



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

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A Message from Karen Wolk Feinstein

Over the past 18 months, our staff have worked tirelessly to advance the mission of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, finding opportunities in the chaos of an immediate public health crisis. The commitment of our staff, combined with the extraordinary circumstances, demanded documentation. In August, we present to you the newest *ROOTS* publication, *An Unconventional Bloom: The Jewish Healthcare Foundation Confronts a Pandemic*.

These pandemic months brought with them many challenges, but we found a silver lining in the new connections we made. Teleconferencing made it easier than ever before to engage with some of the most interesting people in health reform across the country and the world – and we have not squandered the opportunity.

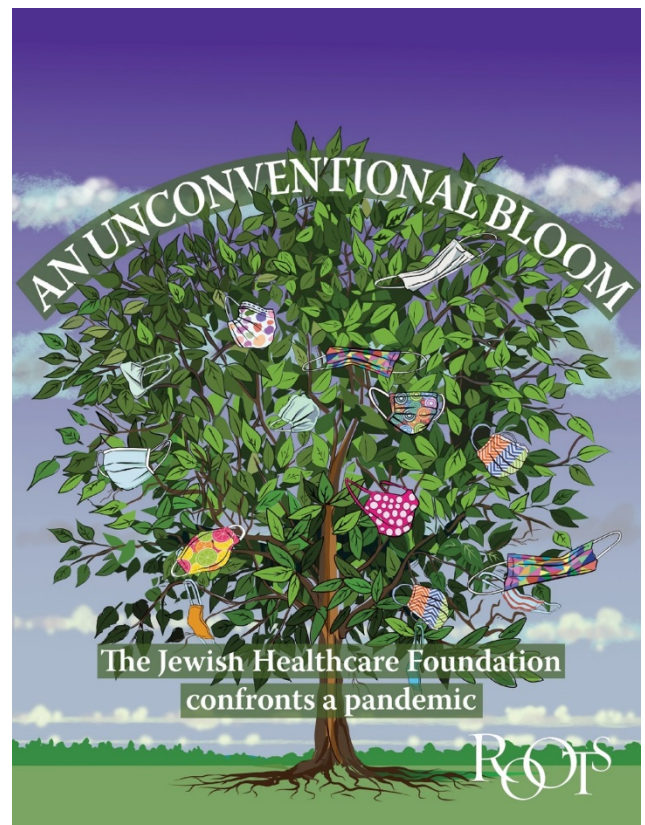
In planning a publication to chronicle this progress, we imagined being able to look back on this “year like no other” with the pandemic as a waning threat. Unfortunately, COVID-19 remains as pressing a concern as ever. Yet, revolutions are born of hope and not despair. We hope this publication will inspire moments of reflection, and that we may all persevere.

An Unconventional Bloom: The Jewish Healthcare Foundation Confronts a Pandemic

The newest ROOTS publication chronicles the Jewish Healthcare Foundation’s work during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the digital publication is now available online. Physical copies are forthcoming this fall. Read on for the introduction:

Not long after the COVID-19 pandemic froze the world in March 2020, it became frighteningly clear that the U.S. federal government did not intend to take command. All the critical components—supplies, logistics, precautions, regulations, and support for the basic functions of daily life in quarantine—were devolved to states and localities.

For the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF), a philanthropic and activist organization in Pittsburgh, the pandemic pandemonium that ensued reinforced longstanding concerns and dismal statistics about the national safety net. An already fractured system was further stressed and exposed, and on top of the imminent threat of disease from the SARS-CoV-2 virus, many of the Foundation’s focus areas were brought into the spotlight. JHF’s three nonprofit operating arms, each with a governing board, engaged their combined 120 staff and Board members to launch a response.



JHF saw an opportunity to create both immediate and long-term solutions in patient safety, senior living, pregnancy care, teen behavioral health, and HIV/AIDS care. However, this would go beyond grantmaking and business as usual. The staff and Board members deployed their collective skills and knowledge to respond to a health crisis like no other.

JHF's work over the past year ranged from regional programs to statewide networks, to advocacy efforts for national policy transformation. The Foundation proposed solutions to prove that progress is possible; engaged key stakeholders and started action groups; advanced the work of community and regional partners; and expanded interest and communicated plans broadly.

As we enter the next stage of living and working through a pandemic, we take pause for a moment of reflection on this journey and how JHF found opportunities in 18 months of chaos.

Read the full ROOTS publication [here](#).

