

HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER NEWSLETTER

Emory University School of Medicine



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OVERVIEW

We're excited to share the latest updates, achievements, and opportunities from the Health Services Research Center.

Here's a glimpse of what's inside this issue:

- Recent progress, initiatives, and activities: Updates from ongoing and new partnerships and initiatives.
- New Leadership: Welcoming fresh perspectives to our team.
- Spotlight Features: Celebrating the work of our fellows, students, and staff.
- Achievements: Recognizing awards, grants, and publications across our community.
- Save the Date: Upcoming events and training opportunities to mark on your calendar.

Dive in for more updates, achievements, and opportunities from our vibrant HSRC community!

MESSAGE FROM THE CENTER

It is an exciting time for Health Services Research at Emory, and we are thrilled to update you on the progress of the Center and multiple new initiatives and activities that we will be taking on in 2025! Over the past year, we have successfully recruited another class within the T32 program, have helped to execute and develop externally-funded research proposals, played an important role in supporting student scholarship, and developed important collaborations across the Emory community.

The Center has also undergone an important change in leadership and scope. We now have joint leadership from the Rollins School of Public Health and the School of Medicine with the arrival of Dr. Stephen Patrick (pg. 4) and have formally integrated the activities of the Healthcare Innovation Program. This has led to the creation of joint programming, for example, with the Department of Health Policy and Management, the Global Center for Diabetes Research, and other partners. This expansion will also us to enact an exciting new membership model open to all HSR scholars across the Emory community in 2025.

We will soon be announcing an HSR pilot grant program, hosting multiple community building events to bring together the HSR community, and continuing to hold symposia and seminars of broad interest to the Emory community.

In this time of growth, it is particularly important for us to learn from all of you to identify areas of strategic development so that we can enhance community and provide critical resources to facilitate development, training, and conduct in HSR.

We look forward to your ideas and partnership.



UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES IN HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

Mark your calendars! Below is a quick list of upcoming seminars, workshops, and special events for faculty, students, and researchers interested in health services research at Emory University. You can find more details about each event at the end of the newsletter.

HSR Seminar Series

 Every 2nd Tuesday of the Month

 12:00 – 1:00 PM

 Grace Crum Rollins Building, 7th Floor, Room 721

- Monthly presentations by leading health services researchers, featuring various topics to enhance knowledge in the field.

Research Work in Progress (WIP) Seminar


 Every 4th Tuesday of the Month

 12:00 – 1:00 PM

 Grace Crum Rollins Building, 7th Floor, Room 721

An informal forum to present and get feedback on ongoing research. All are welcome—faculty, postdocs, and students!

Emory EPIC Cosmos Datathon


 March 21, 2025

 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM


 Emory School of Medicine

A full day of data-driven innovation, using Emory's EPIC Cosmos data for research breakthroughs.

Health Services Research Day

 May 6, 2025

 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM

 Claudia Nance Rollins Building, RSPH Auditorium

An annual highlight showcasing health services research across Emory and beyond. Don't miss it!

Stay Connected! Email Melisa Meza at (melisa.meza@emory.edu) or subscribe to our listserv to keep up with seminars and events. See pg. 16 for subscription details.

HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER

**WELCOMES NEW
CO-DIRECTOR**

**Stephen W. Patrick, MD, MPH,
MS, FAAP**

Professor and Chair,
Department of Health Policy and
Management, Rollins School of
Public Health
Co-Director, Health Services
Research Center
Practicing Neonatologist, Emory
University

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Stephen W. Patrick, MD, MPH, MS, FAAP, as the new Co-Director of the Health Services Research Center. Dr. Patrick serves as Chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Rollins School of Public Health and is a practicing neonatologist at Emory University.

Dr. Patrick brings a wealth of experience in health policy and services research, with a focus on improving outcomes for pregnant individuals with opioid use disorder and their infants. He has held leadership roles at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, served as a Senior Policy Advisor to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and contributed his expertise to numerous national initiatives.

