

WORCESTER



FREE COVID-19 Vaccines in Worcester Available at these Walk-In Clinics:

- Aids Project Worcester
165 Southbridge Street:
Fridays from 1 – 4 PM
- Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center
19 Tacoma Street:
Mondays - Fridays, 8 AM - 1 PM
- UMMHC Mercantile Center
Front Street:
Mondays, 11 AM - 4 PM;
Tuesdays, 10 AM - 3 PM;
Thursdays, 10 AM - 3 PM
- Worcester Public Library's Main Branch
3 Salem Square:
Wednesdays, 11 AM - 7 PM; Saturdays,
11 AM - 5 PM

ALL vaccines administered by medical professionals!

Questions about the vaccine or vaccine clinics?

Call the Worcester Department of Health and Human Services Mobile Clinic at 508-856-6438. Or visit: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/coronavirus/vaccination> for more information about vaccines in Worcester.

I protected my child with the vaccine, it is time for you to do the same, together we can!

— Pablo Hernandez, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Worcester Vaccine Ambassador
Kennedy Community Health

@PostVaxLife



Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Medical School

Year 3: 2021 - 2022

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS
Leading the way in health promotion research

Welcome to the Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Medical School

Annual Report Year 3
October 2021 – September 2022

Introduction:

We are pleased to share the Year 3 Annual Report of the Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Medical School. In this report, we present new and recently completed projects, and updates from ongoing initiatives. We are pleased to showcase the work of current students and fellows and update you on the impact that our graduates are making.

Of particular note is the Worcester Vaccine Confidence Network to promote confidence in and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines among youth and families in Worcester, Massachusetts. We showcase this work and share links where you can access guides for supporting your own work.

We are pleased that this work will continue with the CONFIDENCE (Clinicians for Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations for Youth and Adolescents) Pilot Test funded by Merck Pharmaceuticals. We also announce new funding in climate change mitigation efforts with the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) collaboration with the CDC and many other partners.

As we engage in new projects and continued other projects from last year, we are grateful for all our partnerships that support our work.

We look forward to continuing this work with valuable partnerships and extending into new directions.

Stephenie and Milagros



Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD



Milagros C. Rosal, PhD
Image by Chris Christo

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National PRC Network

The Prevention Research Center (PRC) at UMass Chan is part of a national network of 27 PRCs, funded by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Each PRC is located in an academic research center and uses a community-partnered approach to research ways to prevent or manage chronic illness. Each PRC conducts one main research study in partnership with interested persons and groups in the community.

The PRC at UMass Chan Medical School, is located in the Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine, Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences. Our main research study, BP Control, is the implementation of an effective, systems-based quality improvement initiative to identify patients with uncontrolled hypertension who are not taking their antihypertensive medications as prescribed, and coach them to take the medications. Our partners in implementing this initiative are the Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center and Family Health Center of Worcester.

Our Vision: Our vision is for optimal health of communities, families, and individuals.

Our Mission: Our mission is to prevent disease, promote health and advance health equity through the integration of community-engaged research, practice, policy and education.

We accomplish our Vision and Mission by being:

1. A leader in community health research at UMass Chan Medical School,
2. An integral part of Greater Worcester’s collaborative public health system,
3. A research partner that addresses real-world challenges across Massachusetts,
4. A national model for research that connects academia, public health, community and health care systems

Our faculty and other faculty at UMass Chan have also been awarded additional funding from the CDC for the PRC Vaccine Confidence Network and four Supplemental Interest Projects (SIPS). These awards are:

Year(s)	Title	UMass Chan Medical School Leaders	UMass Chan Medical School Division/Department
Projects led by the PRC at UMass Chan			
PRC Cycle Years 1-5 2019-2024	The Physical Activity Policy, Research and Evaluation Network (PAPREN)	Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD	Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine
PRC Cycle Year 3 2021-2022	PRC Vaccine Confidence Network	Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD	Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine
PRC Cycle Years 4-5 2022-2024	Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE)	Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD	Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine
Projects led by Other faculty at UMass Chan Medical School”			
PRC Cycle Year 2 2020-2021	A Model for Community Health Worker Integration into Epilepsy Clinical Care Settings Informed by Clinical Provider and Patient Readiness	Felicia Chu, MD	Neurology
PRC Cycle Year 3-4 2021-2023	Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs: Evaluating Patient-, Provider-, and Program-level Outcomes Across the US	Nancy Byatt, DO MS, MBA, FACLP	Psychiatry

Who We Are: The Community Advisory Board, Faculty, and Staff

Our Community Advisory Board (CAB) provides vital community-level information and guidance to ground our work in the local environment and context. We are grateful for the CAB's consistent input that we use to inform our projects, generate potential solutions to challenges, and guide our PRC's Translation and Research agenda.

Three CAB members have either retired or moved on to different positions during this past year. We thank each one for their input over the years and wish them well on future endeavors!

- Eric Batista, MBA, City of Worcester
- Suzanne Cashman, ScD, UMass Chan Medical School
- Mónica Escobar Lowell, UMass Memorial Health Care

Below is a list of members of the current CAB. We would also like to thank Martha Benitez, Joanne Calista, and Judi Kirk for representing us on the national PRC Community Committee. A hallmark of our PRC is the strong collaboration with individual CAB members for developing and implementing various projects.

Louis Brady, MBA
President/CEO
Family Healthy Center of Worcester

Casey Burns, MA
Director
Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester

Joanne Calista, MSW and Martha Benitez
Center for Health Impact

Ydalia V. Heimann, MPA
REACH Program Manager
Worcester Division of Public Health

Stephen J. Kerrigan
President & CEO
Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center

Judi Kirk, MSPE
Director of Community Impact
Boys & Girls Club of Worcester

Kimberly Reckert
Community Relations
UMass Memorial Health Care

Paul Matthews
Executive Director
The Worcester Regional Research Bureau

Jean G. McMurray
Executive Director
Worcester County Food Bank

Nikki Nixon, MS
Chief of Research
Worcester Division of Public Health

Our PRC Faculty and Staff

Directors

Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD, MS Co-Director
PRC at UMass Chan Medical School
Professor and Chief, Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine, Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Milagros C. Rosal, PhD, MS Co-Director
PRC at UMass Chan Medical School
Principal Investigator, BP Control Professor, Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine, Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Faculty

Karen Clements, MPH, ScD Faculty
BP Control Core Research Project Assistant Professor, Center for Health Policy and Research, and Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Judy Ockene, PhD, MEd, MA Faculty
PRC at UMass Chan Medical School
Professor, Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine

Lori Pbert, PhD Faculty
PRC at UMass Chan Medical School
Professor and Associate Chief, Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine

Sharina Person, PhD Faculty
BP Control Core Research Project Professor and Vice-Chair, Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Affiliated Faculty

Rajani Sadasivam, PhD Affiliated Faculty
PRC at UMass Chan Medical School
Associate Professor, Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Michelle Trivedi, MD Affiliated Faculty
PRC at UMass Chan Medical School
Assistant Professor, Pediatrics

Staff

Amy Borg, MPH, MEd Deputy Director
Project Director, BP Control and Vaccine Confidence Network
Research Project Director II
Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine

Christine Frisard, MS Statistician
PRC at UMass Chan Medical School
Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine

Karin Valentine Goins, MPH Physical Activity Lead
PRC at UMass Chan Medical School
Research Project Director, PAPREN (Physical Activity Policy Research and Evaluation Network), Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine

Princilla Minkah, BA Research Coordinator II
Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine

Karen Ronayne Research Coordinator, PRC at UMass Chan Medical School
Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine

We thank Karen Ronayne, Research Coordinator, for her dedicated work and many contributions to our PRC over the years!

We wish Karen well in retirement!



PRC Launches Revision of Building Resilience Against Climate Effects Framework

The PRC at UMass Chan is pleased to introduce the revision of the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) framework. The BRACE framework was developed by the Climate and Health Program (CHP) in the Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Health departments (local, state, and other jurisdictions such as tribes) and their partners use the five-step process to plan for climate change adaptation.

The BRACE revision is funded through the Special Interest Project mechanism of the CDC's Prevention Research Centers program. Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD and Karin Valentine Goins are leading our PRC's effort for this work. It is led by a multidisciplinary partnership including:

- Climate and Health Program (CHP) CDC
- Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan,
- American Public Health Association,
- Climate Equity Policy Center,
- Health Resources in Action,
- Public Health Institute,
- University of New Hampshire,
- George Washington University.

In 2022 the Climate and Health Program decided to revise the framework to meet three goals:

- reflect updates in climate science and add mitigation;
- better meet the needs of diverse communities by integrating justice, equity, diversity and inclusion principles;
- create tools to support BRACE implementation by health departments with varying resources.

The two-year revision process includes engagement of an Expert Panel. Represented on the Panel are:

- health departments with CDC's Climate-Ready States and Cities Initiative (CRSCI) funding,
- departments without CRSCI funding who have active climate and health programs,
- frontline climate justice organizations,
- climate and health experts,
- experts on the Climate Change and Health Playbook: Adaptation Planning for Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion created by the American Public Health Association
- federal agencies with climate and health portfolio.

