

JANUARY 2024

THE PENN CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

2023 A YEAR IN REVIEW



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A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

As we look forward to 2024, I have been reflecting on the continued challenges to the health of the public, both locally, and around the globe. To meet these challenges and improve the health of the population demands broad engagement of virtually every sector of society, including the majority of academic disciplines. Here at Penn we must continue to mobilize the depth of public health expertise on campus. From the inception of the MPH degree program in 2002, to the formation of CPHI in 2007, public health has grown tremendously at Penn. The Penn Center for Public Health is committed to serving as the unifying home for everyone at the University who is dedicated to improving the health of the public. We strive to create a public health home for people from many schools and departments to learn from experts and each other, to catalyze new research ideas and collaborations, to respond to public health priorities informed by and pursued in partnership with our community, and to educate future public health practitioners, researchers, and leaders.

In 2023, the Penn Center for Public Health took important strides towards our aspirational goals. This annual report highlights our progress and describes some key initiatives.

Our annual seminar series brought in expert speakers who have proposed actionable solutions to complex challenges. This year we hosted Tracie Hall, former Executive Director of the American Library Association and one of TIME100's 2023 most influential people in the world, to address the public health impact of book banning and information censorship.

We re-invigorated our Senior Fellows Program and launched our Practice & Research series, in which Senior Fellows present on timely and critical public health topics to the larger Center for Public Health network.

We expanded our school-based health initiatives. We empowered our Public Health Plus Pipeline students to conduct youth participatory action research projects and updated our middle and high school health and human development curriculum while expanding to two additional schools.

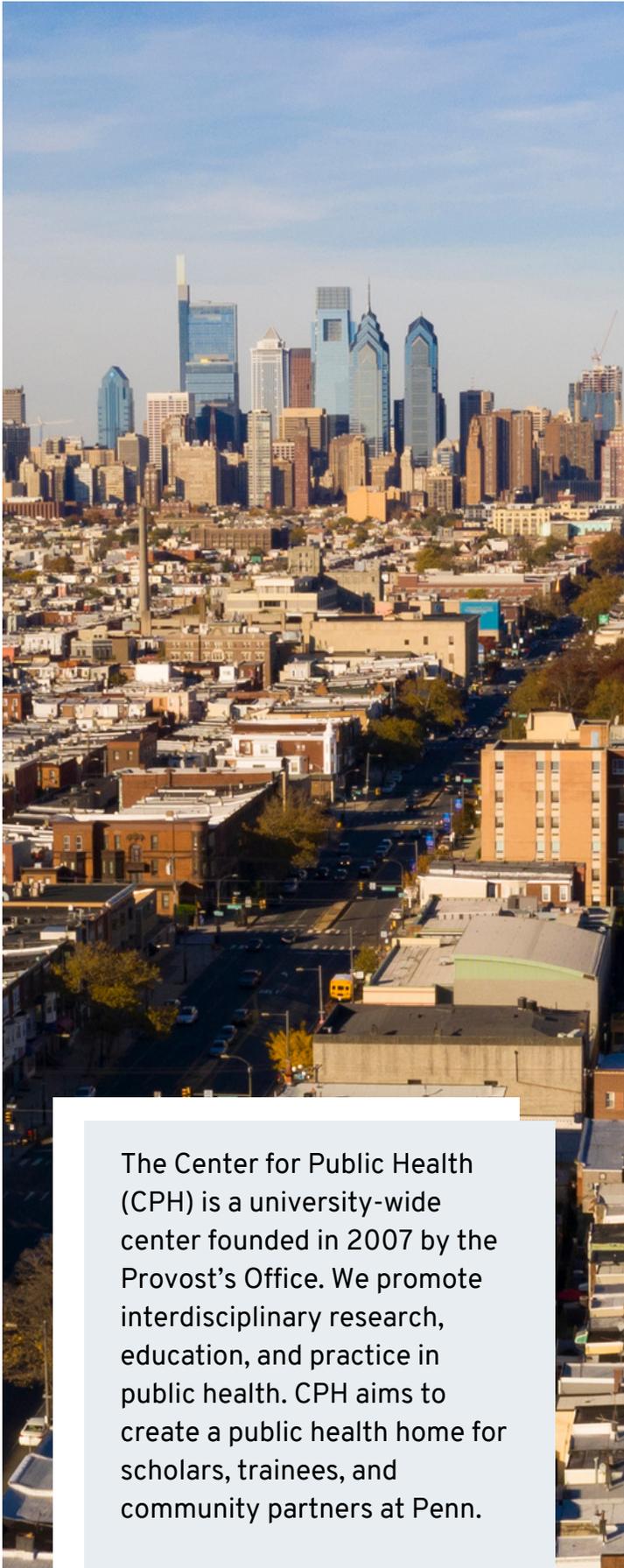
We know our progress to date would not be possible without the dedication of our staff, MPH students, fellows, faculty, as well as our University and community partners. The Penn Center for Public Health remains dedicated to expanding our ability to make a measurable difference in the lives of our communities and the public as a whole. Together, we will continue to advance the discipline and practice of public health to tackle these challenges together. Wishing you all a joyous New Year!