His distinguished career includes over 130 peer-reviewed publications in leading journals, multiple prestigious awards, and testimony before Congress on the impact of the opioid crisis. We are excited for the vision and expertise Dr. Patrick brings to our center!

APPLY FOR THE T32 POST-DOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAM

The Health Services Research Center is inviting applications for our T32 Post-Doctoral training program.

The goal of this program is to train post-doctoral candidates from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary expertise in health services research. There are no specific requirements regarding the type of health services research candidates are pursuing. However, the program does have a special emphasis on research addressing disparities or inequities based on factors such as race/ethnicity, sex/gender, socioeconomic status, geographical residence, healthcare access, and physical/mental disability. Proposals should thus have a component that addresses equity or disparities. A distinguishing feature of our program is the utilization of a multidisciplinary approach to expose trainees to multiple methods and research areas, from epidemiology and biostatistics to behavioral and social sciences, biological sciences, and health policy and implementation.

Training will include multidisciplinary mentoring along with coursework, inter-departmental seminars, hands-on research, grant writing, and career development. Postdoctoral fellows will be MDs pursuing a career in health services research, or PhD graduates in epidemiology, health policy, health economics, or other relevant fields. Post-doctoral trainees will have the opportunity to obtain an MS in Clinical Research or a Certificate in Clinical and Translational Research and can select a personalized training pathway with didactic coursework, supplemented with online trainings from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and other health system-engaged experiences. The program will concentrate on successful training and career development, supported by a diverse group of mentors and affiliated faculty from the School of Medicine, Rollins School of Public Health, and the School of Nursing. The program will emphasize multidisciplinary training, collaborative research, diversity of trainees, presentation skills, and project management. We place significant emphasis on mentorship and career development as well. The ultimate goal of this program is to prepare diverse individuals for leadership positions in health services research in order to improve outcomes and reduce disparities in health care and health care systems.

This fellowship will cover a salary/stipend for 2 years and tuition for the MSCR or CCTR program and will start on July 1, 2025. For questions or additional information, please contact Tracy Obertone at tracy.obertone@emory.edu.

Applications are due by 5 p.m. on February 10, 2025. ([**Link to application here**](#))

T32 FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS

We are excited to welcome our new and returning T32 fellows to the HSRC community and look forward to their contributions to advancing health services research!



Tessa Hulburt, PhD
Post-Doctoral Fellow
Joined in 2023

Tessa Hulburt, PhD, is a postdoctoral fellow at the Emory School of Medicine Department of Orthopedics and Emory Sports Performance and Research Center (SPARC). She joined the Health Services Research Center as a T32 Fellow in 2023, specializing in human movement biomechanics and motion capture technology. Her work focuses on hypermobility spectrum disorders and hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, with the goal of developing and studying implementation of movement-based therapies to improve quality of life and eliminate barriers to comfortable, safe movement for individuals with complex pain conditions.



Lucy D. Hart, MD
Post-Doctoral Fellow
Joined in 2023

Lucy Hart, MD, is a General Surgery resident at Emory University Hospital currently completing her two-year research sabbatical. She joined the Health Services Research Center as a T32 Fellow in 2023, focusing on Trauma Surgery, specifically outcomes research and disparities. Her primary interest is in hospital-based violence prevention, particularly firearm injury prevention. Ultimately, she plans to pursue a career in trauma surgery, where she hopes to continue her work in firearm injury prevention.



Divya Verma, MD
Post-Doctoral Fellow
Joined in 2024

Divya is a third-year pulmonary and critical care fellow at Emory University, specializing in pulmonary hypertension. As a T32 Fellow at the Health Services Research Center, she is studying barriers to vaccine uptake in the Grady Pulmonary Clinic and pursuing an MS in Clinical Research. Originally from the Midwest, she holds a BA in Mathematics from Washington University, an MD from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and completed her residency and chief residency at Baylor College of Medicine. She aims to build a career as a clinician and health services researcher focused on improving outcomes and addressing barriers to care for patients with pulmonary hypertension.



