goods is permitted within the group.

“We want everyone to know that one person reaching out to just one other person to perform an act of kindness is where we can make an impact and where change truly becomes the power of every American,” said Picon and Hinnah.

## Giving Back to the Community in a Time of Need

Archana Bai Reddy  
BSN '20

Archana Bai Reddy is no stranger to hard work. In addition to finishing her final semester of classes and working as an LPN in a pediatric office, she volunteered in the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) call center in Prince William County. “In these uncertain times I believe it is my responsibility to serve the community,” said Archana.

Archana fielded questions regarding COVID-19 symptoms, where to go for testing, and relayed the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for quarantining, disinfecting, and reducing the risk of infection.

She believes her experience and education prepared her to perform the duties at the call center and reported “an inner happiness” that came from helping others each day.

## On the Front Lines: Continuing Public Mental Health Care Amid COVID-19



Darcy Kim  
BSW '02

Darcy Kim is a behavioral health supervisor in the Behavioral Health Outpatient Program at the Fairfax County Community Services Board (CSB).

“My definition of ‘community’ is inclusive of those we serve, as well as those providing service—our staff. Looking after care providers’ emotional and physical health is critical to providing better service delivery, and this is something I strongly advocate for every day in my job. Ensuring caregivers’ health can easily be overlooked when pursuing the goals of productivity, yet I find it’s really not hard to find a balance once you’ve realized the importance of including providers in the definition of ‘community.’ This balance is critical in managing everyone’s safety and really one of the only ways to ensure providers can continue to provide the essential services we deliver in a crisis,” said Kim.



Read more about the CHHS community’s response to COVID-19: [bit.ly/CHHSrise](https://bit.ly/CHHSrise).

## COVID-19 RESEARCH

# Mason Studies the Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Families in First National Longitudinal Childhood Study During a Pandemic

For the more than 350 families participating in the Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) program, COVID-19 presented a challenge and an opportunity. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research team conducted in-person assessments with study participants who were seen in the Population Health Center. However, like every other aspect of everyday life, the ECHO study pivoted to remote data collection on March 19, 2020.

Because ECHO is the first national longitudinal childhood study being conducted during a pandemic, the research team can now assess, through longitudinal data collection, how environmental stressors and the pandemic impact the health of children and mothers.

Nasal swabs of parents and children are now being collected in the home rather than the ECHO site. These biospecimens will provide additional insights into the spread of COVID-19, since they are collected before, during, and after the pandemic and may provide valuable information about the prevalence of the disease in children. The team is also collecting other biospecimens (hair, toenail clippings, and deciduous teeth) remotely for the measurement of environmental chemicals.

"By changing our procedures to focus on COVID-19-related concerns, we have an unprecedented opportunity to understand how living through a pandemic affects the health of Northern Virginia families," says principal investigator Kathi Huddleston.

The research team has also adapted their surveys to address COVID-19 concerns with questions such as whether anyone has been diagnosed with COVID-19, whether sheltering-in-place orders are being followed, and how the pandemic is affecting other aspects of life, such as employment status, social services, and stressors.

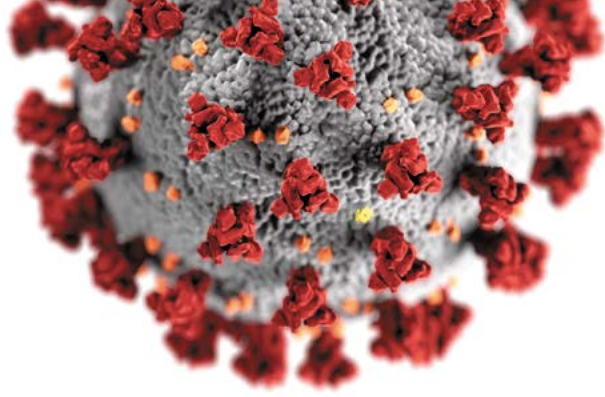
"We're seeing evidence of vast health disparities across our country with the COVID-19 pandemic," says Huddleston. "We know the COVID-19 response such as sheltering in place can look very different for people depending on their family composition, socio-economic circumstances, and a host of other factors. There could not be a better time to capture those impacts of the pandemic as we continue to study the environmental influences of child health."



