



# EMORY HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



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MEDICINE

Health Services Research Center  
Department of Medicine  
and Department of Surgery

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# MISSION | VISION | GOALS



## MISSION

To advance health services research through interdisciplinary collaboration, driving transformational change in healthcare and health systems to improve outcomes for all persons and foster a learning health system. We are dedicated to growing a community of health services researchers and training the next generation of health services researchers to lead and shape the future of healthcare.

## VISION

To be the leading health services research center in the Southeast and a national leader, setting the standard for innovation, impact, and excellence in transforming healthcare across broad patient populations.

## GOALS

**Strategic Goal 1:** Conduct and disseminate innovative and impactful research to improve value and outcomes for all persons.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Prepare the next generation of health services research leaders.

**Strategic Goal 3:** Provide resources and infrastructure to drive efficiency and effectiveness of health services research and promote the growth of a learning health system.



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# MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER

It has been an important year for Health Services Research at Emory. We are pleased to update you on the progress of the HSR Center and the exciting new initiatives and activities that we have begun in 2025! Over the past year, we have advanced our training mission through recruitment of another class within the T32 program and continued to support student scholarship, conducted and helped to facilitate externally-funded and internally-funded research proposals that will impact health and healthcare broadly, and worked to develop collaborations and community at Emory.

This year, the Center has broadened its scope and has undergone an important change in leadership. In the Spring of 2024, Stephen Patrick joined the Emory community as the Chair of Health Policy and Management at the Rollins School of Public Health and co-Director of the HSR Center, This reflects the Center's commitment to engaging and supporting the broad community of HSR scholars at Emory. In addition, Mylin Torres has now joined as Associate Director with a specific focus on policy translation and communication with the policy-making community. Finally, over the past year, we have formally integrated the activities of the Healthcare Innovation Program into the HSR Center, which includes key programming efforts for the broad Woodruff Health Sciences Center community and tracking of HSR funding at Emory. Consistent with this expansion in scope, we have begun to hold community building sessions designed to foster relationships and identify areas of need and growth for HSR, now host joint seminars and works in progress seminars with Health Policy and Management, and have partnered with Emory Digital, the Georgia CTSA, and the Emory Global Diabetes Center to host high-impact events for the Emory community.

Though it is a time of some uncertainty, we expect 2025 to be another year of significant growth. We are working to develop an HSR pilot grant program, will continue to host community building events to bring together the HSR community and integrate with important health system efforts, and are planning exciting symposia and seminars with internal and external faculty. We will also be enacting a revised membership model that will include activities such as mock study sections and enhanced access to data resources in order to boost capacity for high-impact work at Emory.

High-quality health services research has never been more important to advance health care and improve outcomes for all persons!

We are grateful for our institutional support and for the members of the Emory HSR community.

We look forward to continued growth together in 2025!





**LOOKING  
FORWARD**

# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH WELCOMES NEW LEADERSHIP



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

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

2024 was a transitional year within the HSR Center, providing a valuable opportunity to reflect on ways to enhance capacity and infrastructure. With this in mind, the Center welcomed a new leadership. In the latter half of 2024, the HSR Center welcomed Dr. Stephen W. Patrick, MD, MPH, MS, FAAP, as its new Co-Director.

Dr. Patrick joined Emory as Chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Rollins School of Public Health and the Department of Pediatrics and Children's Hospital of Atlanta as a neonatologist.

Dr. Patrick brings extensive experience in health policy and services research, with a focus on improving outcomes for pregnant individuals with opioid use disorder and their infants. Before joining Emory, he 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 to numerous national initiatives addressing maternal and infant health.

His distinguished career includes over 130 peer-reviewed publications, multiple prestigious awards, and testimony before Congress on the impact of the opioid crisis. His expertise and leadership have already begun shaping the future of health services research at Emory.



**Mylin A. Torres, MD**

Associate Director, Emory HSR Center  
Co-Leader, Cancer Prevention Control  
Research Program,  
Winship Cancer Institute  
Director, Health Services, Outcomes,  
and Policy Research Division  
Professor, Dept. of Radiation  
Oncology

Dr. Mylin Torres, a leader in radiation oncology and cancer research, has joined the HSR Center as Associate Director. A Professor of Radiation Oncology at Emory University School of Medicine and Co-Leader of the Cancer Prevention and Control Research Program at Winship Cancer Institute, Dr. Torres brings expertise in cancer care delivery, health disparities, and patient-centered outcomes research. She will lead efforts within the Center to promote policy translation and communication with the policy-making community.

As Director of the Division of Health Services Research, Outcomes, and Policy, she leads transformative efforts to enhance cancer prevention, treatment access, and survivorship care. Her research, supported by grants from the NCI, ASCO, and Susan G. Komen, focuses on mitigating treatment-related toxicities and addressing racial disparities in breast cancer care.

Dr. Torres' impact extends nationally, serving on the NCI Symptom Management and Health-Related Quality of Life Steering Committee and co-chairing the NRG Oncology Health Disparities Committee's Research Implementation Special Interest Group. She has also championed faculty development as Vice-Chair of Academic Operations in Radiation Oncology, founding the Faculty RISE Mentorship Program.

Her exceptional leadership and dedication to improving patient outcomes have earned her numerous accolades, including the Atlanta Business Chronicle Healthcare Heroes Rising Star Award and Winship Cancer Institute's Above and Beyond Award.