**Rhonda Wright, PhD,
MHA, RN**
Post-Doctoral Fellow
Joined in 2024

Rhonda Smith Wright joins Emory's Palliative Medicine Research Team as a Health Services Research Center T32 postdoctoral fellow. Originally from Baltimore, MD, she brings expertise in health equity, with her doctoral research examining the impact of neighborhood segregation on sickle cell disease pain and healthcare utilization. Her work aims to address systemic inequities and promote equitable health service delivery. Rhonda holds degrees from the University of Pennsylvania, University of Michigan, and Johns Hopkins, where she earned her MSN and PhD. A licensed RN, she looks forward to advancing palliative care research at Emory.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

We are excited to highlight the valuable contributions of our REAL student interns, HIP graduate assistants, and undergraduate research assistants. Their dedication and hard work play an integral role in advancing our ongoing projects and initiatives, and we are grateful for their commitment to our mission.



Alyssa Jesse Hugo - REAL Student - Research Assistant

Alyssa is a first-year MPH student in Epidemiology at Emory Rollins School of Public Health, pursuing a certificate in Genetic and Molecular Epidemiology. Her research focuses on chronic diseases, including diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular, and kidney disease, with a passion for improving prevention and care in underserved communities. As a Research Assistant at the Emory Health Services Research Center, she supports manuscript and grant preparation, data analysis, and coalition efforts for the Southeastern Kidney Transplant Coalition. Alyssa aims to reduce health disparities and advance equitable care through impactful research.



Miracle Ephraim - Undergraduate - Research Assistant

Miracle Ephraim is a senior majoring in Human Health and Economics with a minor in Quantitative Sciences. She is passionate about using statistical analysis to address health disparities in underrepresented communities. Currently, she is working on her senior thesis with Dr. Harding, examining whether state Medicaid administration models contribute to lower evaluation rates for Medicaid enrollees with end-stage kidney disease (ESKD). This research aims to identify policy-driven factors impacting access to care for a vulnerable population, as nearly 40% of new ESKD cases rely on Medicaid. Outside of academics, Miracle enjoys reading and exploring new restaurant.



Meg Winata - Health Innovation Program Graduate Assistant

Meg is a fourth-year medical student at Emory applying for general surgery residency. Before medical school, she worked as a Surgical/Trauma ICU nurse at Grady Memorial Hospital, leading quality improvement projects as Chair of the SICU Unit Council and Secretary of the Quality and Safety Council. Meg earned a B.A. in Music with Honors and a B.S. in Nursing from Emory. She is Co-President of Emory's Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) chapter and joined the HSR Center through the HIP program in 2023.



Lauriane Pinto - Health Innovation Program Graduate Assistant

Lauriane Pinto is a third-year medical student at Emory University School of Medicine. At Emory, she is the co-President of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and a Health Innovation Program (HIP) Graduate Assistant. Prior to medical school, Lauriane was a healthcare strategy consultant at Health Advances and PwC, supporting the development and commercialization of novel therapeutics, medical devices, and diagnostics. Lauriane earned a B.S. in biology from Duke University, where she graduated with Honors and Departmental Distinction.

NEW AND ON GOING GRANTS AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

Georgia Clinical and Translational Science Alliance (CTSA) KL2

We are proud to share that Dr. Megan Urbanski has received funding for her project, "A Softer Landing: Using a Community Engaged Systems Science Approach to Optimize the Unexpected Transition to End-Stage Kidney Disease."

Her KL2 project employs systems science methodology and a community-engaged research design to conduct the formative work necessary for developing a multilevel hospital-based systems-change intervention. This intervention aims to optimize care transitions for patients with unexpected end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) by identifying patient and provider needs and addressing systems-level factors that influence these transitions.

Congratulations to Dr. Urbanski and her mentors on this important work!