Regards,



Richard Wender, MD
Executive Director
Penn Center for Public Health





The Center for Public Health (CPH) is a university-wide center founded in 2007 by the Provost's Office. We promote interdisciplinary research, education, and practice in public health. CPH aims to create a public health home for scholars, trainees, and community partners at Penn.



WHAT WE DO

We educate and train public health leaders and practitioners, foster multi-disciplinary collaboration, and promote excellence in public health research and community partnerships.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Public Health is to educate and train public health leaders and practitioners, foster multi-disciplinary collaboration, and promote excellence in public health research and community partnerships.



www.cph.upenn.edu

OUR TEAM



Richard Wender, MD
Executive Director



Heather Klusaritz, PhD, MSW
Director of Community Engagement



Carolyn Cannuscio, ScD
Director of Research



Hillary Nelson, PhD, MPH
Director of Education



Courtney Summers, MSW
Associate Director



Emily Paterson, MPH
Senior Program Manager



Moriah Hall, MPH
Associate Director, MPH Program



Francesca Cameron, MPH
Program Manager



Rachel Feuerstein-Simon, MPH
Research Program Manager



Lydia Moore-Hill
Communications Coordinator



EDUCATE AND TRAIN FUTURE PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS AND PRACTITIONERS





LETTER FROM THE MPH PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The MPH program congratulates CPH on another banner year. While the MPH program operates independently of CPH, we rely on CPH to help with professional workforce development, from the Public Health Pipeline Plus program to the CPH Training Institutes. CPH also provides opportunities for our MPH students to work closely with staff, faculty, and CPH fellows on many of the CPH initiatives.

The MPH program has four tracks. The Generalist track is our most flexible, allowing students to tailor their choice of electives, fieldwork, and capstone project. The Global Health track focuses on the theory and practice of global health. The One Health track focused on the intersection between animals, humans, and the environment, and was designed in conjunction with the School of Veterinary Medicine. Our fourth track, Epidemiology, is new this year, designed in conjunction with the Department of Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Informatics and the Graduate Group in Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

Highlights from the MPH program in 2023 include:

- The program graduated 63 students in 2023
- Our students completed fieldwork with 58 different community organizations

We encourage everyone to look at our website for more information and highlights about the program. Wishing you a happy holiday season and start to the new year!

Regards,

Hillary Nelson, PhD, MPH



 **Master of Public Health**
UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA

HEALTH EDUCATION

The Center for Public Health (CPH), in partnership with the Netter Center and Penn Graduate School of Education (GSE), provides age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) to over 150 Philadelphia public school students, who experience disproportionately high rates of pregnancy, STIs, and violence compared to their peers. This year, we completed a self-study of our curriculum and worked with our school partners to ensure the use of gender inclusive language and expanded our identity and safety content. This fall we added two new school partnerships and are excited about the opportunity to reach more students in West Philadelphia. We're building the capacity of PE teachers to implement our comprehensive sexuality education curriculum.

