



June 2021 | Jewish Healthcare Foundation news, events, milestones, & more

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Pennsylvania Teaching Nursing Home Pilot Aims to Transform Care Model

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed to a nation the clinical, financial, social, emotional, and infection control vulnerabilities of our current facilities—for residents and workers. The urgency to learn from a pandemic that killed over 184,000 residents and staff in long-term care became apparent. In response, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) is supporting a new initiative, the Pennsylvania Teaching Nursing Home project, to trial and validate a better model of residential care for the Commonwealth's frailest residents. JHF operating arm [Health Careers Futures](#)



will launch the pilot in three teaching nursing home partnerships in Pennsylvania. In support of the pilot, Health Careers Futures received three grants totaling \$974,110 from the [John A. Hartford Foundation](#), the [Henry L. Hillman Foundation](#), and JHF.

The project will revive a model of care that proved successful in the 1980s: a “teaching” environment where students, academics, and healthcare workers collaborate to improve care for residents. This model provides opportunities for researchers to experiment with new methods of care, and for students to foster careers in nursing homes and geriatrics.

“The preceding fifteen months, while extraordinarily difficult for long-term care, yielded a number of natural experiments demonstrating that there are creative, innovative ideas in the field worthy of further review and study. This effort will provide a research and pilot platform for what we believe will be helpful concepts to improve quality of life in long-term care.” added David K. Roger, President of the Henry L. Hillman Foundation.

The partnerships will equip existing nursing facility staff with clinical, training, research, and quality improvement support, creating a critical bridge between bedside care and academic innovation and clinical expertise. With increased opportunities to learn first-hand and in a real-life setting, students and staff will enhance their clinical skills while improving the functioning and health status of seniors. Project leaders hope the results of the pilot will inform a better model for ongoing clinical quality improvement and safety in long-term care.

For decades, JHF has advocated for improvements and reform to the holes in the long-term care system, and this project is a landmark in JHF's work. [What COVID-19 Exposed in Long-Term Care](#), the short award-winning documentary JHF produced in 2020, illuminated how a history of lackluster resources and underfunding created a perfect environment for COVID-19 to wreak havoc. JHF commissioned a study by the LeadingAge LTSS Center @ UMass Boston, [“The Case for Funding: What is Happening to Pennsylvania's Nursing Homes?”](#), which documents the critical

role that nursing homes play in the care of older and vulnerable adults in Pennsylvania. The resulting January 2021 report characterizes issues, including changes in Medicaid reimbursement, that will affect the utilization and financial viability of nursing homes in the state. JHF is supporting a forthcoming second study, [The Quality of Care in Nursing Homes](#) by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, which will present policy priorities to redesign current skilled nursing models. The study is convening a Committee on the Quality of Care in Nursing Homes over one year to examine how our nation delivers, regulates, finances, and measures quality of nursing home care.

The Pennsylvania Teaching Nursing Homes project will begin on July 1, 2021 and will run through 2023 in three regions of Pennsylvania (Eastern, Central and Western). The three funding organizations recognized their shared interest in improving the care of nursing home residents and supporting the current and future workforce of skilled nursing homes. The project will draw on the existing resources from the John A. Hartford Foundation's Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative and the Jewish Healthcare Foundation's Full Court Press Senior Residential Living Team, while integrating lessons learned from the Teaching Nursing Home implementation of the 1980s (originally supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). The pilot will engage key academic partners at The Pennsylvania State University College of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing) and University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing.

"The pandemic has shown us the multiple ways we have failed to appropriately integrate nursing homes into the continuum of care and the continuum of nursing education," said Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN, President, The John A. Hartford Foundation. "This program, which has previously shown positive results without the benefit of the Internet, can now be revisited with these world class nursing schools."

"The pandemic tragedy in nursing homes brought attention to the serious challenges to our long-term care industry that have been building for decades. We are proud to bring together a coalition of funding, academic, and health system partners to test a new approach in our Commonwealth," said Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD, President and CEO of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and Health Careers Futures. "Inspiring examples like Hebrew SeniorLife in Boston have demonstrated the positive impact on patients and staff in a teaching nursing home model. We believe this pilot could help pave the way for better long-term care across the country."

Read the Pittsburgh Business Times' coverage here: [JHF, Hillman Foundation launch program to improve long-term care](#)

Coverage in McKnight's Long-Term Care News: [Major nursing home pilot looks to the past for cues about collaboration, innovation](#)

Read more in the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle: [JHF partners in pilot 'teaching nursing home'](#)

Read more in Businesswire [here](#).

New Patient Safety Fellowship Examines Safety in Senior Residences

The pandemic has revealed, at a staggering level, the safety issues facing the frailest older adults in various long-term care settings. Although these challenges are not new, the pandemic has created broad inertia to explore new models that ensure the safety and wellness of seniors. To foster next-generation healthcare leaders who will reinvent the future of senior residential living and geriatrics, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation's 2021 Patient Safety Fellowship delves into the challenges and opportunities at the nexus of senior care and safety.



