

# IMPACT REPORT



**RUTGERS**

Global Health Institute

ON THE COVER: *The Reflective Black Body* is a mural completed by artist Layqa Nuna Yawar in 2015 for the City of Newark and Mayor Ras Baraka's Citywide Mural Project. It can be found in Newark's South Ward, which is one of the neighborhoods in which the Equitable Recovery program operates.

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**DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES:**

Rutgers Global Health Institute is focused on confronting health inequities, no matter where in the world they occur. These health inequities existed long before the COVID-19 pandemic, were worsened during the pandemic, and will persist long after the pandemic ends. We need to remain vigilant in our pursuit of health equity for all.

To accelerate our role in addressing urgent issues in global health, we are actively recruiting for three new faculty positions at the institute: Cancer Care and Prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa; Global Health; and Health Equity, Social Justice, and Population Health.

In the spring, we held our first in-person member meeting in more than two years, and it was great to be reminded of the depth and breadth of Rutgers' global health contributions—and to bring so many of those contributors together after all this time. (See pictures on pages 14–15.) We also welcomed 36 new core faculty and five new professional members this year.

Our Equitable Recovery for New Jersey's Small Businesses program broadened its reach significantly, expanding to Trenton and Perth Amboy and ramping up COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, and education in Essex, Mercer, and Middlesex counties. We are also laying the groundwork to confront deeper inequities in these vulnerable communities.

In collaboration with the Government of Botswana and the University of Botswana, we are moving forward with implementing the findings of our national needs assessment on cancer care and prevention. The Botswana-Rutgers Partnership for Health also is advancing digital pathology, expanding our use of distance learning and telehealth capabilities, and training patient navigators to help women who have breast cancer access timely care.



This is our fourth annual report, and it is typical to undergo strategic planning every five years. In the coming year, we will begin this process. Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences recently released a new strategic plan, and we will follow a similar process and framework. We will be seeking input from our 158 members, students interested in global health, and leaders and stakeholders from across Rutgers and beyond.

I hope you enjoy reading these and other updates on our progress, and I thank you for being invested in global health. It takes long-term investment, and the support of many individuals like yourself, to make a lasting difference. The result: a healthier world for everyone.

Sincerely,

**Richard Marlink, MD**  
Director, Rutgers Global Health Institute  
Henry Rutgers Professor of Global Health



# FACULTY RECRUITMENT

**Rutgers Global Health Institute is recruiting for multiple open-rank faculty positions to accelerate our role in addressing urgent issues in global health and confronting health inequities, no matter where they occur in the world.**

Global health requires work across disciplines and diverse communities, and our process is focused on ensuring that we identify exceptional candidates. We have consulted with experts across Rutgers and incorporated best practices from external resources to ensure our search is extensive, inclusive, and equitable. We are grateful to the many individuals who have provided guidance and support throughout this process:

- Kathleen Bramwell, senior vice chancellor for finance and administration, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
- Enobong (Anna) Branch, senior vice president for equity, Rutgers University
- Jeffrey Carson, provost, New Brunswick, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
- Domenica Dominguez, manager of administration, Rutgers Global Health Institute
- Patricia Fitzgerald-Bocarsly, provost, Newark, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
- Sangeeta Lamba, vice president for faculty development and diversity and vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
- Meredith Mullane, vice chancellor for academic affairs, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
- M. Bishr Omary, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs and research, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
- Stacey Pacheco, director of administration and chief financial officer, Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research
- Denise Rodgers, vice chancellor for interprofessional programs, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
- Angela Senger-Mersich, formerly senior program coordinator, Rutgers Global Health Institute
- Brian Strom, chancellor, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences



Our three search teams comprise leaders in their fields across Rutgers, united by a commitment to global health. Committee members participate in the review of candidates, with a primary focus on the search: reaching and identifying extraordinary scholars who are passionate about promoting and improving equity in health.

Our search committees have partnered with us to recruit faculty across disciplines in three areas related to the institute's work: Cancer Care and Prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa; Global Health; and Health Equity, Social Justice, and Population Health.



Among the open faculty positions is Cancer Care and Prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Faculty recruited for Cancer Care and Prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa likely will share an appointment with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

## Cancer Care and Prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa faces great health disparities relative to most other regions of the world. There are minimal prevention and support services, long delays in cancer detection and diagnosis, barriers in the availability of cancer medications, unreliable data registries, and severe shortages in the specialty-trained workforce. Faculty recruited for this position will focus on identifying and addressing crucial deficiencies in cancer care, treatment, and prevention in sub-Saharan Africa and likely will share an appointment with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

The search committee includes:

- > Elisa Bandera, professor and chief, Cancer Epidemiology and Health Outcomes, and co-leader, Cancer Prevention and Control Program, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
- > Cristine Delnevo, director, Center for Tobacco Studies; co-leader, Cancer Prevention and Control Program, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
- > Mark Einstein, professor and chair, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Women's Health, and assistant dean, Clinical Research Unit, New Jersey Medical School
- > Bruce Haffty, chair, Department of Radiation Oncology, and associate vice chancellor for cancer programs, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
- > Anita Kinney, director, Center for Cancer Health Equity, School of Public Health; associate director for cancer health equity and engagement, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
- > Kelly Kohler, instructor, Department of Health Behavior, Society, and Policy, School of Public Health; resident member, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
- > Edmund Lattime, professor of surgery and associate director for research and education affairs, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
- > Tina Mayer, medical oncologist, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey; associate program director, Hematology/Oncology Fellowship Program, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
- > Coral Omene, medical oncologist, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
- > Eric Singer, associate chief of urology and director, Kidney Cancer Program, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey
- > Suzanne Willard, clinical professor, Division of Advanced Nursing Practice, School of Nursing

## Global Health

This position focuses on the broad areas of improving global health and health equity for all people. Leveraging the institute's cross-disciplinary and collaborative approach to addressing access to health care and health equity, faculty in this position will address wide-ranging issues of global health, such as epidemics and infectious diseases, nutrition and health, health systems, and the effects of climate change on health.

