



# The 14th Annual Undergraduate Research Conference on Health and Society

---

## Program

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

March 25, 2023

# 14th Annual Undergraduate Research Conference on Health & Society

## The Day at a Glance:

---

Welcome Brunch and Registration (Slavin 116)	9:15am - 10:00am
Panel 1 Presentations	10:00am – 10:50am
Panel 2 Presentations	11:00am - 12:05pm
Lunch (Slavin 116)	12:15am - 1:15pm
Panel 3 Presentations	1:30pm - 3:00pm
Closing	3:00pm

## **PANEL 1 | The Cost of Care**

10:00am – 10:50am

Faculty Discussant: Dr. Robert Hackey

---

### ***“Comparing Hospital Costs & Lengths of Stay for Cancer Patients in New York State”***

Ryan Fodero, Providence College | 2023

This paper explores differences in costs and lengths of stay for cancer patients admitted to National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers, non-designated academic medical centers, and community hospitals in New York State using patient-level data from the New York State Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System Hospital Inpatient Discharges dataset from 2017-2019. We employ ordinary least squares and Poisson regressions to compare hospital costs and length of stay for cancer patients, controlling for hospital type, patient demographics, and patient health. Inpatient costs were 27% higher, but length of stay was 12% shorter, in comprehensive cancer centers relative to community hospitals. In New York State, comprehensive cancer centers are a magnet for more complex oncology cases and administer more expensive treatments. That expertise, however, seems to be responsible for more efficient care delivery and thorough discharge planning, allowing for shorter average lengths of stay.

### ***“Reducing Cost-of-Care in Next-Generation Genetic Sequencing”***

Sarah Auletta, Simmons University | 2024

Cost of care in healthcare settings is rapidly rising, and it is increasingly difficult to decrease costs without compromising quality and access. This paper aims to investigate methods and potential opportunities for innovation of next-generation genetic sequencing in healthcare decisions and trajectories of care. I explore the ways in which genetic testing became popular in medicine and how genetic testing is currently being used. I discuss potential innovations in the way that samples

of genetic material are handled once they are taken from patients until the time when the doctor receives the results. By streamlining this process of analyzing the samples and the journey of samples from patient to specialty lab to provider, we can reduce administrative, travel, and labor costs while expediting the process of receiving results. This makes it possible to decrease cost, improve quality by decreasing wait time, and increase access by making the process more efficient.

## **PANEL 2 | Public Health Challenges**

11:00am - 12:05pm

Faculty Discussant: Dr. Deborah Levine

---

### ***“Prescription Stimulant Misuse Amongst University Students in Health Programs”***

Catherine Dancausse, University of North Carolina - Wilmington | 2023

Prescription stimulant misuse (PSM) is characterized by the consumption of stimulant substances for a motive other than its intended purpose. Psychostimulants are commonly prescribed for attention-deficit disorders. With an increasing number of attention-deficit diagnoses in young adults, there has also been a higher diversion rate of these drugs among peers. Stimulants have become the second most abused drug on college campuses, only behind marijuana. This study explores the attitudes, motives, and behaviors behind PSM among college students in health-related majors drawing upon the results of an anonymous survey of students in health-related programs conducted at a medium-sized university in the southeastern United States.

### ***“Assessment of the Kamap Man Tru Men’s Health and Gender Program at Decreasing Partner-to-Partner HIV/AIDS Transmission in Papua New Guinea”***

Eliza Mabey, University of Vermont | 2023

Papua New Guinea has the highest incidence and prevalence of human immunodeficiency virus in the Pacific. Men are more likely to die of AIDS-related illnesses, less likely to get HIV testing, and less likely to access antiretroviral therapy, than women. Initiatives such as the Kamap Man Tru Men’s Health and Gender Program educate members of PNG communities on sexual health, gender-based violence, and healthy relationships. Preventing HIV before it is transmitted is cost-effective, sustainable, and socio-culturally appropriate. Key determinants of the spread of HIV are clearly associated with gender, violence, and sexuality. As a result of Papua New Guinea’s cultural diversity, many barriers affect HIV transmission along with stigmatization, condom use, violence, household roles, and gender inequalities. Public health initiatives should be directed toward identifying and implementing key determinants and interventions within communities.

### ***“The Hidden Victims of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Women”***

Theresa Staab, Providence College | 2023

Early stigmatization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the US as a gay man’s disease left women fighting for visibility in the epidemic for the last forty years. By the late 1980s, women were at the forefront of HIV/AIDS grassroots advocacy yet largely removed from public discourse about susceptibility. Women of color faced a more difficult battle for inclusion

because the erasure of their intersectionality muted their experience as individuals with multiple identities, such as black and gay or black and HIV positive. Furthermore, white women fought to emerge from the shadows of the media's rumors and be recognized as victims of the epidemic rather than bystanders. The insidiousness of HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination is how it weaponizes visibility, amplifying some and erasing others. There was a blatant disregard for women, particularly women of color, who were consistently excluded from the HIV conversations. Despite the general understanding of modes of transmission and the existence of effective treatments (for those with accessibility) that can render most living with HIV undetectable, women with HIV still face the stigma of being hypersexual and immoral. Women were considered safe from HIV if they did not engage in sexually unethical behavior. This work will examine women's marginalized status in the HIV/AIDS epidemic through erasure over time and investigate the hyper-invisibility of women of color due to their intersectional experiences. Furthermore, research will reveal how historical medical mistrust, gendered social norms, and systemic oppression left women disadvantaged in women's continuous fight for equal treatment.

