



August 2023 | Jewish Healthcare Foundation news, events, milestones, & more

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Health Care Redesign Expo Showcases Pittsburgh Safety Tech Innovators

How would you deploy cutting edge technology, out-of-the-box thinking, and interdisciplinary perspectives to reshape longstanding safety issues plaguing today's patients? Thirty graduate students and innovators spent the summer focused on that very challenge, participating in the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF)'s [Patient Safety Challenge Fellowship](#) that culminated with the Health Care Redesign Expo and Award Ceremony on August 14 at the Energy Innovation Center in Pittsburgh. The event featured 12 project teams competing for a \$5,000 grand prize for the most compelling safety idea to transform care.

The five judges reviewed video and written submissions from all the teams in the week preceding the finale, and then questioned teams during the event before convening together to determine the grand prize winner. The judges considered how the ideas addressed the seven dimensions of the projects (safety, technology, patient and family engagement, equity, healthcare delivery, workforce and accountability), and discussed what in tech safety innovation is highly likely to succeed at the frontline, and what is the most novel approach. The judges included: Rick Cancelliere, CEO, Treatspace; Tina Hahn, VP, CIN development and value-based integration, Allegheny Health Network and Physician Partners of Western PA; Jim Jen, MA, MBA, distinguished service professor of entrepreneurship, Carnegie Mellon University; Tamra Minnier, MSN, RN, FACHE, FAAN, chief quality officer, UPMC; and Paul E. Phrampus, MD, CPE, FSSH, FACEP, CPPS, vice chair of quality and patient safety, Department of Emergency Medicine, UPMC.



Karen Wolk Feinstein applauds the work of the fellows and outlines the need for continued attention to patient safety.

the JHF Patient Safety Challenge Fellowship illustrated that, although large, the problem can be dramatically decreased through involved collaboration, out-of-the-box thinking, and impactful legislation," said Harding, a member of the winning team. "Our team greatly benefited from the



Grand prize-winning team al-GO-rithm pictured with the five judges (L to R): Tamra Minnier, Rick Cancelliere, Morgan Birdy, Callum Harding, Paul Phrampus, Jim Jen, and Tina Hahn.

The grand prize-winning idea, [al-GO-rithm](#), came from Morgan Birdy, Master of Health Administration student at Tulane University, and Callum Harding, data business analyst at Holmusk, and set out to prevent falls in the inpatient setting for senior patients. Al-GO-rithm uses real-time EHR data to predict when a patient will attempt to use the restroom in order to improve time management and resource allocation, therefore decreasing the risk of unassisted falls, one of the leading causes of harm in U.S. hospitals.

"Patient safety issues can be overwhelming, but

speakers and mentors provided during the fellowship as we refined our idea to try and address falls within inpatient settings. We were thrilled to win the final prize and look forward to carrying our lessons forward to help make health care safer.

Attendees also had the opportunity to vote for their favorite project, bestowing the People's Choice Award to the project team, [Road System: Reducing Opioid Overdoses and Deaths in PA](#), composed of Jennifer Callear, MSN, doctor of nursing practice candidate at the University of Pittsburgh, Vincent DeStefino, senior medical student at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Tracey Obi, health informatics student at the University of Pittsburgh, Mark Rhoge, neuroscience student at the University of Pittsburgh, and Thomas Tam, machine learning researcher at Carnegie Mellon University. Their project proposed an AI predictive model for risk assessment for addiction, overdose, and overdose-associated deaths and the creation of a centralized database and EHR-compatible communication hub for coordinating management and supportive resources based on predicted risk.

Above and beyond the winners at the event, the Redesign Expo embodied the spirit of the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative's Regional Autonomous Patient Safety (RAPS) initiative through its interdisciplinary and cross-industry/institution collaborations. The evening saw fellows, judges, mentors, and attendees from dozens of areas of expertise tackling patient safety challenges, discussing the potential of novel technology, and identifying where opportunities exist to make transformational change.

