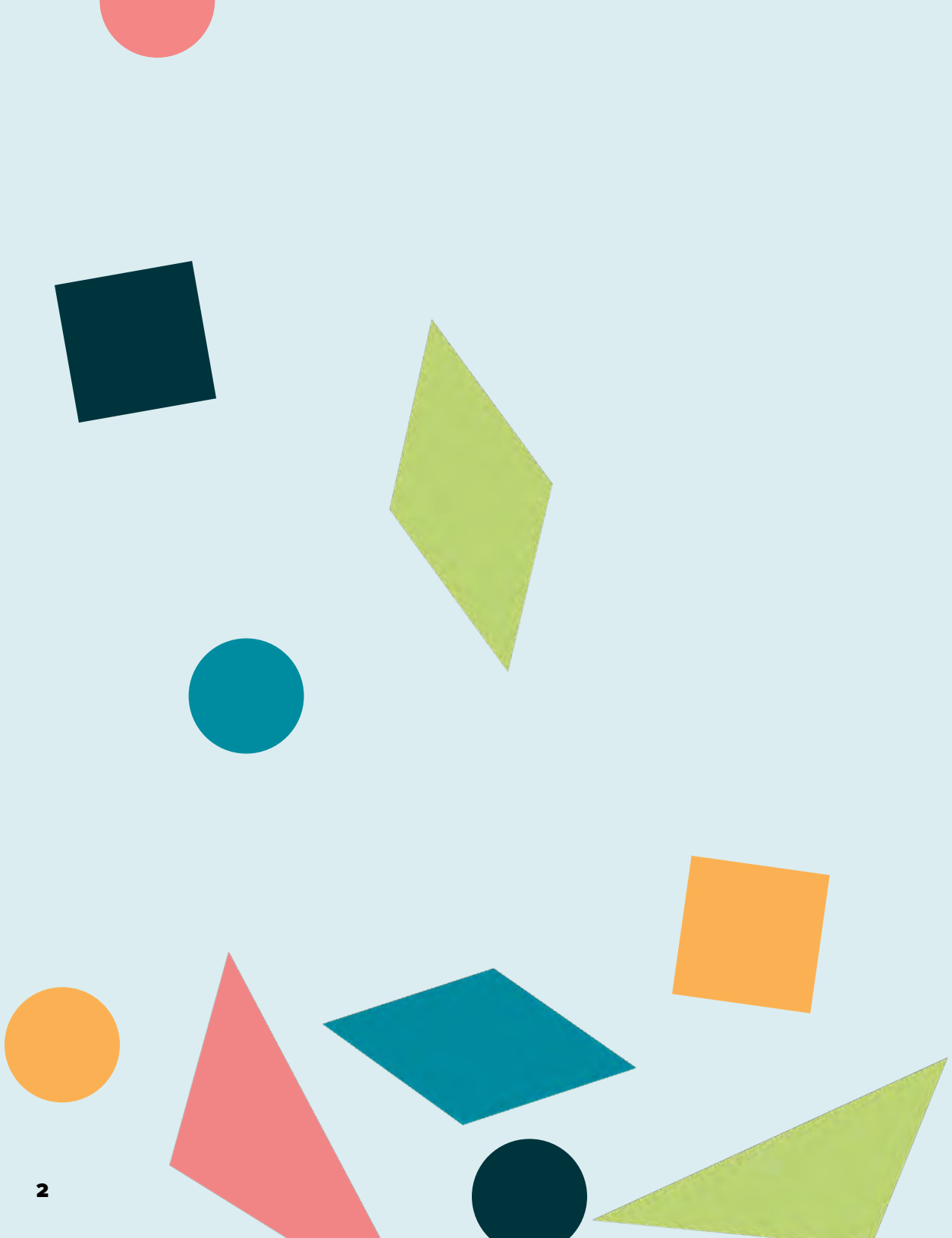
Jewish Healthcare Foundation

2023 year in review



A foundation has an interesting challenge: how does it measure its value?

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) contends with this issue, as we are so much more than a traditional grantmaking entity. With three formal operating arms and an activist agenda that includes training, program development, convening, community education, advocacy, and more, what indicates success?