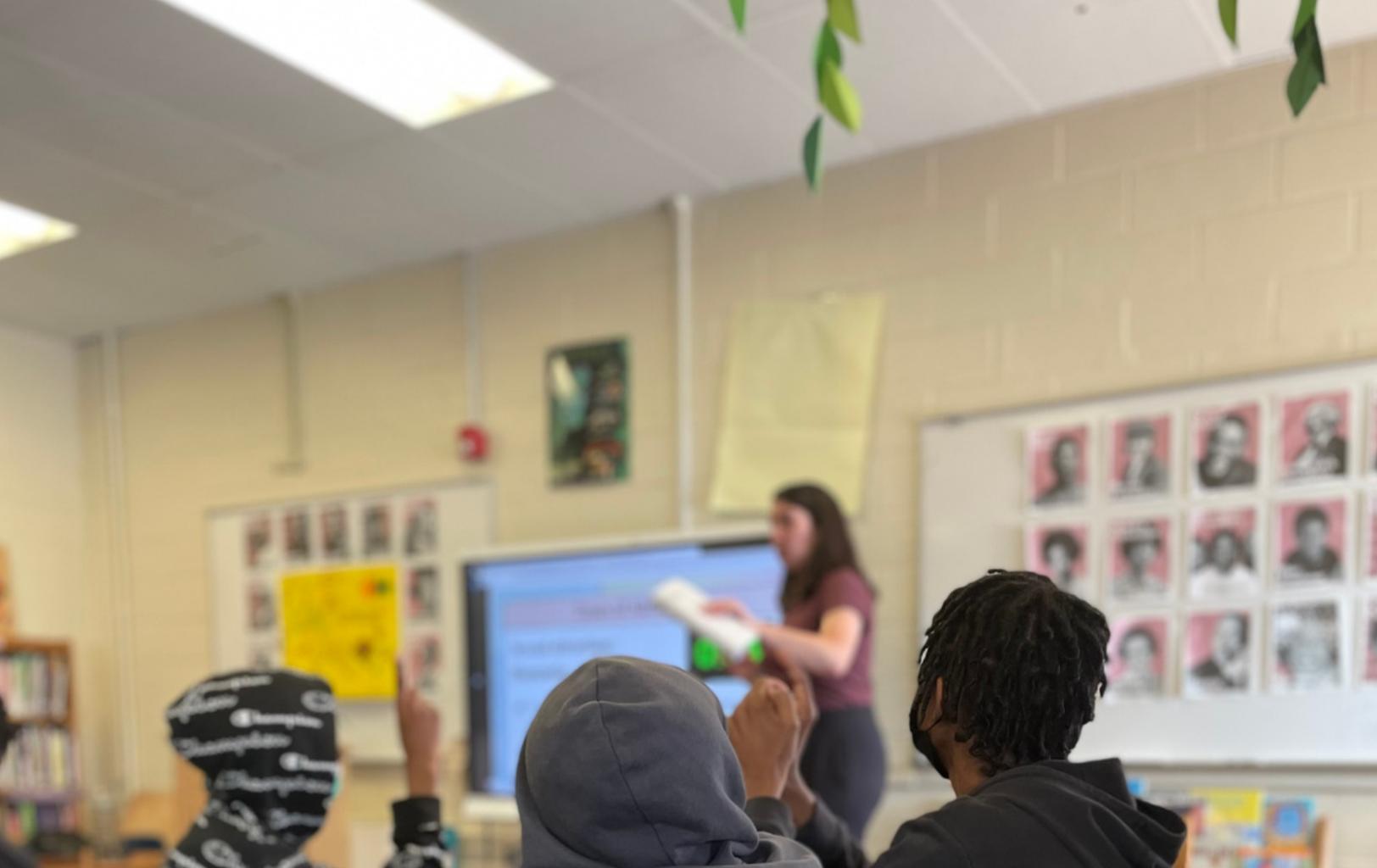
Health and Human Development Education

Over the course of the school year, CPH staff and MPH and MSW student volunteers engage students in lessons spanning from birth control and STI prevention to healthy relationships and identity.