**Lunch - Slavin 116 Executive Dining Room (12:15-1:15pm)**

**PANEL 3 | Racial Disparities in Health and Health Care  
(1:30-3:00pm)**

Faculty Discussant: Dr. Aishah Scott

---

***"The Socio-Political Determinants of Health: How Systemic Racism Facilitates Community violence in Washington, D.C."***

Nadia Altaher, George Mason University | 2023

Racism is deeply embedded in social determinants of health, establishing racial health inequities in populations of color. Recent measures have been taken to address this issue in Washington, D.C. including the 2020 Racial Equity Achieves Results (REACH) Amendment Act and the Child Wealth Building Act which focus on racial equity, social justice, and economic inclusion. My paper explores the correlation between social determinants of health, housing policies, and community by mapping racial covenants from 1940 to 2010, examining neighborhood displacement, and social determinants of health. Current mortgage lending in neighborhoods across the city is used to measure the discrimination in the housing market. Demographic data, drawn from various sources, were used to measure social determinants of health across statistical neighborhoods. The district's racial dissimilarity index of 70.9 indicates that the city is still highly segregated and that zip codes play a significant role in individual health and exposure to violence. To achieve health equity, measures must be taken to dismantle structural racism that include community based participatory research and policies that incorporate a historical context of the problem and the voices of community members.

## ***“A Cinderella Story: Understanding How One Size Doesn't Fit All”***

Cassidy Begley, Providence College | 2023

Proper foot care is critical to diabetic health by ensuring the maintenance of mobility and quality of life. As the U.S. population ages and diabetes diagnoses increase, individuals across the country develop mobility and foot-related problems. While this is a general issue, nonwhites in low-income rural areas are disproportionately impacted. People of color with diabetes in rural low-income communities are more likely to encounter barriers to podiatric care than their white counterparts. Studies show that rural Americans with diabetic foot ulcers have a fifty percent increased risk for foot amputation. Podiatrists play a key role in managing a multitude of chronic diseases by providing preventative care that avoids complications in the foot and ankle. Treatment of diabetic foot infections must be thorough and timely to prevent ulcers, gangrene, or amputation. Ultimately, improving access to podiatrists in these areas would dramatically improve the overall health of these residents.

## ***“Analyzing DEI Efforts and Curricula in Collegiate Nursing Programs”***

Ava Biafore, Victoria Hanlon, and Samuel Lewis, Providence College | 2023

A diverse, representative health care workforce is crucial to advance health care access, patient satisfaction, and health outcomes, particularly for patients of color. A diverse approach to a nursing education includes teaching students how to adequately care for their patients in ways that take into account their race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or any underrepresented intersectional combination. Studies have shown that healthcare students are exposed to racial bias and prejudiced standards of care within their medical education and placement sites. Implicit bias is prevalent among many academic institutions beginning with the application and recruiting process of potential students. Bias can also take place among current students and faculty which causes some students to feel unsupported in their schooling. Best practices for nursing education programs that center health equity include an anti-racist curriculum, bias awareness training, pathway programs to diversify the healthcare workforce, financial support, and effective mentorship. As Providence College creates a new School of Nursing and Health Sciences, it is imperative that these new programs are built on the foundation of health equity. Our research analyzes nursing programs' DEI initiatives and curriculum by interviewing current nursing students and DEI administrators and collecting supplemental information from program websites.

## **2023 Undergraduate Research Conference on Health & Society Participants**

---

Ryan Fodero | Providence College [Providence, RI] rfodero@friars.providence.edu

Sarah Auletta | Simmons University [Boston, MA] auletta@simmons.edu

Catherine Dancausse | University of North Carolina – Wilmington [Wilmington, NC] cad9716@uncw.edu

Eliza Mabey | University of Vermont [Burlington, VT] emabey@uvm.edu

Theresa Staab | Providence College [Providence, RI] tstaab@friars.providence.edu

Nadia Altaher | George Mason University [Fairfax, VA] naltaher@gmu.edu

Cassidy Begley | Providence College [Providence, RI] cbegley@friars.providence.edu

Ava Biafore | Providence College [Providence, RI] abiafore@friars.providence.edu

Victoria Hanlon | Providence College [Providence, RI] vhanlon@friars.providence.edu

Samuel Lewis | Providence College [Providence, RI] slewis7@friars.providence.edu

## **Acknowledgements**

---

Thank you to all our participants, faculty discussants, and conference organizers.

We also want to thank the students who served on this year's selection committee:

William Yaney '23

Christiana Carrillo '23

Satoya Isophe '24

Lindey Joyce '24

Colleen Dorrian '25

This conference is made possible by the generous support of the Canavan Family Fund.

**Thank you for attending the 14th Annual  
Undergraduate Research  
Conference on Health & Society hosted by Providence  
College!**

**Contact Us:**

Providence College  
Department of Health Policy and Management  
1 Cunningham Square, Howley Hall  
Providence, RI 02918  
T: 401.865.1631  
E: [phealthpolicyconference@gmail.com](mailto:phealthpolicyconference@gmail.com)