Department of Surgery Pilot Grant

Dr. Megan Urbanski, along with collaborators Dr. Neal Dickert, Dr. Mani Daneshmand, Dr. Marwan Kazimi, and Dr. William Kitchens, is leading a pivotal study titled "Exploring Out-of-Sequence Organ Allocation Decision-Making Among Organ Procurement Organization and Transplant Center Providers."

This project aims to enhance understanding of decision-making processes for out-of-sequence organ allocation and uncover areas of consistency and variation among organ procurement organization staff and transplant surgeons in the U.S. Grounded in the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network's ethical principles, this research integrates an exploratory sequential mixed methods approach to identify practices that can promote transparency and equity in organ allocation decisions, ultimately contributing to health equity in transplantation.

NEW AND ON GOING GRANTS AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

American Thoracic Society (ATS) Vaccine Initiative



The Health Services Research Center, in partnership with the Grady Pulmonary Clinic (GPC), is contributing to an American Thoracic Society (ATS)-funded study focused on improving vaccine uptake. This project explores patient opinions on vaccines, clinic workflows, and ways to enhance education and distribution of vaccines like influenza and COVID-19.

Through patient interviews and focus groups with GPC fellows and staff, the study aims to identify barriers and develop interventions that improve vaccine education and streamline clinic workflows.

Emma Blythe, MPH and Megan Urbanski, PhD, MSW, have played pivotal roles in study design, mentoring on qualitative methods, and guiding data collection and analysis. Their expertise continues to drive this impactful research forward.

American Society of Transplantation (AST) Research Network

Congratulations to Dr. Jessica Harding, PhD, on securing funding for her groundbreaking study addressing sex inequities in kidney transplant referrals. Dr. Harding's study will investigate whether the sex of dialysis facility physicians influences disparities in transplant referral rates. Through quantitative analyses and qualitative narratives, the study aims to uncover provider-based factors, including potential biases, that contribute to these inequities.

We're proud to celebrate Dr. Harding's work in advancing health equity!



NEW AND ON GOING GRANTS AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

Emory Heart and Vascular Center- Quality of Life in Patients with Left Ventricular Assist Devices

Dr. Joshua Chan (Cardiothoracic Surgery and Transplant Center), in partnership with Dr. Dickert and other HSRC team members, received a pilot grant from the Matt Ryan Foundation to conduct a mixed method study assessing quality of life and to identify facilitators and barriers to success among patients at Emory living with Left Ventricular Assist Devices (LVAD). The study will culminate in a multi-stakeholder process to identify high-priority strategies for enhancing patients' experiences and outcomes and address disparities in experiences and outcomes among patients who have social and economic disadvantage.



Merck (tailored-HF) Project

Dr. Dickert is PI for an implementation study funded by Merck called TAILORED-HF. This primary aim of this study is to assess the impact of system-level implementation of an evidence-based patient activation tool within cardiology clinics to enhance intensification of guideline-directed medical therapy for patients who have heart failure with reduced ejection fraction. Dr. Harding and Ms. Hu are collaborating on this study, along with Dr. Burke (cardiology) and collaborators from the Emory Digital team.



PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS



Berry J, Perez A, Di M, Hu C, Pastan SO, Patzer RE, Harding JL. The Association between Residential Segregation and Access to Kidney Transplantation: Evidence from a Multistate Cohort Study. *Clin J Am Soc Nephrol*. 2024 Nov 1;19(11):1473-1484. doi: 10.2215/CJN.0000000000000565. Epub 2024 Aug 26. PMID: 39186375; PMCID: PMC11556903.

Bulgin D, McBride Murry V, McElroy T, Schlundt D, Bonnet K, Patrick SW. "Just Google It"-A Qualitative Study of Reproductive-Age Women's Stigmatizing Experiences When Accessing Buprenorphine for Opioid Use Disorder. *Womens Health Issues*. 2024 Nov 26:S1049-3867(24)00102-6. doi: 10.1016/j.whi.2024.10.003. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 39603927.