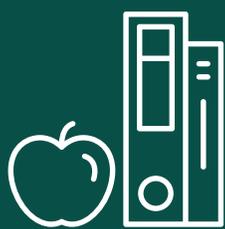
Through interactive lessons, students:

- Gain knowledge and skills to exercise bodily autonomy
- Practice making informed decisions that are best for them
- Learn how to access sexual health resources
- Learn how to identify and navigate healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Gain an understanding of varying gender identities and expressions
- Receive support for emotional well-being





Health Education by the numbers in 2023:



45

classes taught



45

hours of classroom
instruction



150

students served



“Access to quality sexual health education provides vital information and skill-building opportunities for young people. Without comprehensive sex ed, Philly youth are fighting a battle to make safe, informed choices for themselves and their peers with one hand tied behind their backs.”

Julia Barrett, MEd
Sexual Health Education Consultant

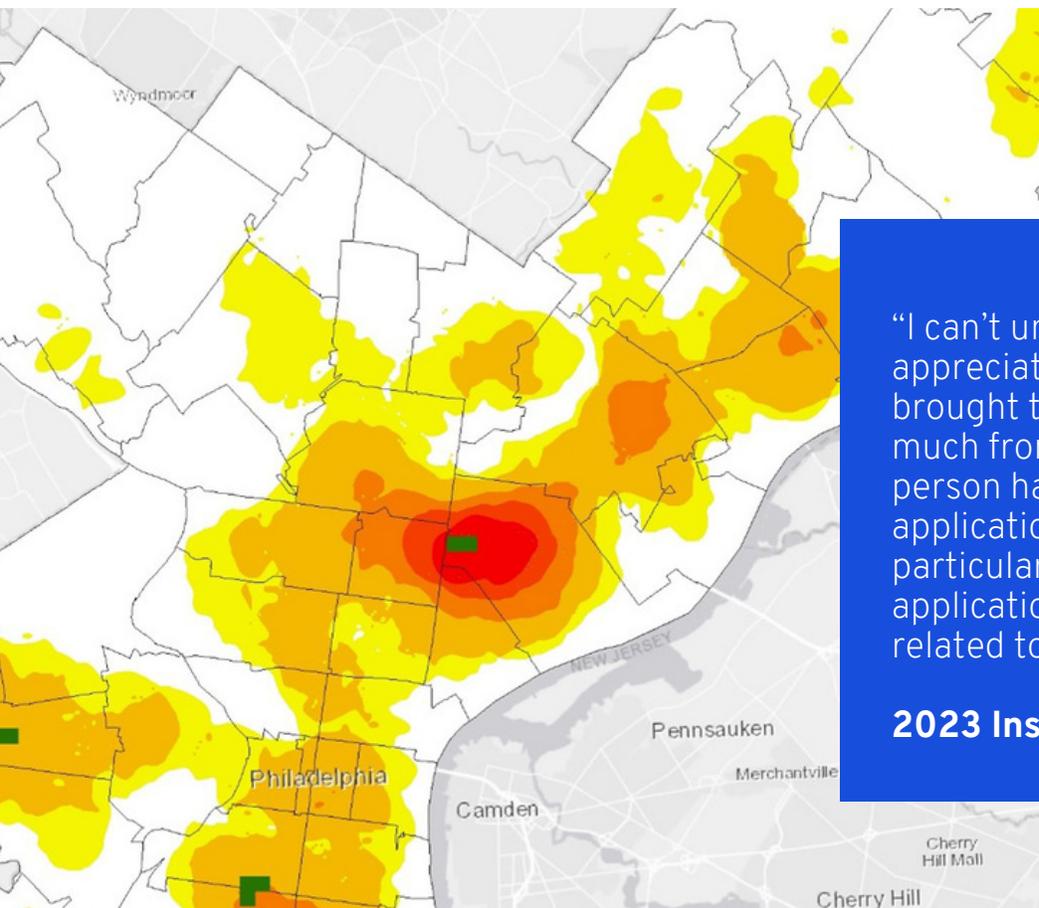
LEARNING INSTITUTES

To support professional workforce development, for students, faculty, practitioners, and community members CPH offers learning institutes that combine didactic lectures with expert speakers and hands-on lab work applicable to individual projects.

To learn more about the learning institutes being offered for this upcoming year, please visit the page on our website here.

GIS & PUBLIC HEALTH

This institute introduces a broad range of ways that Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be applied to public health research, practice, and public policy. By the end of the institute, participants are able to critically analyze maps and research results developed using GIS; learn how to create and analyze thematic maps, geocode addresses, and conduct basic queries; implement a variety of field data collection methods used in GIS such as handheld GPS technology; and develop individual research agendas which incorporate GIS methods.