Other projects included [Korion Health](#), which introduced the SoundHeart Electronic Stethoscope, an affordable electronic stethoscope along with a guided interface that anyone can use from the comfort of their home, aiming to address access issues for patients with heart failure risks; [Community Ability Tech](#), a custom device manufacturing solution aiming to increase accessibility of assistive technology using 3D printers to drive down costs and improve safety for disabled individuals; [MARA](#), an AI technology approach to combating the multifaceted challenges of polypharmacy; and [Modus Vivendi](#), an augmented reality intervention tailored for adolescents and adults with schizophrenia to support healthier and safer integration back into their daily routines after an inpatient stay.

The Patient Safety Challenge Fellowship brought another of PRHI's initiatives, the [Patient Safety Technology Challenge](#), back home to Pittsburgh to fuel the engagement of students and innovators in creating solutions and envisioning transformational approaches to reduce preventable harm from medical errors.



Thirty-one fellows formed 13 teams consisting of fellows and non-fellows to craft novel visions of safer health care.

RAPS Salon Highlights Region's Tech Hub University Leaders

The August 23 Regional Autonomous Patient Safety (RAPS) Research and Development Salon convened innovators, researchers, and technology entrepreneurs from across the Pittsburgh region to highlight regional research initiatives at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh and to brief participants on the region's recently submitted USDA Tech Hub application.

Michael Holland, PhD, the University of Pittsburgh's Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Research Strategies, presented the regional efforts to advance precision public health, an approach that uses big data analytics to identify the right solution in the right community at the right time.

Theresa Mayer, PhD, Carnegie Mellon University's Vice President for Research, commented on the region's robust research and innovation ecosystem to support the translational activities in addition to foundational R&D. This includes CMU's deep and growing partnerships with the University of Pittsburgh, medical centers, and other academic and industry collaborators. She added how it is an exciting time to be in Pittsburgh as the region is experiencing significant growth in the high-tech sector and is positioned to become a national leader. Dr. Mayer also reviewed CMU's diverse portfolio of research funding, which includes a recent increase in NIH funded. Examples of CMU's patient safety-related research includes the NSF-funded AI Institute for Societal Decision Making, the NIH-funded research on clinical decision support tools using AI and human factors, the CDC-funded Delphi National Center for Excellence for Epidemic Forecasting, and CMU's Center for Innovation in Health. She also discussed how CMU is making significant investments in automated science.

Kinsey Casey, the University of Pittsburgh's Associate Vice Chancellor for Economic Development in Health Sciences, briefed Salon participants on the region's application to become a U.S. Economic Development Administration-designated Tech Hub. The application focuses on the region's potential to advance biotech manufacturing. If Pittsburgh's application is approved, Phase II of the application process will take place this fall. She thanked both Dr. Mayer and Dr. Holland for their support in compiling the tech hub application.

Attendees were also reminded that the RAPS Seed Grant Request for Proposal is due by October 16. The RAPS Seed Grant Program is designed to support multidisciplinary R&D teams, start-ups, tech companies, and healthcare organizations in the Pittsburgh region that are in the early stages of developing, testing, or adopting an autonomous solution to prevent medical errors. Grants up to \$50,000 are available. Application details are available [here](#).

The next RAPS R&D salons are scheduled for 12-1 p.m. on October 11 and December 6. Register for either of those meetings [here](#).



Health Careers Futures Board Showcases JHF Workforce Initiatives

On August 23, the Health Careers Futures ([HCF](#)) Board convened to discuss the JHF's teen mental health initiatives, the Behavioral Health Fellows program, Feinstein Fellowships, Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home's Phase II project plan, and lessons learned from international models of care for women and seniors.

Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD, president and CEO of JHF, shared insights from her recent study tour to Australia and New Zealand and innovative models being deployed there to address the current teen mental health crisis including drop-in centers that provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the social, psychological and medical needs of teens. Services can range from teens who are simply seeking a peer counselor to talk to, to youth seeking psychiatric therapy for early onset psychosis.