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER

## LEADERSHIP AND PROGRAM SUPPORT



**Neal Dickert, MD, PhD**  
Co-Director



**Stephen Patrick, MD,  
MPH, MS, FAAP**  
Co-Director



**Jessica Harding, PhD**  
Associate Director



**Mylin Torres, MD**  
Associate Director



**Megan Urbanski, PhD, MSW**  
Mixed Methods Program Lead  
Assistant Professor



**Tracy Obertone, PhD**  
HSRC Associate Director  
of Programs



**Melisa Meza**  
Sr. Program Coordinator



**Cheng Cheng Hu, MPH, MMed**  
Biostatistician

*Analytic Team*



**Emma Blythe, MPH**  
Assistant Epidemiologist

*Student Researchers*



**Alyssa Hugo**  
Research Assistant



**Meg Winata**  
Research Assistant



**Lauriane Pinto**  
Research Assistant



# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER

## ACTIVITIES FY 2025

### 2025 HSRC CALENDAR



#### JAN

- HSRC Joint Seminar Series featuring Dr. Ilana Graetz, PhD

#### FEB

- HSRC Joint Seminar Series featuring Dr. Kevin Wiley Jr., PhD
- HSR Community Round Table
- Research Work in Progress (WIP) featuring Rhonda Wright, PhD, MHSA, RN



#### MAR

- HSRC Joint Seminar Series featuring Nilay Shah, PhD
- EPIC Cosmos Datathon
- Research in Progress (WIP) featuring Kimberly Dickinson, MD, MPH & Lucy D. Hart, MD



#### APR

- HSRC Joint Seminar Series featuring Ashley Leech, PhD
- Seminar featuring Dr. Davene Wright, PhD
- HSR Community Roundtable
- Research Work in Progress (WIP) featuring Divya Verma, MD



#### MAY

- Health Services Research Day, Key Note: Jennifer (Jen) DeVoe, MD, DPhil
- Research Work in Progress (WIP) featuring Tessa Hulburt, PhD



**SUBSCRIBE TO OUR LISTSERV TO  
STAY TUNED FOR MORE EVENTS!**

You can subscribe to the listserv by sending an e-mail with a blank subject line and the following single line in the body (i.e., no signatures) from the account to which you wish to receive messages:

To: [listserv@listserv.cc.emory.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.cc.emory.edu)  
Subject: (leave blank)  
Body: subscribe HSRC-NEWS



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## EPIC COSMOS DATATHON

### 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.

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](mailto:gabriel.najarro@emory.edu))



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH DAY

### 11th Annual Health Services Research Day

Join us for this symposium and networking opportunity where researchers across Georgia will learn about ongoing quality, effectiveness, and value-based research activities

**Tuesday, May 6, 2025 | 8:00 am – 3:00 pm**  
**Claudia Nance Rollins (CNR) Building, Rollins Auditorium**

Health services research examines access to health care, how it is organized and delivered, costs, and outcomes

#### Keynote Speaker

Building Novel Laboratories for  
Health Services Research



**Jennifer (Jen) DeVoe, MD, DPhil**  
Chair, Department of Family Medicine,  
Oregon Health &  
Science University (OHSU)  
Director, OHSU Center for  
Primary Care Research and Innovation

#### Featured Speakers



**Amaka Eneanya, MD, MPH**  
Chief Transformation Officer,  
Emory Healthcare  
Associate Professor of Medicine,  
Emory University School of  
Medicine



**Wilbur A. Lam, MD, PhD**  
Professor, Department of Pediatrics  
Chief Innovation Officer, Pediatric  
Technology Center  
Associate Dean of Innovation,  
Emory University School of Medicine  
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta  
Emory University & Georgia Tech

**Don't miss the Career  
Development in Health  
Services Research  
Panel  
@ 2:00PM**

**REGISTER NOW!**

*Continuing Medical Education  
(CME) Credits offered!*

Learn more at <http://georgiactsa.org/research/cmdts/hsr.html>  
Co-sponsored by Georgia CTSA and Emory Health Services Research Center



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A low-angle, upward-looking perspective of several tall, modern skyscrapers with glass and steel facades. The buildings converge towards the top of the frame, creating a sense of height and scale. The sky is a pale, overcast grey. The overall color palette is muted, with blues, greys, and browns, except for the bright yellow text.

# **HSR FUNDING LANDSCAPE**

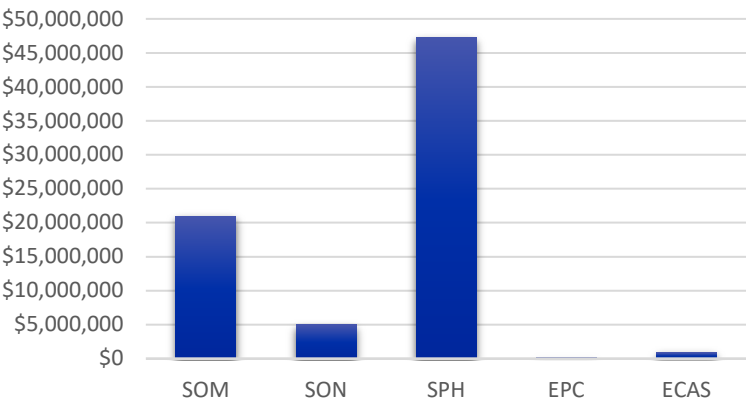
# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH FUNDING LANDSCAPE AT EMORY

Emory University and the Woodruff Health Sciences Center (WHSC) have invested significantly in advancing healthcare access, outcomes, and delivery through Health Services Research (HSR), and a large number of funded projects contain some aspects or elements of HSR.

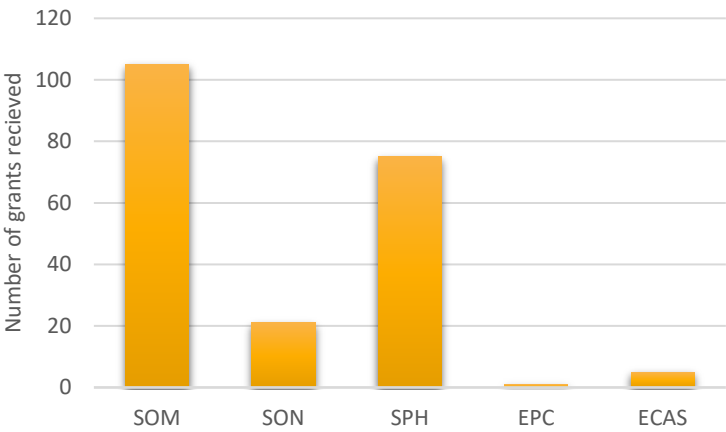
In order to track the impact of the Health Services Research Center and the HSR footprint across Emory University and the Woodruff Health Sciences Center, we adopted a new approach this year. We have focused on identifying external awards that have a significant HSR focus or component. In FY 23, these awards accounted for nearly \$75 million, which is over 5% of all university grants and nearly 7% of total grant funding. Investigators from the Rollins School of Public Health (SPH), School of Medicine (SOM), and School of Nursing (SON) received the largest share of HSR funding, reflecting Emory’s commitment to this critical field.