“I can’t underscore enough how much I appreciated what each presenter brought to the day’s class. I learned so much from each person because each person had their own expertise and application for the software. I particularly liked the real world applications and how each example was related to public health.”

2023 Institute Participant

LEARNING INSTITUTES

QUALITATIVE METHODS INSTITUTE

This comprehensive institute has run for nearly a decade in partnership by the University of Pennsylvania and Thomas Jefferson University. The Qualitative Institute is designed to develop skills that are useful in qualitative and mixed methods research. Participants include health researchers, clinicians, students, and the broader public health community.

Topics include:

- data collection approaches
- structuring and conducting an interview
- selecting an appropriate sample
- organizing and facilitating a focus group
- managing, coding, and analyzing data
- integrating photo elicitation and photo voice
- publishing and disseminating your work
- use and application of NVivo 12, or comparable software
- community partnered research



“Extremely informative opportunity to actually understand the importance and application of the different tools for Qualitative Research. Didn’t realize the power of qualitative work in everyday interactions especially with the community based participatory research.”

2023 Institute Participant

PUBLIC HEALTH PIPELINE PLUS

MISSION AND VISION

The Public Health Pipeline Plus (PHPP) Program is a six-week intensive program in which high school students research and identify solutions for pressing urban public health issues. Founded in 2017, this project is a collaboration between the Center for Public Health and the Netter Center for Community Partnerships. PHPP trains and inspires youth to be public health leaders through hands-on public health education, mentorship, and professional development training. Through a youth participatory action research model, we are building a diverse public health workforce equipped to address health inequities.

WHAT DO INTERNS LEARN?

Interns learn the basics of the research process, including forming a research question, project and hypothesis development, survey and data analysis, and presenting their findings. They also learn from public health professionals in a variety of fields, including maternal and child health, environmental justice, and health policy. Interns evolve into beginner public health researchers and advocates with the passion and skills to transform their communities' health!



“Going into pipeline was like ‘I don’t even know what is public health and now I know so much about public health. I can teach others about public health and that right there says a lot about the program... now I know so much about public health to go back and inform others.’”

2023 Pipeline Plus Intern



SUMMER 2023: A NEW, YOUTH-LED CURRICULUM!

Past iterations of this program included students learning about public health issues from subject matter experts, attending educational field trips, and presenting on public health topics. In 2023 we revamped the programming to fit a model of youth participatory action research (YPAR) in response to feedback about our students' desire to have a more hands-on experience.

Students went directly into their schools and communities to research gun violence in schools, greenspace access, and the impacts of the school built environment on student mental health. They developed research tools, collected data in schools and parks, and presented their findings. Students reported a new sense of efficacy in creating community-based change, desire to continue learning about public health, and high interest in public health as a career path!

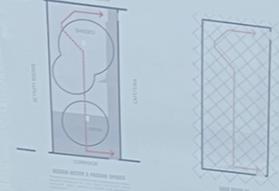




FOSTER MULTIDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION



Sensory Matrix
ENHANCING SENSORY EXPERIENCES



Plan & Circulation Development
CONCEPTUALIZING the SPACE



Climate Analysis
DYNAMIC DESIGN



AMPLIFYING the



DESIGNING FOR LGBTQ+ HEALTH EQUITY: A CONVERSATION WITH JOSÉ A. BAUERMEISTER



On April 7th, 2023, in collaboration with Penn Eidos, the Center for Public Health hosted a talk with José A. Bauermeister, PhD, MPH. This event was held as part of Penn Medicine’s Health Equity Week, an annual conference designed to facilitate expert-driven conversations on health and health care disparities with the goal of advancing health equity through innovative solutions.

José discussed the current landscape of LGBTQ+ healthcare and the need to anticipate policy implications when designing for health equity. He described the mission and vision of the newly established Eidos LGBTQ+ Health Initiative which aims to cultivate and engage emerging and experienced leaders from community, academic, civic and business spheres to create innovative solutions for the LGBTQ+ community.

To view the full event recording please visit [here](#).