Deborah Murdoch, MPH, senior program manager of community health, presented ongoing teen mental health initiatives and the increased momentum for the work at the Foundation. Murdoch provided an overview of the teen mental health services currently being offered at The Friendship Circle's [The Beacon](#) in Squirrel Hill made possible in part by [a grant](#) from JHF.

[UpStreet Pittsburgh](#), a teen mental health service offering free counseling to anyone ages 12-22, like The Beacon was seeded after JHF's 2018 study tour to an [Australian headspace centre](#) and was implemented by the Jewish Family and Community Services. JHF also provided initial funding and consultation for the launch of the program. UpStreet has since extended its service delivery and this winter will open a physical space, JFCS Youth Services at 5844 Forward Avenue.

Murdoch also gave an update on Pennsylvania Senate Bill 886, developed in partnership with members of the PA Youth Advocacy Network, which has been introduced into the General Assembly and would provide students with excused mental health days. She supplied Board members with a copy of the [Mental Health Advocacy Action Guide](#) which was designed by the PA Youth Advocacy Network to share information about issues and ways for other youth to take action.

The HCF Board lauded JHF's commitment to advancing teen mental health services and the work of the teen mental health team.

Bridget McNamee, MID, behavioral health project manager, provided an overview of the [Behavioral Health Fellows \(BH Fellows\)](#) program. Sponsored by Allegheny County Department of Human Services in collaboration with Community Care Behavioral Health and JHF, the BH Fellows program offers educational loan repayment, minimum salary standards, and a cohort learning experience in exchange for a two-year commitment to a behavioral health job within a qualified



Nancy Zions outlines the work of the two phases of the Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home initiative.

service area. The inaugural cohort is currently underway, and the second cohort will begin their training program this fall. The BH Fellows program goal is to recruit 180 fellows through 2024.

Scotland Huber, MS, chief communications officer, presented an overview of the recent progress of the Feinstein Fellowships, including seeing 498 applications and 362 fellows complete a program since the beginning of 2020. The Feinstein Fellowships, launched back in 2001 and renamed in honor of Karen Feinstein in 2016, have now seen over 1,800 alumni come through at least one of the programs. JHF is currently recruiting for the fall's [Salk Health Activist Fellowship](#) and the [Death & Dying Series for Healthcare Professionals](#).

Health Careers Futures was recently awarded a [\\$3.3 million three-year grant](#) from The John A. Hartford Foundation for *Phase II of the Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home Initiative: Dissemination Across Pennsylvania*. The project addresses quality of care in long term care by enhancing the training and engagement of the current careforce while strengthening the pipeline of workers for the future. This occurs in partnership with nursing schools across the Commonwealth. Nancy Zions, MBA, JHF chief operating officer and chief program officer, Anneliese Perry, MS, NHA, program manager of aging initiatives, and Maureen Saxon-Gioia, MSHSA, BSN, RN, nurse project manager of aging initiatives, provided an overview of the accomplishments of Phase I and the plans for Phase II, which includes sustaining engagement and sharing lessons learned to improve residents' quality of care and outcomes within nursing homes and evaluating interventions and broadly disseminate the lessons learned beyond Pennsylvania. It also provides for the establishment of a curriculum task force to examine the current approaches and areas where innovation is needed, propose feasible actions to impact the quality of nursing student academic programs and to include the specialty of post-acute and long-term care in nursing homes, and advance findings that identify feasible updates to curriculum.

Zions presented on the lessons learned about how to care for an aging population by Dr. Feinstein on a Commonwealth Fund study tour to Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore and her own insights from the JHF study tour to Norway and Finland. These include international models of care for women and seniors, touching on the value of Australia's ongoing 45 and Up Study, Oslo's innovative model of a dementia village, and shifts being made in systems of care to accommodate Singapore's rapidly aging population, including creating age-friendly living environments to allow seniors to age in place.

JHF and PRHI Chief Policy Officer Robert Ferguson, MPH gave an update on the maternal health policy goals for 2023, including: Modernizing the midwifery scope of practice, advocating for reimbursement for certified Doulas and community health workers, and increasing the enrollment in WIC.