Jewish Healthcare Foundation Approves \$517K to Support an Innovative Development in Personalized Treatment and Access to Mental Health Support for Teens

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) on August 30 approved new grants to develop an artificial intelligence solution that provides a new approach to research, clinical decision making, and a personalized, safer model of medical experimentation and to extend JHF's efforts in support of teen mental health.

Using Machine Learning to Personalize Treatment

JHF approved a two-year grant of \$237,000 in support of the Digital Twin Eye project at the UPMC Eye and Ear Institute, a pioneering technology initiative that brings the frontiers of predictive analytics to health care. Digital Twin Eye will use big data to provide more effective, personalized treatment for conditions that lead to blindness.

The goal of the Digital Twin Eye project is to develop a framework for an automated personalized medicine system, allowing for more effective treatment based on individual health data paired with predictive analytics. The Digital Twin Eye model will leverage decades of history and medical records to build a scalable dataset to train and test artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms on



Youth advocates celebrated the proclamation to declare May 23, 2021 Teen Mental Health Awareness day in the City of Pittsburgh and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

characteristics over time. These data sets will include treatment history, demographics, genetics, and medical history, as well as socioeconomic standing, education level, and other social determinants of health. As the AI algorithms learn from patient data, the Digital Twin Eye will provide an individualized treatment course for the patient that considers the range of factors that may influence disease progression and a patient's ability to adhere to treatment. Digital twins have been used in other industries for a while, but this innovative project brings the concept to medicine and medical decision making.

The grant will provide partial funding for a full-time lab manager/researcher, postdoc and clinical research fellows, and interns as well as for equipment services, server deployment, and publications.

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) on August 30 approved new grants to develop an artificial intelligence solution that will improve access to high-quality ophthalmic care for vision-impaired individuals and to extend its efforts in support of teen mental health.

Creating a Space for Teens to Address Their Mental Health Needs and Supporting JHF's Teen Mental Health Initiative

JHF approved two grants focusing on teen mental health: a two-year, \$100,000 grant to Friendship Circle in support of the creation of a drop-in community space where teens can access wellness stigma-free support and connection with peers and a one-year, \$180,000 grant to continue JHF's PA Youth Advocacy Network and the Teen Mental Health Collaborative.

The COVID-19 pandemic took a significant toll on the already-fragile emotional health of the nation's youth. As teens struggled with the abrupt transition to online schooling, separation from peers, and concerns about their own health and that of family and friends, their ability to access support for new or worsening mental health was severely curtailed. In an effort to address this crisis, JHF is revisiting pre-pandemic plans to create a pilot for a dedicated teen mental health space at Friendship Circle, centrally located in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh, to provide a safe, stigma-free place for teens to engage in mental wellness programs and connect to higher levels of mental health supports when needed. Programs will include regular classes in wellness and mindfulness for teens, roundtable discussions and expert panels, and trainings which explore wellness topics, self-discovery, and self-expression. The space will be open to middle school and high school teens as well as young adults. Friendship Circle is pursuing matching grant funds for capital development.

Building on existing JHF teen mental health initiatives, this grant support will enable JHF to continue work in youth advocacy and strengthening community collaborations around the issue of teen mental health through 2022. JHF will serve as the convening organization for the PA Youth Advocacy Network and foster continued collaboration between community organizations who participated in the Teen Mental Health Collaborative in 2020 and 2021.

The aim of the PA Youth Advocacy Network is to foster collaboration and learning among youth leaders committed to promoting mental health and awareness in their communities, empower the youth voice in advocating for systems-level change to improve the safety-net for teen mental

health, and build advocacy skills. Through the grant, JHF will continue to provide coaching support and foster collaboration with youth-serving professionals who participate in the Teen Mental Health Collaborative around topics of interest, such as connecting with health plans and health systems, building staff skills for mental health supports, and collaborating on youth programs across communities.

Young Innovators Pitch Solutions for JHF Fellowship Finale

The inaugural Young Innovators Healthcare Fellowship, funded through grants from the Grable Foundation and the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, concluded in August 2021 with a virtual finale event. In a collaborative and creative environment, 24 youth fellows across the Pittsburgh region and from Maryland met over eight weeks to explore healthcare careers and design innovative solutions for current healthcare problems, while gaining entrepreneurial skills and engaging with young professional mentors. The Fellowship, JHF's first for high school students, 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.



In the spirit of innovation, the Young Innovators Healthcare Fellowship met via an online platform called GatherTown to virtually convene.