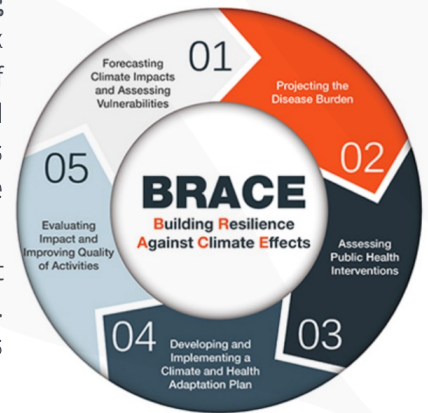
Project outcomes will be the revised framework and a suite of technical guidance and capacity-building materials and tools for public health practitioners to plan and implement climate and health adaptation and mitigation interventions.

Stay tuned!

Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Faculty and Staff

Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD
Principal Investigator

Karin Valentine Goins
Program Director



Preparing Clinicians for Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations

How can clinicians have effective conversations about the COVID-19 vaccines with parents?

The PRC at UMass Chan was recently funded through the Merck Investigator Studies Program to further test an intervention called CONFIDENCE (Clinicians for Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations for Youth and Adolescents). This project is implementing and further testing an approach to communicating with parents of pediatric patients about the COVID-19 vaccine to improve pediatric vaccine uptake in the clinic. This approach was first developed with our PRC's Vaccine Confidence Network (VCN) project and pilot-tested this past spring with the UMass Memorial Benedict Pediatrics Clinic (as described on page 13). The intervention was developed to improve vaccination rates among youth and minority populations, which have continued to lag. Additionally, racial and ethnic disparities persist with lower vaccination rates seen in Black or African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Hispanic populations. With the increasing likelihood that vaccination against COVID-19 will be a yearly occurrence, there is a strong need to develop effective interventions to support vaccine promotion efforts.

With the leadership of Grace Ryan, PhD and Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD, this new project will conduct a more rigorous pilot randomized control trial (RCT), in partnership with Baystate Pediatrics, to further adapt and test CONFIDENCE. Our goals are to further refine the intervention, conduct a pilot RCT, and then create a detailed manual of operations and intervention toolkit to allow for further scalability. One of our goals in this next phase, is to better understand how we can integrate medical assistants and front desk staff at clinics to serve as vaccine ambassadors to support communications and logistics related to vaccine promotion.

CONFIDENCE is meant to truly be a practice-level intervention that uses a wraparound approach wherein all clinic staff feel invested in the outcome. With this next phase of testing, we will recruit 8 pediatric and/or family medicine practices that serve a patient population that is at least 30% racial and ethnic minority group members, to address the continued inequities in vaccination coverage. Our goal is to establish preliminary effectiveness for the CONFIDENCE intervention and then to potentially further scale up this approach to more broadly address the challenge of pediatric vaccine hesitancy.

Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Faculty and Staff

Grace Ryan, PhD, MPH
Post-Doctoral Fellow

Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD
Principal Investigator

Princilla Minkah
Research Coordinator

Sharing Successes of our PRC's Vaccine Confidence Network

How can we promote and increase the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines throughout the United States?

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognized the value of the Prevention Research Center network, with 27 PRCs housed in academic research centers throughout the country. The CDC funded each center to be part of the national PRC Vaccine Confidence Network to promote and increase the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines in their own area, and to collaborate nationally to develop strategies that could be utilized in the present and future.

Our PRC partnered with the City of Worcester's Office of Health and Human Services and the Worcester Division of Public Health Vaccine Equity Initiative to make sure that everyone had access to the vaccine and accurate information. In Worcester, this initiative focused on Latinx, African American and African communities, which experienced the greatest burden of COVID-19 and have the lowest vaccination rates. Our work focused on promoting the vaccine with youth and families among these populations, with partnerships with many youth-serving and other agencies throughout Worcester.

The following pages present our three interventions implemented in collaboration with community partners to promote and increase the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine among youth and families. The foundation for this work included research evidence, empowerment and social norming theory, and focus groups with parents.

To inform the interventions, we held 10 focus groups with 78 parents of children ages 5-11 or 12-17 from Worcester, Massachusetts between June 2021-January 2022. Six groups were held in English and 4 in Spanish. Trusted messengers were asked to recruit and often facilitate the groups. We used the rapid qualitative analysis method to analyze the groups quickly and shared the results with community partners immediately via fact sheets. The words of parents guided all of our work. In particular, we learned that parents wanted:

- Fact sheets that answered questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, particularly as guidance changed and ages of children who could receive the vaccines changed over time
- To know what friends and their own pediatricians decided for their own children, and why
- To be able to have their children vaccinated in the pediatrician office
- To know that the vaccines were free, available without an appointment, and administered by medical professionals when offered at community sites.

Focus groups are described in this publication: *Goulding, M., Ryan, G. W., Minkah, P., Borg, A., Gonzalez, M., Medina, N., Suprenant, P., Rosal, M. C., & Lemon, S. C. (2022). Parental perceptions of the COVID-19 vaccine for 5- to 11-year-old children: Focus group findings from Worcester Massachusetts. Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics, 0(0), 2120721.doi.org/10.1080/21645515.2022.2120721*

Materials are available on www.umassmed.edu/prc.

Community voices guided all of our work, and all projects were implemented in partnership with community agencies. These fact sheets were created from questions asked by local community members, were updated regularly and guided our work.

FACTS ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE

Updated January, 2022

What do vaccines do?

When a vaccine for a virus is injected, the body creates antibodies to fight the virus. It then fights the virus if you are ever exposed to it in the future.



Can the vaccine give me the virus?

NO
There is no way to get COVID-19 from the vaccines.

What does the vaccine cost?
The vaccine is FREE to everyone.

You may be asked to provide information about your insurance. This is because providers can receive reimbursement for a vaccination fee.

How do these vaccines work?

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are mRNA vaccines. Johnson & Johnson (J & J) is an adenovirus vaccine.

- The virus has proteins on the surface of the virus.
- All 3 vaccines tell your body to temporarily make protein so your body reacts and makes antibodies and other immune responses to the protein.
- If you get exposed to the virus, your body will recognize and attack this protein that is on the surface of the virus. In this way it destroys it.
- The COVID-19 vaccines DO NOT enter or your DNA.

Will the vaccines work for new of the virus?

Experts think it's likely all three vaccines against all currently circulating strains of COVID-19. Scientists and vaccine makers to monitor this issue.

How effective are the COVID-19 vaccines?

Even with new variants, the COVID-19 vaccines are still very effective.

Vaccinated people are much less likely to test positive for COVID-19, to be hospitalized for COVID-19, and to die from COVID-19 compared to people without the vaccine.

LESS THAN 1%

In Massachusetts, less than 1% of people who have been vaccinated have been hospitalized because of COVID-19 and even fewer have died from COVID-19.



Has the development of the vaccine been rushed?

NO
Scientists have been developing the technology behind these vaccines for more than 10 years. Scientists, companies and governments came together to develop vaccines to prevent more people from getting sick. Tens of thousands of people volunteered to test them.

Side effects of the vaccines

Side effects are expected and are a sign that the vaccine is working.

- Common side effects: mild pain, redness and swelling in the arm where the vaccine was administered.
- Less common side effects: fatigue, headache, muscle aches, chills, joint pain.



FACTS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR CHILDREN AGES 5 TO 11

January, 2022

I've heard that COVID-19 doesn't affect kids as much, why should I get my child vaccinated?

- Over 6 million children in the United States have been infected by COVID-19. Most infections are mild, and the children fully recover. But, some children have gotten really sick and even died from COVID-19.
- Children who have mild or severe disease can develop "long COVID" where the infection causes long-term health problems.
- Even if you child doesn't get very sick, they can easily spread COVID-19 to others and they will miss out on school and other activities!
- Vaccines are important to make sure children can go to school and activities, play sports, and see their friends!

I heard these vaccines were developed quickly. Should I be nervous about getting this vaccine for my child?

- No. The COVID-19 vaccines went through rigorous clinical trials and FDA approval process. No steps were cut.
- Scientists have worked on the technology for these vaccines for decades. We already had a lot of important data before the pandemic started.

Does my child need to keep wearing a mask after getting vaccinated?

- The CDC recommends wearing a mask in areas where there are a lot of COVID cases, even if you are vaccinated.
- Towns, schools, and businesses may have their own rules about wearing masks. It's best to pay attention to local and state recommendations about where to wear a mask.

What is the recommendation for COVID-19 vaccination for children ages 5 to 11?

- Children should receive 2 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. The second dose should be 3 weeks or more after the first dose. Three doses are recommended for children who are immunocompromised.
- The dose is smaller than the dose for teens and adults, but it is the same vaccine.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine effective and safe for children ages 5 to 11?

- Yes. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was studied in a clinical trial of more than 2,200 children. In the clinical trial, the vaccine was 90% effective in preventing symptomatic cases of COVID-19. No serious side effects were observed.
- Over 4.8 million children of ages 5-11 have safely received at least one dose.



Should my child get vaccinated if they have already had COVID-19?

- Yes! It is possible to be reinfected after having COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated after having been infected with COVID-19 will give your child a greater level of protection.

Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Faculty, Staff, Fellow, Student

Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD
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Milagros C. Rosal, PhD
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Amy Borg, MPH, MEd
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Princilla Minkah
Research Coordinator

Karen Ronayne
Research Coordinator

Grace Ryan, PhD Post-
Doctoral Fellow

Melissa Goulding, MS
Graduate Student

Worcester VCN Project #1:

COVID-19 Vaccine Ambassador Public Health Campaign



COVID-19 Vaccine Ambassador Public Health Campaign





PRC AT UMASS CHAN MEDICAL SCHOOL

OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 Vaccine Ambassador Public Health Campaign was created to promote and increase the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccines among youth and families in Worcester, Massachusetts. As the Latinx, African American, and African communities experienced the greatest burden of COVID-19 and had the lowest vaccination rates, the campaign featured trusted messengers from these communities.

KEY PARTNERS

The campaign involved a partnership among the City of Worcester's Office of Health and Human Services, the Worcester Division of Public Health Vaccine Equity Initiative, and the Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Medical School. Several youth-serving agencies and local community coalitions also collaborated with the campaign.

CAMPAIGN

The campaign included posters, fliers, billboards, bus signs, social media posts, videos and radio announcements in English and Spanish, featuring ambassador vaccine stories with clinic information.



A 7-STEP APPROACH

This model features trusted messengers sharing personal vaccine stories to promote COVID-19 vaccination. We developed a toolkit describing a 7-step approach to collaboratively design and implement an evidence-based vaccine ambassador campaign with local partners. The toolkit provides guides for developing, implementing, and evaluating a public health ambassador campaign, describes the objectives of each step, and highlights key activities that can be performed to accomplish each step.



42

agencies participated



RESULTS

28 million+

impressions from social media, billboards, bus signs, radio announcements, videos, local TV, and print news



411

posters requested by community agencies

2,282

flyers requested by community agencies

This work is a product of a Prevention Research Center and was supported by the Vaccine Confidence Network as part of a cooperative agreement #6U48DP006381-03-01 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Worcester VCN Project #2:

COVID-19 Vaccine Family Ambassador Model

COVID-19 Vaccine Family Ambassador Model



PRC AT UMASS CHAN MEDICAL SCHOOL



OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 Vaccine Family Ambassador Model was created to promote and increase the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines among youth and families in three neighborhoods of Greater Worcester. The Worcester Office of Health and Human Services requested assistance in developing a replicable model to reach residents who were not being reached by other methods. The model featured an evidence-based training for family ambassadors on how to effectively communicate with their neighbors, and a structure for reaching these neighbors and documenting the conversations.

KEY PARTNERS

The partners were the Worcester Office of Health and Human Services, You, Inc. (an affiliate of the Seven Hills Foundations), the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, and the Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Medical School.

THE FAMILY AMBASSADOR APPROACH

- ✓ **CONTACT** 10 neighbors who are parents that have not vaccinated their children against COVID-19.
- ✓ **ASK** if they would be willing to talk about the vaccine.
- ✓ **ADVISE** them to get the COVID-19 vaccine and share personal motivations for being vaccinated.
- ✓ **ASSESS** their thoughts about the COVID-19 vaccines to engage them in conversations about the vaccine.
- ✓ **ASSIST** them by answering questions or concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine and sharing vaccine fact sheets. Inform the parent that the vaccine is free, no appointment is needed, and that medical professionals will be present. If they are willing to get vaccinated, help them make a vaccination plan to go to a vaccination clinic.



16 parents

were recruited to be vaccine ambassadors, completed the training, and contacted neighbors



RESULTS

213 neighbors

were contacted



68% made a vaccination plan

This work is a product of a Prevention Research Center and was supported by the Vaccine Confidence Network as part of a cooperative agreement #6U48DP006381-03-01 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Worcester VCN Project #3:

CONFIDENCE: Clinicians for Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations

CONFIDENCE: Clinicians for Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations for Youth and Adolescents



PRC AT UMASS CHAN MEDICAL SCHOOL



OVERVIEW

Despite effective COVID-19 vaccines for children and adolescents, uptake of these vaccines remains low. We know that parents want to hear from their pediatrician about the vaccines and that pediatricians need support for communicating with hesitant and resistant families. We created an intervention to support pediatricians in promoting COVID-19 vaccine uptake.

KEY PARTNERS

The program involved a partnership among the UMass Memorial Health Children's Medical Center Department of Pediatrics & the Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Medical School.

APPROACH

We developed and pilot-tested a low-touch, multicomponent intervention to support pediatricians in their efforts to improve COVID-19 vaccine uptake. This intervention included three components. We held a webinar training on communication strategies, including sharing personal vaccine stories and approaching conversations collaboratively and with empathy. We supplied the clinic with parent-facing educational materials about COVID-19 vaccination. Finally, we created posters with providers sharing their reasons for vaccinating their own children. We implemented this intervention in a pediatric clinic that averages 18,000 visits per year within the UMass Memorial Health system (Spring, 2022).



Image from the role-playing video for pediatric clinicians



RESULTS

Parent pre-post exit surveys = 69

Clinician interviews = 4

★ Scan QR code to view the publication



Parents

97%

reported that pediatricians talked to them about COVID-19

72%

reported that pediatricians shared a personal story about COVID-19 vaccination

Clinicians

Reported they liked the program because:

- ✓ easy to implement
- ✓ integrated communication strategies with posters

This work was supported by a cooperative agreement #6U48DP00-63-81 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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Core Research Project: BP Control



Coaching patients with uncontrolled hypertension to take antihypertensive medications as prescribed.

Our PRC, Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center and Family Health Center of Worcester have partnered during the past three years to adapt a systems-based quality improvement approach to identifying patients with uncontrolled hypertension and provide coaching to take medications as prescribed.

As a quality improvement program, the project has created systems to track quality indicators, such as the percentage of patients who have their blood pressure measured and their medications reconciled.

Once referred, the Coaches engage with patients in conversations with patients to reinforce their motivations for taking these medications as prescribed, uncover challenges, and create strategies to take these medications consistently.

The Coaches report many successes as they co-create plans, such as having medication instructions written in the patient's language, setting a schedule to take them regularly, and understanding that they need to continue to take them even when their blood pressure is under control. The Coaches are integrated in to the clinical team, and communicate within the electronic medical record to provide coordinated care.

BP Control Coaching Success Story

Patients had lower clinical blood pressure readings after completing plans to take antihypertensive medications as prescribed

Patient Overview
 Age: 64
 Language spoken: Arabic with interpreter

Why was the patient referred?
 Patient had blood pressure readings of 177/100 and 156/76. Referral date: 5/12/2022.

Patient Motivations for Controlling BP
 Patient wanted to control blood pressure to take care of herself.

Patient Reported Challenges Taking Antihypertensive Meds
 1) Patient misunderstood the purpose of the medications, the medication label and schedule to take them.
 2) Patient reported too many pills to track.

Plans made with the Coach
 1. Use a pillbox called Med Minder to manage medications & alert if needed.
 2. Get reminders from family members.
 3. Request prescription renewals in Arabic.

Medication Updates
 • No medication side effects reported
 • No medication adjustments made during coaching period

Results
 Patient completed coaching when reported taking all medications. Final health center BP reading was reported as 118/80.



Questions on how to refer?
 Contact Nelly, BP Control CHW Coach
 508-860-7830

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

177/100 blood pressure reading at time of referral	5 visits patient met with the CHW for medication adherence coaching and routine bp self-monitoring from 5/12/2022 to 7/21/2022	118/80 health center blood pressure reading after working with Coach
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Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Faculty and Staff

Milagros C. Rosal, PhD
Principal Investigator

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Christine Frisard, MS
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Ann McMahan, MD
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Evelyn Ortiz, RN
Clinical Supervisor

Julie Fraher, RN
Quality Assurance

Jose Ramirez, MD
Operations Champion

Sarah Bertrand
BP Control CHW

Donna Latham
Information Technology

Family Health Center of Worcester Staff

Rebecca Blumhofer, MD
Medical Champion

Nelly Plasencia
BP Control CHW

Thuha Le
Operations Champion/
CHW Supervisor

Amanda Ryder
Information Technology

Under Development



The Walk Audit Academy (WAA) is a community capacity-building tool that helps learners move from knowing what they want – a community where people can safely and comfortably walk and roll where they need to go – to how to get there by grounding planning and implementation efforts in their local context to achieve sustainable change.

The WAA is grounded in 4 Big Ideas:

1. Activity-friendly routes to everyday destinations are an important support for safe, enjoyable and accessible physical activity. Making routes activity-friendly can mean:
 - Creating connections and filling gaps between everyday destinations and to other travel modes such as transit or bicycling;
 - Increasing quantity, quality, and accessibility of pedestrian infrastructure;
 - Identifying and fixing problems in existing pedestrian infrastructure;
 - Aligning with community efforts to solve other issues that impact walkability, such as safety from violence and local economic development issues.
2. Making walking and rolling in your community safer and easier should be about improvements for everyone but also prioritizing improvements for those that need them the most.
3. Evidence-based infrastructure improvements for walking and rolling must be adapted for the unique local context.
4. Learning by doing, combined with honest reflection, is key to making meaningful change.