Patient Safety Podcast Explores Redesigning Healthcare Systems for Safety and Resiliency

The most recent Up Next for Patient Safety podcast episode “Engineering Systems for Safety” welcomes emergency room department leaders Chris LeMaster, MD, MPH and Tina Vitale-McDowell, RN, MSN for a dive into how systems engineering approaches can address some of the biggest challenges in healthcare safety and what we can learn from our frontline workers. Listen to the episode [here](#).



Four Projects Approved to Receive Maternal Health Innovations Grants

Allegheny Health Network’s Immigrant & Refugee Doula Program, Hello Neighbor, The Mid-Atlantic Mothers’ Milk Bank, and The Midwife Center for Birth & Women’s Health will be the first recipients of maternal care innovation grant funding, intended to identify unique opportunities to improve maternal health outcomes in Pennsylvania.

JHF is operating as the fiscal agent for federal Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds provided through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to address maternal health needs. A total of \$4.5 million is available for short-term, maternal care innovation projects that will positively impact maternal health in Pennsylvania. [An external statewide review panel](#) comprised of subject matter experts from across Pennsylvania met for the first time on August 9, to finalize funding recommendations for the first round of proposals, received May through June of 2023.

Twelve proposals were received in total with AHN’s Immigrant & Refugee Doula Program, Hello Neighbor, The Mid-Atlantic Mothers’ Milk Bank, and The Midwife Center for Birth & Women’s Health being recommended by the committee for immediate funding, totaling \$697,489.

The awarded proposals include:

- AHN’s Immigrant & Refugee Doula Program’s expansion of current operations by increasing impact related to maternal nutrition and food insecurity support through an innovative collaboration with the AHN Healthy Food Centers. Doulas and community health workers (CHWs) will be trained to provide culturally appropriate, basic maternal nutrition education to pregnant and postpartum clients during home visits and appointments on an ongoing basis. Through this project, Doulas and CHWs will learn to recognize and address food insecurity and nutrition-related concerns during their encounters through screening assessments and informal conversation and act accordingly by providing tailored food boxes to their clients. Additionally, the project seeks to further impact community awareness of food insecurity and

maternal mortality as it relates to immigrants and refugees through the annual Immigrant and Refugee Health conference.

- Hello Neighbor will expand their current services providing culturally tailored and individualized support for refugee and immigrant moms and babies. This will be achieved through the hiring of a newly created position, a Smart Start Program Coordinator, allowing for remote navigation throughout surrounding counties for virtual support, increasing outbound recruitment, and overseeing case acuity to maintain appropriate levels of case management for case managers.
- The Mid-Atlantic Mothers' Milk Bank will reduce barriers to donor milk access for medically fragile infants by establishing a web-based education center, video content, clinician webinars, infographics, display materials, awareness campaigns, and clinician conferences.
- The Midwife Center will expand its services, serve new clients, and build on its innovative healthcare model by mentoring more health professionals to reflect a more diverse clientele.

In addition to these awards, JHF expects to issue awards for the remainder of proposals received in the first round and recommended for funding in September, pending receipt of information and/or changes requested by the review committee.

A second round of proposals, those received July through August, will be provided to the review committee in September for consideration early this fall. As of August 28, 13 new proposals have been received, totaling over \$1.7 million in requests.

JHF Seeks Proposals to Improve Food Access for Low-Income Pregnant People in Pennsylvania

JHF is operating as the fiscal agent for federal Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds provided through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to address maternal health needs. A total of \$2.25 million is available to provide short-term healthy food access grants that directly impact low-income pregnant individuals and new families in Pennsylvania.



Proposals are being sought from interested and qualified Pennsylvania organizations that will provide food-as-medicine style programs to make healthy, nutritious foods available to low-income pregnant people to demonstrate the impact this has on their overall health, maternity outcomes, and infant outcomes.

A nationwide survey completed by Michigan State University stated that 31 percent of people report that the pandemic has affected their ability to feed their family. Several risk factors of maternal mortality, such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes, rely on a healthy diet; however, accessing healthy food can be a real challenge for low-income pregnant individuals.