The search committee includes:

- > Emily Barrett, associate professor, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, School of Public Health
- > Dina Fonseca, professor, Department of Entomology, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences; director, Center for Vector Biology, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
- > Maria Laura Gennaro, professor, Department of Medicine, New Jersey Medical School; professor, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Public Health
- > Tobias Gerhard, interim director, Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research (IFH); director, Center for Pharmacoepidemiology and Treatment Science, IFH
- > Daniel Horton, assistant professor of pediatrics, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; assistant professor of epidemiology, School of Public Health
- > Emilia Iwu, interim director for global health and clinical assistant professor, School of Nursing
- > Arnold Rabson, director, Child Health Institute of New Jersey
- > Padmini Salgame, professor, Department of Medicine, New Jersey Medical School
- > Stephan Schwander, associate professor, Department of Urban-Global Public Health, and director, Global Public Health Concentration, School of Public Health
- > Shobha Swaminathan, associate professor, Department of Medicine, New Jersey Medical School
- > Riva Touger-Decker, professor, Department of Clinical and Preventive Nutrition Sciences, and associate dean for global affairs, School of Health Professions

Faculty recruited for the Global Health position will address wide-ranging issues, such as epidemics and infectious diseases, nutrition and health, health systems, and the effects of climate change on health.







Faculty recruited for Health Equity, Social Justice, and Population Health will apply an interdisciplinary approach to confronting health inequity, whether in local New Jersey communities or around the world.

## Health Equity, Social Justice, and Population Health

Health equity, social justice, and population health are core elements of global health. Faculty in this position will have a track record of scholarly work in health equity, discrimination, structural racism, inclusion, diversity, or related disciplines. They will apply an interdisciplinary approach and collaborate with other researchers, faculty, community partners, and stakeholders to advance health equity in their work.

The search committee includes:

- > Gloria Bachmann, associate dean of women's health and director of the Women's Health Institute, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
- > Gwyneth Eliasson, assistant professor, Department of Health Behavior, Society, and Policy, School of Public Health
- > Nir Eyal, director, Center for Population-Level Bioethics, Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research
- > Sunanda Gaur, professor, Department of Pediatrics, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
- > Shawna Hudson, professor and research division chief, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, and director, Center for Advancing Research and Evaluation for Patient-Centered Care, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
- > Manuel Jimenez, assistant professor, Department of Pediatrics and Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
- > Karen WeiRu Lin, professor, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, assistant dean for global health, and assistant director, Family Medicine Residency Program, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
- > Charles Senteio, assistant professor, Department of Library and Information Science, School of Communication and Information
- > Vincent Silenzio, professor, Department of Urban-Global Public Health, School of Public Health
- > Michelle Stephens, executive director, Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice; professor, Department of Latino and Caribbean Studies and Department of English, School of Arts and Sciences

**Learn more about our open positions:**  
[globalhealth.rutgers.edu/hiring](https://globalhealth.rutgers.edu/hiring)

# EQUITABLE RECOVERY

**Since 2020, our Equitable Recovery for New Jersey's Small Businesses program has offered crucial ongoing support to small businesses and local nonprofit organizations, including faith-based organizations, in low-income and minority communities.**

For these businesses, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to especially severe economic and operational challenges. Until recently, program support was focused on COVID-19 safety, education, testing, and vaccines. Now, as the needs of these businesses are shifting, the program is evolving to incorporate efforts aimed at building long-term resilience.

One critical aspect of the Equitable Recovery program is to engage community leaders and establish meaningful partnerships with local organizations that are strongholds within a community. Through these relationships, we gain important insight, connect with other resources and partners within their networks, and develop trust among the community members.

Myrlene Charles (left), owner of Scorpions Variety Store in Newark's West Ward, talks with Equitable Recovery program coordinator Etphane Barthelus. Barthelus speaks Haitian Creole, Charles's native language.



## Making it Happen

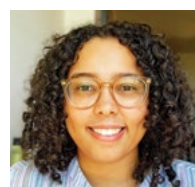
We have intentionally recruited and hired program coordinators who live in the communities we serve and speak the languages familiar to members of these communities:



### Etphane Barthelus

Program Coordinator, Newark

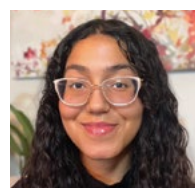
Etphane speaks English and Haitian Creole.  
*Etphane pale Anglè avèk kreyòl Ayisyen.*



### Licelot Gonzalez

Program Coordinator, Newark

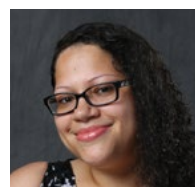
Licelot speaks English and Spanish.  
*Licelot habla inglés y español.*



### Solanggy Guillen

Community Engagement Coordinator, Perth Amboy

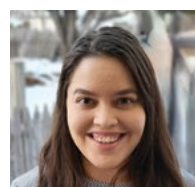
Solanggy speaks English and Spanish.  
*Solanggy habla inglés y español.*



### Lynette Lee

Program Coordinator, New Brunswick

Lynette speaks English and Spanish.  
*Lynette habla inglés y español.*



### Florencia Modernel

Program Coordinator, Trenton

Florencia speaks English and Spanish.  
*Florencia habla inglés y español.*



Education and event materials are regularly offered in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole, the languages primarily spoken by the program's target populations. These include promotional flyers, printed educational materials, virtual training with live interpretation, and in-person assistance with registrations and applications.