“[The fellowship] has shown me that our society has large, unsettling obstacles in terms of health, but it has also introduced me to young professionals who are taking on those obstacles,” said fellow Cyd Kennard, rising junior at Winchester Thurston High School. “It has changed the way that I see myself ten years from now, showing me that through communication, collaboration, and well-identified problems, I can pursue a career that does its part to address these challenges.” During the August 5th finale, four groups of fellows pitched their design solutions to important healthcare challenges focusing on problems within patient safety, access to health care, health care misinformation, and teen mental health.

Fellowship partners and guest speakers helped the fellows identify and better understand challenges in healthcare and begin to propose solutions. [Design 2 Make a Difference](#), a design/engineering program for elementary-high school students of Greater Pittsburgh Area schools, provided an introduction to design thinking principles. With Winchester Thurston School's director of technology, David Piemme, MEd, and science department chair/STEM coordinator, Graig Marx, MEd, fellows formed project teams for each healthcare challenge and used the design-thinking framework to understand the experiences of their target users and craft a defining problem statement.

During the Health Technology Innovations in Healthcare sessions earlier in the summer, fellows learned from health tech leaders and entrepreneurs Todd Wolynn, MD of [Kids Plus Pediatrics](#), Po-Shen Loh, PhD of [NOVID](#), a COVID-19 response app, Courtney Williamson, PhD, of [Abillife](#), who were joined by Marx, who is also the entrepreneurial lead at [Prescrib3D Technologies](#). In addition, Rema Padman, PhD, trustees professor of management science and healthcare informatics at Carnegie Mellon University, provided an overview on the evolution of health informatics in the healthcare industry and highlighted the ever-growing incorporation of technology moving forward. Dr. Padman also introduced students to health innovator and high school student, Aarav Chandrasekar, who showcased his project to gamify the informed consent process for pediatric patients and reinforced the application of design-thinking through this work.

Fellows also had the chance to join a Making the Most of Mentoring training with the Mentoring Partnership of SWPA in preparation for a networking session, where fellows connected with JHF Fellowship alumni and partners, including young professionals spanning a wide variety of careers and disciplines in health care.

Young Innovators Fellow Krishna Jaladanki, rising senior at River Hill High School in Maryland, said, “The Young Health Innovators Fellowship allowed me to explore innovation in an unconventional setting. The collaborative environment was much different than traditional school, but this method of learning was significantly more effective than lecture-style learning. I formed fruitful connections with JHF staff and speakers which I hope will help me with my future endeavors. The teachings of this fellowship have allowed me to approach design thinking in a totally different way, and I truly feel ready to develop solutions to solve current and future healthcare issues.”

National and Statewide Advisory Group Launches for Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home Initiative

As part of the [Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home Initiative](#) launched in July 2021, a National and Statewide Advisory Group has formed for the initiative and held their first meeting on August 16. The team of esteemed professionals from nursing governing bodies, research institutions, non-profits, and academia will provide strategic input and advice to improve the care of older adults in nursing homes, bolster the workforce, and encourage future workforce growth. This group will also assist in identifying and tracking major policy and/or structural barriers to implementation and dissemination identified through the initiative.



The National and Statewide Advisory Group met for the Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home Initiative.

During the first National and Statewide Advisory Group meeting, Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN, President of The John A. Hartford Foundation and a funder of the initiative, along with the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) and the Henry L. Hillman Foundation, welcomed the group. Dr. Fulmer reviewed the Teaching Nursing Home model and explained that the effort will draw on existing resources from The John A. Hartford Foundation's Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative and JHF's Full Court Press Senior Living Team, while integrating lessons learned from the Teaching Nursing Home implementation of the 1980s (originally supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.) The demonstration will be conducted across sites in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and will serve to inform other states. The National and Statewide Advisory includes not only representatives from Pennsylvania, but representatives from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, and other national entities in a position to watch, learn, and advise on next steps. Members of the group are invited to also attend the Biweekly Working Group meetings for the Initiative.

Amy Berman RN, LHD (hon), FAAN, senior program officer of The John A. Hartford Foundation, reviewed the core principles of the initiative to ensure everyone has the same knowledge base. This work builds on recommendations that have resulted from the CMS Commission on Quality and Safety in Nursing Homes and will inform and derive from the work being done at the National Academies of Medicine, specifically their study of care in nursing homes. The group discussed guiding principles for measurement and evaluation of the initiative's outcomes. A Measurement Taskforce will meet over one month to solidify and refine the measures that will be the focus of the initiative.

Berman then led the group in a discussion of the initiative's interventions, which include promoting age-friendly health systems, leadership development, and advanced practice nurse consultation. Using evidence-based tools and models, the Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home Initiative's Biweekly Working Group will implement these components with nursing home sites and will measure impact on the current and future workforce.

The nearly 50 people who are now part of the initiative, from the National and Statewide Advisory Group to the regional teams of nursing homes and schools of nursing, will all be connected through JHF's web-based portal Tomorrow's HealthCare. Nancy D. Zions, MBA, COO/Chief Program Officer of JHF and primary investigator for the Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home Initiative, introduced the platform, which will serve as an online repository of initiative documents and a central location to stimulate discussion outside of meetings. Stacie Bonenberger, MOT, OTR/L, senior quality improvement specialist with JHF and operating arm Health Careers Futures, led a demonstration of the key uses of Tomorrow's HealthCare and next steps for participants.

The National and Statewide Advisory Group will meet four times per year, and next on December 13th.

The members of the National and Statewide Advisory Group include:

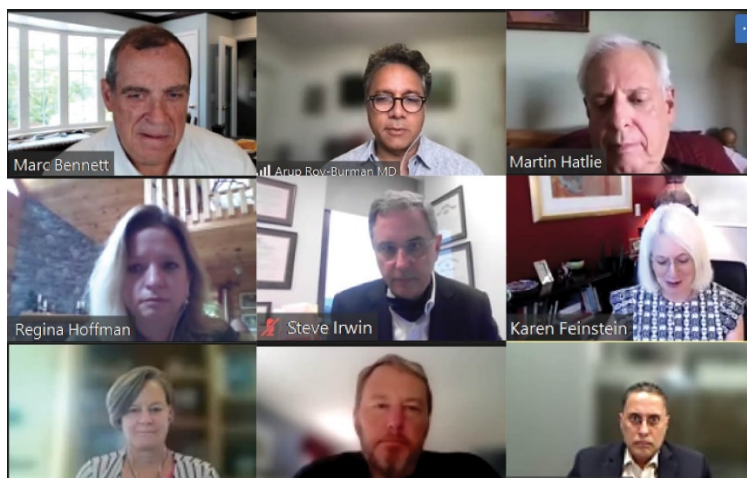
- **Chair, Advisory Group — Alice Bonner**, PhD, RN, FAAN, Senior Advisor, Institute for Healthcare Improvement – Associate Professor, Northeastern University Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice, School of Nursing

- **Melissa Batchelor**, PhD, RN-BC, FNP-BC, FGSA, FAAN, Director, Center for Aging, Health and Humanities, Associate Professor, The George Washington University School of Nursing
- **Erika Fricke**, Executive Director of the Health Committee of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives
- **Chair, Measurement Taskforce — Ann Kolanowski**, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor Emerita Penn State School of Nursing
- **Shari Ling**, MD, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Medical Officer, Center for Clinical Standards and Quality (CCSQ)
- **Jeanne Parker Martin**, MPH, President and CEO, LeadingAge California
- **Joanne Reifsnnyder**, PhD, MSN, MBA, FAAN, Executive Vice President, Clinical Operations and Chief Nursing Officer, Genesis
- **Eric Rodriguez**, MD, Geriatrician, Benedum Geriatric Center, Chair of the Health Careers Futures Senior Residential Living Full Court Press Team
- **Susan Ryan**, MA, Senior Director, The Green House Project of Nursing
- **Susan Sherman**, RN, MA, FAAN, President and CEO of the Independence Foundation
- **Ann Torregrossa**, JD, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Health Funders Collaborative and former Director of the Governor's Office of Health Reform.
- **Deborah Trautman**, PhD, RN, FAAN, President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)
- **Joan Weiss**, PhD, RN, CRNP, FAAN, Deputy Director, Division of Medicine and Dentistry, HRSA President
- **Heather Young**, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean Emerita, Better Irene Moore School of Nursing, UC Davis

Read more from LeadingAge PA's Member Spotlight blog post [here](#).

Full Court Press Team Considers Partnerships for the National Patient Safety Board

On August 10, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative's Patient Safety Full Court Press Team met to discuss the next stage of advocating for a National Patient Safety Board (NPSB): focusing on potential partnerships for collecting data, studying medical errors, and creating solutions. Like the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) on which it is modeled, the NPSB will interface with partners to help carry out its core functions: to determine when to initiate an NPSB study using existing data; to conduct the study with other organizations; and to translate the NPSB's recommendations into daily, autonomous



The Patient Safety Full Court Press Team met to explore opportunities for partnership to advance the proposal.

practices implemented by industry partners. The meeting convened national experts to examine similar opportunities for the NPSB.

Co-Chair Steve Irwin, JD, gave the welcome and gave an update on the NPSB Policy & Advocacy Coalition, which has continued to engage patient safety leaders and legislators to build support for the proposal.

Marc Bennett, MA, President & CEO of national, nonprofit healthcare consulting firm [Comagine Health](#) and Jennifer Lundblad, PhD, MBA, President & CEO of healthcare quality and safety nonprofit [Stratis Health](#) discussed how the NPSB could partner with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Quality Innovation Networks and Quality Improvement Organizations (QIN-QIO).

Bennett was a previous board chair for the [Network for Regional Health Improvement](#) and a previous president and board chair for the American Health Quality Association. He has served on the Quality Alliance Steering Committee at the Brookings Institution, has been a member of the national advisory board of the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform, and is a National Quality Forum representative on the John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety & Quality Awards Committee. Bennett is a frequent contributor to national policy forums in health information technology, health information exchange and improvement.

Lundblad has expert knowledge of and experience in rural health quality and actively contributes on groundbreaking improvement initiatives. She is part of federally funded projects for value-driven payment and quality improvement in rural health. Previously, she served as project director for the federally funded Rural Hospital Intervention Support Center to provide technical assistance for Medicare Quality Improvement Organizations (QIO) staff and rural hospitals nationally in the areas of clinical quality and patient safety culture improvement, and as project director for a CMS-funded multi-state project to field test and refine new rural relevant quality measures.

Both Stratis Health and Comagine Health have built networks across the Western U.S. in national healthcare quality and safety, through their work as part of the CMS Network of Quality Improvement and Innovation Contractors (NQIICs) initiative. NQIICs improve healthcare quality by providing technical assistance, continuous improvement processes, and strategic management structure, and they work to increase patient safety across the healthcare spectrum by addressing appropriate prescribing of antibiotics and prevention of infections and hospital readmissions. Bennett, Lundblad, and the FCP Team discussed how this work could present a model for the NPSB, as QIN-QIO Community Coalitions are active in every state and could be a forum for implementing solutions in response to NPSB recommendations.

Arup Roy-Burman, MD, Co-Founder & CEO of startup [Elemeno Health](#) then shared the company's innovative healthcare education tool. Elemeno Health provides "just-in-time", mobile-friendly training that helps frontline care teams to provide safer care at the bedside or in practice precisely when needed. Using a cloud-based solution for micro-learning, Elemeno's service includes interactive guidelines, smart checklists, and concise how-to videos, which are available to healthcare workers on-demand, 24/7.

Dr. Roy-Burman first became interested in patient safety after an early, personal encounter with medical error, in which his sister died at a young age. He shared how this impacted his medical and patient safety career; he is now a technological innovator who has pioneered efforts to engage frontline staff and improve outcomes in the inpatient setting. Elemeno Health's technology has already been implemented to reduce errors and alleviate staff burnout in real health settings, and the organization was recognized as the first-place winner of the 2021 JHF Healthcare Safety Challenge. The tool presents a potential solution for the NPSB to address a lack of effective training on patient safety, a common cause of medical error.

Former NTSB Chairman Christopher A. Hart, JD, then joined the meeting to share insights from the NTSB that could apply to the NPSB. Chairman Hart holds a law degree from Harvard University and master's and bachelor's degrees in aerospace engineering from Princeton University. He is a member of the District of Columbia Bar and the Lawyer-Pilots Bar Association, and is a licensed pilot with commercial, multi engine, and instrument ratings. Chairman Hart's family has a tradition of accomplishment in transportation. In 1926, his great uncle, James Herman Banning, was the first African-American to receive a pilot's license issued by the U.S. government.

Chairman Hart presented an overview of the NTSB and how it investigates transportation accidents, determines the cause(s), and makes recommendations to prevent recurrences. He emphasized the advantages of being an independent federal agency, including that the NTSB is completely separate from the events it investigates and can therefore give an objective perspective and report. As Chairman Hart noted that the NTSB uses a collaborative "system think" approach with industry partners to address mishaps that occur frequently, a similar approach could be useful in patient safety to identify and address trends, and develop systemic responses.

The FCP Team discussed all insights presented and how each could apply as the team builds the NPSB proposal and the network of stakeholders grows.

The next Full Court Press meeting, planned for September, will focus on how health systems, like Kettering in Dayton, Ohio, have deployed TeleTracking's Command and Control Centers.

JHF Board Convenes for August 2021

On August 30, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation Board of Trustees convened. JHF Board Chair Debra L. Caplan, MPA, called the meeting to order and JHF President and CEO Karen Wolk Feinstein introduced new staff members Emily Franke, LSW, MSW, Lisa George, MPH, CHES, Bridget Jordan, and Maureen Saxon-Gioia, MSHSA, BSN, RN.

Mike Ginsberg, JD, Carole Bailey, CPA, and Geoff Gerber, JD, gave reports from the Finance & Audit Committee and the Investment Committee. Caplan and Jim Rogal gave additional reports from the Distribution



Dr. José-Alain Sahel presented on digital twin technology and advances in ophthalmology care and research.

Committee and the Communications Committee, respectively.

Special guest speaker José-Alain Sahel, MD, distinguished professor and chairman of the department of ophthalmology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, exceptional class professor at Sorbonne Université of Paris, and the endowed chair of the Eye and Ear Foundation, gave a presentation on digital twin technology and advances in research and care for ophthalmology.

A novel approach in health, digital twin technology can be used to inform diagnoses and prescription and treatment decision-making for better, safer care, Dr. Sahel said. The patient-centered "digital twin" technology creates a model of an individual patient that can simulate diagnostics and outcomes of various therapies, to provide individualized treatment and safety monitoring. This is possible due to innovative imaging technology, combined with an artificial intelligence model, which can analyze and predict an outcome for the patient. This can inform decisions of both the clinician and the patient and contribute to a data pool that benefits each subsequent patient who would use the technology. Dr. Sahel's team were the first in the U.S. to use this approach and are starting to treat patients in Pittsburgh.

Dr. Sahel emphasized the importance of focusing on vision and health, noting that the proportion of vision-related conditions is rising globally over time with an aging population. He shared that the University of Pittsburgh and UPMC have made ophthalmology a top priority, investing in a new state of the art facility and model of care. The UPMC Vision and Rehabilitation Hospital, currently being constructed next to UPMC Mercy, will take a humanistic approach to caring for people and will be a cornerstone for an integrated multidisciplinary research approach to address visual system disorders, supporting both clinical and research advances.

Feinstein and JHF staff then gave a special presentation of the latest ROOTS publication, [An Unconventional Bloom: The Jewish Healthcare Foundation Confronts a Pandemic](#).

Feinstein then gave the President's Report, and operational updates and announcements.

Community Partners Engage Teens on Mental Health with Expressive Arts

In fall 2020, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) awarded thirteen community-based organizations in Allegheny County a total \$318,000 in emergency grants to provide emotional support and opportunities for connection for local teens during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, JHF has convened a Teen Mental Health Collaborative of the grantees, helping them to collaborate and share their insights. As these partners engaged youth in their communities, several have creatively approached teen mental wellness, using expressive arts programming to provide students with an emotional outlet and mental wellness education.

At Center of Life's [KRUNK](#) program, a Hazelwood-based music and health initiative, middle and high school students use the elements of hip-hop through dance, songwriting, beat making, recording engineering, visual art, and equipment management to communicate positive messages about current events and mental health to peers. The program is designed as a "micro-enterprise" production company, as it aims to teach students the skills and professionalism required to succeed in the music industry. Center of Life had been offering this arts programming previously, and the grant from JHF helped to add a mental wellness lens to this work. KRUNK students were provided with coping techniques that helped them to manage their stressors. Center of Life staff educated students on the strategies and allowed them to practice their use. Program staff noted a large change in the emotional wellbeing of their students. In groups, students focused on mutual solutions to resolve disagreements, and they produced high-quality concerts and more compositions than in years past. Students also had increased GPAs and attendance in their virtual learning classrooms, which Center of Life attributes to participation in the KRUNK program.

A+ Schools' [TeenBloc](#) program is a collective of 8th-12th grade students in the city of Pittsburgh from varying backgrounds. Through a series of artistic outlets, this program guides students in advocacy and leadership development to help them find and use their voices to ignite changes that will impact their education. With JHF's funding, the TeenBloc program incorporated mental wellness into their ongoing arts programs. This past year, TeenBloc students engaged in quarterly projects to provide them with a creative outlet to support their mental wellness as they navigated their educational experience during a pandemic. In the fall of 2020, students created pieces for a window installation at community arts space BOOM concepts, which explored their personal ancestral connections, concerns for the world we live in, and how their voices are frequently dismissed due to age. Over winter 2020-21, students created a three-part podcast series with the YMCA Lighthouse Project, in which they discussed topics such as the future of education and social media through the lens of Afrofuturism. In the spring of 2021, TeenBloc organized a social media feature called "TBH (To Be Honest)" as a visually expressive tool for students to share their experiences of online remote learning and their needs. Currently, students are working to create a



The Chill Project at Baldwin High School used traditional Japanese puppetry to combine social-emotional learning with the arts.

vlog that tells the story of Perry High School, expanding upon the data in A+ Schools' 2020 Report to the Community.

Allegheny Health Network's [The Chill Project](#) at Baldwin High School used traditional Japanese Bunraku puppetry to combine social-emotional learning and the arts, in collaboration with artists-in-residence and puppet artists Matt and Deana Acheson. Puppeteers collaborate to maneuver the puppets and produce life-like actions and emotional scenarios, as a means of emotional expression and teamwork. High school students participated in sessions to learn evidence-based coping skills (especially mindfulness), and to learn how to use the puppets. The program took a non-traditional approach that could reach students who have a language barrier or for whom English is their second language. After teachers expressed interest in the program, The Chill Project is currently engaging students in the summer extended school year program and providing services to 19 English language learner students during the summer.

In addition, partners [The Second Floor at the JCC](#), the [Friendship Circle of Pittsburgh](#), the [Center of Life](#), along with the [10.27 Healing Partnership](#), are hosting the Connect and Create: A Collaborative Teen Art Exhibit on September 12, from 7-8:30 pm at the JCC Robinson Building. More information is available [here](#).

Jewish Cemetery and Burial Association of Greater Pittsburgh Grows with JHF Funding

The [Jewish Cemetery and Burial Association of Greater Pittsburgh](#) (JCBA) continues to meet the demands of the region in maintaining sacred Jewish resting places and in handling all arrangements for free burials of those in need, with a \$25,000 contribution from the Jewish Healthcare Foundation to the JCBA endowment. JCBA held an annual ceremony at New Chesed Shel Emeth on August 15th to unveil two tombstones for indigent members of the Jewish community who passed away over the last year, and the JCBA installed a privacy fence. JCBA is now associated with 24 cemeteries, and new cemeteries and trusts to come into the JCBA in 2021 include the Johnstown Jewish Cemeteries, Anshe Lubovitz in Shaler Township, Ohave Israel in Brownsville, and Meadville's Hebrew Burial Association. As the JCBA endowment continues to grow, interest from it goes toward funding fence enclosures and signage to enhance security, wall repairs to secure hillsides, annual costs for software user fees needed as part of their electronic database



The JCBA unveiled a new tombstone in the free burial cemetery at the New Chesed Shel Emeth in Shaler Township in August 2021.

enhancement project, and other priorities. The Jewish Healthcare Foundation is grateful for the JCBA's efforts to further sustain more cemeteries across the region.



The JCBA's recent restoration of the Old Chesed Shel Emeth pillars, gate, and arch.

Tausi Suedi: Global, Maternal, and Child Health Champion

The COVID-19 pandemic brought more threats than solely the danger of a new disease to communities around the world. The pandemic exacerbated pre-existing disparities and increased barriers to addressing them, especially for women's health. Long before and throughout the pandemic, Women's Health Activist Movement Global Board member and global health champion Tausi Suedi, MPH, has worked to improve health outcomes for women and girls experiencing barriers to health services, resources, and information. In addition to her academic appointments at Towson University and Penn Medicine in global health, Suedi serves as chair of the board of directors for [Childbirth Survival International](#) (CSI), a Baltimore-based nonprofit organization. In this position, she has supported several community-based outreach programs for mothers and families across sub-Saharan Africa to distribute information, deliver services and essential supplies, and create opportunities for skills development to benefit women and girls with low literacy levels. CSI's work is distinctive for its collaborative spirit and partnership with community leaders, an approach it has found to be successful in delivering necessary resources and creating positive, sustainable change.



Tausi Suedi

Suedi says her passion for public health began early. As a child, Suedi aspired to be an obstetrician. She traveled frequently and saw first-hand that quality of life and access to health services varied between developed countries and less developed countries. From this experience, and from her parents, who worked for the United Nations, she learned the practice of public service, which motivated her to pursue a career in improving maternal and child health outcomes in communities where individuals struggle to access health services, resources, and information.

She spent seven years coordinating programs for women in Uganda, Tanzania, and Afghanistan before joining CSI, where she led multiple efforts across five countries in sub-Saharan Africa to conduct community outreach for maternal, child, and community health programs. For International Women's Day 2020, with support from the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, CSI Uganda hosted an event to educate pregnant women about safe motherhood and the importance of delivering with a skilled birth attendant, and to distribute 320 childbirth kits. Suedi describes this effort as a great success.

Suedi's career has taught her that collective motivation to act drives change and that stakeholders' sense of urgency can be strikingly diverse. To truly support women and communities, she says, program organizers must understand community culture and involve community members, especially religious leaders, business owners, and local council leaders. In Africa, "many of these positions are filled by men," Suedi says, which "creates an opportunity to work with men to be able to advance some of the agendas for women and girls because it is a win-win for all."

Such an opportunity arose when CSI launched their first maternal health program in Uganda in 2014, which focused on maternal health education and distribution of essential medical supplies for birth. Some doubted that men would express interest—but Suedi opted to incentivize male attendance at the event with childbirth kit rewards. Nearly every woman who attended brought her husband. "You just have to figure out what people want," Suedi said.

Suedi recalled the men's awe at learning the complexity of women's health and its impact on a community, and she emphasized the importance of inviting them to the table, saying, "Men have to be actively involved, because if we are not engaging them in the conversation, if they don't understand the consequences of frequent births, especially those that are poorly spaced, then it creates several problems not only for [the mother] but for the family, the community, and the country ... it becomes a global issue."

This represents one of Suedi's core philosophies: health systems must be built to work for pregnant women if they are to work for everyone. "If we're able to change or transform communities so that they are thriving and everybody is doing well, that has an impact all the way to the global level," she said.

In 2018, Suedi felt it was time to address inequities among young women of color in the U.S. and build on successes from the programs in sub-Saharan Africa. Given that CSI is headquartered in Baltimore, it was only fitting to host a program in the city. Translating lessons from Uganda and Tanzania CSI collaborated with local partners to launch Girl Talk, Girl Power, a free summer camp for about 20 adolescent Black girls in West Baltimore. The program was structured to address common issues many face, such as trauma from abuse, assault, and home instability. To date, the

Girl Talk, Girl Power program has impacted 10,000 girls in sub-Saharan Africa and the U.S., teaching each girl to “advocate for herself and the girl standing behind her,” Suedi says. “That’s how we will fully transform communities.”

As the COVID-19 pandemic increased inequalities for women and girls around the world and presented obstacles for CSI to engage with communities in sub-Saharan Africa during the past 18 months, Suedi has continued to innovate and adapt. CSI has maintained outreach to pregnant and postpartum women, families with young children and orphans, and families with individuals living with disabilities and chronic illnesses, held food drives, and developed a vocational skills training center to help women and girls learn how to become financially stable.

Presently in Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, and Tanzania, CSI’s vision is to expand throughout Africa and aid more communities, as preventable deaths of women and children continue each day, Suedi notes. She is heartened by partners who take a community-based focus and consider stakeholders’ needs. Suedi says, “The Jewish Healthcare Foundation is one of those funders that truly understands the value of impacting people by putting people and communities first.”

Morgan Overton Elected President of Young Democrats

Congratulations to Women’s Health Activist Movement Global Community Engagement and Policy Associate Morgan Overton, MSW, the newly elected president of the Young Democrats of Allegheny County. Overton and Martell Covington, the new vice president, are the first Black people to hold these positions of the organization. “...Our goal is to really build a pipeline of people from all diverse intersections to recognize that they do hold political power and they are the future,” Overton is quoted in an article for Pittsburgh CityPaper. Read more about Overton and Covington [here](#).



Morgan Overton

Too Hot for July 2021 Postponed

[AIDS Free Pittsburgh](#) and [True T PGH](#) have made the difficult decision to postpone the Too Hot for July 2021 events, due to rising COVID-19 cases in Allegheny County and across the southwestern Pennsylvania region. We hope to gather safely in-person at a later date. For future updates, follow [AIDS Free Pittsburgh on Facebook](#).



Apply Today for the 2021 Salk Health Activist Fellowship

Concerned about the U.S. public health system? Want to learn from inspirational thinkers and collaborate with peers to develop out-of-the-box solutions? Join the Salk Health Activist Fellowship this fall. Applications are now open and are due by September 6. The fellowship runs Tuesdays Sept. 21 - Nov 16. Apply [today](#).



Alyce Palko Helps to Take COVID-19 Vaccines on the Road

Over the past several months, Jewish Healthcare Foundation Communications Associate Alyce Palko has volunteered with her mother, Gail Palko, CRNP, MSN, to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to homebound individuals and their caregivers in their hometown of Somerset, PA, and across rural Somerset County. Their efforts are part of a local push to reach individuals who may experience barriers to vaccination, with vaccine provider [Highlands Health](#), the Somerset County Commissioners, the local Area Agency on Aging, and the Cambria-Somerset COVID-19 Task Force, of which Alyce is a member. Read more in an article by Somerset newspaper the Daily American [here](#) (disclaimer: this article is behind a paywall).



Alyce Palko and her mother, Gail Palko, on a home vaccine trip in Somerset County, PA. Photo courtesy of the Daily American.