Read more: [bit.ly/CHHSECHO20](https://bit.ly/CHHSECHO20)







## The College of Health and Human Services is Awarded Seed Funding Grants for Two Urgent COVID-19 Studies

Two Mason grants will enable preliminary data collection to study the feasibility of telehealth-based intimate partner violence screening and the effects of COVID-19 on young adults in America.

### **A Pilot Feasibility and Acceptability Study for Telehealth-Based IPV Screening and Intervention During COVID-19**

Reports of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, mirroring increases experienced during previous humanitarian crises and natural disasters.

Jhumka Gupta and Rebecca Sutter received \$21,900 to pilot a telehealth-based IPV screening and safety planning intervention for low-income rural and Latina immigrant women served by the Mason and Partners (MAP) Clinics in Northern Virginia.

Their research will include focus groups, in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews with nurses, IPV survivors, and IPV advocates/service providers. Data gathered from this phase will inform the revision of clinic-based IPV screening, safety planning, and referral tools that have been previously used with refugee women. The second phase of the study will involve assessing the feasibility, fidelity, and acceptability of two different screening and referral approaches within six MAP clinics.

The study builds on research from previous humanitarian crises to develop urgently needed interventions that address IPV and safety while maintaining social distancing. Researchers will use these data to inform a larger intervention study.

### **How Will COVID-19 Affect the Future of Young American Adults? Rapid Changes in Health and Stress Before and During the COVID-19 Epidemic**

Young adults may be important spreaders of the COVID-19 virus because they often have no or mild symptoms and may be more likely to disregard advice to limit their social activities.

CHHS faculty Amira Roess, Alison Cuellar, and Lawrence Cheskin with fellow Mason researchers Jerome Short, Virginia Espina, and Lance Liotta have received \$35,000 for this study, the goal of which is to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in this age group and their many contacts and better understand antibody dynamics in young adults.

In May 2020, the researchers began estimating the level of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2 seroprevalence) virus among more than 150 college students. They will measure the association between the level of COVID-19 virus in their blood samples and self-reported stress.

The researchers seek to identify measures that young adults will likely adhere to, which sources of information they trust to convey these measures, and what emotional support programming they need. ■



Read more: [bit.ly/UrgentCOVIDStudies](https://bit.ly/UrgentCOVIDStudies)



# NSF Grant Enables Amira Roess to Continue Investigating Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV2) and Related Coronaviruses

The College received a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to study the emergence and spread of coronaviruses such as COVID-19, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV2), and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Amira Roess, who joined Mason's faculty in fall 2019 as a professor in the Department of Global and Community Health, is the principal investigator on the grant. Roess studies the spread of MERS-CoV2, a novel coronavirus, between wildlife, camels, and humans in East Africa.

The original \$2.45 million grant for this research was awarded to Roess when she was at George Washington University (GWU) in 2018 (Grant No. 1816064). Roess will continue to oversee this multidisciplinary collaboration between colleagues at American University, Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin, GWU, University of Georgia, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University, and Dilla University on this multiyear research project.

Funding from this grant allows for continued development of models that predict coronavirus emergence and transmission by incorporating environmental, social, behavioral, and cultural factors.



"Bringing this NSF grant to Mason will allow us to continue doing the analysis and monitoring required to understand coronavirus epidemiology, including why some strains are more contagious than others and why some have higher fatality rates," says Roess. "Our research seeks to better understand the role of antibodies and that will allow us to develop public health responses to lower infection risk." Her ongoing coronavirus research continues to help inform public health practices related to COVID-19 at the federal, state, and local levels.

"It has never been more critical to advance this research as we experience the global implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. NSF support will allow the College to understand and disseminate life-saving knowledge of coronaviruses and develop public health protocols to fight COVID-19," says Germaine Louis, professor and dean of the College of Health and Human Services. ■



Read more: [bit.ly/RoessMERS20](https://bit.ly/RoessMERS20)

# Using Machine Learning to Help Flatten the Curve in the Pandemic

For public health experts fighting COVID-19, there are still many unknowns including how the disease spreads through populations, what impact lifting the stay-at-home order has on the infection rate, and how people's movement patterns affect the spread of the disease.

Janusz Wojtusiak, associate professor of health informatics and director of the Machine Learning Inference Lab; Amira Roess, professor of global health and epidemiology; and Dieter Pfoser, professor and chair of geography and geoinformation science, have launched a study to answer these questions. The goal is to develop a better understanding of people's movement patterns and ultimately model the potential spread of the pandemic.