In 2023, we raised $30 million in addition to what we distributed from our endowment to advance our work and to fund worthy partners. But that isn't how we define our success. We look to enduring advancements in policy or care delivery or behavior change that improve the lives of populations.

In January 2023, we aimed to apply leadership and creativity to achieve these objectives:

- Advance the creation of a National Patient Safety Board;
- Explore the deployment of artificial intelligence/ machine learning and other technologies for higher value care;
- Support and inspire healthcare workers and students to shape the healthcare system in which they want to work and receive care and help them to build skills to enhance their own performance;
- Nurture teen advocates to promote policies that support their mental health needs and test new models of community-based triage for teens with emotional concerns;
- Develop the networks, the research, and the policies to address women's health inequities in older age;
- Advance the satisfaction and skills of workers in long-term care, maternity, and community behavioral health;
- Conceive novel approaches to bring treatments and supports to people living with HIV/AIDS.

On the following pages, you can see how we approached our 2023 goals. Please let us know if you believe we've made sufficient progress. How would you rate our year?

Debra L. Caplan, MPA
Chair, Board of Trustees

Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD
President & CEO

Patient Safety

Joe Kiani speaks at RAPS Launch Event at CMU on February 24.

The Foundation continued to work on the national epidemic of medical errors that worsened even as the COVID epidemic weakened. As workers resigned or retired, the problem of preventable harm reached frightening levels. Estimates run to hundreds of thousands who have died from adverse events and many more who were permanently disabled. We continued to reach out to regional, national, and global leaders in patient safety to collaborate on reducing errors worldwide by sharing successes and seeking innovations.

The year began with Pittsburgh kicking off a campaign to establish itself as a global hub for autonomous patient safety solutions. The Regional Autonomous Patient Safety (RAPS) initiative was launched at an event hosted by the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative (PRHI) and the Pittsburgh Technology Council at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), which convened over 100 tech, healthcare, and innovation leaders to engage in discussions and ideation sessions. Joe Kiani, founder, chairman, and CEO of Masimo Corporation and co-inventor of what is now recognized as "modern pulse oximetry," underlined the promise of technology in preventing medical errors, described the market opportunity for patient safety innovations, and provided insight into how to create an innovation hub in Pittsburgh. Following the launch event, the RAPS regional advisory board was formed, gathering leaders from academia, health care, technology, and industry.

To continue the conversation and foster cross-sector and institutional collaboration and discussion, PRHI launched Patient Safety Research & Development (R&D) Salons, with sessions discussing digital twin technology, regional research initiatives at CMU and the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), the significance of national policy recommendations to advance patient safety research and innovation, and Pitt/UPMC efforts to test and commercialize patient safety innovations. **Over 150 engaged** in the three inaugural Salons.

The RAPS Seed Grants began accepting proposals for multidisciplinary R&D teams, start-ups, and tech companies in the Pittsburgh region that are developing autonomous solutions to prevent medical errors. JHF allocated $300,000 for early-stage research.

In early 2021, JHF and PRHI established the National Patient Safety Board (NPSB) Advocacy Coalition, which grew to **over 80 members** during 2023, representing all the major stakeholders in health care. The NPSB Advocacy Coalition's key legislative goals involve creating an interdisciplinary, innovation-focused team at the national level, thus establishing a federal home for patient safety. The work of the NPSB Advocacy Coalition was highlighted at a July 13 Congressional briefing in Washington, DC with a discussion on the alarming downturn in patient safety measures nationally and why an NPSB is the solution.

Dr. Feinstein, as the national spokesperson for the NPSB Advocacy Coalition, attended numerous speaking engagements to discuss

Members of the NPSB Advocacy Coalition speak to Congressional staffers in Washington, DC, on July 13.

the NPSB and hosted four new episodes of the *Up Next for Patient Safety* podcast to spur further conversation shaping the future of patient safety.

On the national stage, **the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology recommended the establishment of a National Patient Safety Team** in a landmark report released in September 2023. The Team would be a multidisciplinary entity within the Department of Health and Human Services and includes the appointment of a patient safety coordinator reporting to the President. The report also recommends advancing technological solutions to address patient safety and alleviate the burden on the frontline workers.