We also identified radio as an important medium for disseminating information within immigrant communities. Our outreach through local ethnic radio stations has included Radio Gamma 87.9 FM, a Haitian radio station serving the Newark region, and Ritmo 98.5 FM, a Hispanic radio station in Trenton.

Program manager Arpita Jindani, who speaks English, Hindi, and Marathi, also contributes language support where needed.

## Program Expansion

The Equitable Recovery program began in New Brunswick, followed closely by Newark. Over the past year, the program also rolled out in Trenton and Perth Amboy and expanded its COVID-19 education, vaccination, and testing efforts in Essex, Mercer, and Middlesex counties. This expansion was possible with a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health.

### COVID-19 VACCINATION AND TESTING

The New Jersey Department of Health grant helped us expand our testing, vaccinations, and multilingual education for marginalized groups in Essex, Mercer, and Middlesex counties. We have partnered with local community-based and faith-based organizations to offer pop-up testing and vaccination clinics and to ensure equitable access to these services. Our clinics are often held in nontraditional locations that are deeply embedded in communities, such as places of worship, schools, restaurants, and a performing arts center. These efforts are laying the groundwork for further expansion of our services for underserved communities in New Jersey. Our aim is to help these communities build long-lasting resilience beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.



A young boy receives a COVID-19 vaccine during an Equitable Recovery program clinic at New Brunswick Performing Arts Center, which is within walking distance for many of the city's residents.

### TOTALS FOR FY'22

The following COVID-19 vaccination and testing data represents all efforts organized or supported by the Equitable Recovery program.

**80** vaccination clinics

**4,106** vaccines administered

**77** testing clinics

**2,795** tests administered

## New Location: Trenton

With support from Bristol Myers Squibb and the New Jersey Department of Health, the Equitable Recovery program expanded to Trenton in the summer of 2021. Of Trenton's more than 90,000 residents, 27.2 percent live in poverty. The city's population is 48.7 percent Black or African American, and 37.2 percent identify as Hispanic or Latino. About a third of all households speak a language other than English at home.

We collaborate with community leaders who contribute invaluable insights into the needs of these minority communities, and we've established partnerships with local organizations that support our program. For example, Latino Merchants Association of New Jersey has been integral, helping us build connections and understand dynamics within the Latino business community, which includes more than 250 establishments in the city.

Support in Trenton has included one-on-one consultations to help business owners access a broad range of resilience support services, multiple COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics, and a health fair that included not only COVID-19 testing and vaccination but also broader preventive screening services.



Brothers Wilfredo and Carlos Gonzalez own Karla's Mini Market, an international grocery store in Trenton.



The Trenton-based Latino Merchants Association of New Jersey has been an invaluable partner in the city, where they work and give back in countless ways. Association board members, pictured left to right, are Miguel Rodriguez, Amin Arias, Miosotis Belmarez, Jenna Figueroa Kettenburg, Manuel Hernandez, and Wilson Vargas.

## New Location: Perth Amboy

The New Jersey Department of Health grant allowed us to expand our outreach in Middlesex County, and we identified the city of Perth Amboy as an area of unmet need. As of July 5, 2022, only 33 percent of Perth Amboy's eligible population has received a booster vaccine as opposed to 58 percent countywide. In addition, only 32 percent of children ages 5 to 11 have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, compared with 52 percent of children in the same age group throughout Middlesex County. We have partnered with local organizations and the mayor's office to host COVID-19 vaccination events and a related health and awareness event in Perth Amboy.

## Continued Impact: New Brunswick

With support from the Johnson & Johnson Foundation and the New Jersey Department of Health, the Equitable Recovery program in New Brunswick has collaborated with multiple local partners to respond to ongoing COVID-19 testing needs, as well as a citywide push to promote COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters. The program has held weekly testing and monthly vaccination clinics at various locations that are convenient for community members, particularly the underserved. Clinic sites have included a charter school, a community farmer's market, and a local church.

At the end of November, the weather became too cold to continue hosting clinics in the outdoor tent at Tavern on George. In collaboration with city partners, we moved our weekly testing site indoors to New Brunswick Performing Arts Center. This timing coincided with the rise of the Omicron variant, during which the demand for testing jumped nearly sevenfold. The performing arts center has become a community fixture for both vaccination and testing, offering an easily accessible downtown location.

Rutgers Global Health Institute was honored by the American Repertory Ballet during a special event, the Mask-erade Gala, held on March 12 at New Brunswick Performing Arts Center. The institute was recognized for its role in helping to coordinate testing and vaccination services for the community.





Olayinko Idehen owns Olaseni Ventures, an African market in Newark.

## Continued Impact: Newark

The Equitable Recovery program in Newark, supported by a grant from Merck & Co., Inc., has provided businesses with a range of resilience support services. The program also has offered many COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics, with additional support from the New Jersey Department of Health.

Regular program collaborator and Rutgers Global Health Institute core faculty member Kevin Lyons, an associate professor at Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick, helped connect us with manufacturing companies. We learned that these companies' employees and their families needed vaccinations. During a two-hour evening event at Unionwear, a company in Newark with 130 employees, 38 employees and family members were vaccinated against COVID-19.

Three of our clinics were held at Tree House Cares, a food pantry that provides not only food but also clothing and other resources to hundreds of people weekly. The community members who attended the event, many of whom were housing insecure and food insecure, received food, gift cards, and hygiene kits. At one of the clinics, HIV screening also was offered in collaboration with North Jersey Community Research Initiative.

Micano Evra, owner of Family Manor restaurant and a host on Radio Gamma, invited institute director Richard Marlink to appear twice on his local Haitian radio program. During those appearances, Marlink answered COVID-19 related questions for the audience. Family Manor also has served as a vaccination site for the program, and many clinic attendees reported learning about the clinics from Evra's show.