Participants are using GPS apps to provide data on how people move during each stage of the pandemic. Study participants are also recording their daily symptoms throughout the study to record any symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection.

Once this information is gathered at a small scale, experts in machine learning can develop models for how movement impacts the spread of the disease. ■

➔ Read more:  
[bit.ly/MachineLearnCOVID20](https://bit.ly/MachineLearnCOVID20)



# Researching How Food-Related Behaviors and Physical Activity Change During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Constance Gewa, associate professor of nutrition and food studies, is leading a study to examine the effect of COVID-19 on food-related behaviors and physical activity among Mason students.

Participants will complete online surveys to report on their eating habits, access to different foods, food sources, engagement in physical activity, and body weight over a period of 12 months. Study participants will also provide information on their anxiety levels, socio-economic status, and select demographic indicators during the study period.

The goal of the study is to inform policy and programs that may help college students prepare for, cope with, and recover from emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. ■



# FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI AWARDS

## Emeritus Professors

Two College professors received Emeritus Status, approved by the Board of Visitors this year.

**Len Nichols**, *Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics, Department of Health Administration and Policy*

**Dennis Ritchie**, *Department of Social Work*

## College Faculty Awards

### Master Teacher Award for a Senior Faculty Member

Recognizes a faculty member with seven or more years of teaching experience for excellence in teaching.

**Dennis Ritchie**, *Professor, Department of Social Work*

### Master Teacher Award for an Adjunct Faculty Member

Recognizes an adjunct faculty member for excellence in teaching.

**Grant Huang**, *Adjunct Faculty, Department of Rehabilitation Science*

### Evelyn Cohelan Faculty Endowed Leadership Award

Recognizes outstanding educational leadership and service to the School of Nursing.

**Katherine Scafide**, *Assistant Professor, School of Nursing*

## College Staff Awards

### Senior Employee of the Year

Recognizes an outstanding employee who has been employed at CHHS 24+ months.

**Vannary Khov**, *Office Manager, Department of Social Work*

### Junior Employee Award

Recognizes an outstanding employee who has been employed at CHHS 6 months to 24 months.

**Claudia Giliberti**, *Human Resources Specialist, Dean's Office*

### Exemplary Service

Recognizes a staff member's exemplary service and support toward achieving the vision and mission of the College.

**Christine Kania**, *Financial Specialist, Dean's Office*

## Stearns Center 2020 Teaching Excellence Awards

### Adjunct Teacher of Distinction

Teachers of Distinction are faculty members who have been finalists for the Teaching Excellence Award, and who are recognized across campus for their exceptional teaching and their commitment to teaching-related activities.

**Avinash Patwardhan**, *Adjunct Faculty, Department of Global and Community Health*

## Fall 2019 Mason Core Teaching Recognition Recipients

These faculty have been recognized by students for teaching an outstanding Mason Core course (above a 4.75 out of 5 on the element "my overall rating of teaching" from the Student Ratings of Instruction).

**Virginia Blair**, *Assistant Professor, Department of Health Administration and Policy*

**Suzanne Carmack**, *Assistant Professor, Department of Global and Community Health*

**Danielle Catona**, *Assistant Professor, Department of Global and Community Health*

**Andrew Guccione**, *Professor, Department of Rehabilitation Science*

**Sara Hoffman**, *Adjunct Faculty, Department of Global and Community Health*

**Lisa Lindley**, *Associate Professor, Department of Global and Community Health*

**Margaret Slavin**, *Associate Professor, Department of Nutrition and Food Studies*

**Shannyn Snyder**, *Adjunct Faculty, Department of Global and Community Health*

**Sherri Taylor**, *Adjunct Faculty, School of Nursing*

**Alejandro Villarroel**, *Adjunct Faculty, Department of Nutrition and Food Studies*

**Kristen Vlaun**, *Adjunct Faculty, Department of Global and Community Health*

**Kim Winnard**, *Adjunct Faculty, Department of Global and Community Health*

# Mason's Black Alumni Chapter Recognizes Two CHHS Alumni for Their Impact on the World and in Their Communities



**Ashley Koranteng**, BS Community Health '19, is currently pursuing her Accelerated Master of Public Health, focusing on epidemiology. She has a cross-cultural background that has impacted the way she views public health, thereby sparking her interest in topics such as social determinants of health, food deserts, health promotion, and health equity. Koranteng aspires to work in the fields of epidemiology and disease prevention, as well as food allergy research, given that she has food allergies herself. She is also committed to continuing her social entrepreneurship ventures, such as AK Tutoring LLC and Rise and Thrive Inc.