Karen Feinstein presents at CMU-K&L Gates Conference on June 22. (Photo courtesy of Carnegie Mellon University)

In November, JHF and PRHI sponsored a summit on AI and patient safety along with the University of Utah, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and others. Nearly 100 leaders in safety gathered in Salt Lake City to present AI-enabled solutions to the national rise in medical errors.

Meanwhile, the Patient Safety Technology Challenge continued the work of infusing patient safety tech awards into existing competitions across the United States and prepared to launch the second phase of the Challenge. The objective is to excite

young innovators and their faculty from several disciplines in the promise of patient safety technology to save lives and prevent disability. By year's end, the Challenge sponsored **45 events** with **573 patient safety teams** with over 1,990 student participants, awarding 60 patient safety prizes and **reaching over 12,600 attendees**.

In this spirit, JHF turned its traditional summer Patient Safety Fellowship into a Patient Safety Technology Challenge. Over 30 participants organized into 12 teams presented their tech breakthroughs to a distinguished panel of local judges. The winning team developed a solution to prevent falls in the inpatient setting for seniors by using real-time electronic health record (EHR) data to predict when a patient will attempt to use the restroom to improve resource allocation and staff assignments, resulting in a lower risk of patient falls. They received a $5,000 award. The People's Choice Award winner was an AI predictive model for risk assessment for addiction, overdose, and overdose-associated deaths and the creation of a centralized database and EHR-compatible communication hub for coordinating management and supportive resources based on predicted risk.

Funding was awarded to Tall Tale Productions to produce a documentary,

The Kalogon team, winners of the Patient Safety Technology Innovation Award at SXSW, with PRHI consultant Ariana Longley.

The Pitch: Patient Safety's Next Generation, to build on the success of the Patient Safety Technology Challenge and highlight the potential for technology and cross-disciplinary innovation to improve patient outcomes. The documentary tells the story of an innovator who participated in a Patient Safety Technology Challenge event and aligns his work with tech-enabled innovators shaping the future of patient safety. The film's premiere is slated for spring 2024.

JHF continued its long tradition of going abroad to bring home new ideas for health system improvement. The 2023 study tour included a dive into patient safety through visits to Ukom, the Norwegian Healthcare Investigation Board, and the Safety Investigation Authority in Finland. In addition, PRHI collaborated with 17 member countries of the International Patient Safety Organisations Network, organized by the UK Healthcare Safety Investigations Branch (HSIB). During HSIB's annual conference, JHF presented its work to establish an NPSB to a global audience of **over 700 people**.

Karen Feinstein, Nancy Zionts, Debra Caplan, and colleagues visit with Bent Høie, founder of Ukom and County Governor of Rogaland, and his staff in Norway.

BH Fellows participants attend a program retreat at Phipps Conservatory.

Workforce Development

2023 marked another year of unease within the healthcare workforce, with satisfaction surveys indicating significant burnout and strain. JHF continued to invest in initiatives that fill knowledge gaps and build skills, to advocate for policies and practices that focus on worker safety, and to support advocacy and technologies that relieve burdens on the front lines of care.

For 22 years, the Feinstein Fellowships have worked to inspire graduate students and young healthcare professionals in the Pittsburgh area to recognize and effect opportunities to improve care. The Fellowships provide a collaborative, multi-disciplinary learning environment to engage the next generation of leaders and activists.

The three Fellowships in 2023 – the Death & Dying Fellowship (conversations at the end of life), Patient Safety Fellowship, and Salk Health Activist Fellowship – aimed to cover critical topics that aren't part of traditional healthcare graduate programs. The Death & Dying Fellowship addressed a key challenge: the reality that professionals feel ill-prepared to communicate about death, dying, and grief with patients and families. The winter cohort welcomed **24 graduate students**.

The year's hybrid Patient Safety Fellowship built on the Patient Safety Technology Challenge, culminating in the Health Care Redesign Expo with **12 teams of 30 graduate students** competing for a $5,000 grand prize for the most compelling safety idea as determined by a five-person panel of expert judges.

The Salk Health Activist Fellowship held in the fall centered on the theme of "mental health policy change" with fellows building advocacy plans focused on existing or potential legislation in Pennsylvania to address worker mental health, youth mental health and school-based mental health services, universal mental health screenings in primary care, and financial incentives to attract more behavioral health workers.