THE FARM AT PENN PARK SPRING EVENT



On May 24th, the Penn Center for Public Health in partnership with Penn Wellness gathered University leaders at the Farm at Penn Park to discuss the work advancing food justice on and off campus. The Farm at Penn Park is a unique, multidisciplinary initiative that engages stakeholders from across the Penn community around four central pillars of wellness, food access, sustainability, and education. Penn CPH's Executive Director, Richard Wender kicked off the evening and reminded us all that the Farm at Penn Park serves as a great opportunity for food justice partnerships across the University and our surrounding community.



ACCESS MATTERS: A CONVERSATION WITH TRACIE HALL ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACTS OF BOOK BANNING



On October 31, 2023 Penn Center for Public Health partnered with Penn Libraries for a crucial dialogue led by featured speaker Tracie Hall addressing the far-reaching consequences of censorship and book bans on public health. Tracie D. Hall, an esteemed leader and former Executive Director of the American Library Association, led the discussion, emphasizing the pivotal role libraries play in providing communities access to health information and social services.



For a full recording of the talk please visit [here](#).



SENIOR FELLOWS PROGRAM



The Penn Center for Public Health Senior Fellows Program is a network of interdisciplinary public health leaders and experts across all of Penn’s schools, the University of Pennsylvania Health System, and the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

100+ Senior Fellows across all 12 schools in 2023

Senior Fellows do a significant portion of their academic work in the area of public health, whether teaching, research, practice, consultation or a combination thereof. The Senior Fellows contribute high impact research to advance the field.

Senior Fellow opportunities



Join a virtual community of public health leaders and experts at Penn



Collaborate significantly with other CPH Fellows in research and scholarship



Participate in public health seminars, retreats, events, or other Center for Public Health activities



Support the next generation of public health professionals

PRACTICE AND RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES



The Practice and Research Seminar series is a new CPH initiative designed to highlight the public health work being done across the University. Our goal is that this series will forge greater connections between public health-minded faculty and staff from all corners of the campus who might not have previously met. This series is held virtually the first Wednesday of every month from 12pm-1pm.



The first three seminars have highlighted a broad range of public health topics, from gender-affirming care, to the role of livestock in global and planetary health, to planning for safe school buildings in Philadelphia. The discussions have been lively and interactive and we look forward to our spring series, which will include an equally broad range of topics.

For a full schedule and speaker lineup for the Practice and Research Seminar Series, please visit [here](#).



“Collaboration is crucial in public health practice and research. One of the reasons I am so excited about this series is that it provides a dedicated and consistent space for interdisciplinary public health leaders across the University to come together and work together to advance public health priorities.”

Hillary Nelson, PhD, MPH





THAN

SUPPO

A photograph of a group of people, likely at a public health event or conference. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. In the foreground, a man with glasses and a blue surgical mask is looking towards the right. He is wearing a light blue and white striped button-down shirt and a lanyard with a badge. To his right, a woman with long dark hair and a black face mask is also looking towards the right. In the background, another person wearing a white face mask is visible. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

**EXCELLENCE IN
PUBLIC HEALTH
RESEARCH AND
COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS**

COMMUNITY-BASED VACCINE PARTNERSHIPS

In partnership with Penn’s Department of Family Medicine of Community Health (DFMCH), we launched our Community Covid-19 Vaccine Clinic program in May 2021. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center for Public Health led community education efforts and worked with these partners to deliver highly successful mass vaccination clinics in underserved communities. Since 2021 we have built on those efforts and provided over 100 vaccine clinics in schools, churches, and community centers in West Philadelphia and provided more than 10,000+ vaccines. The next three pages highlight some of the Center’s key vaccine equity initiatives.

Project 1: Community Partnerships for Wellness (CP4W)

The Center for Public Health continues to support the work of DFMCH Community Partnerships for Wellness (CP4W) to improve health equity in the West Philadelphia community through the delivery primary care services. CP4W provides physical exams, blood pressure and A1C testing, immunization against flu, COVID, and other communicable diseases, and navigated support for other care needs. CP4W hosts twice weekly clinics at West Philadelphia High School, regular clinics with community partner organizations (such as ACHIEVEability and Mighty Writers), and pre-participation sports physical clinics in schools across West and Southwest Philadelphia, in collaboration with the Division of Sports Medicine. The CPH facilitates the development of new partnerships and provides on-going support for existing partnerships.