Beyond the pandemic, we will work to continue and expand our resilience-focused support services. A recent needs assessment in the city's West and South Wards will help inform these efforts.



Tanya Veltz, right, speaks with a volunteer at Tree House Cares, a food pantry she runs in Newark. Tree House Cares collaborated with Rutgers Global Health Institute to host pop-up clinics offering COVID-19 testing and vaccination, hygiene kits, and HIV screening during its food distribution events. Many of these needs were identified through Veltz's regular interactions with the community.

Learn more about the Equitable Recovery program and our many community partners: [globalhealth.rutgers.edu/resilience](https://globalhealth.rutgers.edu/resilience)



# BOTSWANA-RUTGERS PARTNERSHIP

**In the southern African country of Botswana, most cancers are diagnosed at advanced stages. As is the case throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the provision of oncology care is affected by a lack of specialized health personnel, inefficient health care systems, deficient diagnostic services, and substandard treatment options. These dynamics contribute to Botswana's 75 percent cancer mortality rate.**



Rutgers Global Health Institute's team based in Botswana includes (left to right) Morongwa Legwaila, Tapologo Leselwa, Refeletswe Lebelonyane, Vusi Ndaba, and Tendani Gaolathe. Not pictured: The Botswana-Rutgers Partnership for Health team also includes Reena Antony, Tlotlo Ralefala, Kirthana Sharma, and Peter Vuylsteke.

The COVID-19 pandemic also continues to pose a threat to Africa's people and health systems. With each new variant and the ongoing threat of infection surges, continued vigilance is necessary.

The Botswana-Rutgers Partnership for Health is engaged in a multiyear effort to build a national comprehensive cancer care and prevention program together with the Government of Botswana. The partnership also supports pandemic preparedness and response.

## National Cancer Care and Prevention Needs Assessment

The Botswana Cancer Care and Prevention Needs Assessment took place from September 2020 through April 2021. Funded by Bristol Myers Squibb, the assessment evaluated the country's four hospitals that have the capacity to provide cancer care: Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone, Sekgoma Memorial Hospital in Serowe, Nyangabgwe Referral Hospital in

Francistown, and Letsholathebe II Memorial Hospital in Maun. The health care facilities and workforce at these hospitals were assessed, and cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, community members, and health care workers participated in focus group discussions.

Critical challenges identified in this assessment included a lack of essential cancer treatment modalities and surgery, persistent delays from the point of patient presentation to cancer diagnosis, lengthy and unreliable turnaround times for pathology, as well as insufficiently trained health care personnel working in cancer care. Recommendations developed from the assessment include implementing measures to facilitate earlier diagnoses, increasing efficiency of referral practices, and expanding laboratory capacity. These recommendations require reskilling and upskilling the health care workforce at these four hospitals.

## Cancer Kitso

Cancer Kitso is a cancer care and prevention training program for health care workers in Botswana. Modeled after the successful national KITSO AIDS Training Program, the vision of Cancer Kitso is to transform the provision of cancer care and prevention through patient-centered oncology care in Africa. Kitso means “knowledge” in Botswana’s local Setswana language.

Once established in Botswana, the goal is to expand the program to Lesotho and Tanzania, and ultimately to other countries in eastern and southern Africa.

Curriculum development specialists from the University of Botswana are facilitating the development of the training curriculum. This is a collaborative process involving subject matter experts from the University of Botswana, oncologists from Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone, and faculty and clinicians from Rutgers Global Health Institute, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, and Rutgers’ Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and School of Nursing. Currently, the curriculum is focused on the Botswana context, although discussions are ongoing with key personnel in Lesotho and Tanzania.

## Strengthening Patient Navigation and Coordination

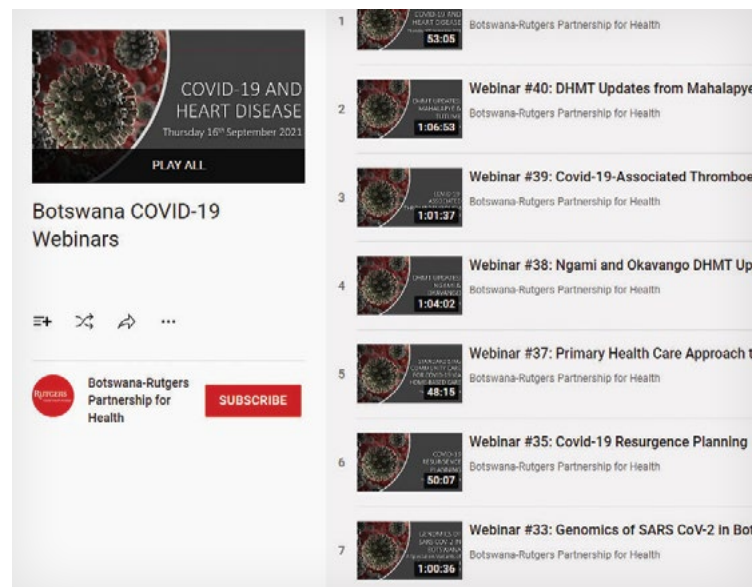
A grant from the Union for International Cancer Control is supporting the creation of a system of patient navigators who can promote timely access to care for women with breast cancer. The project, “Strengthening a Patient Navigation Coordination and Training Program for Botswana,” builds on our prior research that identified gaps in these systems. The aim is to engage more community navigators and increase the number of trained clinical navigators available to assist breast cancer patients. In addition, a dedicated coordination program will evaluate patient navigation services and help embed these services into the health system in Botswana.



Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone, one of Botswana’s four hospitals with the capacity to provide cancer care, participated in the Botswana Cancer Care and Prevention Needs Assessment.