The Walk Audit Academy is a 6-module curriculum that guides learners through a process of discovery and documentation, creating a description of current policy, practice, and processes in your community that shape the walk and roll environment, planning what you want to change, assessing progress over time, and adjusting your activities. The curriculum includes an embedded video series about planning, conducting, and reporting on walk audits to produce high-quality data about walkability and opportunities for improvements.

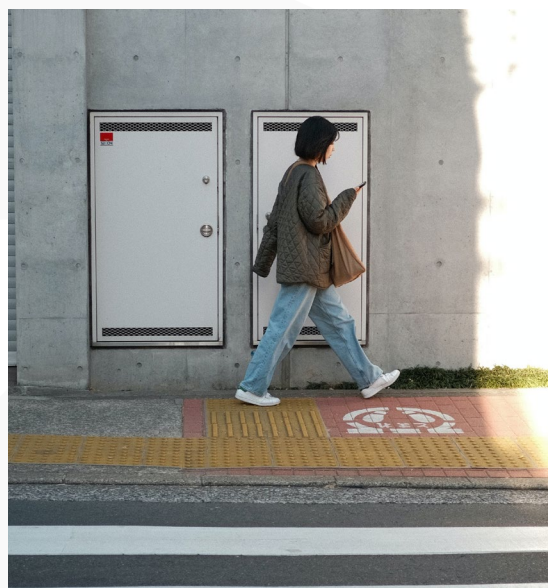
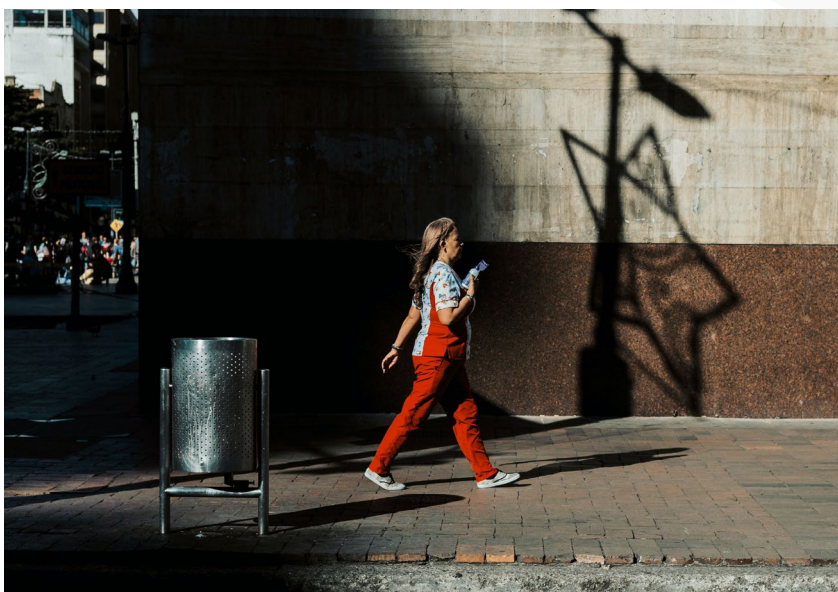
Walk Audit Training through Worcester REACH (Worcester Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health)

Better and more accessible walking opportunities support many community goals, connecting homes, jobs, school, health care, food, recreation, and more. The Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Medical School collaborated with WalkBoston and the Worcester (REACH) program to increase the community's collective ability to improve walking opportunity.

Walk audits are a tool for getting community input about walking conditions based on observation and lived experience. This firsthand information can add important detail to more technical information. Walk audit information can be used in several ways: when the city or state asks for public input; to submit a complaint; to connect with other community groups about changing policy or practice; or to test a short-term demonstration of a proposed improvement.

Walk audits are often led by outside experts. Learning to plan, conduct, and report on walk audits on their own is a valuable skill for organizations and the community. They become the experts!

We piloted the program with REACH in October 2022 through January 2023. Residents were invited to join as part of a neighborhood organization or with a citywide group focused on youth, older adults, persons with disabilities, and others. Five teams of 2-3 individuals participated, two place-based and three citywide. Each team received a stipend. The program started with learning what features make it easier or harder to walk in your neighborhood. There were independent activities using a series of eight short videos WalkBoston made about their process. At the end there was a community report-out where each team showcased their work and lessons learned.



Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Faculty and Staff

Stephanie C. Lemon, PhD
Principal Investigator

Karin Valentine Goins, MPH
Program Director

The Physical Activity Policy Research and Evaluation Network Hits Its Stride



PAPREN
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY RESEARCH
AND EVALUATION NETWORK

The PRC at UMass Chan, together with the PRC at the University of Illinois Chicago, is the Coordinating Center for the Physical Activity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (PAPREN), funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. PAPREN is a collaborative space

for researchers, planners, engineers, policy makers, green space managers, advocates, health professionals and others interested in **evaluation research**. Together, they address key evidence gaps and **implementation research** that identifies evidence-based strategies for improving practitioner capabilities and the translation of research to practice. With nearly 850 members and growing, the Network offers ongoing opportunities for learning and collaboration. [PAPREN is the research partner](#) of the [Active People, Healthy NationSM](#) initiative of the

CDC. Recent highlights include:
Grand rounds presentations featuring “arrested mobility”; innovative methods in physical activity surveillance; and emerging leaders.

- Network meetings featuring park, trail and greenway interventions to promote physical activity; initial results from the PAPREN applied evaluation project on zoning and physical activity; and the Building H index that ranks American companies on how their products and services affect health including physical activity
- Products of Work Groups and collaborations with Active People, Healthy NationSM that partners released included six manuscripts; two infographics and accompanying information; one report for a Partner; twenty seven completed conference presentations; five practitioner products, and two practitioner webinars.

Associated Projects

Creating Streets that are Safer for Biking: PAPREN has been working with the League of American Bicyclists on a project to learn from communities across the country about how they are integrating equity considerations into biking infrastructure, such as community streets that support biking, and their planning and programs. We are also seeking to understand their barriers and facilitators to accomplishing this.

We are learning how the League's Bicycle Friendly Communities application and program can better support communities to integrate equity into their bicycle infrastructure and planning. To do this, PAPREN led and analyzed a series of 6 focus groups with participants representing jurisdictions across the country who have responsibilities related to bicycling infrastructure and programming. We then provided the League with a thematic summary of results and a set of actionable items that can be undertaken to better support communities as they make these plans. This work is funded by the CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, Obesity (DNPAO).

Creating Sidewalks that are Safer for Walking: The PAPREN Transportation Policy & Planning Work Group is working with America Walks, a national walking advocacy group, on a small project to investigate municipal policies and practices regarding responsibility, financing, enforcement, and prioritization for sidewalk installation and repair. The team explored local policy and practice in a sample of twelve municipalities from the 200 most populous counties in the U.S. This work can help connect local decision making about sidewalks to more walking opportunity and help advance policy and practice at the local, state and national levels to improve active transportation, physical activity, health and equity.

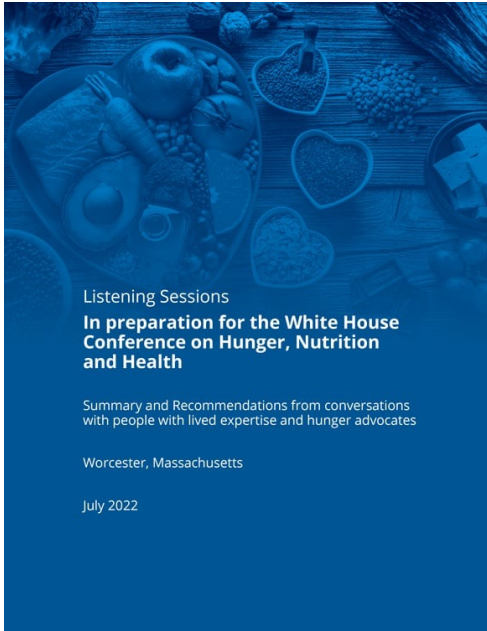


Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Faculty and Staff

Stephanie C. Lemon, PhD
Principal Investigator

Karin Valentine Goins
Project Director

Sharing Local Voices with the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health



The pandemic has taken a huge toll on people's ability to access enough food in our local community, a struggle echoed throughout the state of Massachusetts and nation. In Worcester, food justice advocates formed a local emergency planning group to facilitate food access by coordinating food pantries and making changes to local systems. This local emergency planning group formed a Worcester Task Force on Food Security to formally take collective action. The group gathered and presented information related to food security on a new website: <https://foodhelpworcester.org>. This group also served as a source of on-the-ground input to policy strategies and priorities of the long-standing Worcester Food Policy Council.

As a partner with the Worcester Food Security Task Force, our PRC collaborated with several coalitions and US Representative Jim McGovern to conduct three listening sessions in preparation for the Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health on September, 2022. We created three virtual listening sessions with people with lived expertise with food insecurity.

Each listening session was intended to capture the experiences and recommendations of people with lived experience with food insecurity, as well as agencies involved in responding to the crisis of food insecurity. Participants included adults, parents, grandparents, representatives of food banks and pantries, healthcare providers, legal advocates, hunger advocates, higher education employees, and nonprofit agencies.

Below are a few experiences shared by participants:

"SNAP and other programs have been essential to being able to stay afloat but never enough to cover more than half a month with careful shopping, budgeting and cooking at home. The constant stress caused by poverty is unrelenting."