The 2021 Patient Safety Fellows explore the future of senior care.

Senior living options must embrace creative solutions that help older adults age well and safely in a range of settings. This summer's 30 fellows—representing over 20 disciplines, 11 different colleges and universities, and five states—have begun exploring existing and conceptual models for transforming our community and healthcare systems. Divided into four interdisciplinary teams, the fellows will craft a new model of care that maximizes safety and quality of life for a case study of an older adult. Fellows will pitch to members of JHF's Senior Care Full Court Press Team during the finale later this summer, making the case for how their models will address some of the challenges of our current systems and create dialogue about the opportunities and challenges they have identified.

Since the Fellowship began on June 1, each week the fellows have explored a core element of their long-term care models. Early sessions overviewed aging in the modern world and current best practice models, while recent sessions examined *The Past, Present, and Future of Long-Term Care Policy* and *Aging Well with Safety and Quality at the Forefront*. Fellows engaged with expert guest speakers, including **State Senator Maria Collett**, JD, BSN, Pennsylvania Senate Aging & Youth Committee Minority Chair; **Anne Ellett**, NP, MSN, Founder & Executive Director at Memory Care Support LLC; **Bobbi Jo Haden**, Vice President of Retirement Services at Presbyterian Senior Care Network; **Fatemeh Hashtroudi**, Director of Quality Improvement at Community LIFE; **Marissa Hoover**, DEd, Director of Development at the Penn State Smarthome Research Initiative; **Kathy Gillespie**, CEO of Clearfield County Area of Agency on Aging, Inc; **Georgia Goodman**, Director of Governmental Affairs at LeadingAge PA; **Ruth Guilinger**, MD, Medical Director at LIFE Pittsburgh; **Eric Rodriguez**, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Division of Geriatric Medicine; **Susan Ryan**, Senior Director at the Green House Project; **State Senator Judy Ward**, RN, Pennsylvania Senate Aging & Youth Committee Chair; and **Gail Weidman**, Director of Policy & Regulatory Affairs at the Pennsylvania Health Care Association.

“It’s hard to fight for a cause or understand its purpose when we don’t see how it impacts us in the moment. Initially when I started the Patient Safety Fellowship, I was ready to learn about ways to facilitate change for the older adults in my life, but over time, I’ve realized that I’m here for me. Aging is inevitable regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status and so we need to look beyond today to ensure our safety for the years to come,” said Patient Safety Fellow Martha Nkangabwa, MS, Program Consultant with the Neighborhood Learning Alliance.

In upcoming sessions, the fellows will have virtual visits with four local senior living and senior care organizations: Community LIFE, Cross Keys Village, The Jewish Association on Aging’s AHAVA Memory Care Center of Excellence, and Vincentian Collaborative System. Future sessions will continue to focus on ways to enhance systems to maximize safety and quality, including considerations for workforce and design.

“The Patient Safety Fellowship has allowed me to engage with speakers and peers from different areas of the healthcare sector who all have the same focus: quality patient care for the elderly,” said John Bielewicz, MSOL, graduate student in healthcare administration and management at Point Park University and the director of supply chain at St. Clair Hospital. “The opportunity to understand the options that are being created and the many other insights are allowing me to take note on how I can continue to change and work towards better care. I am looking forward to the remaining weeks and focusing on our final project to collaborate on a solution and use these learnings towards my future in the industry.”

High Schoolers Design Tech Solutions in Young Innovators Healthcare Fellowship

On June 17th, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) launched its first-ever summer fellowship for high school students, the Young Innovators Healthcare Fellowship, funded through grants from the Grable Foundation and the Benedum Foundation. In a collaborative and creative environment, youth across the Pittsburgh region will explore healthcare careers and design technology solutions for current healthcare problems, while gaining entrepreneurial skills and engaging with young professional mentors.



The Fellowship is a spin-off of [Liftoff PGH 2020](#), JHF's health innovation initiative that convened leaders across Pittsburgh's technology, health, education, and entrepreneurship sectors for our region's first virtual healthcare innovation summit. The Fellowship is virtual and will run for eight weeks, through August 5th.

The 24 fellows represent 9th-12th grades, attending Pine Richland High School, South Fayette High School, North Allegheny High School, Winchester Thurston School, Peters Township High School, Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy, River Hill High School, Fox Chapel Area High School, and a homeschool program. The fellows have interests in public health, biotech/robotics,

medicine, healthcare access and equity, rural and low-income communities, computer science in health, mental health, neuroscience, and entrepreneurship.

During the kick-off session, Fellows met the JHF staff, participated in a team-building activity, and learned about community mapping, a skill they will use in their projects to design a solution for a current healthcare problem.

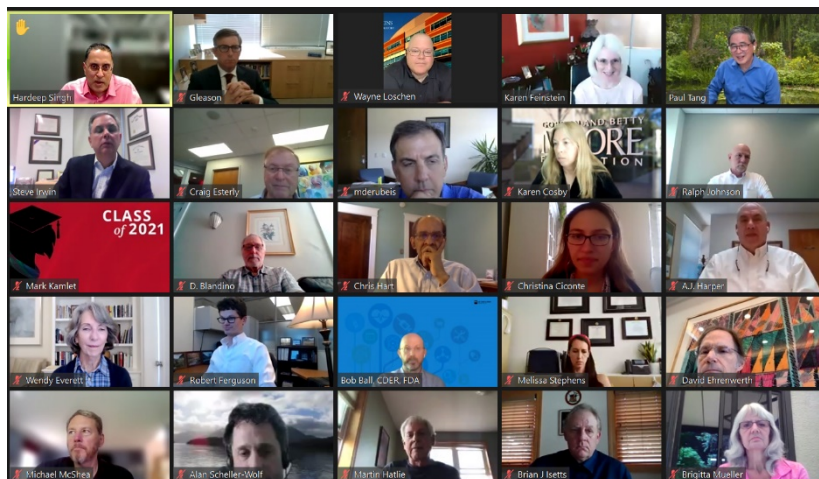
On June 24, the *Defining Health and Healthcare* session, Tiffany Taulton, MSPPM, Director of Community Initiatives at Hazelwood Initiative spoke about community health and the impact of social determinants of health. She emphasized the importance of tailoring resources to meet community needs and uplifting community voices. Jim Withers, MD, FACP, Founder and Medical Director of Operation Safety Net, spoke about his journey into the field of street medicine and provided insight from how he had to rethink approaches to traditional healthcare for the individuals most left out of it. Carol Frazer, LPC, Practice Transformation Specialist for the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative, engaged the youth in a discussion on identifying challenges in healthcare.

In the coming weeks, fellows will explore topics including design, mentoring, health innovation, and careers in health and technology, while working in small groups to design their own solutions to today's healthcare problems. For the finale on August 5th, fellows will present their projects in a virtual pitch session.

Full Court Press Convenes National Data & Patient Safety Experts

On June 17, the Patient Safety Full Court Press Team met to discuss data analytics and human factors engineering opportunities for the proposed National Patient Safety Board (NPSB), hearing from several national experts. The presentations and ensuing conversation demonstrated clear opportunities for an NPSB to leverage existing data and other successful models of monitoring, as well as innovative engineering strategies, to make an impact on patient safety.

Patient Safety Full Court Press Team and Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative Board Co-Chair Steven Irwin, JD opened the meeting and gave an update on the NPSB Policy and Advocacy Coalition's work. Several new groups have joined the coalition, and the proposal is garnering attention in Washington, D.C. The Coalition is continuing to focus on securing co-sponsors.



Patient Safety Full Court Press Team members gathered to discuss opportunities in data analytics and human factors engineering.

Paul Tang, MD, MS, Adjunct Professor at the Stanford Clinical Excellence Research Center and a member of the Health and Medicine Division Committee of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), spoke on the [NAM Committee's review of AHRQ's draft report on patient safety](#). He commented on how the country is at a relative standstill in patient safety progress. Dr. Tang discussed suggested strategies to enhance the surveillance of patient safety data while reducing the burden on individuals and organizations to collect and manage the data. Technology, including artificial intelligence, and automated data transmission from electronic health records could help to accomplish these goals, Dr. Tang noted. A Pittsburgher, Dr. Tang previously worked as the Vice President and Chief Health Transformation Officer for IBM Watson Health.

Robert Ball, MD, MPH, ScM, Deputy Director of the Office of Surveillance and Epidemiology, Center for Biologics and Evaluation Research at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) presented information on the FDA's Sentinel System, which monitors medical product safety. In 2019, Dr. Ball shared, the FDA established a new Sentinel innovation center, and actively works with existing data to prevent problems with drugs and medical devices.

Wayne Loschen, MS, Software Engineer/Project Manager at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (JHU APL) spoke on the laboratory's ESSENCE disease surveillance system, which governments and health organizations can use to process large amounts of health data and detect potential outbreaks of disease. ESSENCE has been used to surveil many diseases, including Zika virus, Ebola, influenza, and COVID-19, and to monitor mass gatherings and emergencies/natural disasters. Through the National Syndromic Surveillance Program, 71% of U.S. emergency departments currently contribute emergency department data, which the CDC manages with ESSENCE.

Jonathan Gleason, MD, Executive Vice President and James D. and Mary Jo Danella Chief Quality Officer at Jefferson Health shared how human factors engineering could be used to reduce medical error. Dr. Gleason described human factors engineering as "socio-technical" work, where humans and machines are intimately partnered to prevent errors. Rather than using education and behavior change to prevent errors, human factors engineering modifies equipment and systems to better fit human needs while increasing safety. This has already been applied in the aviation industry and has potential for wider application in health care.