Left to right: At Nyangabgwe Referral Hospital, deputy hospital superintendent Lowell Chansa and hospital manager Kobamelo Motshidisi receive a laptop and other equipment from Botswana-Rutgers Partnership for Health representative Vusi Ndaba.



The Botswana COVID-19 Webinars, available on YouTube, are a valuable reference for health care providers across the country.

## Health Information Technology Needs Assessment

Through a grant from the U.S. Department of State's University Partnerships Initiative, Rutgers Global Health Institute engaged with experts and stakeholders across Botswana and Rutgers to identify and address needs for health information technology in Botswana. These efforts facilitated a new collaboration among the Government of Botswana, University of Botswana, and Botswana-Rutgers Partnership for Health. The resulting joint project inventoried the landscape of digital technology capabilities, capacities, and needs within specific health care facilities, and identified solutions for broader communication among health care facilities, the government, and academic and clinical partners. This needs assessment provided insights into site-specific information technology equipment requirements to support telementoring, distance education, and future telemedicine efforts.

The project focused on the four public hospitals designated as oncology care sites: Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone, Sekgoma Memorial Hospital in Serowe, Nyangabgwe Referral Hospital in Francistown, and Letsholathebe II Memorial Hospital in Maun. Based on the identified needs, each facility was supplied with a laptop, conferencing camera and speaker, and mobile broadband internet. Two of the sites also lacked, and thus received through the program, smart TV screens. The equipment is intended to facilitate virtual trainings and meetings and future telehealth initiatives.

## Botswana COVID-19 Webinars

COVID-19 remains a looming threat in Botswana, despite a fairly successful vaccination campaign. Dynamics related to new variants and the ever-present possibility of a new wave of infections call for sustained vigilance. The Botswana COVID-19 Webinars, a series organized by the Botswana-Rutgers Partnership for Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the University of Botswana, and the Botswana-Harvard AIDS Institute Partnership, will continue to play a significant role in mitigating the pandemic. The series covers timely topics such as airway management, emergency response coordination at the district level, genomics of SARS-CoV-2 in Botswana, research findings, and vaccines. The average attendance for the series is at over 60 individuals, and the webinar archive on YouTube continues to serve as a valuable reference for an ever-growing number of health care providers across the country.

**View the webinars on YouTube:**  
**[go.rutgers.edu/botswanacovid](https://go.rutgers.edu/botswanacovid)**



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# STAY CONNECTED ALL YEAR



## Cancer Pathology Working Group

The Botswana-Rutgers Cancer Pathology Working Group was launched in September 2020 to harness a collective commitment across Rutgers, Botswana’s Ministry of Health, and the University of Botswana to improve pathology and laboratory medicine services for cancer. The working group consists of 28 members across diverse professions, including pathology, oncology, laboratory medicine, informatics, and molecular biology.

The group is currently involved in creating a digital collection of pathology cases for training purposes. Working in collaboration with the University of Botswana’s Department of Pathology, the Rutgers Cancer Institute’s biomedical informatics team has launched digital imaging capabilities for pathology slides. This will allow for a diverse spectrum of cancer biospecimens to be used as teaching and learning resources in Botswana and at Rutgers. The working group’s co-chairs are Lynnette Kyokunda, head of the pathology department, and Moses Rugemalila, pathologist and lecturer, both at the University of Botswana. The digital imaging capabilities and training resources will allow for teaching and knowledge exchange among trainees at both institutions, and more broadly for trainees at academic institutions in southern Africa.

**DON’T MISS OUT** on the latest developments in the Botswana-Rutgers Partnership for Health, the Equitable Recovery program, or the work of our 158 faculty and professional members, impacting many communities in New Jersey and worldwide.

Sign up for *Global Health Connection*, the monthly newsletter that offers all of this (and more). Each issue brings together impactful global health stories, upcoming events, and relevant resources from across Rutgers, all curated for your inbox in an easily digestible format.

**[globalhealth.rutgers.edu/ghc](https://globalhealth.rutgers.edu/ghc)**

**FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:**



# MEMBERSHIP

**Rutgers Global Health Institute has 158 members from across the university, the Rutgers Health system, and beyond. These members are faculty and professionals who collaborate to support and advance the institute's mission.**

Our membership includes three types: core faculty member, core professional member, and affiliate professional member. Core faculty and core professional members are Rutgers faculty and staff from across the university and its health system; affiliate professional members are non-faculty from organizations outside of Rutgers.

## Spring Members Meeting

On May 5, we held the Spring 2022 Members Meeting—our first in-person members meeting in more than two years. The meeting, held at Cook Student Center in New Brunswick, included remarks by Chancellor Brian Strom, an institute update, and time for networking. Chancellor Strom stressed in his remarks that global health is not necessarily “international health.” Rutgers Global Health Institute works to promote health equity worldwide. That includes addressing inequities in health—and in social and environmental determinants of health—right here in New Jersey.

May 5 marked the first in-person meeting of Rutgers Global Health Institute members in more than two years.



Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences chancellor Brian Strom spoke about the wide range of perspectives and roles needed to address global health.

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences leaders Kathleen Scotto (left), vice chancellor for research and dean of Rutgers Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, and Jeffrey Carson, provost for New Brunswick, are among the institute's members.