From left to right, Maryanna Owoc, PhD, Karen Kwok, MSN, FNP, MPH, and Ivy Yip present their project at the Salk Health Activist Fellowship finale.

JHF was named a lead partner in the new Allegheny County BH Fellows program, committing to offer training and coaching to 180 behavioral health fellows over the next four years. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for behavioral health services has increased. The BH Fellows workforce development program aims to support frontline and clinical staff in Pittsburgh. Designed to attract existing behavioral healthcare staff and new hires into available jobs with local behavioral health, mental health, and substance use services providers, the program offers standard minimum salary levels and loan repayment up to $25,000 for workers with a bachelor's degree and up to $45,000 for workers with a master's degree. The first two cohorts of the BH Fellows program launched in June and October 2023, **supporting 45 new and existing frontline behavioral health workers** in critical service areas.

JHF also addressed the problem of substance use. In 2023, there were approximately 250 Centers of Excellence (COEs) locations across the Commonwealth. The Opioid Use Disorder COE Technical Assistance Project supports the Commonwealth's COEs, with the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy Program Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) providing technical assistance, learning networks, and curriculum specific to the needs of each COE, and PRHI supporting the learning networks in partnership with PERU.

To support the COEs in providing effective care coordination, integrating physical and behavioral health needs for every patient with an opioid use disorder, and increasing access to medication-assisted treatment, PRHI held **24 virtual learning network sessions** with an average of 99 participants for each session.

Adam Trainer, MA, shares his observations and questions during a session of the Death & Dying Fellowship.

HealthChoices is Pennsylvania's managed care program for medical assistance recipients, providing physical and behavioral medical care, as well as long-term supports. In that regard, physical health managed care organizations (MCOs) are working with PRHI and the Health Federation of Philadelphia to facilitate the HealthChoices Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Learning Network. In 2023, they held quarterly regional learning collaborative sessions across the Commonwealth as well as three statewide learning sessions focused on trends in HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B and C, how PCMHs and MCOs can help patients stay insured, and embedding health equity activities into existing team and organizational processes.

In response to the severe workforce shortage in all sectors of health care, including primary, acute, oral, long-term care, and behavioral health in the Commonwealth, JHF and over 200 organizations signed onto a PA Health Funders Collaborative letter asking Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro to establish an Office of Health Workforce Reform in his Administration.

Governor Shapiro established workforce development as a priority of his Administration, revamped the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board, and announced the appointment of more than 40 members. JHF Board Chair Debra Caplan, MPA, was chosen to represent community organizations on the board.

Patient Safety Fellows share their projects at the Health Care Resdesign Expo on August 14.

Honoring its commitment to advance maternity care, JHF contracted with the PA Community Health Worker (CHW) Collaborative, developing CHW reimbursement policies for perinatal doulas with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) by 2024. The goal of the policies is to modernize the scope of midwifery practice in Pennsylvania.

Safer Childbirth City participants share at the finale gala: Muffy Mendoza, Kieashia DeShawn, Syreeta Gordon, Angela Bejarano, Iyanna Bridges, and Amber Edmunds.

Women's Health

From its earliest days, JHF has embraced a strong women's health agenda, making strides in breast cancer advocacy and awareness, women's cardiac health, advocacy for reproductive rights, the scourge of infant mortality, and the challenges of caregiving.

For the past several years, JHF has addressed our nation's outlier status in maternal mortality with a "full court press." As the leader of the statewide Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PA PQC), JHF expanded and enhanced the work of our birthing centers in 2023 by increasing to **55%** the number of hospitals with substance use disorder perinatal pathways up to one year postpartum; increasing to **30%** the hospitals with trauma-informed protocols; and increasing to **88%** the hospitals providing health equity trainings.

The PA PQC received $1.4 million from the PA Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs to continue its work to improve outcomes for maternal opioid use disorder (OUD) and neonatal abstinence syndrome that began in 2019. PA PQC received a $795,000 federal grant through the Health Services and Resources Administration to implement a new Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health bundle each year over four years, in addition to the PA PQC's continuing work with substance use disorders (SUD).

In addition, in 2023, JHF helped to launch a statewide maternal health collaborative to gain consensus on policy solutions for guaranteeing reimbursement for certified doulas, modernizing the scope of midwives, and creating and funding a perinatal behavioral health access program.

Akbar Hossain, Secretary of Policy and Planning, PA Office of the Governor, speaks at the May 4 PA PQC meeting in Harrisburg.

Through the *Pittsburgh: A Safer Childbirth City* initiative, JHF sustained support for collaboration across seven community-based organizations (CBOs) participating in the initiative — Brown Mamas, Elephant Song Doula Services, Healthy Start, Hello Neighbor, Kangaroo Birthing & Maternity Concierge, MAYA Organization, and The Birthing Hut — serving Black mothers and families by establishing a shared resource hub for CBOs, co-creating the Regional Doula Advisory, and launching the Perinatal Health Equity Champions program, which resulted in newly established doula policies with birth hospitals and community doulas.

On October 19, the *Pittsburgh: A Safer Childbirth City* initiative held its finale gala at Kelly Strayhorn Theater, providing a space for JHF, the Women's Health Activist Movement Global (WHAMglobal), and the seven participating CBOs to share their work and vision for a healthier Pittsburgh for moms and babies and to network with allies and leaders working toward a future where we experience equitable Black maternal outcomes. This was the culmination of years of work resulting from Pittsburgh's selection

as one of the initial cities to participate in the Merck for Mothers program, which fosters community-led solutions to help cities reduce racial/ethnic disparities in maternal health and morbidity.

In 2023, JHF served as the fiscal agent and lead planner for the dissemination of nearly $10 million of Coronavirus State Recovery Funds provided through the Pennsylvania DHS for maternal and child health. Ten projects were awarded over **$2 million** for short-term maternal care innovation projects having a positive impact on maternal health in Pennsylvania. In August, over $600,000 was awarded to address maternal nutrition and food insecurity in the immigrant and refugee population in Allegheny County, provide individualized support for refugee mothers and children, reduce barriers to donor milk access for medically fragile mothers and babies, and expand services. In October, **$1.3 million** was awarded to six organizations to provide equitable programming to better serve BIPOC and marginalized birthing people and birth workers, implement a maternal-child medical home model to reduce barriers to care access, provide health education opportunities and screenings in low-income housing developments, create a Family Support Fund for pregnant people and new families, expand the MomsWork program, and provide support for parents with OUD/SUD and access to doulas.

Shawndel Laughner and Selena Eisenberg meet with St. Clair Hospital staff as part of the Perinatal Health Equity Champions program.

JHF awarded over **$2 million** in healthy food access grants to 12 different organizations across the Commonwealth to be used to increase access to nutritious foods, educational resources, programming, and care coordination for pregnant and postpartum Pennsylvanians. A review committee, comprised of subject matter experts from across Pennsylvania, reviewed the proposals and made recommendations. Funding was also provided to the Organizing Voices for Action Committee to implement Philadelphia's Maternal Mortality Review Committee's recommendations, and to expand a pilot project between the Pennsylvania DHS and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to provide lactation support and doula care to pregnant inmates at two state correctional institutions serving women in Pennsylvania.

Following the 2022 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, in which the court held that the U.S. Constitution does not confer a right to an abortion, JHF established the Women's Reproductive Health Emergency Grant Fund and began a monthly virtual convening of funders across the state to discuss its effects on women's healthcare access in the community. The group continued to meet and collect data in 2023 and has expanded to include women's reproductive rights funders and providers.

The WHAMglobal Board reconstituted, welcoming **16 new Board members** from across the globe. JHF launched WHAMglobal in 2016 to rally support for women's unmet health needs. On March 23, the Board convened and unanimously agreed to address a new topic, "Women's Health Inequities in Older Age." The Board was called to action by the lack of research involving women; medical bias based on gender and age; and knowledge gaps on important health issues in older women, including menopause. The new focus is the result of a strategic plan with priorities and actions completed and presented to the Board in June and a study tour to Norway and Finland. Planning also began for a Salzberg Seminar in early 2024 to initiate a network of leaders to work together on the issues surrounding women's health inequities as they age.

Aging

Student nurses meet with a nursing home resident as part of Teaching Nursing Home Collaborative. (Photo courtesy of Penn State Ross and Carol Nese College of Nursing and Centre Care Rehabilitation and Wellness Services)

From its inception, JHF has maintained a commitment to advancing care for older adults. Support for caregivers and the long-term care workforce, dementia awareness, and end-of-life training for healthcare professionals are focal points of JHF's initiatives to serve the aging population.

The Pennsylvania Long-Term Care Quality Improvement Learning Network, funded by Medicaid managed care organizations in partnership with Age-Friendly Health Systems and the Pennsylvania DHS, is operated by JHF. In 2023, they held 44 webinars for more than **8,100 attendees**; offered training to 600 eligible skilled nursing facilities and saw participating nursing homes achieve higher quality scores; and recruited and supported over 75 faculty. In addition, JHF has supported the distribution of personal protective equipment to homes in need and established relationships with PA Office of Long-Term Care Transformation, PA RISE, and Pennsylvania DHS to serve as their educational network.

From left to right: Nancy Zionts, Karen Feinstein, Jacqueline Dunbar-Jacob, Maureen Saxon-Gioia, Anneliese Perry, Kristen Brenneman, and Stacie Bonenberger at the 15th Annual Celebrating Champions Dinner where Dr. Dunbar-Jacob was honored as the 2023 Caregiver Champion.

With JHF leadership, Pennsylvania piloted dementia-friendly strategies to attend to the growing number of persons living with dementia. In 2023, the program saw 300-plus new Dementia Friends each month across the state; trained more than **100 new Dementia Friends Champions**; supported more than eight communities across Pennsylvania; and held workshops and webinars throughout the year.

The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) was selected as one of 43 recipients nationally of the Centers for Disease Control's BOLD grants supporting public health programs to address Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, receiving $1.85 million in funding. JHF helped secure the grant and will play a vital role through Dementia Friends and Dementia Friendly Pennsylvania, assisting with the program as a convener and trainer for the ACHD five-year grant.

JHF successfully completed Phase I of the Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home pilot and was awarded over $3.3 million from The John A. Hartford Foundation and additional funders for Phase II of the project. The initiative contributed to the creation of a new textbook for nursing students and long-term care workers and established the Teaching Nursing Home Collaborative, which aims to expose 100% of the nursing homes and schools of nursing in Pennsylvania to Age Friendly Health Systems over three years;

Girl Scout Troop 70709, located in Clymer, become Dementia Friends on October 11.

create new standards for clinical nurse placements in long-term care; and finalize new core curriculum components for geriatric nursing.

JHF led new statewide policy efforts for the Moving Forward Coalition/National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Report on Nursing Facility Quality; partnered with the Pennsylvania DHS and Department of Health's new Center for LTC Innovation; partnered with Age-Friendly Pittsburgh on the Reframing Aging marketing initiative; and completed SAGE training, receiving certification as a culturally competent organization for LGBTQ+ older adults.

JHF continued its leadership in end-of-life care. Staff completed the second Death & Dying Series for Healthcare Professionals. Inspired by the popular Death & Dying Fellowship, the Series was designed to enhance the serious illness communication skills of healthcare professionals who are already in practice. Closure and the Coalition for Quality at the End of Life (CQEL) work continued and expanded with the completion of an OSHER course for seniors and a new online statewide Pennsylvania Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) continuing education curriculum.

Members of CQEL, Robert Arnold, MD; Dillon Stein, DO; Theresa Brown, PhD, BSN, RN; Eric Horwith, MSW, LSW; Scott Miller, MD, MA; and Judith Black, MD, MHA, discuss the current state of hospice care.

Teaching Nursing Home Collaborative partners meet at JHF.

World AIDS Day panel at an AFP event on December 1.

HIV/AIDS

Among its first initiatives in 1991, JHF addressed the AIDS epidemic, joining with a handful of foundations across the nation in an informal network called "Funders Concerned About AIDS." At that time, a diagnosis of HIV was a death sentence. Because of this work, JHF was designated the fiscal agent for Ryan White and other HIV funds in Western Pennsylvania. Since that time, JHF has expanded its work across the Commonwealth by training outreach workers, and regionally by marketing effective treatments, supporting housing and medical/dental services, funding safe needle exchange, advancing collaborations, and regional planning and other interventions. JHF has received numerous awards and recognitions for its HIV/AIDS work.

A Southwestern PA Ryan White Learning Collaborative training session at JHF.

In 2023, JHF worked with local and state leaders to increase the allowable market rates for HIV-positive clients to provide sustainable, safe housing for anyone eligible to receive it. This process allowed **75 additional families** to be housed across Allegheny County and increased housing coverage by $650,000. The program was also able to award a new $350,000 contract to Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR) for their immigration drop-in center. This funding has assisted PAAR in expanding services for Early Intervention, serving some of the most vulnerable populations in the city. JHF also collaborated with local providers to expand case management services, providing more comprehensive, personalized care. The increased funding of $500,000 was used to hire new social workers who can assist with trauma-informed care and aid in reducing caseloads for their peers. In addition, the program helped relaunch an original prevention support program, Project SILK, with the assistance of Allies for Health and Wellbeing. Project SILK was relaunched on Pittsburgh's North Side working out of the new QMNTY Center on East Ohio Street. SILK looks to engage at-risk youth by providing them with life skills, social support, and education on sexual health.

The Minority AIDS Initiative increased funding and added two new providers focusing on immigrant and migrant health populations on the eastern side of the Commonwealth. The program, which started as a pilot in 2012, continues to break expectations by engaging hard-to-reach individuals in need of stable medical care. In October, the program hosted its first in-person, statewide training since the pandemic with **over 30 participants** from across Pennsylvania. The program has been asked to present multiple times at various Pennsylvania DOH activities to highlight its success and achievements.

An additional $425,000 was granted to JHF to increase the AIDS Free Pittsburgh (AFP) media campaign, which advertises services available to rural and suburban communities.

Since the program fully launched in 2023, over three dozen new clients have been identified in need of numerous services ranging from housing to dental care.

AFP continues to increase access to testing in primary care settings to reduce infection by 95% and reduced linkage to care time by connecting 100% of new clients to medical care and access to medication within 12 hours of diagnosis (the national standard is 30 days).

AFP launched a new community advisory board composed of individuals with lived experience and frontline workers as well as participating in the International Fast Track Conference by presenting the success of our work.

Dream Doll, a New York-based rapper and musician, gave an electrifying headlining performance at AFP's annual Too Hot for July event. (Photo by Ryan Michael White)

Outreach workers participate in a biannual learning session, held at EQT Plaza.

Hazell Azzer of AFP with Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey at the Overdose Awareness Day event at the City-County Building.

State Senator John Kane leads a press conference with PA Youth Advocacy Network members announcing legislation to provide students with excused mental health days.

Teen Mental Health

Several years ago, JHF looked at the indicators of health among adolescents in the U.S. and determined that our nation was at the bottom of all developed countries. In short, the U.S. was a bad place to be a teen, and JHF mobilized. Through grassroots advocacy efforts and strategic partnerships advanced by JHF, access to mental health services and support for youth in Allegheny County and across Pennsylvania has expanded, including newly introduced legislation, an advocacy action guide to activate youth as change agents, the opening of teen drop-in centers seeded with JHF support, and continued collaborative work and learning with youth-serving organizations.

In 2023, the PA Youth Advocacy Network organized a Student Mental Health Advocacy Day for **over 100 youth** representing more than 15 youth-serving organizations and school districts. On November 15, teens from 10 counties traveled to Harrisburg to participate in a press conference around Senate Bill 886, a bill for excused mental health days, and met with over 25 legislators to share their experiences and perspectives around improving teen mental health services and supports.

Leading up to the advocacy day, teens partnered with State Senators John Kane and Judy Schwank to draft SB 886, which would ensure K-12 students can take a mental health day without a doctor's note or diagnosis, allowing students to connect with resources and support instead of truancy court. Representative Napoleon Nelson introduced a companion bill in the PA House, HB 1519. If passed, the legislation will enable Pennsylvania to join 12 other states in providing students excused absences from classes to focus on their mental well-being.

PA Youth Advocacy Network teens also developed an advocacy action guide as the culminating project of an eight-week advocacy series to connect teens from across the Commonwealth with a shared commitment to improving mental health supports and services. The guide includes student-created projects that share their perspectives on mental health topics and offer ideas and tools to act. The guide has been shared with members of the Teen Mental Health Collaborative, on social media, and with schools, community-based organizations, and state legislators.