The Patient Safety Full Court Press Team will next meet in July to discuss further steps for building and advancing the NPSB proposal.

Maternity Full Court Press Team Responds to WIC Crisis

On June 28, the Maternity Full Court Press Team met to discuss the current crisis with the crucial Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program in Pennsylvania. In 2020, the disruptive request for applications process to renew WIC agency funding caused the loss of WIC agencies across the state, and enrollment has been decreasing steadily in recent years. If the current trajectory is followed, the Allegheny County



Allegheny County Health Department Director Debra Bogen, MD spoke at the Maternity Full Court Press meeting on PA WIC.

Health Department will no longer be the local WIC provider after 9/30/22, unless additional action is taken. Similar effects will be felt across the state. The Full Court Press Team explored these issues and potential solutions for Pennsylvania WIC.

Maternity Full Court Press and Women's Health Activist Movement Global Board Chair Pat Siger gave the welcome and an update on the Full Court Press strategy to certify and reimburse doulas and perinatal community health workers. She shared that the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) convened a statewide Doula & Perinatal CHW Advisory Group with over 100 members. Within the Advisory Group, a Doula Alliance led by five doulas are gaining consensus on definitions, core competencies, and standards to create a doula certification program in Pennsylvania and to reimburse certify doulas. Siger then commented on the urgency of the situation related to WIC.

JHF President and CEO Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD introduced Ann Torregrossa, JD, Executive Director of the PA Health Funders Collaborative, who gave a call to action on PA WIC. Torregrossa emphasized the importance of WIC and advocated for changes to address the barriers to clients accessing the program, such as allowing online purchasing and telehealth. Torregrossa called for the Full Court Press Team to spread information about increased WIC benefits and advocate for federal and state improvements to the program.

Debra Bogen, MD, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) then discussed the impact of the request for applications on WIC agencies and Allegheny County. She shared that ACHD is currently appealing to remain a WIC agency, as the removal would be detrimental to both staffing and service for WIC in the county. She called for greater transparency about the application review process. She also echoed Ann Torregrossa's calls for breaking down barriers to WIC access. To that end, Dr. Bogen shared that ACHD is moving ahead with their proposed plans

to partner and colocate WIC services in healthcare facilities in Allegheny County as a key strategy to improve access.

Senator Judith Schwank, 11th Legislative District, Chairwoman of the Women's Health Caucus joined the conversation on legislative involvement in PA WIC action. To improve communication and collaboration in the future, Senator Schwank shared, legislation is being introduced to create a state WIC advisory council comprised of diverse stakeholders. Senator Schwank asked the Full Court Press Team to send letters to state administration in support of PA WIC.

Carrie Dinsmore, President of the Pennsylvania WIC Association, offered additional comments. She discussed the declining WIC participation rate across the state, citing problems with outdated EBT cards, program and access barriers, outdated practices, and transportation barriers. Dinsmore warned that decreased enrollment will continue if WIC agencies are changed as currently determined in the request for applications.

Darlena Birch, MBA, RDN, Senior Public Health Nutritionist, National WIC Association discussed opportunities to increase awareness of WIC cash value benefits. Birch shared about the increase in benefits for fresh fruits and vegetables, and she shared messaging toolkits and campaigns to increase awareness about the extra benefit availability. As an example, the National WIC Association shared an action alert with members to generate advocacy, promoting funding and expansion of WIC nationally. Further discussion on national approaches to using WIC awareness communication toolkits will follow through the Maternity Full Court Press.

The Full Court Press Team further discussed immediate actions to take to stop the request for applications, increase awareness of expanded WIC benefits, and support enrollment in PA WIC. Pat Siger then gave the closing remarks, which summarized a great deal of support for PA WIC and energy around advocacy.

Read more about recent changes to PA WIC in the Philadelphia Inquirer. This article quotes Ann Torregrossa: [Pa. awarding Philadelphia WIC program to Temple University, taking it from agency that ran it for 42 years](#)

Seniors Full Court Press Team “Travels” Around the World in 80 Minutes

On June 10, the Senior Residential Living Full Court Press Team “traveled” around the world from the comfort of their homes to explore creative, uplifting models of care, senior living, and social policy implemented in many countries, and to consider what could be applied in the United States. The 80-minute session took team members to Denmark, Spain, Sweden, and Japan, countries that are embracing the changing demographics and technologies that could support more seniors to age independently at home. The Team, chaired by Eric Rodriguez, MD, MPH, also welcomed guest expert speakers to provide their insights on the models.



International models designed with seniors in mind allow couples to safely live together as they age.

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) has often looked to international models for program and policy inspiration, noted JHF President & CEO Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD, describing past study tours completed including Australia, Toronto, and Spain. This session also built on a program JHF organized and presented at an April 2021 International Women’s Forum Women in Health Care Special Interest Group meeting, to explore international, innovative senior care models.

In Denmark, the team learned about Dementia Villages, residential communities designed to support senior couples to live and age well together, safely. Located on an island, the project has expanded an existing care center into a self-contained village, with 125 homes, that hopes to give persons with dementia a safer place to live and a more fulfilling life than they might find in a typical care center. In Sweden, policies with similar goals have been made to help couples live together through old age, through public-private partnerships.

For Spain, the team heard about the work of Mercè Boada Rovira, MD, PhD, Chief Medical Officer of private non-profit organization [Fundacio ACE](#) in Barcelona, Spain. Dr. Boada Rovira’s dementia work and research focuses on improving diagnosis, personal patient attention, and respite programs for families, in contrast to the U.S. focus on drug and advanced disease research for people with dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. In 2019, current JHF Board Chair Debra Caplan, MPA, Dr. Feinstein, and JHF COO and Chief Program Officer Nancy Zionts, MBA had met with Dr. Rovira on their study tour and got to see first-hand the innovative programming and research she leads. Her organization, Fundacio ACE, as a day care center for adults with early-stage Alzheimer’s, provides tailored diagnostics, non-pharmacological therapies, and a training and education program for patients and families, while conducting innovative research. Dr. Rovira stressed the feminization of dementia, with women disproportionately bearing both the burden of the disease and the caregiving responsibilities. She emphasized the need to examine how to support women affected by dementia (both patients and families).

Focusing on Japan, Margarita Estévez-Abe, PhD, associate professor of political science at Syracuse University spoke on Japan's aging policies, workforce, and outcomes. She noted that Japan's high-quality long-term care is funded by a social security system, which supports their senior population, part of the most aged society in the world. Japanese nursing homes were much better protected from COVID-19 in the early days of the pandemic because of their safety net, and the country overall has had a small pandemic death toll, she noted.

The team then viewed examples of innovative robotics, developed in Japan, Israel and elsewhere, that assist seniors and provide better senior care. Examples include robots to provide comfort, medication dispensing, entertainment, communication with families, and assistance with lifting patients.

The Full Court Press Team then shared challenges, opportunities, and solutions that they found exciting, as the team looks to assure a future that accommodates, supports, and celebrates each aging person. The team noted the need for a massive shift to understand our collective responsibility to care for seniors, and the need to change funding systems for senior living. Workforce development and funding, and reimagining regulation are critical, team members noted. The team will continue to consider these international pieces of inspiration as plans for re-modeled senior care grow. For the next Senior Living Full Court Press meeting on July 27, the team will join the 2021 Patient Safety Fellowship finale, where fellows will present creative solutions to current challenges and problems facing senior residential living and senior care.

Jewish Healthcare Foundation Receives \$50,000 for End-of-Life Virtual Training Curriculum

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) received a \$50,000 grant from the [McElhattan Foundation](#) to develop a virtual curriculum for PA POLST (Pennsylvania Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment) training, to expand the reach of the training for healthcare providers across the Commonwealth. JHF is the founder and statewide coordinator for the [Coalition for Quality at End of Life](#) and PA POLST, and it serves as the source for certified POLST education, fielding questions and consultations from providers across Pennsylvania. This project builds on JHF's [Liftoff PGH](#) initiative, which included discussion of innovation at end-of-life care and was also sponsored by the McElhattan Foundation.

The POLST process is designed to ensure that seriously ill or very frail patients can choose the treatments they want or do not want and that their wishes are documented and honored across care settings and health systems. The training equips healthcare providers to hold conversations with seriously ill patients and their loved ones about treatment options near the end of life to

The image shows a pink and white form for Pennsylvania's POLST. At the top, it says 'SEND FORM WITH PERSON WHENEVER TRANSFERRED OR DISCHARGED'. Below that is the 'Pennsylvania Department of Health' logo and the title 'Pennsylvania Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)'. The form is divided into several sections: 'A. CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR)', 'B. CHEMICAL REVERSAL', 'C. ARTIFICIALLY ADMINISTERED HYDRATION / NUTRITION', and 'D. SUMMARY OF GOALS, MEDICAL CONDITION AND SIGNATURES'. There are checkboxes for various options like 'Do Not Attempt Resuscitation' and 'Artificially Administered Hydration / Nutrition'. The 'closure' logo is prominently displayed in the center, with the text 'Changing expectations for end-of-life' below it. The bottom of the form has a section for 'E. SIGNATURES' where the patient, family, and healthcare provider can sign.

document the patient's wishes on a POLST form, which communicates the patient's preferences when they cannot do so.

Currently, the only option for PA POLST training is in person, which limits attendees' ability to participate and adds costs. A virtual curriculum will reach hundreds of additional healthcare providers and create the highest quality content to be delivered by the POLST team, sponsored by the Coalition for Quality at the End of Life (CQEL).

In consultation with community experts and practitioners, the JHF Aging Team will spearhead the creation and testing of online, self-paced training tools and adapt the existing POLST: Doing it Right! curriculum to allow for virtual live events. The POLST team will deliver the new curriculum to a minimum of four cohorts of public health professionals across Pennsylvania in the first year, starting in fall 2021. POLST will continue to provide resources that help assure patient preferences for care at the end of life are respected, as part of registration for training.

This project builds on JHF's history of work to support education and awareness around patient-centered end-of-life care in Pennsylvania and other states. JHF developed [Closure](#), an education, planning, and outreach effort focused on end-of-life care, and in 2012 held a two-day Closure Conversation for 100 PA leaders, resulting in the expansion of CQEL. JHF has catalyzed similar Closure efforts in Utah and Louisiana and regularly presents Community Conversations on end-of-life at the University of Pittsburgh Osher Institute. In additional training and awareness efforts, JHF offers the annual Death & Dying Fellowship for young health professionals; developed the Creative Nonfiction edition *Stories at the End of Life*; and funded the Emmy-nominated WQED documentary *The Last Chapter*.

Coalition for Quality at End of Life Works to Achieve National Best Practices

The Coalition for Quality at the End of Life (CQEL) held a statewide quarterly meeting for over 50 attendees on June 24, organized by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF). Special guest, Susan Tolle, MD, Chair of the Oregon POLST Coalition and Director of the Center for Ethics in Healthcare gave a presentation discussing different states' approaches to POLST quality assurance activities and how they are working to align POLST orders with patient wishes. It was with Dr. Tolle's guidance and inspiration that JHF worked to establish CQEL and advance POLST in PA 15 years ago under the leadership of Robert Arnold MD, Chief, Section of Palliative



Experts across the state joined the CQEL meeting.

Care and Medical Ethics at the University of Pittsburgh, Judy Black, MD, Medical Advisor to JHF, and Nancy Zions, MBA, JHF COO & Chief Program Officer. The attendees were able to discuss next steps for how PA POLST could advance to achieve national best practice and policy, and how approaches to conversations about vaccine hesitancy and end-of-life could inform one another. Local physician and clinical innovation leader Mylynda Massart, MD, PhD, Medical Director of the UPMC Primary Care Precision Medicine Center was the second featured speaker. Her presentation discussed addressing vaccine hesitancy in underserved communities and long-term care facilities, and she suggested that these conversations have similar themes to those discussing end-of-life care.

AIDS Free Pittsburgh and Highmark Foundation Award \$90,000 in HIV Screening Grants to Local Organizations

AIDS Free Pittsburgh and the Highmark Foundation awarded four Allegheny County healthcare providers grants to pilot new HIV screening projects for high-risk populations. Grantees Community Human Services Project Silk, UPMC St. Margaret Family Medicine Residency, Allies for Health + Wellbeing, and Planned Parenthood of Western PA received the combined \$90,000 in funding and launched their new projects on June 1.

The projects aim to increase access to HIV testing in healthcare and/or community-based settings through innovative service delivery models, which are needed to address the small but steady increase in the percentage of people in Allegheny County diagnosed with late-stage HIV (AIDS). Increasing the rate of HIV testing is key to early detection, diagnosis, and treatment, which can stop the spread of HIV and support long, healthy lives for people living with HIV.

The grantees will use a variety of approaches tailored to each community they serve, including pop-up parties with incentives, workshops, storytelling, contests, and at-home testing kits, to encourage HIV testing and build trusting community relationships.

“We are so excited to bring our Relationships Empower Access to Care and Health (REACH) to the Mon-Valley,” said Sean DeYoung, Chief Executive Officer of Allies for Health + Wellbeing. “Transportation and access to care have been long-standing barriers in this part of our region, so being able to provide confidential, safe HIV and STI testing directly to the community, in partnership with local organizations such as Rainbow Kitchen and Free Store 15104 is an important step forward. We are very grateful to AIDS Free Pittsburgh and Highmark Foundation for providing the funding that is making this project possible.”



Grantee Allies for Health + Wellbeing held a free HIV testing mobile clinic in March 2021.

“Project Silk is excited about this opportunity from AIDS Free Pittsburgh and the Highmark Foundation to increase the care of communities we serve through HIV testing,” said Project Silk Program Director Jessica Burdick. “This resource will impact Project Silk’s ability to intentionally reach new people and have a greater impact on the community.”

Youth Filmmakers Explore Mental Health in JHF-Funded Pitt Research Project

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) funded and supported a University of Pittsburgh research project to create a series of films on mental health created by youth filmmakers in Pittsburgh. The films premiered during a public virtual event on June 23, along with a discussion about teen mental health and commentary from the research team.