After graduation, **Erica J. Street**, MPH '16, moved to Atlanta to begin a fellowship at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. Shortly thereafter, she joined the Division of Population Health's Applied Research and Translation Branch as a public health evaluator with the Prevention Research Centers program. She now serves as an epidemiologist for the Defense Health Agency's Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch in Silver Spring, Maryland.



Read more: [bit.ly/BACCHHS20](https://bit.ly/BACCHHS20)

## Sharon Lamberton Awarded Distinguished College Alumna of the Year

**M**ason alumna Sharon Brigner Lamberton (MS Health Policy '01) is the deputy vice president of state policy for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA). She brings her clinical care and policy experience to the table in her work with the National Governors' Association, National Foundation of Women Legislators, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, and other groups on important issues like prescription drug misuse, adherence/care coordination, insulin affordability, and drug pricing.

Lamberton received the distinguished alumni award virtually due to COVID-19—a disease that PhRMA and its members are fighting head-on. PhRMA members are now collaborating to find treatments and immunizations and to address the shortage of personal protective equipment.



"I attribute my success to mentors like Drs. PJ Maddox, Len Nichols, and Mary Wakefield who took time to help mold me and my professional goals early in my career, as well as the work experience and knowledge gained by working for Dr. Wakefield and with Marcia Bearo during graduate school at the Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics on rural health issues," says Lamberton. She remains active in the Mason community by presenting at health policy seminars, mentoring Mason students through practicum assignments and internships, and collaborating on alumni development efforts for the College.



Read more: [bit.ly/CHHSDistAlumniLamberton](https://bit.ly/CHHSDistAlumniLamberton)

## LEADERSHIP

### Advisory Board

#### College Advisory Board Brings Insight and Expertise

This year, the Advisory Board welcomed five new members: Ellie Dehoney, Maureen Dempsey, Praduman Jain, Susie Lee, and Tonga Turner, and it said farewell to members Kevin Donnellan, Susan Lydick, Karen Remley, and Les Taylor. The board, which has grown from 10 members to 13, serves in an advisory capacity to the dean and members of the leadership team. Board members bring expertise and knowledge in areas such as policy and advocacy, management and leadership, financial planning and strategy, and community outreach.

#### Current Advisory Board Members

**Janet E. Hinchcliff, Chair**  
Principal  
Health Systems and Strategy Health  
Transformation Tech Center  
The MITRE Corporation

**Mary Ann Friesen, Vice Chair**  
Nursing Research Coordinator  
Inova Health System

**Gloria A. Addo-Ayensu**  
Director of Health  
Fairfax County Health Department

**Robert B. Blancato**  
President  
Matz, Blancato and Associates

**Eleanor Dehoney**  
Vice President of Policy and Advocacy  
Research!America

**Maureen Dempsey**  
Regional Vice President and Chief  
Medical Officer  
Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield

**Praduman Jain**  
CEO and Founder  
Vibrent Health

**Susie Lee**  
Executive Director  
Potomac Health Foundation

**Angela H. McConnell, USAFR/USA  
MAJ (RET)**  
Owner and CEO  
Q Integrative Healthcare Consulting

**Robin E. Mockenhaupt**  
Senior Vice President, Strategic  
Initiatives  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Carolyn A. Taylor**  
Corporate Operations Officer  
Taylor-Oden Enterprises

**Tonga Y. Turner**  
Director  
Access and Social Health  
Kaiser Permanente Community Health

➔ Read more about the College  
Advisory Board:  
[bit.ly/CHHSAdvBd](https://bit.ly/CHHSAdvBd).



### Alumni Chapter Board

The CHHS Alumni Chapter Board serves as ambassadors for the College by enhancing diverse student, faculty, and alumni experiences to improve public health. Current members include:

**Mary Alemayehu, MSN '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**



# College Administration

## Dean's Office

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## Departmental Chairs

The College is pleased to welcome Carolyn (Carey) Drews-Botsch as the new chair of the Department of Global and Community Health and Martha (Marti) Kubik as the new director of the School of Nursing. Congratulations to Emily Ihara for her permanent appointment to chair of the Department of Social Work.

### Lawrence J. Cheskin

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### Marti Kubik

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