Bowers M, Hu C, Gompers A, Rossi A, Pastan SO, Patzer RE, Harding JL. Geographic variation in sex disparities in access to the kidney transplant waitlist: a national US cohort study 2015-2021. *Nephrol Dial Transplant*. 2024 Dec 20;40(1):206-208. doi: 10.1093/ndt/gfae202. PMID: 39251398.

Dickert NW, Speight CD, Balser M, Biermann H, Davis JK, Halpern SD, Ko YA, Krishnan A, Matlock DD, Mitchell AR, Moore MA, Montembeau SC, Morris AA, Noonan K, Rao BR, Scherer LD, Sloan CE, Ubel PA, Allen LA. Integrating Out-of-Pocket Costs Into Shared Decision-Making for Heart Failure With Reduced Ejection Fraction: A Stepped-Wedge Trial (POCKET-COST-HF). *Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes*. 2024 Dec 3:e011273. doi: 10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.124.011273. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 39624892.

Dickert NW, Spiegelman D, Blumenthal-Barby JS, Graham G, Joffe S, Kahn JM, Kass NE, Kim SYH, Kerlin MP, Langford AT, Lavery JV, Matlock DD, Fenton KN, Mensah GA. Ethical issues in implementation science: perspectives from a National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute workshop. *Implement Sci*. 2024 Nov 19;19(1):77. doi: 10.1186/s13012-024-01403-6. PMID: 39563405; PMCID: PMC11577597.

Dickert NW, Najarro GR. Learning From Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation Experience in Cardiac Arrest: Strengths and Limitations of Prognostic Modeling Using Machine Learning. *Crit Care Med*. 2024 Jul 1;52(7):1156-1158. doi: 10.1097/CCM.00000000000006316. Epub 2024 Jun 13. PMID: 38869391.

Gompers A, Rossi A, Harding JL. Intersectional race and gender disparities in kidney transplant access in the United States: a scoping review. *BMC Nephrol*. 2024 Jan 25;25(1):36. doi: 10.1186/s12882-023-03453-2. PMID: 38273245; PMCID: PMC10811805.

Harding JL. Advancing Equity in Living Donor Kidney Transplant: We Need More Male Donors. *Kidney360*. 2024 Dec 1;5(12):1788-1790. doi: 10.34067/KID.000000000632. PMID: 39724108; PMCID: PMC11687977.

Harding JL, Dixon MA, Di M, Hogan J, Pastan SO, Patzer RE. Setting reasonable goals for kidney transplant referral among dialysis facilities. *BMC Nephrol*. 2024 Jul 24;25(1):235. doi: 10.1186/s12882-024-03671-2. PMID: 39048955; PMCID: PMC11270779.

Montembeau SC, Kim JH, Baugh CM, Campbell EG, Baggish AL, Dickert NW. Physicians approach shared decision-making for sports eligibility decisions heterogeneously. *Am Heart J Plus*. 2024 Feb 29;40:100371. doi: 10.1016/j.ahjo.2024.100371. PMID: 38510500; PMCID: PMC10946034.

Mustapha AF, Ogunniyi MO, Dickert NW. Striking the Right Chord: Contextual Complexities in Cardiovascular Clinical Trial Representation. *JACC Adv*. 2024 May 1;3(7):100954. doi: 10.1016/j.jacadv.2024.100954. PMID: 39130044; PMCID: PMC11312771.

Patrick SW, Loch SF, McNeer E, Davis MM. Voter Support for Policies Associated With Child Health as National Campaign Priorities. *JAMA Health Forum*. 2024 Sep 6;5(9):e243305. doi: 10.1001/jamahealthforum.2024.3305. PMID: 39331370; PMCID: PMC11437383.