“We are grateful for our community partners who continue to support this critical public health work. It would not be possible to provide vaccines without the support of our partners and their willingness to host clinics. Through our partnerships we have been able to bring vaccines to communities that experience geographic and structural barriers, thus addressing health inequities in West and SW Philadelphia.”

Heather Klusaritz, PhD, MSW



COMMUNITY-BASED VACCINE PARTNERSHIPS

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

Project 2: Trusted Messengers to Dispel Mis-/Dis-information and Promote Vaccine Confidence

Funded by the American Academy of Pediatrics, this project aimed to promote vaccine confidence and dispel vaccine misinformation in hard-to-reach communities of Philadelphia. This project aims to address this challenge by 1) Developing educational modules (English & Spanish) to support vaccine conversations and disseminate accurate vaccine-related information by trusted messengers, 2) Engaging community members through hyperlocal campaigns at recurrent and special events targeting populations and neighborhoods with low vaccination coverage (routine and COVID-19 vaccines).

This work is led by Angela Shen ScD, MPH (Vaccine Education Center, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia) and Heather Klusaritz (Center for Public Health and Department of Family Medicine and Community Health).



COMMUNITY-BASED VACCINE PARTNERSHIPS

Project 3: Improving Adult Immunization Rates for COVID-19, Influenza and Other Routine Vaccinations

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) partnered with healthcare systems to form a Real-Time Learning Network and commit to testing and reporting on strategies to improve immunization practices and to sharing learnings with the broader community of geriatrics health professionals. The aims of this project are to 1) enhance effective vaccine activities that are currently in place, 2) increase the number of patients who receive recommended vaccines by decreasing vaccine hesitancy, and 3) promote health equity in vaccines.

This work is led by Lisa Walke, MD (Chief of the Division of Geriatric Medicine for the Perelman School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania) and Heather Klusaritz (Center for Public Health and Department of Family Medicine and Community Health).





PARTNERSHIP. ACCESS. EQUITY.





SAYRE BREATHING ROOM PROJECT

In partnership with Penn Praxis, Penn Center for Public Health launched a new initiative to create an outdoor wellness garden called “The Breathing Room” at Sayre High School, as part of the 2023 Projects for Progress. This project built off of the successful Design to Thrive program model PennPraxis developed at West Philadelphia High School (WPHS).

Project Summary

The Breathing Room will create an outdoor wellness space at Sayre High School that is built collaboratively by Penn Design, Landscaping, and City and Regional Planning student and Sayre students. The team will study the effects of that space on health and include teenagers in all aspects of data collection and analysis, to propel wider action on racial disparities in public school infrastructure and social determinants of health. This team proposes to work with high school students to create an outdoor “calm room” and social space.

To read more about the Sayre Breathing room project please visit [here](#).



BUILDING THE SAYRE BREATHING ROOM



FOOD JUSTICE PARTNERSHIPS



The Center for Public Health seeks to create, nurture, and sustain partnerships to advance food justice in the Philadelphia community.

Working in partnership with the Farm at Penn Park, we continued to support the work of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania's food pantry and HUP Harvest.

Additionally in 2023 we supported the expansion of produce distribution from the Farm at Penn Park to Puentes de Salud. In partnership with the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, we began exploring opportunities for a food distribution site on or near Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, to serve Penn Medicine patients, community members, and staff.



"At HUP, we understand the value of community organizations and the importance they have in reaching patients where they are. At HUP Harvest, we provide medically tailored groceries including a full choice pantry to prenatal patients experiencing food insecurity. Patients' voice and community partners truly guide the work we do and are the real experts in this space. The Center for Public Health has provided strategic support to HUP Harvest in networking with community partners as we grow our services."

Sofia Carreno, MSN, RN





SERVICE LINK

MISSION AND VISION

Established by CPH in 2011, Service Link connects Philadelphians to public benefits and community organizations that address the social drivers of health. Dedicated, trained undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, medical, MPH, and law students volunteer at primary care and community sites in Philadelphia.