"When the pandemic started, we began receiving free school meals. My daughter had a variety of food choices and kid friendly foods that I could not otherwise afford. I noticed that suddenly I had breathing room in my budget for things like clothing or medicines."

"The poverty threshold index effects are, it's affecting a lot of us. I know there was an increase, but that is so, so, unrealistic. For people that work that are in the service industry, a lot of people comment that they've gotten a raise, they've gotten whatever, because of COVID it went up to automatically to \$15. We have been fighting for years for \$15 raises...but the costs of everything else has wiped that out, wipe that out clearly. This threshold is keeping people in poverty, keeping us struggling and fighting against each other."

PRC Deputy Director Amy Borg and graduate student Claire Branley followed a rapid analysis process to quickly create a summary to present to the White House.

Spotlight on Students, Post-Doctoral Fellows and Alumni

Meet Abigail Asare!

As a junior at Worcester Technical High School, Abigail Asare joined our PRC team as an intern for the month of July 2022. Abigail came to us from Girls Inc. of Worcester through the Eureka! program. She helped implement our work to promote the COVID-19 vaccines among youth and families. Abigail is interested in learning about different types of research and health career paths.



Meet Claire Branley!

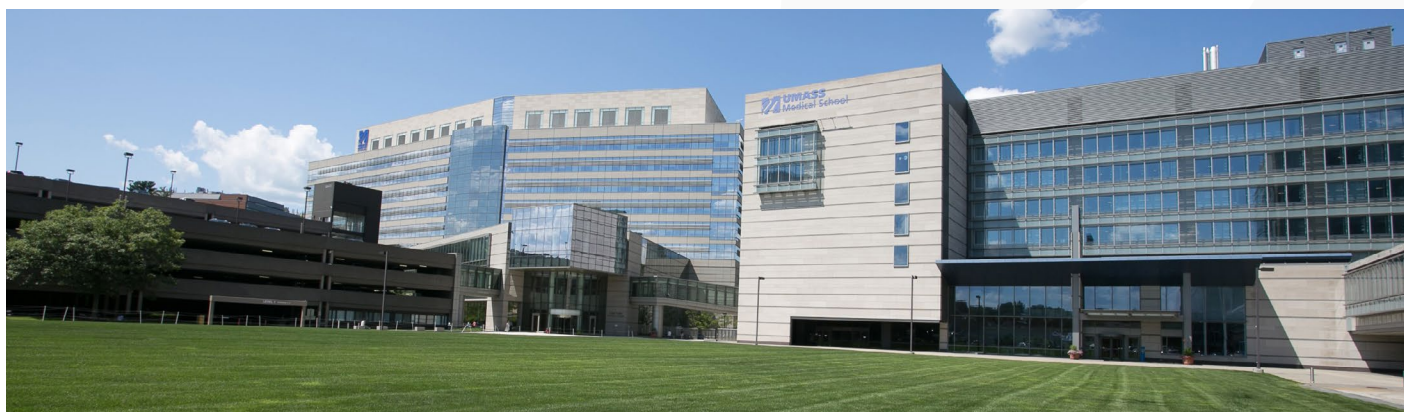
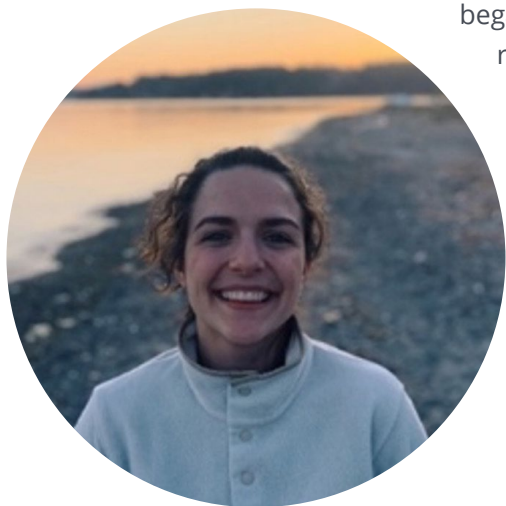
Claire Branley joined our PRC as an MD/PhD student in the summer of 2021. She moved to Worcester from Seattle, Washington, where she attended the University of Washington (UW) and received a B.S. in Public Health and Global Health. In Seattle she participated in projects related to food insecurity and urban agriculture at the UW Farm and 21 Acres Center for Sustainable Living, and her passion for

researching the intersection of nutrition, food insecurity, and chronic disease began. Since joining the PRC, she has been able to expand her qualitative research skills by attending and transcribing findings from focus groups.

In the summer of 2022, she joined the PRC's collaboration with the Worcester Food Security Task Force's listening sessions to summarize voices of people with lived expertise of food insecurity

for a report for the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. When she transitions to a full time PhD program in the fall of 2023, she hopes to continue research on preventing hunger using public programs, and the increasingly close partnership of

medical professionals, nutritionists, and hunger advocates to decrease the burden of food insecurity in Worcester and beyond.



Meet Grace Ryan, PhD, MPH!

Dr. Grace Ryan is a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the PRACCTIS T32 program mentored by Drs. Lori Pbert and Stephenie Lemon. She has been working with the PRC over the last year to support the Vaccine Confidence Network projects. Specifically, she led formative research to understand pediatricians' perspectives on COVID-19 vaccine delivery and parental hesitancy, which was recently published in Preventive Medicine Reports. From this work and other

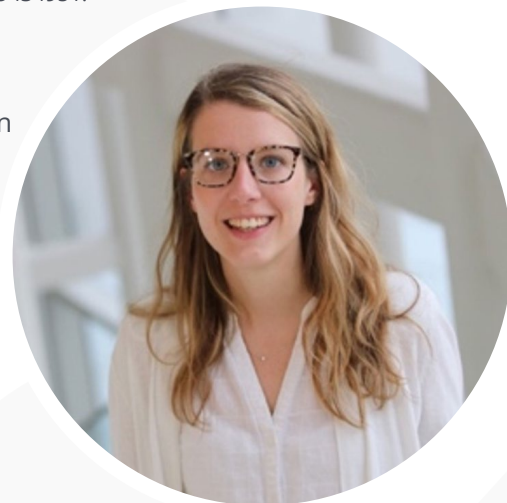


qualitative work that was conducted for the VCN project, she helped to develop a low-touch, multicomponent intervention to support pediatric practices struggling to vaccinate youth and adolescents against COVID-19. She led a small pilot project with the Benedict Pediatrics Clinic at UMass Memorial to test this intervention and she and Dr. Lemon were recently funded to conduct a more rigorous pilot test. In addition to her work on the VCN project, Grace is also conducting research related to cancer prevention and control, particularly among rural, adolescent populations. She is currently working on a scoping review of barriers and facilitators to adolescent cancer prevention in rural, primary care practices and is pursuing grant funding to support her work in implementation of evidence-based interventions to promote HPV vaccination in clinical settings.

Ryan GW, Goulding M, Borg A, Minkah P, Hermann S, Fisher L, Rosal MC, Lemon SC. Clinician perspectives on pediatric COVID-19 vaccination: A qualitative study in central and western, Massachusetts. *Prev Med Rep.* 2022 Oct;29:101966. doi: 10.1016/j.pmedr.2022.101966. Epub 2022 Sep 1. PMID: 36065256; PMCID: PMC9434951.

Updates from Melissa Goulding, MS!

Melissa Goulding is a doctoral candidate in the Clinical and Population Health Research Program (CPHR) at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School. Mentored by Dr. Stephenie Lemon, her research interests include chronic disease prevention in children with a focus on health equity. She is grateful for the opportunity to learn from Dr. Lemon and to be a part of the important work conducted by our PRC. During this year with the PRC, Melissa published her secondary analysis of data from the Healthy Kids and Family Study and contributed to our PRC's Vaccine Confidence work which aimed to increase COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and uptake in youth. A recent publication from this work was led by Melissa and details parental perceptions of the COVID-19 vaccine for their 5–11-year-old children.



Goulding M, Rosal MC, Gupta N, Borg A, Lemon SC. High Prevalence and Lack of Parental Awareness of Pediatric Hypertension Among a Low-income Sample in Worcester, MA. *Matern Child Health J.* Published online September 25, 2022. doi:10.1007/s10995-022-03470-x

Goulding M, Ryan GW, Minkah P, et al. Parental perceptions of the COVID-19 vaccine for 5- to 11-year-old children: Focus group findings from Worcester Massachusetts. *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics.* 2022;0(0):2120721. doi:10.1080/21645515.2022.2120721

Melissa continues to make progress on her dissertation, which is supported by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute through a National Research Service Award pre-doctoral fellowship. Her dissertation is a mixed methods exploration of adherence to clinical practice guidelines for blood pressure screening in pediatric populations within the UMass Memorial Healthcare System. Moving forward, Melissa aims to build a career in academia and community-based research which focuses on chronic disease prevention and health equity in children.

Updates from PRC Alumni

Updates from Valerie Silfee, PhD!