## HSR-focused External Awards Across Emory University, FY23 External

Dollar Value of HSR Awards by School, FY23



Number of HSR Awards by School, FY23





# **HIGH IMPACT HSR AT EMORY**



# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER

## HIGH IMPACT HSR

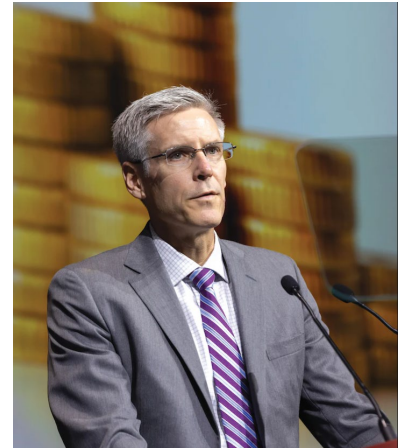
Throughout 2024, the **Health Services Research Center** supported faculty investigators by fostering collaborative partnerships and providing innovative resources. Our dedicated efforts have not only optimized patient outcomes and healthcare systems but have also propelled the field of Health Services Research (HSR) into new frontiers of impact.

**Grant:** TAILORED-HF Implementation Study

**Recipient:** Neal Dickert, MD, PhD

Funded by Merck, the TAILORED-HF study, led by Dr. Neal Dickert, will assess the impact of system-level implementation of an evidence-based patient activation tool in cardiology clinics. The project involves both patient-facing and clinician facing decision support and will be conducted using a pragmatic, cluster-randomized design. The goal is to improve optimization of guideline-directed medical therapy (GDMT) for patients with heart failure with reduced ejection fraction (HFrEF).

This ongoing study brings together a multidisciplinary team, including Jessica Harding, PhD, Cheng Cheng Hu, MPH, MMed, Michael Burke, MD, Gabriel Najarro, PA, MPH, and members of the Emory Digital team.



**Neal Dickert Jr., MD, PhD**  
Co-Director, Emory Health Services Research Center  
Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Cardiology

**Grant:** Georgia Clinical and Translational Science Alliance (CTSA) KL2

**Recipient:** Megan Urbanski, PhD, MSW

Dr. Megan Urbanski was awarded funding in August 2024 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-funded study applies systems science methodology and community-engaged research to develop a multilevel, hospital-based systems-change intervention. The project focuses on improving care transitions for patients with unexpected end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) by identifying patient and provider needs and addressing systems-level factors that impact these transitions. This research aims to enhance care delivery and inform future interventions for patients navigating an unexpected ESKD diagnosis.



**Megan Urbanski, PhD, MSW**  
Assistant Professor  
School of Medicine,  
Department of Surgery



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## HIGH IMPACT HSR

**Grant:** American Society of Transplantation (AST) Research Network

**Recipient:** Jessica Harding, PhD

Dr. Jessica Harding was awarded funding from the American Society of Transplantation (AST) Research Network to examine sex disparities in kidney transplant referrals. Her study explores whether the sex of dialysis facility physicians influences disparities in referral rates, combining quantitative analysis and qualitative narratives to identify provider-based factors, including potential biases, that contribute to these inequities. This research aims to uncover systemic barriers in the transplant referral process and inform strategies to promote greater equity in access to kidney transplantation.



**Jessica Harding, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Department of Surgery &  
Department of Medicine

**Grant:** American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Research Professorship

**Recipient:** Mylin Torres, MD

Dr. Torres was awarded funding from the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Research Professorship for her project, "*Genetic Determinants of Treatment-Related Comorbidities, Poor Treatment Adherence, and Worse Survival Among Black Patients with Early-Stage Breast Cancer.*"

She leads a team of researchers investigating how breast cancer treatment exacerbates pre-existing conditions and leads to new comorbidities, contributing to poor adherence and racial disparities in outcomes. By integrating genetic analysis with patient data, this research seeks to identify key factors driving these disparities and inform targeted strategies to improve treatment adherence for patients with early-stage breast cancer.



**Mylin A. Torres, MD**

Associate Director,  
Emory HSR Center  
Co-Leader, Cancer Prevention  
Control Research Program,  
Winship Cancer Institute  
Director, Health Services,  
Outcomes, and Policy Research  
Division  
Professor, Dept. of Radiation  
Oncology



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## HIGH IMPACT HSR

### Rollins-Gallup Public Health Priorities Survey

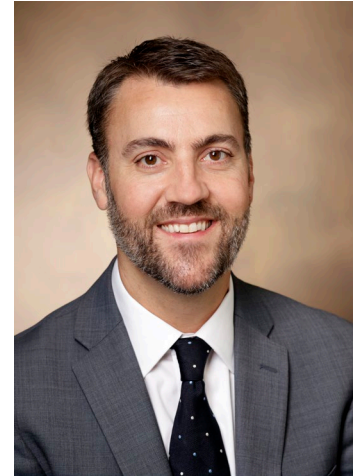
In February 2025, Emory's Rollins School of Public Health, in collaboration with Gallup, hosted a highly anticipated event unveiling key findings from a nationwide survey on health and well-being in the U.S. The survey, conducted by Gallup with support from Emory's Center for Public Health Data Systems, provided critical insights into racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare access, chronic disease prevalence, and overall well-being.

Stephen W. Patrick, MD, MPH, Co-Director of the HSR Center and Chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management, played a central role in the event, emphasizing the importance of data-driven research in shaping policies to address health inequities. His leadership continues to strengthen the HSR Center's commitment to producing high-impact research that informs policy and drives meaningful change.

During the event, public health leaders, policymakers, and researchers gathered to discuss the survey's implications and explore strategies for improving health equity. The findings underscored significant disparities in health outcomes and reinforced the need for community-driven solutions to close these gaps.

This event exemplifies the HSR Center's dedication to advancing health services research that informs policy, practice, and public health interventions. Through large-scale data analysis and cross-sector collaborations, the Center continues to play a pivotal role in shaping evidence-based approaches to health equity.

Video of event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Lm6IVc4MLE>  
Survey: <https://sph.emory.edu/news/public-health-priorities-survey/index.html>



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

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



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS



**Neal Dickert Jr., MD, PhD**

Co-Director, Emory Health  
Services Research Center  
Associate Professor of Medicine,  
Division of Cardiology

### ***Integrating Out-of-Pocket Costs Into Shared Decision-Making for Heart Failure With Reduced Ejection Fraction: A Stepped-Wedge Trial (POCKET-COST-HF)***

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*. 2025 Jan;18(1):e011273. Epub 2024 Dec 3. PMID: 39624892.



**Mylin A. Torres, MD**

Associate Director, Emory HSR Center  
Co-Leader, Cancer Prevention  
Control Research Program, Winship  
Cancer Institute  
Director, Health Services, Outcomes,  
and Policy Research Division  
Professor, Dept. of Radiation  
Oncology

### ***Analysis of Travel Burden and Travel Support Among Patients Treated at a Comprehensive Cancer Center in the Southeastern United States***

Bai J, Barandouzi ZA, Yeager KA, Graetz I, Gong C, Norman M, Hankins J, Paul S, Torres MA, Bruner DW. Analysis of travel burden and travel support among patients treated at a comprehensive cancer center in the Southeastern United States. *Support Care Cancer*. 2024 Jun 22;32(7):451. doi: 10.1007/s00520-024-08656-3. PMID: 38907006.



**Ilana Graetz, PhD**

Associate Professor of Health  
Policy and Management at the  
Rollins School of Public Health,  
Emory University

### ***Primary Care Telemedicine and Care Continuity: Implications for Timeliness and Short-term Follow-up Healthcare***

Graetz I, Huang J, Muelly E, Gopalan A, Reed ME. Primary Care Visits Are Timelier When Patients Choose Telemedicine: A Cross-Sectional Observational Study. *Telemed J E Health*. 2022;28(9):1374-1378. <https://doi.org/10.1089/tmj.2021.0528>.



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS



**Zanthia Wiley, MD, FHM, FIDSA**

Associate Professor of Medicine  
Emory Division of Infectious Diseases  
Associate Vice Chair, RYSE (DEI)  
Initiatives, Department of Medicine  
Emory University School of Medicine

***Advancing Health Equity Through Action in Antimicrobial Stewardship and Healthcare Epidemiology***

Marcelin JR, Hicks LA, Evans CD, Wiley Z, Kalu IC, Abdul-Mutakabbir JC. Advancing health equity through action in antimicrobial stewardship and healthcare epidemiology. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol.* 2024 Apr;45(4):412-419. doi: 10.1017/ice.2024.7. Epub 2024 Feb 14. PMID: 38351853; PMCID: PMC11318565.



**Dio Kavalieratos, PhD**

Director, Research and Quality  
Associate Professor Division of  
Palliative Medicine Department of  
Family and Preventive Medicine

***The Validity of Patient-Reported Outcome Measures of Quality of Life in Palliative Care: A Systematic Review***

Li Y, Hung V, Ho K, Kavalieratos D, Warda N, Zimmermann C, Quinn KL. The Validity of Patient-Reported Outcome Measures of Quality of Life in Palliative Care: A Systematic Review. *J Palliat Med.* 2024 Apr;27(4):545-562. doi: 10.1089/jpm.2023.0294. Epub 2023 Nov 15. PMID: 37971747.



**Randi N. Smith, MD, MPH**

Vice Chair, Diversity, Equity &  
Inclusion, Department of Surgery  
Assistant Professor of Surgery  
Assistant Professor of Public Health,  
Emory University  
Trauma Surgeon, Grady Memorial  
Hospital

***Addressing Health Disparities in Violence***

Castater, C., Jaeger, B.W., Hampton-Anderson, J. et al. Addressing Health Disparities in Violence. *Curr Trauma Rep* 10, 24–29 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40719-024-00267-x>



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

## HSRC SUPPORTED RESEARCH

The Health Services Research Center (HSRC) advances research that improves healthcare access, delivery, and outcomes. Through funding, methodological support, and collaboration, we help investigators tackle key challenges in health systems and policy. This section highlights projects supported by HSRC, showcasing our impact on Health Services Research at Emory and beyond.

### American Thoracic Society (ATS) Vaccine Initiative

**Project Team:** Emma Blythe, MPH; Divya Verma, MD; Sarah Montembeau; Naqqash Punjwani, MBA; Megan Urbanski, PhD, MSW; Annette Esper, MD, MSc; Carmen Polito, MD, MSc; Abiodun Kukoyi, MD

In 2024, the Health Services Research Center, in collaboration with the Grady Pulmonary Clinic (GPC), continued its contributions to an American Thoracic Society (ATS)-funded study aimed at improving vaccine uptake. This project explores patient perspectives on vaccines, clinic workflows, and strategies to enhance education and distribution of influenza and COVID-19 vaccines. Through patient interviews and focus groups with GPC fellows and staff, the study is identifying key barriers to vaccination and developing interventions to improve vaccine education and streamline clinic workflows.

Emma Blythe, MPH, and Dr. Megan Urbanski, PhD, MSW, have been instrumental in study design, qualitative methods mentorship, and data collection and analysis, ensuring the continued success of this impactful research.

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

**Project Team:** (PI) Joshua Chan, MD, (Co-I) Neal Dickert, MD, PhD

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.



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

## HSRC SUPPORTED RESEARCH

### Department of Surgery Pilot Grant

**Project Team:** Megan Urbanski, PhD, MSW

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

This project seeks to enhance understanding of decision-making processes in out-of-sequence organ allocation and identify areas of consistency and variation among organ procurement organization staff and transplant surgeons across the U.S. Using an exploratory sequential mixed methods approach, the study aligns with the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network's ethical principles to promote transparency and equity in organ allocation decisions, ultimately advancing health equity in transplantation.

### Multidisciplinary Intracranial Atherosclerosis Disease Clinic in Safety Net Hospital

**Funder:** Emory Medical Care Foundation- SEA

**Project Team:** (PI) Digvijaya D. Navalkale, MD, (Co-I) Stacie Schmidt, Emma Blythe, MPH, Megan Urbanski, PhD, MSW, Erica Robertson, Namita Patel, Drayton Davis, Marny Sadler

This project aims to mitigate health disparity by establishing a multidisciplinary clinic for intensive medical management of risk factors for intracranial atherosclerosis disease-related strokes at Grady Memorial Hospital that serves a high proportion of racial and ethnic minorities who are at risk of recurrent strokes. This clinic will utilize a patient-centered approach to address risk factor control and unmet social needs and promote lifestyle changes. We will test this clinic's feasibility, implementation, and sustainability and determine the magnitude of risk factor control with this approach.



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# **SHAPING THE FUTURE OF HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH**

# T32 POST-DOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAM

## FY 2024-2025

We are now in our second year of our AHRQ-funded T32 post-doctoral training award to support the next generation of health services scholars. The program launched in July of 2023 and has as its primary goal to provide comprehensive training in health services research to individuals from a broad range of professional backgrounds. Our program is highly multidisciplinary, and fellows are exposed to multiple research areas and methodologic approaches. Through joint seminars and work in progress sessions as well, they are immersed in the broad Emory health services research community.

### **Comprehensive Training:**

Our training encompasses multidisciplinary mentoring, coursework, seminars, hands-on research, grant writing, and career development. Postdoctoral fellows, whether MDs or PhDs, can pursue advanced degrees and tailor their training path with additional focused coursework.

### **Collaborative Environment:**

Our program thrives on a collaborative and supportive environment, with expertise from mentors across disciplines. We focus on multidisciplinary training, collaborative research, diversity, presentation skills, and project management.

### **Ultimate Goal:**

Our ultimate goal is to equip individuals for leadership roles in health services research, addressing disparities and promoting equity. Through mentorship and diverse training experiences, we aim to contribute to improved healthcare outcomes.

Our post-doctoral training program reflects our dedication to excellence, diversity, and impactful research in health services.

We are accepting applications on a rolling basis. Submit an [application](#) today!



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# T32 POST-DOCTORAL TRAINING PROGRAM

## CURRENT FELLOWS

### MEET OUR T32 POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS



**Rhonda Smith Wright, PhD, MHSA, RN**  
Post-Doctoral Fellow

Rhonda Smith Wright, PhD, MHSA, RN, under the mentorship of Dr. Dio Kavalieratos, is advancing research on nurse-led palliative care interventions for adults with sickle cell disease. Her work includes a retrospective chart review and a systematic literature review to assess the impact of palliative care on patient outcomes. She has secured funding, completed nearly all data extraction for the literature review, and is preparing for data analysis. Dr. Smith Wright has presented her research at national conferences, contributed to multiple publications, and participated in professional development workshops. She has also engaged in mentoring and collaboration to support emerging scholars in palliative care research. Her research aims to develop patient-centered interventions that address the unmet needs of individuals with sickle cell disease.



**Divya Verma, MD**  
Post-Doctoral Fellow

Divya Verma, MD, under the mentorship of Dr. Annette Esper, has made significant progress in her vaccine uptake study at the Grady Pulmonary Clinic, completing patient interviews and beginning qualitative analysis. Her research includes focus groups with clinic staff and fellows (accepted as an abstract at the American Thoracic Society meeting), a retrospective study on vaccine decision-making among patients with high-risk pulmonary disease, and projects on transitions of care and pulmonary arterial hypertension in pregnancy. She attended the American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST) 2024 conference as a fellow-in-training and will present two abstracts at the American Thoracic Society 2025 meeting. Additionally, she has contributed to mentoring and teaching through lectures for medical students and residents.



**Lucy D. Hart, MD**  
Post-Doctoral Fellow

Lucy Hart, MD, under the mentorship of Dr. Randi Smith, has made notable advancements in her research on firearm injury prevention and cost-effectiveness. Her work evaluates the implementation and outcomes of a hospital-based violence intervention program (HVIP) in Atlanta, Georgia, defining firearm injury trends and associated social determinants of health. She has contributed to multiple trauma outcomes studies, led qualitative research on HVIP facilitators and barriers, and is finalizing cost analyses. Dr. Hart has presented at national and international conferences, collaborated on grant-writing, and engaged in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives with the American College of Surgeons. She aims to apply her research experience to future trauma surgery and violence prevention efforts in academic settings.



**Tessa Hulburt, PhD**  
Post-Doctoral Fellow

Tessa Hulburt, PhD, under the mentorship of Dr. Neal Dickert, is advancing research on pain management interventions for adolescents with hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (hEDS) and Hypermobility Spectrum Disorder (HSD). Her work builds on the FIT Teens program, a cognitive-behavioral therapy and neuromuscular training intervention for adolescent fibromyalgia, to assess its applicability for hypermobile patients. She has completed biomechanics studies, finalized an interview study protocol, and is currently enrolling participants. Dr. Hulburt has published three manuscripts, presented at national conferences, and received the Young Investigator Award. She remains committed to developing accessible, patient-centered pain interventions that integrate biomechanics, pain psychology, and implementation science.



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# TRAINING WITH INNOVATION

## HEALTHCARE INNOVATION PROGRAM

The HSR Center is committed to training the next generation of health care leaders by providing resources to support education inside and outside of the classroom. This year, the HSR Center merged with the Emory-Georgia Tech Healthcare Innovation Program, which has always been a key partner (along with the Georgia Clinical and Translational Science Alliance) in this arena, supporting new and upcoming investigators with access to study design and analytical support, didactic training and seed funding to pilot new and innovative research. This merger brings together important strengths of each program "under one roof." Below are some highlighted activities from these partnerships:



In collaboration with HIP, Institute for Healthcare Improvement Emory Open School (IHI) hosted its third-annual Emory x Georgia Tech IHI Case Competition last March. Established in 2022, the competition is a student-led initiative aimed at engaging students in quality improvement and healthcare delivery innovation. Each year, it gives students the opportunity to design innovative solutions to real-world healthcare issues.



The 2024 IHI Case Competition challenged students to develop a strategic approach outlining how a non-traditional healthcare delivery model could address a major health issue disproportionately affecting the Southeast U.S., such as chronic disease burden, HIV, maternal care, climate change, or cancer. There were over 50 teams and more than 200 individuals who registered for the competition. Undergraduate and graduate students from universities across Georgia, Duke, Johns Hopkins, and Vanderbilt were eligible to participate. We thank all of our participants for their hard work and innovative proposals. The top three winning teams pitched their proposals to an in-person panel of faculty judges and were awarded prizes totaling \$9k.



*"The 2024 IHI Case Competition was a tremendous success. It was our third year hosting the event, but the first time expanding the competition beyond Georgia. Students from institutions across the Southeast were eligible to participate and we had a record-breaking 240 students from 10 universities register!"*

### **Lauriane Pinto**

M.D. Candidate, Emory  
University School of Medicine  
President, IHI  
Joined HIP since 2022

- Lauriane Pinto, HIP GA



# TRAINING WITH INNOVATION

## HEALTHCARE INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM XLI



The 41st Healthcare Innovation Symposium, “The Future of AI Tools in Healthcare: Assuring Safety and Efficacy,” brought together experts to discuss the evolving role of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare. Hosted by the Emory-Georgia Tech Healthcare Innovation Program in partnership with the Georgia Clinical & Translational Science Alliance (Georgia CTSA), the event took place on April 1, 2024, at Emory University's WHSCAB Auditorium.

Over 150 people registered for the symposium, which featured a keynote address by Dr. Robert Califf, Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). His presentation highlighted the critical need for safety, efficacy, and regulatory oversight in the development and implementation of AI-driven healthcare tools.

A panel discussion followed, featuring distinguished experts:

- Dr. Anant Madabhushi, Director of the Emory Empathetic AI for Health Institute
- Nancye Feistritz, Vice President of Emory Healthcare Center for Care Delivery and Innovation
- Dr. Alistair Erskine, Chief Information and Digital Officer at Emory Healthcare
- Dr. Jon Duke, Director of the Center for Health Analytics and Informatics at Georgia Tech Research Institute

The event provided valuable insights into the future of AI in healthcare, emphasizing innovation, ethical considerations, and patient-centered applications. A live webcast allowed broader participation, ensuring that the discussion reached beyond the in-person attendees.



**Meg Winata**

M.D. Candidate, Emory  
University School of Medicine  
Co-President, IHI  
Joined HIP since 2024

*“Our team had the incredible opportunity to engage with Dr. Califf, gaining insights into his experience as a leading voice in healthcare regulation. We had a stimulating discussion on current health challenges and the FDA’s role in supporting innovation. It was an unforgettable experience to meet and learn from such an esteemed leader.”*

- Meg Winata, HIP GA

# **BUILDING CAPACITY FOR HSR**



# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

## RESEARCH CAPACITY & COLLABORATIONS

Health services research is a highly collaborative field and much of success and preeminence depends on having a broad network of collaborations and administrative support. In 2023, the Health Services Research Center continued its dedication to fostering partnerships within and beyond Emory University, essential for success in this domain. Prioritizing operational efficiency and robust research infrastructure, the center aimed to empower School of Medicine researchers in undertaking impactful projects.



## HIGHLIGHTED COLLABORATIONS



### **National Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) Network OneFlorida+**

The HSR Center (site Principal Investigators: Neal Dickert and Department of Biomedical Informatics Professor Gari Clifford) leads Emory's participation in the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) OneFlorida+ Clinical Research Consortium, PCORnet, an integrated partnership of clinical research networks and research ecosystem to offer real-world data to conduct health services research. This new Network participation has offered research investigators across Emory opportunities to partner with OneFlorida+ on pragmatic research trials and/or to conduct research with the large network of electronic health record data. Multiple collaborative projects have been funded with Emory collaborators, including OneFlorida's RECOVER electronic medical records studies (PI: Dr. Rishikesan Kamaleswaran, Biomedical Informatics), work addressing diabetes risk among racial and ethnic minorities after COVID-19 (PI: Dr. Rosette Chakkalakel, Family & Preventive Medicine), and the PREVENTABLE trial which aims to prevent dementia in older adults (PI: Dr. Ambar Kulshreshtha, Family & Preventive Medicine).



### **EPIC Cosmos**

Epic Cosmos is Epic Systems' expansive research platform that aggregates de-identified patient data from multiple health systems. It provides a robust, secure environment for health services research by streamlining access to real-world clinical data. This platform is designed to help researchers analyze trends in patient outcomes, resource utilization, and care quality across large populations, enabling faster, evidence-based insights that support better decision-making and improved healthcare delivery. Emory will host its inaugural Cosmos Datathon 3/21/25 where teams will assemble with onsite experts to explore the de-identified dataset that currently contains 295 million unique patients and 15 billion encounters from 1600 hospitals.



### **GA All Payer Claims Database**

The Georgia All-Payer Claims Database (APCD) is a repository of healthcare, pharmacy, and dental claims data from both private and public payer sources across the state. It includes eligibility and other publicly available data to create a comprehensive, longitudinal multi-payer dataset in order to provide the greatest opportunities for improving the healthcare delivery system. The GA APCD is a collaborative effort between the Georgia Office of Health Strategy and Coordination (OHSC) and the Georgia Tech Research Institute – Center for Health Analytics and Informatics (GTRI-CHAI). Members of the Emory community have contributed to this effort as advisors, and Dr. Dickert is part of the data governance committee, along with Dr. Turbow and Ms. Rousselle.



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH **INCREASING** **RESEARCH CAPACITY & COLLABORATIONS**



## HIGHLIGHTED COLLABORATIONS



### **Emory – Kaiser Permanente of Georgia Collaborations**

Kaiser Permanente Georgia and Emory HSRC continue to collaborate across multiple areas of research. This includes work to identify and quantify the relative contributions of clinical, geographic, and social determinants of health factors contributing to COVID infections and outcomes. Dr. Jessica Harding, along with Dr. Shivani Patel from the Georgia Center for Diabetes Translation Research Center (GCDTR), and Kaiser Permanente (Georgia, Hawaii, and Pacific Northwest) have also received NIH funding to examine relationships between COVID-19 and new-onset diabetes.



### **Department of Justice, DeKalb County, Georgia State, and Grady Hospital**

Dr. Randi Smith (Surgery) has active funding from the Department of Justice to collaborate with DeKalb County, Grady Hospital, and Georgia State University to implement a Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative in DeKalb County. The focus of this project is to develop DeKalb County's Violence Intervention Plan working with external and internal organizations to conduct research, develop an implementation model, and ultimately employ programs and services that reduce violent crime and improve communities that have high violent crime. This project incorporates a unique working group that is a collaboration of universities, school districts, nonprofits, court systems, public safety, and human services designed to find a solution to save lives.



### **Better Center**

The Behavioral Economics to Transform Trial Enrollment Representativeness (BETTER) Center is part of the American Heart Association's Strategically-Focused Research Network to advance the science of diversity in cardiovascular clinical trials. Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), Emory University, Grady Health System, and MedStar Washington Hospital Center are collaborating to use behavioral health science to improve clinical trial participation among diverse groups. BETTER brings together experts in behavioral economics, health services research, research ethics, and clinical trials to identify methods that make trial enrollment and retention easier for everyone. The overall PI is Scott Halpern, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.E. at the Perelman School of Medicine at Penn. Emory faculty Neal Dickert, M.D., Ph.D., and Modele Ogunniyi, M.D., M.P.H. serve as project PIs.



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER **DATABASES**

The Health Services Research Center helps to provide linkages to **more than 55** existing local, regional, and national databases through HSRC faculty. The HSRC keeps a record of the data available, how to access it, and if there is a cost or contract necessary for access.









# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER

## MEMBERSHIP MODEL & RESPONSIBILITIES

The HSR Center has developed a new membership model that we will implement in 2025. One of the most important elements of this new model is that it will be open to all members of the Emory University community who are engaged in HSR. This will represent a significant expansion in membership opportunities for faculty, staff and trainees. Membership in the HSR Center is currently free and provides numerous benefits.

**Membership Benefits:** Members of the Health Services Research Center (HSRC) will receive a range of support designed to enhance their research efforts and facilitate successful project outcomes, including:

- **Pre-Award Support:** Assistance and guidance in preparing proposals and securing funding for research projects. This includes access to mock study section reviews as well as administrative support.
- **IRB Support:** Guidance and resources for navigating the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, ensuring compliance and ethical standards in research.
- **Data Access:**
  - **Internal Data:** We will work to facilitate access to internal data that are relevant for health services research.
  - **External Data:** We provide support in obtaining access to external datasets to broaden research opportunities.
- **Analytic Support:** Expertise in data analysis and interpretation to enhance research findings.
- **Project Support:** Assistance throughout the research project lifecycle, from planning to execution.

**Membership Expectations:** Most importantly, members are expected to participate in the life of the HSR Center and the Emory HSR community. Specific expectations include the following:

- **Mock Study Section:** Members are expected to participate in mock study sections, providing and receiving constructive feedback to enhance research proposals and grant applications.
- **Pilot Grant Review:** Members are expected to participate in review of pilot grant proposals.
- **Seminars:** Members are expected to attend and present their work at seminars, fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration within the HSR community.
- **Mentorship:** Members will mentor students and trainees, supporting the development of the next generation of health services researchers and promoting a culture of learning and professional growth.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please visit our website to apply for membership or email [HSRC@emory.edu](mailto:HSRC@emory.edu) for more info. [Apply here](#)



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CENTER

## SUPPORT SERVICES

In 2024, the HSR Center continued to enhance research quality by optimizing support services for Emory investigators. With a strong emphasis on both biostatistical and qualitative methodologies, our core remains an essential resource for advancing health services research. As a hub for study planning, management, and analysis, we provide expert guidance across diverse research designs—including clinical trials, secondary data analysis, and qualitative studies. Our streamlined support process ensures that Emory investigators receive tailored, high-impact assistance at every stage of their research, ultimately strengthening the reach and influence of health services studies at our institution.

### HSR Support Services Include:

- Protocol development and regulatory considerations
- Qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and implementation science study design
- Development of qualitative and quantitative analytic plans
- Survey design
- Statistical analysis
- Power Analysis/Sample Size calculations
- Assist with the writing of statistical components of manuscripts
- Identification of data sources ([some possible data sources found here](#))
- Connect you with other investigators across Emory
- Assist with manuscript writing of completed projects

### Request Process

#### What are the review criteria?

The HSR Support services are available for use by any members and affiliates of the HSR center. The HSR Request Committee assesses each request using the following criteria:

- The extent to which the project represents HSR
- Effort estimated for each project
- Project impact/trajectory; and
- Ability and commitment to securing additional funding as needed to complete the project
- Requestors should expect to receive an initial communication about their request within two business days

#### What is the cost?

- We are pleased to be able to offer 10 hours at no charge for those who do not have grant funding, however, the requestor is responsible for the cost of time exceeding the initial 10 hours. There is a maximum of 3 projects per investigator per year (10 hours per project.)

For more info email: [Jessica.harding@emory.edu](mailto:Jessica.harding@emory.edu)

Emory Health Services Research Center



### EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

At the Health Services Research Center, we are excited to introduce our enhanced (HSRC) Support Services! Recognizing the pivotal role of biostatistical and qualitative methods in research, our expert team is here to elevate your projects from inception to completion. Whether you're in the planning stages or post-award analysis, our support services are tailored to meet your needs.

#### HSRC SUPPORT SERVICES INCLUDE:

- ✓ Protocol development & regulatory considerations
- ✓ Qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, & implementation science study design
- ✓ Development of qualitative & biostatistical analytic plans
- ✓ Survey Design
- ✓ Assist with manuscript writing of completed projects

- ✓ Power Analysis/Sample Size Calculations
- ✓ Assist with the writing of statistical components of manuscripts
- ✓ Identification of data sources ([some possible data sources found here](#))
- ✓ Connect you with other investigators across Emory
- ✓ Statistical Design

#### LET US ELEVATE YOUR RESEARCH!

Connect with us at the Health Services Research Center and experience the difference our (HSRC) Support Services can make. Empower your research journey today!

Check out our website for more info!

[HSRC SUPPORT SERVICES](#)



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES

The HSR Center provides critical support in biostatistics, epidemiology, and research methods, assisting faculty, trainees, and staff in strengthening their research projects. Our team offers statistical analyses, study design guidance, and consultations on qualitative and quantitative methods to advance health services research and health equity.

In 2024, our analytics team supported approximately 35 students and conducted over 60 consultation appointments, offering expert guidance on epidemiology, study design, research methods, and best practices. Their efforts have been instrumental in enhancing research quality, ensuring that investigators have the expertise needed to drive rigorous and impactful health services research.

Additionally, the HSR Center provides grant application support, including assistance from an experienced Pre-Award administrator and access to boilerplate documents (e.g., facilities/resources pages, letters of support). For assistance, please contact Tracy Obertone ([tracy.obertone@emory.edu](mailto:tracy.obertone@emory.edu)).

We are grateful for their dedication and the expertise they bring to the Emory research community, reinforcing the HSR Center's commitment to fostering high-quality, ethical, and innovative research that advances public health and health equity.



**Cheng Cheng (CC) Hu, MPH,  
MMed**  
Biostatistician



**Emma Blythe, MPH**  
Assistant Epidemiologist



**Tracy Obertone, PhD**  
Associate Director of Programs



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# **CORE HSR ACTIVITIES**



# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CORE ACTIVITIES

To meet our strategic goals, the HSR Center supports several activities to help faculty, trainees, and students in health services research to conduct and disseminate impactful research, prepare the next generation of health services researchers through training and education, and to provide the resources and infrastructure critical to drive HSR. These include but are not limited to research seminars, networking events, mock study sections, and training opportunities to support the next generation of health services researchers.

## HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH DAY

The 10th Annual Health Services Research (HSR) Day, hosted by Georgia CTSA and the Emory Health Services Research Center, brought together over 140 researchers at Emory's Rollins School of Public Health. This symposium provided a valuable networking opportunity, allowing researchers from across Georgia to showcase cutting-edge health services research through featured talks, oral abstract presentations, and poster sessions.

The event featured keynote speaker Stacie B. Dusetzina, PhD, from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, who delivered an insightful presentation titled "Medication Affordability and Progress on Lowering Drug Prices in the United States." Dr. Dusetzina's talk highlighted the critical challenges in drug pricing and how research in health services can drive meaningful policy changes.

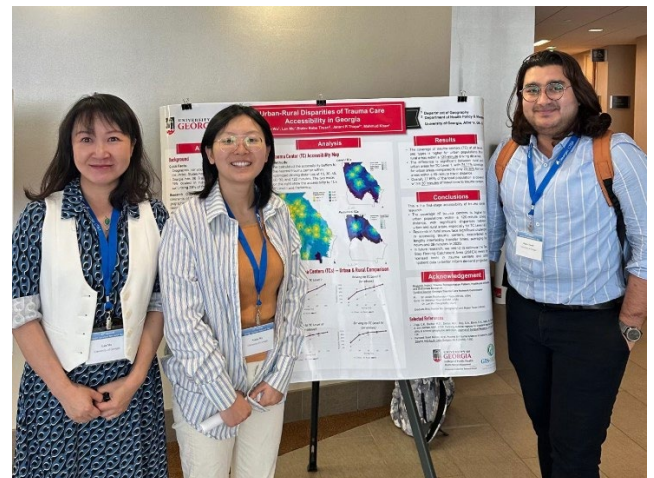
Additionally, Sandra L. Wong, MD, MS, Dean of Emory School of Medicine and Chief Academic Officer of Emory Healthcare, presented a compelling lecture on "Geography, Access, and Health Equity."

Reflecting on the event, HSR Day Chair Zanthia Wiley, MD, noted:

*"What I enjoyed most about our 10th Annual Health Services Research Day was the collaboration across institutions—including Emory, Morehouse, UGA, and Georgia Tech—as well as the variety of excellent presenters, from undergraduate students to faculty. HSR Day 2024 represented diversity at its best."*

A special thank you to our planning committee, keynote speaker, featured speakers, staff volunteers, abstract reviewers, and poster judges who made this event possible.

Learn more about [Health Services Research Day](#) and stay connected for future events!



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# HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CORE ACTIVITIES

## HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH SEMINARS

The HSR Center hosts monthly health services research seminars, featuring both internal and external experts. These seminars provide faculty, trainees, and staff with opportunities to explore new and emerging topics in the field, engage with leading researchers, and foster collaborations across the Emory community. Each session offers a platform to expand professional networks and gain insights from cutting-edge research that advances knowledge and innovation in health services.

 **Every 2nd Tuesday of the Month**


 **12:00 – 1:00 PM**

 **Grace Crum Rollins Building, 7th Floor, Room 721**

## RESEARCH WORK IN PROGRESS (WIP) SEMINARS

Research Work in Progress (WIP) meetings provide a supportive forum for students and faculty to present their ongoing research and receive valuable feedback. These sessions help enhance research quality, strengthen grant applications and thesis defenses, and prepare trainees for peer review and oral presentations. Open to all—faculty, postdocs, and students—WIP meetings foster collaboration and continuous improvement in health services research.

 **Every 4th Tuesday of the Month**

 **12:00 – 1:00 PM**

 **Grace Crum Rollins Building, 7th Floor, Room 721**

## Stay Connected!

Email Melisa Meza at ([melisa.meza@emory.edu](mailto:melisa.meza@emory.edu)) or subscribe to our listserv to keep up with seminars and events. See pg. 37 for subscription details.



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