Source: CDC

COMMUNITY WORK

This past fall, Service Link held weekly clinics at three community sites: Unity Health Clinic, United Community Clinic, and University City Hospitality Coalition. Additionally, Service Link partnered with another club on campus called KDSAP, which conducts kidney screenings, at Masjid Al-Jamia, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Guru Nanak Sikh Society. We held 27 total site clinics across all of our community sites.

Service Link also has branches at the Netter Center and the Penn Family Center, where our volunteers call patients and work on cases over the phone.



“I am currently a health care attorney with Manatt Health, where I primarily do access work. Our firm does a lot of Medicaid work, and I'm currently working on some reproductive rights and health equity matters. Of course, I'm heavily influenced by my history with Service Link when I'm thinking and advising about integrated care and SDOH factors.”

Krushee Patel, Service Link Alum



UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

Penn CPH is a hub for public health leaders at the University of Pennsylvania.

SCHOOLS



UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

KEY PARTNERS

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Community Scholars Program

Eidos LGBTQ+ Health Initiative

The Farm at Penn Park

Netter Center for Community Partnerships

Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics

Penn Center for Addiction Medicine and Policy

Penn Center for Excellence in Environmental Toxicology

Penn Community Engagement and Research Core

Penn Medicine Center for Health Equity Advancement

Penn Center for Health Incentives & Behavior Economics

Penn Center for Global Health

Penn Department of Family Medicine and Community Health

Penn Injury Science Center

Penn LGBTQ+ Center

Penn Libraries

Penn Local Health Engagement Group

Penn Center for Community Health Workers

Penn Medicine

Penn Praxis

Penn Wellness

Urban Health Lab

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

AccessMatters
ACHIEVEability
African Family Health Organization (AFAHO)
Africom (Coalition of African Communities)
Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Black Women's Health Alliance
Camden Coalition
Caring People Alliance
Coalition Against Hunger
Covenant House PA
Family Practice and Counseling Network
The Food Trust
Free Library of Philadelphia
Health Federation of Philadelphia
Healthcare Improvement Foundation
Healthy NewsWorks
Lutheran Settlement House
MANNA
Maternity Care Coalition
Mighty Writers
People's Emergency Center
Philabundance
Prevention Point Philadelphia
Project HOME
Puentes De Salud
Scattergood Foundation
School District of Philadelphia
West Philadelphia Promise Zone
Young Chances Foundation
Family Practice and Counseling Network



HOW TO WORK WITH US

There are many ways to engage with Penn CPH – whether you are a Penn faculty, staff member, student or public health partner at an academic, government, or community organization.

CONNECT

Be part of the Center for Public Health’s network. Sign up for our listserv [here](#).

JOIN

Our program hosts 100+ Senior Fellows and serves as dedicated space to bring together interdisciplinary public health senior leaders across the University, and advance research, collaboration, and innovation in public health.

To learn about how to join as a Center for Public Health Senior Fellow please visit [here](#).

PARTICIPATE

Engage with us throughout the year through one of our signature events or programs.

- **IN PERSON:** Attend our in-person Seminar Series events that feature the nation’s top leaders in public health. Is there a public health leader that you would love to hear from? Let us know!
- **ONLINE:** Participate in our virtual Practice and Research Webinar series that occurs from 12pm-1pm the first Wednesday of every month. For a full upcoming schedule, please visit [here](#).

COLLABORATE

Collaborate with center staff on community-based activities, including Service Link, school-based health initiatives, the Public Health Pipeline summer intern program, and Community Driven Research Day. By collaborating with the Center for Public Health, you will have the opportunity to network with other public health professionals from our extensive network of Senior Fellows and community partners.

Interested in working with us? Reach out [here!](#)

LEARN

To support professional workforce development, CPH offers learning institutes for students, faculty, and community organizations, and members of the greater public health community. Different relevant skill-based sessions are offered throughout each year.

To learn more about our next institute or register for the course, please visit [here](#).

DONATE

To support the continued mission of Penn CPH and help advance public health, learn about our donor options. If you are interested in donating to the work of our Center, please contact: Megan Osvath at mrenaut@upenn.edu.



Penn Center for
Public Health
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA