



August 2020 | Jewish Healthcare Foundation news, events, milestones, & more

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A Renewed Mission: Liftoff PGH Coming December 2020

Three years ago, [Liftoff PGH](#) was just a conversation. No one foresaw the public health crisis we now face, nor how reality would collide with our vision. And yet, Liftoff PGH was designed for this very moment. Health care is at the core of societal vitality, but the global pandemic has highlighted grave inequalities and vulnerabilities. This is the time for collective ingenuity, for Pittsburgh to step forward with unusual partnerships and unfettered creativity.

We are at Liftoff.



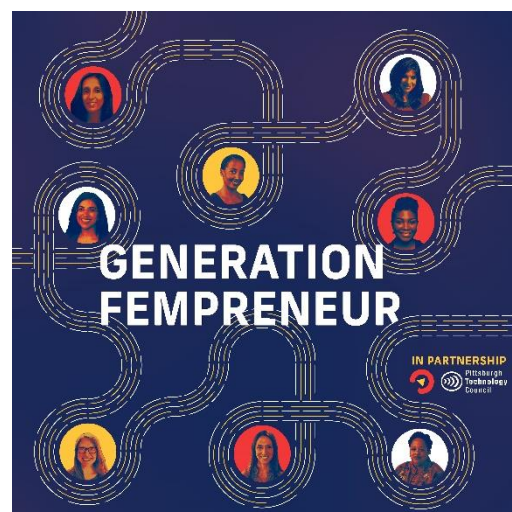
As our region prepares for change with renewed tenacity, Liftoff PGH must meet this challenge with an equally bold proposal. We are excited to announce a new virtual model for our innovation summit, blending augmented reality with digital keynotes and interactive workshops. [Read more about our experiment in collaboration.](#)

This is only the beginning of the journey, and none of us can predict the final destination. But we hope you'll join us for what promises to be an exhilarating month -- [pre-register today!](#) The first 100 people to pre-register as an Early Adopter will receive a LiftoffPGH T-shirt or face mask.

Liftoff PGH and Pittsburgh Tech Council Co-Host Women+ Innovation Series

Liftoff PGH is building a movement of innovators, and our strength derives from the diversity of voices. To showcase and elevate women+ in the innovation spaces of health care and entrepreneurship, Liftoff PGH created *Generation Fempreneur*, a week-long summit featuring 8 leading women breaking down barriers. From August 24 to 28, we were proud to partner with the Pittsburgh Tech Council's *Business as Usual* program, hosted by CEO Audrey Russo, to bring these conversations to the region's business, technology, and community leaders.

More than 340 people tuned in all week to hear from experts in inclusive leadership, in organizational design, in women's health, and in investment and entrepreneurship. Dr. Sonya Borrero, Dr. Tamar Krishnamurti, and Dr. Mehret Birru-Talabi discussed the complications of balancing health equity with the milestones of commercializing their applications supporting reproductive autonomy. Dr. Audrey Murrell and Ayana Ledford broke down the obstacles to women and specifically women of color in



leadership positions. Dr. Courtney Williamson discussed the ways she overcame challenges on her way to founding the medical device company AbiliLife. And Erica Friedman and Kim Cauley Eckel shared the importance of social innovation to tackle large scale systemic issues.

So where are the women+ in innovation? Actually, Dr. Ledford does not like that question. “Women are creating and designing in front of our very eyes. But we are simply not elevating their impact and creating promotional tracks that unearth their discoveries.” Adds Murrell, “This is a not a question of capability, but rather of capital. Racism, unconscious bias, and investment anxiety lead to disparities in investment, which means we do not see representation of diverse leaders even when research tells us that women-run businesses are as successful as their male counterparts.”

There is a long way to go until women+, and particularly women of color, can use the same networks of influence to bring their ideas to light. But as comments poured in, what materializes with absolute clarity is the movement fighting to ensure a new reality. As Dr. Murrell articulated, “We cannot separate issues of ethics and social responsibility with diversity and inclusion.” So until we honor the vision and experience of women+, of our own generation fempreneur, Pittsburgh’s own potential remains unfulfilled.

Watch the series on YouTube through the Pittsburgh Tech Council’s [channel here](#).

Register [here](#) for our next upcoming speaker event, Business Resiliency of Health Care in the “New Normal,” in partnership with PNC on September 10 from 12-1pm.

AIDS Free Pittsburgh and True T Pgh Co-Host HIV Awareness Events

July was way too hot this year, so [AIDS Free Pittsburgh](#) brought *Too Hot for July: Black AF*, the initiative’s annual HIV awareness event, to August. This year, *Too Hot for July: Black AF* was divided into three events over three days, which included a combination of physical and remote components to ensure the safety, health, and wellness of the community while still providing quality, meaningful opportunities for connection.

The first event was a HIV mini-conference, during which healthcare providers shared updates on HIV testing, prevention, and treatment, as well as transgender health care and COVID-19.

Community leaders voiced some of their concerns and experiences with racial disparities in health care and housing in the region. The conference ended with a powerful presentation by Jacen Zhu, an adult entertainer and founder of the initiative #TakedownTina, which addresses the dangers of meth use in the Black gay community. Jacen is also known as “Undetectable Man” for [PrEP Squad](#)



Kha'DJ prerecords their DJ set for Too Hot for July Black AF: A Quarantine Ball.

[DC](#), a group of volunteers who promote positive sexual health for men who love and have sex with men.



Rebecca Pope and Skip Sanders of Hear Corp in their command center directing DJ Taylor Waits for Too Hot for July Black AF: A Quarantine Ball.

As the second event, [True T Pgh](#) hosted a Queer State of the Union to address the community on components of advocacy, education, empowerment, and entertainment for the consumption of queer people of color and our allies. Speakers and performances addressed topics including Black Trans lives, Queer Black youth advocacy, HIV, and stigma in the Black community. True T Pgh Co-CEO John Easter said the vision to create opportunities for Black Queer people to connect in a safe, virtual space “inspired [True T Pgh and AIDS Free Pittsburgh] to do this whole week of events, because we felt we were creatively attached to something that could make a difference... we want to do virtual things that are meaningful. It made us all more hopeful for what we all do and what’s happening.”

Too Hot for July: Black AF closed out with a quarantine vogue ball. Four local DJs prerecorded their sets, and the night commenced with a contest consisting of three categories: Best Dressed, Painted Face, and a vogue dance battle judged by local ballroom legends. Due to safety, we were only able to have a few in-person participants, but joy and celebration was felt. Winners took home trophies and cash prizes.

Easter added, “The response we got back about this event has been the best response we have had in a long time, and personally this has been our favorite event we’ve done since we’ve been in our space so far, since March of 2019.”

Over 6,000 people viewed the events on Facebook and Twitch. Sponsors for the events included [True T Pgh](#), [Allies for Health + Wellbeing](#), [Central Outreach Wellness Center](#), [Macedonia FACE](#), University of Pittsburgh’s HIV Treatment and Prevention Research Clinic, and [Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania](#).

JHF Suggests COVID-19 Solutions for Local Universities

In response to recent concerns about COVID-19 outbreaks on local university campuses, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation surveyed our Board members and Window newsletter subscribers to generate creative solutions for campuses.

We present to you the results of last week's survey on "Keeping our Campuses and our Communities Safe." In 2 ½ days, we received over [100 helpful ideas](#) to prevent the outbreaks that have plagued other cities.



Clearly, we touched a chord. When the nation learned about the outbreaks of COVID-19 at the University of North Carolina, Iowa State and Notre Dame early last week, there was little surprise. College students who have been confined for months, often in their parents' homes, are likely to savor their freedom in every respect. Simply hoping they will mask and social distance—abandon the parties and social life central to college life—was wishful thinking.

The safety of the students, as well as the faculty, staff, neighbors, and health personnel at nearby hospitals, requires vigorous and innovative measures. It is an ethical and public health obligation. The suggestions that we've assembled, thanks to our many respondents, are worth serious consideration. Hopefully, these ideas will prove helpful to our university officials as they accelerate protections.

We tried to remove redundant and Orwellian measures and sort these ideas into categories. We would like to hear from you and welcome additions.

Click [here](#) to read more about the survey results.

If you have not yet completed the survey and would like to do so, please click this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3Z6HLZ3>

Summer Internship on Mental Health Advocacy Empowers Youth

Fourteen students from Pittsburgh and Allegheny County had a transformative experience this summer through a virtual internship focused on mental health and advocacy. The internship, part of [Partner4Work](#)'s Learn & Earn Program, was facilitated by Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) staff, Deborah Murdoch and Carol Frazer, together with Erin Barr of [Jewish Family and Community Services](#) (JFCS) and Namita Dwarakanath of [Children's Hospital Pittsburgh](#).

Students from six schools learned about mental wellness, conducted research on mental health disorders, and identified coping strategies and actionable ways to help a struggling friend. They also learned about using art and research data for advocacy and had the opportunity to share their perspectives on responding to teen mental health with community stakeholders.

The interns learned about advocacy skills from several guest speakers, including Rev. Sally Jo Snyder, acting director of Consumer Health Coalition; Ayala Rosenthal, youth advocate with the PA Youth Advocacy Network; Sarah Pesi, JCC teen engagement coordinator; and Morgan Overton, JHF community engagement and policy associate. Intern Puja Neopanay said these presentations taught her a great deal: "I have an interest in diversity and inclusion, and it's really nice to know that I can advocate for something I'm passionate about." Students also learned about potential careers during informational interviews, including an interview about psychiatry with JHF Board Member Dr. Mindy Hutchinson.

For the finale, students presented suggestions for mental wellness in education, workplaces, and communities. The youth recommended that adults should model mental wellness and listen to teens more often, and that leaders across settings should incorporate mental wellness resources and education into their systems.

The Learn & Earn program empowered youth to speak up about their ideas and needs as the new school year approaches, in a time when supporting teen mental health is essential. During the education presentation, Learn & Earn intern Musya Presman shared her thoughts: "I think it's really important to start open conversations and create more safe spaces for mental health in school and at home." The students also suggested that schools provide tailored mental health education to students and faculty, create safe spaces to better support teens, and acknowledge how their home responsibilities impact their mental health and ability to succeed in school, particularly during the pandemic.



Interns Moi Moi, Musya, Tulasha, and Puja explored mental wellness and advocacy this summer.

What's one word or phrase you would use to describe your internship experience?



Interns created a "word splash" to describe their experience this summer – top words included "educational," "unique," and "fun." We couldn't ask for better feedback!

After attending the Learn & Earn students' presentation, [Stand Together](#) Project Coordinator Danyelle Borish said she was impressed with the students' knowledge and "their ability to assess their own schools and provide introspective solutions to the challenges they face." Borish said, "It's so important that youth find their voice and advocate for themselves, especially in the difficult age of adolescence. Adults, even with the best intentions, can sometimes 'miss the mark' and miss out on opportunities to support youth in ways that work for them." Borish, who guest presented for the interns with Stand Together Project Director Michael Gruber, is working to adapt the Stand Together program to a virtual model for schools in the Fall.

Interns also presented to the Partner4Work and JFCS Learn & Earn staff to share ideas for incorporating mental wellness programming into future workforce development programs. They shared the connection between mental health and commitment to work and encouraged worksite supervisors to check-in on mental health with student interns, especially during the pandemic. Students shared feedback that offering an internship focused on mental health and advocacy would be beneficial in future summers.

JHF Testifies on Maternal Mortality for PA Democratic Policy Committee

During an August 12 joint virtual hearing of the PA Senate and House Democratic Policy Committee, Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) Chief Policy Officer Robert Ferguson, MPH presented remarks on further action to address maternal mortality and improve quality of care.

The United States' maternal mortality rate is three times greater than that of any other developed country, Ferguson said, noting that rates are rising across the country and in Pennsylvania. These issues are complicated by systemic racism, substance use disorder rates, and the challenges of being pregnant and giving birth during a global pandemic.



Robert Ferguson testified at the PA House and Senate Democratic Policy Committee hearing virtually.

Ferguson recommended to the Committee several actions to address maternal mortality through foundational structures yet to be put in place. These include improving equitable access to doulas, modernizing licensure laws to support the midwifery workforce in Pennsylvania, analyzing how policies are facilitating or alleviating racial disparities, and building out maternal levels of care for

risk appropriate care (as Pennsylvania only has five birth centers, which have received an influx of transfer requests during the COVID-19 pandemic).

These recommended actions would build on the creation of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC) and the Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PA PQC) to improve maternal health outcomes. Housed within the Department of Health, the MMRC reviews maternal deaths, identifies root causes, and develops strategies to reduce preventable morbidity, mortality, and disparities. JHF and its operating organization, the [Women's Health Activist Movement Global](#) (WHAMglobal), administer the PA PQC, which has launched over 100 quality improvement programs to improve standards of care for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, to identify and treat maternal Opioid Use Disorder, and to adopt practices related to hemorrhage and severe hypertension. The PA PQC is funded by the [Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs](#) and [the Henry L. Hillman Foundation](#). It has grown to include 65 birth hospitals and NICUs, representing 87% of live births, and 14 health plans across the Commonwealth.

Recently, the PA PQC spotlighted the roles of doulas during COVID-19 and worked with AccessMatters to offer DOH-funded implicit bias trainings. The PA PQC is also preparing to rollout protocols to improve maternal depression screening and follow-up, and to reduce racial disparities. In July, the PA PQC launched a Maternal Depression and Racial Disparities Task Force co-chaired by Chaunda Cunningham from Healthy Start and Saleemah McNeil from Oshun Family Center.

Read more in the Daily Local News of Chester County: [Testimony: Pandemic, bias worsens high death rate for US mothers](#)

Watch a recording of the hearing on Senator Lisa Boscola's website here: [Policy Committee Hearing on Innovative Responses to Maternal Mortality](#)

JHF Highlights Crisis Still Plaguing Skilled Nursing Facilities on *Business as Usual*

On August 5, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) returned to the daily noontime program [Business as Usual](#) to discuss the ongoing crisis COVID-19 presents to skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and older adults. The [Pittsburgh Technology Council](#)'s daily virtual interview series has remained a consistent and invaluable source of insight, providing direct access to influential leaders throughout the pandemic.

Since March, President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Tech Council Audrey Russo has interviewed dozens of prominent government officials, business executives, and members of the nonprofit and foundation community on timely and pertinent topics. JHF was invited as a subject matter expert in health and senior care [back in May](#), but as the community still lacks adequate solutions to the



Nancy Zions discusses skilled nursing facilities and COVID-19 during the Business as Usual program.

ongoing emergency in long-term care facilities three months later, JHF returned to further highlight the crisis.

During the episode, Nick Vizzoca, President & CEO at Vincentian Collaborative System and Nancy Zions, COO & Chief Program Officer at JHF, discussed the state of SNFs, including how the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated issues with funding, staffing, and resources that have plagued the industry for years. Both Vizzoca and Zions passionately illustrated the stark reality facing long-term care facilities during this pandemic, and they advocated for drastic steps to protect residents and staff. Vizzoca and Zions also called for funding reform to support these facilities into the future.

Zions presented plans to support PA long-term care facilities with testing, staffing, and education through the Regional Response Health Collaborative Program (RRHCP), a five-month, statewide collaboration between the [PA Department of Human Services](#), the [PA Department of Health](#), and the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#), in which JHF is a lead educator. Over the weeks since the *Business as Usual* conversation, the RRHCP has conducted nearly 650 on-site visits to assist long-term care facilities. The RRHCP call centers have received more than 500 calls to assist facilities with universal testing, staffing support, PPE and testing kits, and JHF has launched a statewide learning network available to all long-term care facilities with twice weekly webinars on topics related to infection control and the latest guidance for responding to and mitigating spread of COVID-19.

A recording of the *Business as Usual* conversation is available on [YouTube](#) and the [PGH Tech Council Website](#).

Honoring Terry Starz

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation is dedicating a bench through the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy to honor Dr. Terry Starz, a beloved member of the community who has served his patients for over 40 years. Dr. Starz is an internist and rheumatologist at Arthritis and Internal Medicine Associates – UPMC, as well as a clinical professor of medicine and occupational therapy at the University of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Starz has been a Jewish Healthcare Foundation and Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative board member since 2018. Throughout his career, Starz has been active with medical societies including the Allegheny County Medical Society and the Pennsylvania Rheumatology Society (as well as serving as a past president of both), and with the American College of Rheumatology. He has served on dozens of committees and in support of initiatives at Pitt, UPMC, and regional hospitals, and has received many top awards for his board and community service, including from the national and regional chapters of the Arthritis Foundation.



His honors and awards include the 2015 Arthritis Foundation National Healthcare Professional of the Year, being named among the 2010 Top Doctors in Pittsburgh Magazine, and the 2006 Pressman Award by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College of Physicians [“in recognition of his commitment to his patients and his community.”](#)

Dr. Starz spearheaded and championed the *Fit with a Physician* program, and his commitment to seniors is embodied in his dedication to growing the program. To honor Dr. Starz’ dedication to fitness and wellness in the community, the bench will be placed in Highland Park, near the fountain below the reservoir. The Jewish Healthcare Foundation staff, your fellow trustees, and the community thank you, Dr. Starz! See you in our parks.

JCC Program Supports Students During Pandemic

The [Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh](#) (JCC) is hosting a program, called [All Day at the J](#), to support families during the pandemic. The full-day program is an extension of their childcare programs and will provide students in grades K-6 an opportunity to complete their online learning requirements with additional support. The program will ensure that children are able to engage in a full slate of activities to ensure that their mental, emotional and physical health are all being attended to in accordance with CDC and state guidelines, while parents return to work. The program will run from September 1 to October 30 at JCC Squirrel Hill. The [Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative](#) is supporting the JCC by providing guidance in process design for safe, reliable and efficient drop-off and pick-up practices, as the JCC welcomes roughly 140 students in addition to their roughly 80 Early Childhood Development families, to ensure the safety of all families and staff.



Read more in the TribLive: [Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh offers program for children during remote learning](#)

PA PQC Letter from Dr. Levine

In an August 20 letter, PA Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine thanked PA maternal health providers for their work during the pandemic and made several recommendations, including that providers should allow a support person and doula to be present during labor and delivery. As administrators of the PA Perinatal Quality Collaborative, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and WHAMglobal thank Dr. Levine for the DOH's continued support and partnership during this difficult time. Read the full letter [here](#).



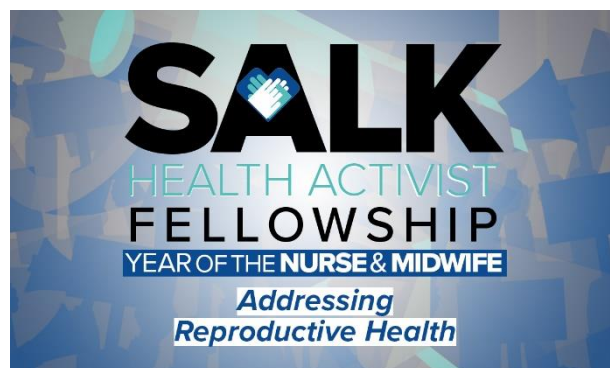
World Patient Safety Day Event on Sept 17

On World Patient Safety Day (September 17, 2020), Karen Feinstein will speak at the Patient Safety Movement Foundation's virtual Unite for Safe Care event. The event will center discussion on developing a National Patient Safety Authority as a solution to the United States' decades-long issue with preventable medical error. Join us on the 17th to advocate for this crucial cause, and learn more at the Unite for Safe Care website [here](#).



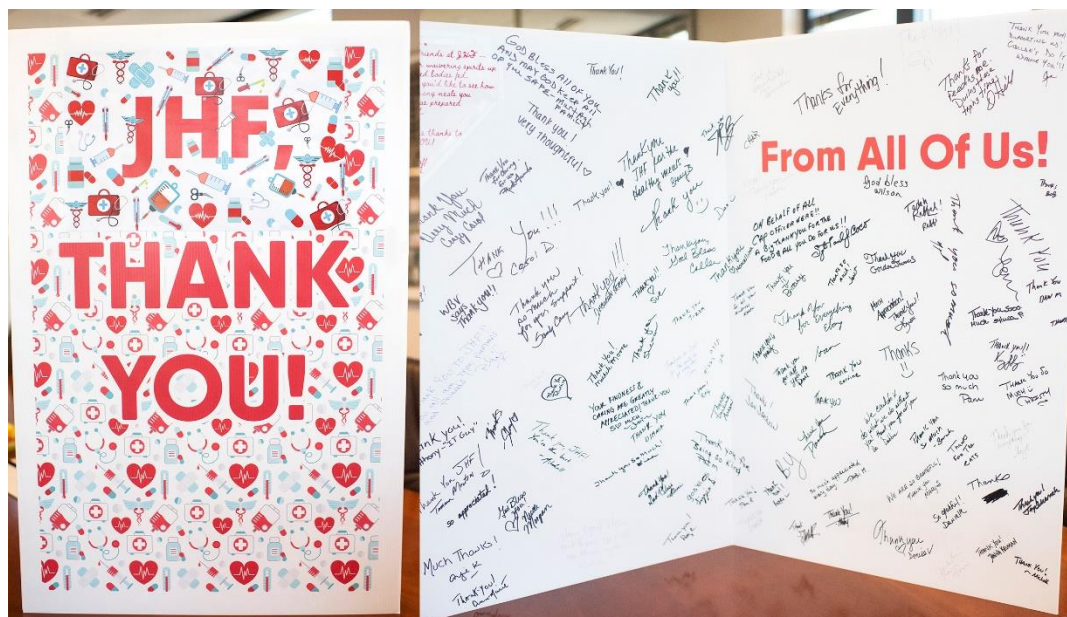
Salk Health Activist Fellowship

Are you passionate about critical reproductive health issues, nursing, and midwifery? Do you want to mobilize action and get a candidate's buy in for your vision? The all-virtual 2020 Salk Activist Fellowship will give you the opportunity to advocate for a renewed platform for women's health and effect lasting change. Learn more [here](#).



Thank You Card from JAA

We were so pleased to hear from the Jewish Association on Aging about their successful meal delivery service and receive this giant card! Take a peek at what it takes to prepare the meals for their staff in this video [here](#).



Automating Patient Safety today at 5:30

Join us as we delve into the power of autonomous technologies to reduce medical error. Health Systems Innovation Lead at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), Michael McShea will explore how technology integrates with current and new systems.



Family Spinner Shoutout

Congratulations to the Family Spinner Team on the growth of their idea! The team is finalizing the launch of their tabletop spinner game, which aims to help families engage in meaningful, authentic conversations. We are so proud to have been a partner along the way. Read more in the Post-Gazette [here](#).