Dr. Valerie Silfee joined WeightWatchers (WW) as the Senior Manager of Behavior Change Experiences in May 2022. She is part of the WW Science Team who work across the organization to undertake, share, and translate research so that it's accessible and actionable for all people. In this role, Dr. Silfee collaborates with product, design, and innovation teams to ensure that WW's digital experiences are rooted in behavioral weight management best practices and designed in consideration of behavior change principles. Her role is fully remote which allows her to continue to reside in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with her husband, son, and dog. Dr. Silfee will be welcoming another baby boy in early 2023!



Updates from Dr. Meera Sreedhara, PhD, MPH!

Meera Sreedhara, PhD '20, MPH, works as a health scientist and evaluator on the Evaluation and Program Effectiveness Team (EPET) within the CDC's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. She supports comprehensive evaluations of CDC-funded programs that address heart disease and stroke and provides technical assistance to program recipients. She applies mixed methods skills that she developed as a PRC trainee to EPET's portfolio of evaluation research projects.

Updates from Dr. Andrea López-Cepero, PhD!

Andrea López-Cepero, PhD, '19 is an Assistant Professor in the Epidemiology Department in the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. She is focusing her population health research skills on seeking ways to understand how stress influences cardiometabolic diseases among Latinx populations, particularly through negative physiological and behavioral adaptations. She has recently been leading studies to understand how resilience factors may promote cardiometabolic health among young adults in Puerto Rico and tailoring stress-reduction interventions for this group.

She continues to collaborate with our PRC team, resulting in several research publications:

López-Cepero AA, Mattei J, Frisard C, Riseberg E, Jimenez J, Lemon SC, Rosal MC. Dysfunctional Eating Behaviors and Dietary Intake in Puerto Rico. *J Immigr Minor Health*. 2021 Aug;23(4):867-870. doi: 10.1007/s10903-021-01156-0. Epub 2021 Mar 18. PMID: 33733376.

López-Cepero A, Frisard C, Mabry G, Spruill T, Mattei J, Austin SB, Lemon SC, Rosal MC. Association between poor sleep quality and emotional eating in US Latinx adults and the mediating role of negative emotions. *Behav Sleep Med*. 2023 Mar-Apr;21(2):162-171. doi: 10.1080/15402002.2022.2060227. Epub 2022 Apr 13. PMID: 35416102.



Beyond work, Dr. López-Cepero enjoys playing tennis and exploring Atlanta.

Updates from Dr. Oluwabunmi Emidio, MD, PhD, MPH

Oluwabunmi Emidio, MD, MPH, graduated with a PhD from the Clinical and Population Health Research Program in May 2022. Under the mentorship of Stephenie Lemon, PhD, Dr. Emidio studied the implementation and evaluation of evidence-based interventions in practice to improve health outcomes and equity. She was a Post-Doctoral fellow in a National Cancer Institute-funded training program Prevention and Control Cancer: Training for Change in Individuals and Systems (PRACCTIS) and currently works in the Center for Healthcare Organization & Implementation Research at the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs as a Post-Doctoral Fellow.



Updates from Dr. Monica Wang, ScD, MS!

Monica Wang, ScD, MS, is a former Post-Doctoral Fellow with the Prevention Research Center. She is an Associate Professor of Community Health Sciences at the Boston University School of Public Health, an Adjunct Associate Professor of Health Policy and Management at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and an Associate Director of Narrative at the BU Center for Antiracist Research. Dr. Wang is nationally recognized as a leading health equity researcher in obesity and chronic disease prevention. She directs community-engaged research to target racial inequities in health and pursues cross-sector collaborations to promote health and health equity through public health interventions and policies.

Updates from Dr. Christina Griecci, PhD, MPH!

Christina Griecci, PhD, MPH is an Assistant professor and the Director of Public Health Programs at Rivier University. In addition to directing the program, she teaches courses in public health and epidemiology. She is the parent of three children. She earned her doctorate from the UMass Clinical and Population Health Research Program in May 2018.

Research Brief

Association between poor sleep quality, emotional eating and emotions among Latinx adults in the United States

Overview

US Latinx adults are more likely to have poor sleep quality than non-Latino white adults. Poor sleep is linked with negative emotions such as feeling depressed, stressed, and anxious. These negative emotions are known to trigger emotional eating. However, we don't know if there is an association between poor sleep quality and emotional eating among US Latinx adults, or whether having negative emotions explains this association.

Main Questions

- How does sleep quality affect eating habits among Latinx adults?
- What role do negative emotions play in the relationship?

Study

This study is a secondary analysis of the Latino Health and Well-Being Study, which took place in the largely Latino city of Lawrence, Massachusetts from 2011-2013. Sleep quality was measured with the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index. EE was measured with the EE subscale of the Three Factor Eating Questionnaire R18-V2 (categorized as no EE, low EE, and high EE). Negative emotions were measured via a composite score that included depression, anxiety, and perceived stress. Poisson regression models with robust variance errors estimated prevalence ratios (PR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI). Mediation was evaluated with the Karlsson-Holm-Breen method.

The Bottom Line

In this sample of Latino adults, poor sleep quality was linked with higher emotional eating. Having more negative emotions explained this association.

Source

Andrea López-Cepero, Christine Frisard, Guadalupe Mabry, Tanya Spruill, Josiemer Mattei, S. Bryn Austin, Stephenie C. Lemon & Milagros C. Rosal (2022) Association between poor sleep quality and emotional eating in US Latinx adults and the mediating role of negative emotions, Behavioral Sleep Medicine, DOI: 10.1080/15402002.2022.2060227

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Acknowledgement

Research reported in this manuscript was supported by the National Institute of Mental Health (R01 MH085653). Drs. Lemon and Rosal received funding from the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (5 P60 MD006912) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1 U48 DP005031). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the funders.



Spotlight on Results

People with poor sleep quality were 74% more likely to report high levels of emotional eating than people with good sleep quality.

Controlling for negative emotions, the effect of poor sleep on high EE was reduced to 1.23 (95% CI = 0.92, 1.65), leaving an indirect effect of 1.41 (95% CI = 1.25, 1.60).

More than half (62.6%) of the effect of poor sleep quality on emotional eating was explained by negative emotions.

Call for Action

- Programs should address sleep quality and negative emotions together help promote healthy eating.
- Long-term research is needed.



Looking at Eating Behaviors and Food Eaten in Puerto Rico

Overview

What is the connection between eating behaviors and the food that people choose to eat? This study looked at dysfunctional eating behaviors (DEB) and what is eaten among adults residing in Ponce, Puerto Rico. There are numerous DEB, including 1) emotional eating, or eating due to inability to cope with emotions; 2) uncontrolled eating, or eating without hunger; and 3) cognitive restraint, or limiting food for weight loss or weight maintenance. Research has found that DEB are prevalent among Latinos who live in the mainland United States and may influence what people eat. Nonetheless, DEB have not been studied among people who live in Puerto Rico. This study fills that gap.

Main Questions

The researchers wanted to know:

1. How many participants experienced emotional eating, uncontrolled eating and cognitive restraint?
2. How were emotional eating, uncontrolled eating and cognitive restraint related to consumption of calories from fat, saturated fats and fruits and vegetables?

Study

The study used data from the Ponce, Puerto Rico cohort of the Latino Health and Well-Being. Individuals (N=92) who self-identified as Puerto Rican, English/Spanish speaking, and between ages of 21-85 were recruited from May 2014 to April 2015 from three health clinics serving low-income patients. Emotional eating, uncontrolled eating and cognitive restraint were measured with the Three Factor Eating Questionnaire (TFEQ) R18- V2. Dietary intake was measured with the Block Fruits and Vegetable and Fat screener. Socio-demographic characteristics included sex, age, employment status, education and marital status.

The Bottom Line

A large percentage of the sample experienced some level of DEB. Emotional eating was associated with more consumption of fats and cognitive restraint with more consumption of fruits and vegetables. Research is needed to understand how these associations are related to health in Puerto Rico.

Source

López-Cepero AA, Mattei J, Frisard C, Riseberg E, Jimenez J, Lemon SC, Rosal MC. Dysfunctional Eating Behaviors and Dietary Intake in Puerto Rico. *J Immigr Minor Health*. 2021 Aug;23(4):867-870. doi: 10.1007/s10903-021-01156-0. Epub 2021 Mar 18. PMID: 33733376.

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Acknowledgement

This research was supported by the National Institute of Health (TL1TR001454) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (U48DP005031-01). This publication is also a product of a Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research Center from the CDC. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors.



Spotlight on Results

1. 76% of participants reported emotional eating which was associated with calories from fats ($\beta=1.95$, 95% CI 0.40, 3.51) and saturated fats ($\beta=3.26$, 95% CI 0.67, 5.85).
2. 87% of participants experienced cognitive restraint, which was associated with eating fruits and vegetables ($\beta=0.69$, 95% CI 0.20, 1.19).
3. 88% of participants reported uncontrolled eating, which was marginally associated with percentage of total calories from fats ($\beta=1.70$, 95% CI -0.21, 3.6) and from saturated fats ($\beta=2.83$, 95% CI -0.35, 6.01)

Call for Action

Research is needed to understand how these associations are related to health in Puerto Rico in order to take action to promote health.



Our mission is to prevent disease and advance health equity by fusing community engaged research, practice, policy and education. For more information, visit:

www.umassmed.edu/prc

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- PRC at UMassChan

Overview

COVID-19 vaccines provide strong protection against the SARS CO-V 2 for children and youth. Although they have been approved for youth of ages 12 and older since May 2021, and for children between the ages of 5-11 since November 2021, vaccination rates among youth are low. As parents view their child's clinician as a trusted partner in caring for their children, a key to increasing rates could be involvement of the clinicians. The purpose of this study was to explore the thoughts and experiences that clinicians have in talking about the vaccine with parents, setting up clinical workflows to vaccinate children, and strategies to address the logistical challenges of vaccinating youth in the clinic.

Main Questions

- What experiences do clinicians have in talking with parents about the COVID-19 vaccine?
- What challenges do clinicians face in providing this vaccine in their clinic?
- What strategies do clinicians recommend for discussing and providing COVID-19 in the clinic?

Study

This study explored the views of pediatric and family medicine clinicians about efforts to vaccinate pediatric patients against COVID-19, challenges and recommendations. Researchers at the Prevention Research Center at UMass Chan Medical School conducted 16 interviews with family practice and pediatric clinicians in central and western Massachusetts between October and December 2021. Clinicians were asked about their strategies for talking with families about the COVID-19 vaccine and other pediatric vaccines, experiences and recommendations for providing the COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccines in clinic, additional resources needed to provide the vaccine in clinic, and strategies for encouraging hesitant parents. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed according to the rapid qualitative analysis method.

The Bottom Line

Clinicians recommended sharing personal stories about vaccination, recognizing parents' fear about the vaccines, and being persistent with recommendations. While they recognized success with these practices in their own clinics, clinicians identified a need to better define best practices and training for conversations about the vaccines, and for integrating them into routine practice.

Contact

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Source

Ryan GW, Goulding M, Borg A, et al. Clinician perspectives on pediatric COVID-19 vaccination: A qualitative study in central and western, Massachusetts. *Prev Med Rep.* 2022;29:101966. doi:10.1016/j.pmedr.2022.101966



Spotlight on Results

Clinicians reported:

- Experiences: Clinicians reported that parents typically fall into three groups: vaccine-accepting, hesitant but potentially accepting, and refusers.
- Challenges: Dedicated staffing, space, educational materials.
- Recommendations: When talking with parents, share personal vaccine stories, acknowledge parents' fears about the vaccines, and be persistent over time with hesitant parents. Clinicians also recommended training for having individual conversations with parents and integrating vaccines into routine practice.

Call for Action

Clinicians are on the front lines of efforts to improve vaccination rates through parental education, vaccine delivery or referral to community vaccine sites. Training on giving strong, presumptive recommendations, directly addressing misinformation, developing effecting messages, and integrating vaccine delivery best practices into routine practice are needed.

This work was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [#6U48DP006381-03-01]; GR is supported by the National Cancer Institute [#T32 CA172009]; MG is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, National Institutes of Health [TL1TR001454].



Research Brief



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

Parental attitudes, concerns, and thoughts about the COVID-19 vaccine for 5- to 11-year-old children: Focus group findings from Worcester, MA

Our mission is to prevent disease and advance health equity by fusing community engaged research, practice, policy and education. For more information, visit: www.umassmed.edu/prc

Overview

Vaccine hesitancy is a long-standing public health issue that can result in low vaccination rates. This pattern is seen in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine among children, as the vaccination rates are low. Low vaccination rates are concerning, as COVID-19 infection among 5- to 11-year-old children increases their risk of diabetes, other illnesses, hospitalization, and death. Exploring how parents view the COVID-19 vaccine is key to designing and implementing public health and clinical strategies to promote vaccination.

Main Questions

- What do parents think are the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine for their children?
- What concerns do parents have about this vaccine?
- Who do parents trust for information about this vaccine?

Study

This study recruited parents of 5- to 11-year-old children living in Worcester, Massachusetts, through trusted community partners to talk about the of COVID-19 vaccine for their children. Seven focus groups were conducted via Zoom with a total number of 67 parents, three in Spanish (n=37) and four in English (n=30). Focus groups were held pre- and post-FDA emergency use authorization (October 2021 - January 2022). Parents were asked their thoughts about 1) potential benefits of the vaccine, 2) concerns about the vaccine, 3) trusted sources of information, 4) impact of COVID-19.

The Bottom Line

Parents trust their child's healthcare provider as well as their friends and family. From these sources parents want to hear about personal vaccine decisions and experiences. Sharing these personal stories and messaging that highlights the many benefits of vaccination may help to motivate parents to vaccinate their children.

Contact

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Source

Goulding, M., Ryan, G. W., Minkah, P., Borg, A., Gonzalez, M., Medina, N., Suprenant, P., Rosal, M. C., & Lemon, S. C. (2022). Parental perceptions of the COVID-19 vaccine for 5- to 11-year-old children: Focus group findings from Worcester Massachusetts. *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics*, 0(0), 2120721.



Spotlight on Results

- Parent responses reflected their own attitudes and those of people they knew. Parents views on vaccination varied. Some were accepting while others were hesitant and resistant.
- Reasons for vaccination: 1) Peace of mind to protect themselves, family and community from COVID-19 illness transmission, severe disease, and death. 2) Social, emotional, educational reasons, such as not missing school, returning to 'normal' and reducing child anxiety.
- Concerns: Short-term and long-range side effects, changing recommendations, vaccine speed of development.
- Parents trust 1) healthcare providers (especially their child's provider) 2) their friends and families' experiences 3) their own experiences. They also want to know the vaccination decisions that their providers, friends and family make for their own children.

Call for Action

Clear communication is needed to combat vaccine hesitancy. Parents want to hear vaccine decisions form healthcare providers and friends.

Supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cooperative agreement #9U48DP006381; the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences #TL1TR001454 and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute #F31HL164126 (MG); and the National Cancer Institute #T32 CA172009 (GR). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors. The authors thank the YMCA of Central Massachusetts, El Buen Samaritano Food Program Inc. and Parents Union of Massachusetts for recruiting parents, and Xolchit Polanco-Roman, and Carmen (Coqui) Negron for facilitating discussions.

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Funded Projects

09/30/2021 – 09/30/2022

Public Health Practice

CONFIDENCE: Clinicians for Effective COVID—19 Vaccine Conversations for Youth and Adolescents

This is a pilot randomized control trial with waitlist comparison condition to test a multicomponent, clinic-based intervention to promote COVID-19 vaccine intention and uptake among diverse youth and adolescents

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: Merck Pharmaceuticals (PI: Lemon)

Dates: 2022-2024

Research Focus: Critical and Emerging Issues

Worcester Vaccine Confidence Network

The PRC at UMass Chan is promoting confidence and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines among youth and families in Worcester, Massachusetts. There are three components to this approach 1) COVID-19 Vaccine Ambassadors Public Health Media Campaign, 2) COVID-19 Vaccine Family Ambassador Mode, and 3) Preparing Clinicians for Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Dates: 2020-2022

Research Focus: Critical and Emerging Issues

Worcester COVID-19 Case and Vaccine Surveillance

This contract with the City of Worcester's Division of Public Health supports our team to conduct daily case counts for COVID-19 cases and vaccines for the Greater Worcester area.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: Worcester Division of Public Health (contract)

Dates: 2021-2023

Research Focus: Critical and Emerging Issues

Experiences with COVID-19 among Population Sub-Groups in Massachusetts Prevention

The PRC is conducting a series of focus groups to gather and present in-depth information about Massachusetts residents' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular emphasis on the social determinants of health. These include factors such as mental and behavioral health, access to care, financial impact, employment, housing, safety and social support. The populations of focus were selected in collaboration with the MDPH by using the results of the COVID Community Impact Survey (CCIS) to identify populations with high disparities and/or challenges.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Partners: Trusted messengers for specific populations

Funder: Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) (contract)

Dates: 2021-2022

Research Focus: Critical and Emerging Issues

Central Massachusetts Technical Assistance Provider for the MDPH Covid-19 Community Impact Survey

The PRC is conducting analyses and disseminating data from the COVID Community Impact Survey (CCIS) in Central Massachusetts to describe disparities and/or challenges that were identified for each population of focus in this survey. CCIS is a statewide survey with over-sampling of populations that experienced COVID-19 disparities. The survey documents experiences with the social determinants of health during the pandemic and was designed for communities to use in strategic planning and other efforts.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: Massachusetts Department of Public Health (contract)

Dates: 2021-2023

Research Focus: Critical and Emerging Issues

Greater Worcester COVID-19 Survey

In collaboration with the Worcester Division of Public Health and the Central Massachusetts Public Health Alliance, this community-wide survey assesses the experiences of Greater Worcester residents with the SARS CoV-2 pandemic, including physical, emotional and social impacts.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Partners: Worcester Division of Public Health and Massachusetts Public Health Alliance

Funder: Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund (PI: MPI) Sharina Person, PhD

Dates: 2020-2022

Research Focus: Critical and Emerging Issues

Greater Worcester Regional Youth Health Survey

The survey is administered to middle and high school students in the Greater Worcester Area. It asks about health risk behaviors such as bullying, smoking, alcohol and drug use, food security and others.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: Worcester Division of Public Health (PI: Lemon) (Contract)

Dates: 2016-2023 (administered every two years)

Research Focus: Food Access, Critical and Emerging Issues

Evaluation of the Worcester Division of Public Health REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health) project

This sub-contract to the Worcester Division of Public Health's REACH project will allow in-depth evaluation of the REACH program. Evaluation focuses on the implementation of evidence-based policy, systems and environmental strategies to promote health among Latino residents.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: City of Worcester Division of Public Health, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (PI: Bolen) (Contract)

Dates: 2019-2023

Research Focus: Food Access, Chronic Disease, Critical and Emerging Issues, Built Environment

Policy, Systems, Environment

BRACE 3.0: Building capacity of health departments and their partners to address climate and health

This project utilizes community-engaged, rapid implementation science methods to develop, field test and disseminate a revised version of the CDC's Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) framework (BRACE 3.0). BRACE 3.0 is an evidence-informed approach designed to assist public health officials and their community partners prepare for the negative health effects of climate change in their communities that aligns with Public Health 3.0.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (PI: Lemon)

Dates: 2022-2024

Research Focus: Built Environment

Physical Activity Policy and Evaluation Research Network (PAPREN) (SIP)

This Special Interest Project (SIP) is a PRC network with three overarching aims: 1) establishing and building capacity among a network of researchers and practitioners who conduct physical activity policy research, 2) providing technical assistance in built environment-related policy activities among recipients of CDC SPAN, REACH and HOP grants, and 3) conducting an applied evaluation research project to understand the long-term influence of master plans on physical activity and associated outcomes and to identify model policies.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (PIs: Lemon, Chriqui)

Dates: 2019-2024

Research Focus: Built Environment

Intervention and Implementation

BP Control: Economic Analysis of the Implementation of a Community Health Worker-Delivered Intervention to Enhance Antihypertensive Medication Adherence in Accountable Care Organizations

As the Applied Research Project of the PRC at UMass Chan, BP Control is studying costs, return-on-investment, and blood pressure among sub-groups of people, to inform implementation of an effective intervention for promoting adherence to anti-hypertensive medications among patients with uncontrolled hypertension. The intervention will be implemented as standard of care for all patients with uncontrolled hypertension.

PRC Investigators: Milagros C. Rosal, PhD, Stephenie C. Lemon PhD

Partners: Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center, Family Health Center of Worcester, Inc.

Funder: PRC's Core Research Project, funded by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (PI: Rosal)

Dates: 2019-2024

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

Coordinating community-clinical linkages with community health workers to improve health and social outcomes for adults with epilepsy (SIP)

This project is exploring a sustainable and transferable model of epilepsy care that could be utilized at: epilepsy centers across the country, community neurology practices, and primary care practices in rural and underserved areas. Such unique models may offer epilepsy patients better disease management, improved quality of life, and a greater ability to reduce upstream health determinants, thereby improving overall health and well-being. Thus, the research is relevant to the CDC's role to promote healthy and safe behaviors, communities, and environments.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD (PI of record),

Funder: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (PI: Chu)

Dates: 2021-2022

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs: Evaluating Patient-, Provider-, and Program-level Outcomes Across the US (SIP)

This project will develop an approach for assessing Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs, a model being implemented across the United States for delivering mental healthcare to pregnant and postpartum individuals. Findings will be shared with Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs and key partners to 1) improve Access Programs' programming and evaluation, and 2) to inform policy and funding.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD (PI of record)

Funder: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (PI: Byatt)

Dates: 2021-2024

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

RADx Clinical Studies Core

The Clinical Studies Core of RADx supports the clinical testing of SARS CoV-2 point-of-care testing devices in diverse communities across the United States in partnership with academic, health care and government agencies.

PRC Investigators: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD, Milagros C. Rosal, PhD

Funder: National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) (PI: McManus)

Dates: 2020-2022

Research Focus: Critical and Emerging Issues

PR-OUTLOOK: PR Young Adults Stress, Contextual, Behavioral & Cardiometabolic Risk

This study will fill knowledge gaps regarding the prevalence of cardiovascular disease (CVD) behavioral and cardiometabolic risk factors and overall cardiovascular health (CVH) among young adults in Puerto Rico and ascertain their psychosocial (individual and neighborhood-level) and sociodemographic determinants. We will establish an island-wide cohort of 3,000 young adults (18-29 years old) using a multi-stage sampling of probabilistic plus community approaches; conduct comprehensive assessments (survey, anthropometric, physiological), and establish a biorepository (blood, hair, saliva, urine) for future longitudinal studies of CVD risk, DVH, and mechanism.

PRC Investigator: Milagros C. Rosal, PhD

Funder: National Institutes of Health (PIs: Rosal, Perez)

Dates: 2019-2024

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

Translating Research into Practice: A Regional Collaboration to Reduce Disparities in Breast Cancer Care

Translating Research into Practice (TRIP) draws upon the principles of community-engaged implementation science to facilitate deployment and utilization of: (a) regional patient registries; (b) systematic screening for social barriers to care with a referral plan; and (c) patient navigation services into one integrated model of care to improve the quality and effectiveness of care delivery for African American women with breast cancer.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute (NCI) (PIs: Battaglia, Freund, Haas, Lemon)

Dates: 2017-2022

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

Bridging the evidence-to-practice gap: Evaluating practice facilitation as a strategy to accelerate translation of a systems-level adherence intervention into safety net practices

This study will test whether a refined practice facilitation strategy improves fidelity to the implementation of ALMA, an evidence-based intervention targeting adherence to antihypertensive medication among Latino patients with uncontrolled hypertension; and whether the practice facilitation strategy results in improved blood pressure control.

PRC Investigator: Milagros C. Rosal, PhD

Funder: National Institutes of Health, New York University School of Medicine (PI: Schoenthaler)

Dates: 2019-2024

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

STRIDE: Strengthening Translational Research in Diverse Enrollment

This collaborative study between UMass Chan Medical School, Vanderbilt and the University of Alabama at Birmingham is developing innovative approaches to enhancing informed consent procedures with a goal of improving research literacy among under-served populations. This project is developing a multi-level informed consent platform that integrates e-consent with patient storytelling and simulations-based research assistant training. The intervention will be tested in the context of six ongoing clinical trials in a multiple time series design randomized trial.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: National Institutes of Health, National Center for the Advancement of Translational Science (PIs: Lemon, Allison, Saag, Harris)

Dates: 2016-2022

FITLINE: Pediatric Practice-based Obesity Intervention to Support Families

The goal of this randomized clinical trial is to test a program consisting of telephone coaching and a family workbook of informational materials, to see if it reduces obesity among children. The trial is enrolling 512 children ages 8 to 12 with overweight and obesity and their family from 16 pediatric practices.

PRC Investigator: Lori Pbert, PhD

Funder: National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

Dates: 2016-2022

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

Preventing Childhood Obesity Through Youth Empowerment: A Cluster RCT of the H2GO! Program

This study is a partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs in Massachusetts and involves testing the effectiveness of a narrative-based youth empowerment intervention for reducing sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and obesity.

PRC Investigators: Milagros C. Rosal, PhD, Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Partner: Boys and Girls Clubs in MA

Funder: National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), Boston University-Prime (PI: M. Wang)

Dates: 2020-2025

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

Vaper to Vaper: A Multimodal Mobile Peer-Driven Intervention to Support Adolescents in Quitting Vaping

Vaper-to-Vaper (V2V) is a group of mobile tools, such as texting, which are designed for adolescents to help their peers manage their tobacco cravings and quit vaping. The tools built upon prior tobacco intervention work. **PRC**

Investigator: Lori Pbert, PhD

Funder: National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

Dates: 2021-2023

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

Continuation of the Nicotine Dependence in Teens (NDIT) Study to Age 30

The study followed the use of tobacco products, quit attempts, and genetic and environmental factors among study participants. It extended the ability to follow participants until they are 30 years old.

PRC Investigator: Lori Pbert, PhD

Partners: University of Montreal

Funder: Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute (PI: O'Loughlin)

Dates: 2015-2020

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

Training Grants

Prevention and Control of Cancer: Training for Change in Individuals and Systems

This T32 training project continues funding for PRACCTIS (Prevention and Control of Cancer: Training for Change in Individuals and Systems), a pre- and postdoctoral training program located at the UMass Chan Medical School in partnership with its affiliates: UMass Boston, Baystate Health, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and the Center for Healthcare Outcomes and Implementation Research at the Veterans Health Administration. The project trains the next generation of scientists to conduct pragmatic research that seeks to promote evidence-based practice along the cancer continuum.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute (NCI) (Pis: Lemon, Ockene)

Dates: 2019-2024

Research Focus: Chronic Disease

Massachusetts Consortium for Cardiopulmonary Implementation Science Scholars

This interdisciplinary K12 training program for junior faculty promotes the development of independent implementation researchers committed to addressing cardiopulmonary disease prevention, treatment and management. The program is led by the UMass Chan Medical School in collaboration with Baystate Health and the Center for Healthcare Organization and Implementation Research of the Veterans Health Administration.

PRC Investigator: Stephenie C. Lemon, PhD

Funder: National Institutes of Health (PIs: Lemon, Lindenauer, Wiener)

Dates: 2017-2022

Research Focus: Chronic Disease



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