In Allegheny County, access to mental health services and support was expanded through the opening of two teen drop-in spaces with funding provided by JHF. Building on a concept widespread in Australia and New Zealand, JHF planted seeds for replication after the Foundation's 2018 study tour, which included a visit to an Australian headspace centre. The Friendship Circle's The Beacon, a teen wellness and community space in Squirrel Hill providing after-school and evening hours for teens to access stigma-free wellness support and connection with peers, opened with the support of a two-year, $100,000 grant from JHF. UpStreet expanded on its online peer

PA Youth Advocacy Network's proclamation for Teen Mental Health Awareness Day (May 23) was passed and recognized by five counties, including in Allegheny County.

counseling program by opening a physical location in September, offering free drop-in consultation with therapists, scheduled therapy appointments, text-based peer support, and support groups for anyone ages 12–22.

Meanwhile, the Teen Mental Health Collaborative, formed in 2020, continues to bring together youth-serving organizations committed to providing safe spaces for teens, expressive arts and youth voice programs, and mental health support in the community. More than 20 community-based organizations meet quarterly to share strategies and resources. Training on grief and loss, Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Expression (SOGIE), and trauma were provided to members of the Teen Mental Health Collaborative in 2023 in partnership with Highmark Caring Place, Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation, and the Center for Victims.

JHF and operating arm Board members tour the UpStreet facilities during the December All-Boards meeting.

The Teen Mental Health Collaborative's March meeting at Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation.

Pictured from left to right: Rivkee Rudolph, Rabbi Mordy Rudolph, Danny Rosen, Karen Wolk Feinstein, and Debra Caplan at the grand opening of The Beacon.

Jewish Community

Thanks to JHF funding, the Edward and Rose Berman Hillel Jewish University Center of Pittsburgh organized a meal for Israeli college students to connect and discuss their feelings regarding reports of antisemitism.

JHF honors its Montefiore Hospital legacy by giving special attention to the health needs of the Jewish community, both in Pittsburgh and in Israel.

Since its inception, JHF has provided an annual grant to the Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh (JFED) to address the health needs of the Jewish population, including the elderly, children, families with disabled children, and the poor. JHF's commitments to JFED and its related agencies totaled almost $3 million in 2023. This year's annual grant to JFED for $900,000 represents 60% of the approximately $1.5 million allocated to JFED for funding for health, mental health, and human services in the local community. Additional allocations include $1.5 million to the Jewish Association on Aging Renaissance; $50,000 to the Anti-Defamation League in memory of Justin Reid Ehrenwerth; $200,000 to establish the new Justin Reid Ehrenwerth Community Impact Award; $50,000 to The Beacon at The Friendship Circle; $50,000 to the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh's (JCC) 10.27 Healing Partnership Phase II; $25,000 to the *Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle*; $25,000 to Violins of Hope; $25,000 to the Third Annual Eradicate Hate Global Summit; $15,000 to JCC's 10.27 Documentary: Healing; and $10,000 to the Israel Healthcare Foundation.

JHF also approved special emergency grants to support the healthcare needs of Israel's citizens following the terrorist attacks by Hamas that took place on October 7, the continued violence in the Israel-Hamas War, and the rippling impact of antisemitism that has occurred locally and across the U.S. Emergency grants included $100,00 to the Israel Healthcare Foundation (supporting the Clalit HMO), $50,000 to Magen David Adom (the Israeli Red Cross), and $25,000 to Tel Aviv Sexual Assault and Crisis Center to respond to the medical needs and trauma of the Israeli people. Grants totaling $135,000 were awarded to Hillel International, the University of Pittsburgh/ Carnegie Mellon University campus Hillel, and two local Chabad organizations serving these campuses to support the mental health needs of teens and young adults.

(above) JHF staff and Trustees visit the Violins of Hope exhibit. (below) JHF Board member Pat Siger speaks at one of the many events held in conjunction with the Violins of Hope Pittsburgh exhibit, which she co-chaired.

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The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) is an activist and grantmaking foundation with three operating arms: the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative, Health Careers Futures, and the Women's Health Activist Movement Global (WHAMglobal).

JHF offers a unique brand of activist philanthropy to advance healthcare innovation, advocacy, collaboration, and education in the interest of better population health. Our mission is to address a limited number of critical areas of need to build a stronger healthcare safety net, but to do so with high aspirations, intelligent interventions, and maximum creativity.

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