In this project, a group of eight youth across the city were trained to create, analyze, and screen their own films using a research method [Collaborative Filmmaking](#) to explore mental health stressors and supports in their lives. The study, led by Jessica Burke, PhD, MHS and Sara Baumann, PhD, MPH of the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public Health Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, was also supported by a University of Pittsburgh [Year of Creativity](#) Grant. In addition to creating the films, youth participated in interviews with the research team about their experiences.



JHF Program Manager Deborah Murdoch helped recruit the teens from our PA Youth Advocacy Network and community partners. She also worked closely with the researchers to adapt to challenges presented during COVID-19 restrictions, help keep the youth filmmakers engaged, and identify opportunities to use the films for advocacy and program design.

The youth were asked to create films of any kind that addressed stressors in their daily lives. The exploratory, youth-created and directed films focus on the youths’ vision, which took various creative approaches. The research team identified stressors as a theme across the films, including academics, college prep, school relationships, racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and family pressures. Supports also emerged as a theme, including spending time with pets, and going outside. Social media and the environment created by the pandemic (attending school online and limited travel/in-person socialization) were identified as both stressors and supports, depending on how they affected individual teens. Data synthesis of research findings is currently ongoing, and the research team hopes to share findings in a peer-reviewed manuscript in the coming months.

The discussion that accompanied the screening generated audience feedback and suggestions for better supporting teen mental health. Audience members recommended more creative opportunities for teens to express themselves, change the education system, and destigmatizing mental health. The team hopes for the films to reach a broader audience to lead to positive change.

Watch a recording of the screening and discussion [here](#).

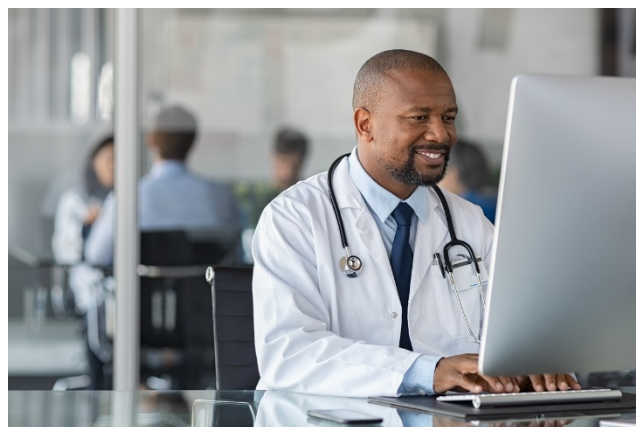
Read more in the TribLive here: [Pitt project addresses teen mental health through lens of high school students](#)

Listen to coverage on 90.5 WESA The Confluence [here](#).

Read KDKA's coverage here: [Pitt Research Project Explores Mental Health Of Teenagers](#)

Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative Trains Physician Leaders through CMU Course

This summer, the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative (PRHI)'s Jennifer Condel, Manager of Lean Healthcare Strategy and Implementation, and Bruce Block MD, Health Care Consultant, are providing training in Healthcare Quality Improvement for 25 physician leaders. The course is part of Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy, Master of Medical Management for Physicians, an 18-month cohort-based program for experienced physicians in the U.S. and abroad. The two 4-week virtual sessions (May 29-June 26 and July 3-July 31) are conducted through asynchronous, online learning experiences, weekly Zoom sessions, and collaborative discussions. The course is a distillation of PRHI's celebrated Perfecting Patient Care curriculum, concentrating on the physician's role in implementing and sustaining a Lean quality improvement culture through alignment of strategic goals and application of collaborative approaches to systematic problem solving.



Marina del Rey Film Festival Selects JHF COVID-19 Documentary

The short, JHF-produced documentary, *What COVID-19 Exposed in Long-Term Care*, was selected for the 2021 [Marina del Rey Film Festival](#), marking the third film festival selection of 2021 for the documentary. The 20-minute documentary explores the causes behind the COVID-19 crisis in long-term care facilities across the United States. JHF released the documentary in 2020, and it has been screened by WQED and several Pittsburgh and nationwide senior health and aging organizations. The



documentary also won the Jury's Choice Award from the A Show for A Change Film Festival in March 2021 and was selected for the 2021 [Manhattan Film Festival](#).

A Legacy of Literacy and Love with Heartwood Ethics Curriculum Creator Ellie Childs

Each day at Winchester Thurston, a young Eleanore Nix would read the school's credo emblazoned on the stairwell wall: "Think also of the comfort and the rights of others." This mantra would act as a moral compass for Nix (who would later be known as Ellie Childs), guiding her through a winding life and career built around advocacy, education, and service.

As she grew up just north of Pittsburgh, Childs' early influences for public service included her father, Robert Nix, an esteemed pediatrician who worked with Jonas Salk on the polio vaccine. She built a career as a lawyer and prison reform advocate, eventually settling on a farm outside Zelienople, Pennsylvania. Her experience defending juvenile criminals opened her eyes to the challenges and dangers facing youth, which sparked a passion for social justice. "In looking for the value in these children, I asked different questions than ever before, and soon grew to understand how confused they were, how isolated and angry," she recounted in a 1993 speech for the W.N.Y Regional Prevention Education Conference.