Urbanski M, Blythe E, Hamblin A, et al. "The Heart of the Center": Exploring the Role of the Patient Care Technician in US Dialysis Care. *Kidney Med*. 2024;7(1):100934. Published 2024 Nov 14. doi:10.1016/j.xkme.2024.100934

UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

SPRING 2025 HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH SEMINARS

Mark your calendars!

The Spring HSR Seminar Series, hosted by the Department of Health Policy and Management and the Health Services Research Center, will take place **every 2nd Tuesday of the month from 12-1 PM ET** in the Grace Crum Rollins Building 7th Floor Rm 721.

This engaging series will feature expert speakers discussing critical topics in health policy and research.

Lunch is provided!

Stay Connected: Email Melisa Meza at (melisa.meza@emory.edu) directly or subscribe to our listserv to stay informed (see pg. 16 for details)

We look forward to seeing you there!



UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

RESEARCH WORK IN PROGRESS (WIP) SEMINARS

Looking for a supportive platform to share your research and receive valuable feedback? The Research Works in Progress Seminar Series (WIP), a collaboration between the Department of Health Policy and Management and the Health Services Research Center, is here to help.

WIP seminars provide a unique opportunity for students, postdoctoral trainees, and faculty to present research at any stage, from early proposals to nearly finished papers. The seminars foster multidisciplinary discussions, promote community, and help refine work in preparation for grant submissions, manuscript drafts, oral presentations, or thesis defenses.

- **When: Every 4th Tuesday of the month, 12–1 PM ET**
- **Where: Grace Crum Rollins Building 7th Floor Rm 721**

Lunch is Provided!

Interested in presenting? Contact Melisa Meza at (melisa.meza@emory.edu) to secure your slot.

Stay Connected: Email Melisa directly or subscribe to our listserv to stay informed (see pg. 16 for details)



Join us to collaborate, learn, and advance your research in a welcoming and constructive environment!

11TH ANNUAL HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH DAY 2025

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS!

Due: March 3, 2025

For more info: <http://bit.ly/HSRDay>

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Jennifer (Jen) DeVoe, MD, DPhil

Chair, Department of Family
Medicine, Oregon Health &
Science University (OHSU)
Director, OHSU Center for
Primary Care Research and
Innovation

REGISTER NOW!

*Registration is required

Join us for this symposium featuring invited talks, selected oral abstracts and a panel on career development. Come network with researchers across Georgia and learn about ongoing quality, effectiveness, and value-based research activities.

Conference date:

Tuesday, May 6, 2025

8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Where:

**Rollins School of Public Health
Auditorium**

HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

Examines access to health care, how health care is organized and delivered, and outcomes and costs of health care services.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Join Georgia Clinical & Translational Science Alliance colleagues at this 11th annual health services research symposium and networking opportunity.

Oral and poster presentations will be selected from submitted abstracts.* Abstract submission is not exclusive, and is allowed at other conferences. We welcome submissions from all students, staff, and faculty involved in **Health Services Research**.

SUBMIT NOW!

Abstract limit is 1800 characters (250 – 300 words).

ABSTRACT TIMELINE

Abstract Submission Deadline: **March 3, 2025**

Abstract Acceptance Notice: **April 2025**

QUESTIONS?

Contact:

Melisa Meza

melisa.meza@emory.edu

Sponsored by:



Health Services Research Center
Department of Medicine
and Department of Surgery

UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

EMORY EPIC COSMOS DATATHON



The Emory Epic Cosmos Datathon is a unique opportunity to accelerate your research and network with members from across the community.

This intensive, one-day event will challenge participants to leverage the Epic Cosmos dataset to set a manuscript "launch pad" within a single day. We seek researchers, clinicians, and data scientists with a passion for big data and a desire to explore this larger, longitudinal dataset.

Join us to collaborate with experts, explore the dataset, and produce impactful research in a dynamic and fast-paced environment.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

March 21, 2025 11am-6pm (ET)

@ Emory School of Medicine

For more information please email Gabriel Najarro (gabriel.najarro@emory.edu)

STAY CONNECTED

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