## New Members for 2022

### CORE FACULTY MEMBERS

**Elisa Bandera**, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

**Soumitra Bhuyan**, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

**Enobong (Anna) Branch**, University Equity and Inclusion

**Joel Cantor**, Center for State Health Policy

**Jeffrey Carson**, Office of the Provosts, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences

**Gwyneth Eliasson**, School of Public Health

**Devin English**, School of Public Health

**Merlene Fredericks-James**, School of Public Health

**Tobias Gerhard**, Center for Pharmacoepidemiology and Treatment Science

**Ethan Halm**, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences

**Christina Ho**, Rutgers Law School

**William Hu**, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

**Emilia Iwu**, School of Nursing

**Kristen Krause**, School of Public Health

**Naa Oyo Kwate**, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

**Teri Lassiter**, School of Public Health

**KiBum Lee**, School of Arts and Sciences

**Sharon Li**, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

**Jesse Liss**, School of Arts and Sciences–Newark

**Gwendolyn Mahon**, School of Health Professions

**Coral Omene**, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

**Jiyeon Park**, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy

**Rafael Pérez-Figueroa**, School of Public Health

**Yonaira Rivera**, School of Communication and Information

**Slawa Rokicki**, School of Public Health

**Mitchel Rosen**, School of Public Health

**Brent Ruben**, School of Communication and Information

**Novneet Sahu**, New Jersey Medical School

**Soko Setoguchi**, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

**Mansi Shah**, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

**Noa'a Shimoni**, New Jersey Medical School

**Eric Singer**, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

**Michelle Stephens**, Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice

**David Tulloch**, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

**Kyle Warren**, School of Nursing

**Stanley Weiss**, New Jersey Medical School



New core professional member Jennifer Lerner, center, poses with core faculty member Tina Mayer and Richard Marlink, director of Rutgers Global Health Institute. Lerner is a nurse practitioner and Mayer is a medical oncologist at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey. Mayer is co-director of a global oncology fellowship program developed by Rutgers Global Health Institute, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, the University of Botswana, and Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone, Botswana.

### CORE PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

**Johanna Bernstein**, Rutgers Global

**Antonio Calcado**, Institutional Planning and Operations

**Jennifer Lerner**, Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

### AFFILIATE PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

**Amin Arias**, Latino Merchants Association of New Jersey

**Manuel Hernandez**, Latino Merchants Association of New Jersey

Learn about all of our members:

[globalhealth.rutgers.edu/members](https://globalhealth.rutgers.edu/members)

## IMPACT COUNCIL

The Rutgers Global Health Institute Impact Council is made up of experts in global health and health care industries. The council provides key input into the institute's priorities and advancement strategy. The members are:

**Joseph Camardo**  
**Brenda Colatrella**  
**John Damonti**  
**Patricia Doykos**  
**Randy Freiberg**  
**Nimesh Jhaveri**

**Michele Korfin**  
**John McFadden**  
**Betsy McNeilly**  
**James Sapirstein**  
**David Scheer**  
**Jeff Sturchio**



# STUDENT COUNCIL

**The Rutgers Global Health Institute Student Council works to advance global health engagement opportunities for students throughout Rutgers. The 83-member council includes undergraduate and graduate members from 19 Rutgers schools.**

Recognizing the value of alumni relationships in exploring career pathways, the former Career Pathway Awareness and Alumni Engagement committees merged. The newly combined Career Pathway Awareness and Alumni Engagement Committee has two key aims:

- 1) to make information and involvement opportunities related to career pathways in global health more accessible to Rutgers students, and
- 2) to connect with Rutgers alumni working in global health and related fields.

The council's leadership includes two co-presidents and committee co-chairs—two each for four committees.

Brooke Margolin and Laura Palm are co-presidents of the Rutgers Global Health Institute Student Council.



## Co-Presidents

**Brooke Margolin**, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, School of Public Health

**Laura Palm**, Mason Gross School of the Arts

## Co-Chairs

### CAREER PATHWAY AWARENESS AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

**Leah Cherukara**, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, School of Arts and Sciences

**Adishi Ranjan**, School of Arts and Sciences

### GLOBAL HEALTH EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**Dominic Baun**, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

**Nila Uthirasamy**, School of Arts and Sciences

### GLOBAL HEALTH CASE COMPETITION

**Aparna Ragupathi**, School of Arts and Sciences, School of Communication and Information

**Claire Wolfe**, School of Public Health

### STUDENT ORGANIZATION COLLABORATION

**Sanjana Nayak**, School of Arts and Sciences

**Priya Tailor**, New Jersey Medical School

# MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



**MARIA GLORIA DOMINGUEZ-BELLO,** director of the New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health, and her husband, Martin Blaser, director of the Center for Advanced Biotechnology

and Medicine, are the subjects of a feature-length documentary. *The Invisible Extinction* premiered at the Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival on March 24. The importance of protecting our microbiome and the potential power of restoring lost microbiome diversity are key themes of the film. It chronicles the pioneering couple's work from New Jersey to Switzerland—where they are collaborating to build the Microbiota Vault, a global nonprofit initiative to preserve human microbial diversity.



**MANUEL E. JIMENEZ,** assistant professor in the Departments of Pediatrics and Family Medicine and Community Health as well as director of developmental and behavioral pediatrics

education at the Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, was inducted into the American Society for Clinical Investigation in April.



**DIANE HILL,** assistant chancellor for university-community partnerships at Rutgers University–Newark, was appointed to the Wealth Disparity Task Force formed by New Jersey governor Phil

Murphy in September. The Wealth Disparity Task Force advises the Murphy Administration on strategies aimed at addressing the various causes and effects of wealth disparity in New Jersey.



**GLORIA BONILLA-SANTIAGO,** director of the Community Leadership Center at Rutgers University–Camden, initiated a partnership with Universidad Nacional de Asunción in Paraguay that led to

the creation of the Higher Education Center for Ethics, Equity, and Transparency in Paraguay. The project, spearheaded by the Community Leadership Center and funded by a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development, is an important step toward fighting inequity and inequality in the country.



**MANUEL CASTAÑEDA,** director of community health for the nonprofit New Brunswick Tomorrow, is leading a project, which received a \$100,000 grant from Robert Wood

Johnson Foundation, to provide equitable access to COVID-19 vaccinations in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and neighboring communities. Through a door-to-door campaign, health care ambassadors address vaccine hesitancy and help ensure access, particularly among marginalized groups.



**CARA CUITE,** an assistant extension specialist and assistant professor in the Department of Human Ecology at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, was the principal

investigator awarded a Hunger-Free Campus Grant from the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. The grant supported a two-day virtual

conference hosted by Rutgers in February: Envisioning Hunger-Free College in New Jersey. The conference included remarks from New Jersey governor Phil Murphy and Rutgers president Jonathan Holloway.



**SHAUNA DOWNS**, assistant professor in the Department of Urban-Global Public Health at the School of Public Health, received a grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human

Development to study behavior change communication strategies to improve infant and young child nutrition in Senegal. The study is focused on the impact of a mobile health messaging intervention on infant and young child feeding practices as well as the implementation challenges and opportunities for increasing future mobile health messaging programs.



**ROBERT KOPP**, professor in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at the School of Arts and Sciences, is the principal investigator for a \$20 million grant from the National Science Foundation to develop a

plan with universities throughout the country to protect coastal areas increasingly threatened by extreme weather caused by climate change. The multi-university group has formed a Megalopolitan Coastal Transformation Hub to provide fundamental research related to more resilient, sustainable coastlines, which are vital to the national economy.



Kopp and **KEVIN LYONS**, associate professor of professional practice at Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick, were appointed co-directors of Rutgers' new Office of Climate Action. They

are overseeing the implementation of the university's Climate Action Plan, which aims for Rutgers to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 and to work toward achieving national net-zero greenhouse gas emissions no later than 2050.



The laboratory of **MARIA LAURA GENNARO**, professor of medicine and epidemiology at New Jersey Medical School and the School of Public Health, will provide antibody testing to

help determine the incidence and long-term effects of COVID-19 in children as part of an initiative by the National Institutes of Health. The serological testing, which detects the presence of antibodies directed against proteins produced by SARS-CoV-2, is part of the national Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery Initiative (RECOVER). The antibody testing project is being supervised by Natalie Bruiners, an assistant professor at the medical school.





**WILLIAM HALLMAN,** professor and chair of the Department of Human Ecology at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, was appointed co-chair of the Climate Communications Initiative of the National

Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. He also was a member of the working group that provided expert guidance for a report titled *Lessons from COVID-19 on Executing Communications and Engagement at the Community Level During a Health Crisis*, published by the National Academies in December.



**PADMINI SALGAME,** associate director of the Public Health Research Institute at New Jersey Medical School, was among the authors of a study that investigated two strains of the bacterium causing tuberculosis

(TB). The findings, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, could help inform new approaches to combatting rapid TB transmission and drug resistance.



**JOACHIM SACKEY,** assistant professor in the Department of Clinical and Preventive Nutrition Sciences at the School of Health Professions, was selected to join the Education Committee of the Consortium of Universities for Global

Health (CUGH). CUGH includes more than 170 academic institutions and other organizations from around the world that are engaged in addressing global health

challenges. The Education Committee promotes health equity and planetary health through education and capacity building across disciplines, professions, institutions, and countries.



**MICHAEL STEINBERG,** professor and chief of general internal medicine in the Department of Medicine at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, is part of a team of researchers

awarded \$2.6 million from the National Cancer Institute to evaluate relighting behavior among smokers. The team will study the prevalence and factors that may correlate with cigarette relighting—the practice of smoking a cigarette, extinguishing it, and lighting it again to smoke—as well as its consequences on health and efforts to quit smoking.

# GLOBAL HEALTH SEED GRANTS

**Our Global Health Seed Grants support collaborative faculty activities that address health inequities in New Jersey and around the world. The following projects were awarded up to \$10,000 each for implementation during the 2021–2022 academic year.**

## Education, Training, and Capacity Building Projects

### Enhancing Capacities of the Believe in a Healthy Newark Coalition by Engaging Rutgers University–Newark Students

**Jesse Liss**, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Rutgers University–Newark

**Bernadette So**, Career Development Center, Rutgers University–Newark

**COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:** Believe in a Healthy Newark; Center for Public Health Workforce Development and Center for Health, Identity, Behavior, and Prevention Studies, Rutgers School of Public Health

This project established an undergraduate internship program at Rutgers University–Newark in which students were trained and matched with community organizations that are leading public health initiatives in Newark’s underserved neighborhoods. The goals were to augment the capacities of the public and nonprofit organizations that comprise the Believe in a Healthy Newark coalition and to create experiential learning opportunities in public health so that Rutgers students can gain exposure to career pathways in this field and enhance their professional skills. The internship program led to five student projects on diverse topics: mental health services and development programs for Newark youths, eviction prevention education and advocacy, implementation of a new lead-safe housing law, food insecurity research, and the use of social media campaigns for community education.



Ziad Sifri’s project involves creating virtual teaching resources to recruit and certify Stop the Bleed instructors and providing medical-grade tourniquets in resource-limited settings.

### Expanding Train-the-Trainer Programs for Lifesaving Bleeding Control Techniques in Resource-Limited Settings

**Ziad Sifri**, Department of Surgery, New Jersey Medical School

**COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:** Centro de Salud Carabamba, Julcán; College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences, University of Sierra Leone; Department of Emergency Medicine, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School; International Surgical Health Initiative; Office of Global Affairs, Rutgers School of Health Professions

The COVID-19 pandemic has stunted New Jersey Medical School’s Stop the Bleed training series, which teaches individuals who are not otherwise medically qualified how to stop bleeding in severely injured people and potentially save their lives. In low- and middle-income countries, where emergency medical resources are incredibly lacking, there is tremendous need for more people to become certified in these lifesaving techniques. This project supports the creation and promotion of virtual teaching resources to recruit and certify Stop the Bleed instructors in Ghana, Peru, Sierra Leone, and elsewhere, while also providing medical-grade tourniquets for training and real-world use in these resource-limited settings.