Childs reading with grandson Jonah

In the late 1980s, Childs joined with three experienced elementary school teachers, who were similarly concerned about the dangers and crises facing children. Over two years, the group brainstormed character attributes and experiences that constitute the foundation of community among all people. They settled on a list of seven universal attributes, that if adopted, they believed, would build strong individuals with a sense of caring and understanding. These attributes – Courage, Loyalty, Justice, Respect, Hope, Honesty, and Love – became the basis for the heart of Childs' career: the [Heartwood Ethics Curriculum](#).

Heartwood, named for a tree's solid inner core, teaches life lessons through literature, to promote the understanding and practice of the seven attributes in children. With carefully curated books featuring human characters, Heartwood facilitates learning through the reading aloud of multicultural stories and conversation about related, age-appropriate ethical and cultural issues. The Heartwood Institute spread the curriculum to hundreds of school districts across the city and country, partnering with the Highmark Foundation and the Children's School at Carnegie Mellon University along the way.

Little did she know, Childs' own high school days turned out to be a networking space – JHF President and CEO Karen Wolk Feinstein sat behind Childs in study hall. The two remain dear friends today and share a passion for instilling quality values in the next generation. Beginning in 2019, JHF launched [GRAN: An Intergenerational Reading Program](#), which is based on the Heartwood Ethics Curriculum and funded by the Heinz Endowments. At two community after-school programs in Hazelwood – [Hazelwood Propel](#) and [Center of Life](#) – the GRAN program [trained and matched](#) 19 GRAN volunteers aged 50+ with 50 pre-kindergarten and early elementary school children to engage in meaningful conversations around ethics, while sharing the pleasure of reading. Carrying on the mission of Heartwood, the GRAN reading program provided a way for community members to make connections across generations, inspiring the sharing of knowledge, lessons of inclusivity and acceptance.

Although changes to public education over the years drew focus away from character education programs like Heartwood, Childs says the legacy of the curriculum lives on in a time when it is needed more than ever. Heartwood reached over one million children, “who could all be parents now, talking to their kids about respect and justice,” she notes.

Now based in California and surrounded by family, Childs carries on the Heartwood tradition with her grandson Jonah, whom she babysits and reads with every morning. “I’m much more patient than I was as a parent, and there’s nothing I’d rather do than sit down and be with my grandchild at that moment... it brings me tremendous joy.”

JHF Welcomes New Staff

In July, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) welcomes two new staff members to the seniors and aging team.

Lisa George, MPH, CHES is a senior communications and program specialist for the JHF aging team, focusing on end-of-life initiatives and supporting overall communications efforts. Prior to joining the foundation, Lisa spent more than two decades with the Oncology Nursing Society’s publications department, where in her final role she served as senior editorial manager. During her tenure with the society, she was instrumental in launching and managing the organization’s book publishing program, developing award-winning resources for cancer care professionals and patients and families affected by the disease. Lisa earned a bachelor’s in English literature and a master’s in public health with a focus on behavioral and



Lisa George and Emily Franke

community health sciences, both from the University of Pittsburgh. During her master's work, she participated in research examining the acceptability and utility of screening for unmet social needs in the clinical setting. She also is a Certified Health Education Specialist and a graduate of the JHF 2020 Patient Safety Fellowship.

Emily Franke, LSW, MSW is a program associate on the JHF aging team. She is a licensed social worker with extensive experience in grief recovery, end-of-life choices, caregiving issues, and psychopharmacology. She honed these skills through positions at the Benedum Geriatric Center as a pre-licensed therapist and most recently as a psychiatric social worker on the Integrated Health and Aging Program unit at Western Psychiatric Hospital. She has worked to support individuals who are experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety in the context of medical diagnoses and those experiencing caregiver or career-related burnout. Emily earned her dual bachelor's degrees in psychology and gender, sexuality & women's studies from the University of Pittsburgh, where she went on to graduate with her master's in social work. As a Hartford Fellow during her master's program, she worked to develop skills specific to serving the diverse older adult population with a specific focus on LGBTQIA older adults.

Stay tuned for a future announcement of additional new staff in the July Window.

Jewish Healthcare Foundation Staff Visit New Offices for Orientation Day

On June 21, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) welcomed staff back into the office for an orientation. This was the first time many had seen the new office spaces since JHF began occupying them in June 2020. It was a reunion for many teams who had not seen each other in 15 months, and an introduction to a few staff hired remotely during the pandemic. We look forward to beginning the transition back to the office over the summer, so that teams may collaborate in-person again.



Staff enjoyed meeting in person, the first time for many in over a year.



JHF COO & Chief Program Officer Nancy Zionts led tours of the new space.



Staff enjoyed refreshments in the spacious office kitchen.