## Research Projects

### Exploring Scalable Multimodal Approaches to Identify Vulnerable Populations in the Congo

**Woojin Jung**, School of Social Work

**COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:** Microsoft; World Food Programme

This project uses artificial intelligence technologies to more accurately and rapidly identify areas of extreme poverty in the Republic of the Congo, informing humanitarian responses to the country's surging food insecurity in the wake of COVID-19. The research incorporates daytime satellite imagery, nighttime luminosity, geographic features, and Twitter data to create algorithms that estimate the wealth and livelihood of geographic regions.

While still underway, the project has yielded many rich insights. One main finding is that traditional targeting methods combined with novel data sources better capture households experiencing multidimensional poverty. Specifically, a household's distance to education services and the average building size on its block are strong predictors of multidimensional poverty, while the distance to health services is a robust indicator of extreme poverty.

These types of geographic features that are drawn from Open Street Map, such as building size, are as effective as the opinions of local surveyors and chiefs (village leaders) in determining whether a household is poor. Based on these early findings, the research team is developing machine learning models to improve the accuracy of identifying the most vulnerable households.

Woojin Jung's research is using artificial intelligence technologies to help predict poverty and food insecurity in Congo, allowing for more precise targeting of social safety net programs.



### **Real-Time Monitoring of Suicidality in Depressed Adolescents: A Smartphone-Based Ecological Momentary Assessment Study**

**Vincent M. B. Silenzio**, Department of Urban-Global Public Health, School of Public Health

**COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:** Central South University; Xiangya School of Public Health; The Affiliated Brain Hospital of Guangzhou Medical University

To gain a highly nuanced understanding of suicide-related thoughts and behaviors among adolescents who are experiencing depression in China, this line of research incorporates smartphone-based survey apps and wearable monitoring devices to collect real-time data from study participants over a 28-day period. The interdisciplinary research team draws upon the resulting high volume of contextually specific data points captured over time through these and related data-collection methods to inform the development of national guidance and policies for adolescent suicide prevention and intervention.

### **Youth and Family HIV Stigma: Examining Potential Barriers to HIV Services and Stigma-Reduction Interventions**

**Emilia Iwu**, Division of Nursing Science, School of Nursing

**COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:** Institute of Human Virology Nigeria; Association of Positive Youth in Nigeria

Through focus groups comprising adolescents and youth living with HIV (AYLHIV) and their adult caregivers in Nigeria's Rivers State, this research is exploring the impact of stigma on this population with respect to their physical and mental health and health care engagement, especially adherence to HIV treatment regimens. Additionally, the study is examining how AYLHIV and their caregivers feel about interventions to reduce stigma's impact on their well-being and what they would recommend for a future intervention.

This study is being conducted in collaboration with the Association of Positive Youth in Nigeria, a national nongovernmental organization involved in HIV prevention, care, and support, and pediatric health providers in select facilities in the state.

Emilia Iwu's research is exploring the impact of stigma on adolescents and youth living with HIV in Nigeria's Rivers State, pictured below.







Global Health Seed Grants awarded for the upcoming year will impact urgent global health issues around the world. Chiara Sabina's project is focused on intimate partner violence survivors in Quito, Ecuador, pictured above.

## NEW GRANTS AWARDED

**The following grants were recently awarded for implementation during the 2022–2023 academic year.**

### **Ectoparasites and Diseases of Poverty in Low-Income Urban Communities**

Alvaro Toledo, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

### **Examining the Influence of Food Environments on Infant and Young Child Feeding among Subsistence Farming Communities in Senegal**

Shauna Downs, School of Public Health

### **Impact of Social Factors and Birth Weight on Mental Health, Self-Efficacy, and Parent-Infant Bonding among Postpartum Mothers in Nepal**

Sangita Pudasainee-Kapri, School of Nursing–Camden

### **Integrative Community Therapy for Intimate Partner Violence Survivors in Quito, Ecuador**

Chiara Sabina, School of Social Work

### **Using Machine Learning to Examine Quality of Care: Analyzing Nursing Notes to Investigate Racial Inequity in Brazil**

Charles Senteio, School of Communication and Information

# SEMINAR SERIES



## Viewpoints in Global Health Research

In February, we launched a new seminar series that features guest faculty presenters from diverse global health fields. There were 12 events in the spring semester, covering a range of topics including adaptive immunity, child health ecosyndemics, cervical cancer control, artificial intelligence, abortion, and mental health impacts of air pollution.

View the seminar recordings:  
[globalhealth.rutgers.edu/viewpoints](https://globalhealth.rutgers.edu/viewpoints)

**Paul Morgan, Pennsylvania State University**



**D. Cristina Stefan,  
University of Global Health Equity**



**Luis Arturo Valdez, University  
of Massachusetts Amherst**



**Devaki Nambiar,  
The George Institute  
for Global Health**





# FACULTY IMPACT AROUND THE WORLD



**RUTGERS GLOBAL HEALTH INSTITUTE'S** 139 core faculty members (a significant subset of the institute's 158 total members) are engaged in global health-related education, research, and service projects in more than 100 countries around the globe. Our core faculty are drivers of our institute's and Rutgers' impact on health equity worldwide, including right here in New Jersey.

View our global health project map  
to explore and connect.

**[globalhealth.rutgers.edu/projectmap](https://globalhealth.rutgers.edu/projectmap)**



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