Maternal mortality and morbidity remain a serious issue in Pennsylvania and across the U.S. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. experienced a maternal mortality rate of 32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2021, the highest of any developed

country. Rates of maternal mortality and morbidity continue to rise, particularly among non-Hispanic black populations.

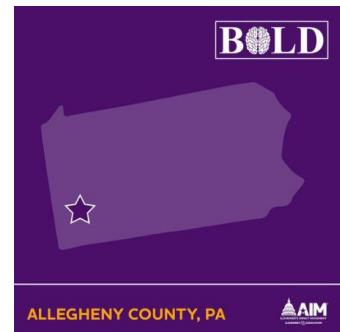
Grants may include, but are not limited to, programs and activities that: directly provide healthy foods or food prescription boxes to the targeted populations; pair cooking classes or nutritional education with the provision of healthy foods; support super food pantries, food banks, and other similar operations; or otherwise expand access to healthy foods for low-income pregnant people and new families in Pennsylvania.

Interested organizations are encouraged to review the Request for Proposals (RFP) to learn more about eligibility and how to apply at www.jhf.org/Nutrition. Awards are intended to be made for projects between \$15,000 - \$100,000 per year for up to two years. A review committee will be convened to make all funding decisions, comprised of subject matter experts from across Pennsylvania; a diverse mixture of food access advocates and experts, representatives for all regions of Pennsylvania, as well those with grant making experience.

Proposals will be accepted beginning September 15th, 2023. Awards will be made on a rolling basis through September 30, 2024 or until funding has been fully expended.

JHF to Serve on Leadership Team and Provide Training through CDC BOLD Public Health Grant Awarded to Allegheny County

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



Allegheny County is one of the oldest regions in the United States, with 19.7% of the population 65 years and older. It has the second largest population of older adults among the 40 largest U.S. counties, second to Palm Beach, Florida. Allegheny County's population has aged mainly in place, and this trend is anticipated to continue.

As a BOLD grant recipient, the ACHD will work to increase awareness and understanding among the public (including populations of high burden), providers, and other professionals of ADRD topics corresponding to primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. It will also address the social determinants of health to achieve health equity goals including but not limited to the improvement of community-clinical linkages among health care systems and existing services, public health agencies, and community-based organizations.

ACHD, JHF, the Alzheimer Association, Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh, and the Allegheny County Department of Human Services-Area Agency on Aging will serve on the leadership team that guides the work of the Allegheny County BOLD Coalition (ABC).

JHF will provide information sessions and training to the ABC and other community members, starting October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028, as part of the Dementia Friends Pennsylvania Program. Read more in the [press release here](#) and in [coverage by WESA](#).

Perinatal Health Equity Champions Program Links Traditional Birth Services and St. Clair Hospital

JHF and WHAMglobal facilitated a collaborative project through the Perinatal Health Equity Champions Program between Igi Osé – Traditional Birth Services and St. Clair Hospital's Labor and Delivery Unit titled "Community Doulas: A Hospital's Least Tapped Resource."

The Champions Program is a year-long engagement model designed to build capacity in the birthing workforce to help address racial disparities and improve maternal health care in the Pittsburgh region. The Champions Program builds trusted working relationships among community and hospital birth workers in which common goals drive solutions to holistic care, strengthen continuity of care, and bridge resources across the maternal care continuum. The Perinatal Health Equity Champions program is facilitated by Pittsburgh: A Safer Childbirth City, WHAMglobal, and [JHF](#).

Of the program, community birth worker Selena Eisenberg, Midwife, CLD, CPD and former Salk Fellow, said it provided her a window into the systematic differences between hospital-based and community-based work, fostering a deeper understanding of the hospital system, how to convey the structure of hospital systems to clients, and to provide an opportunity to impact the lives of birthing people.

"Creating individualized programming [for St. Clair] has been an amazing learning opportunity for me. Hearing the lived experiences of providers and how it has impacted their feelings about and interactions with doulas and community birth workers has made me more understanding. As important as policies are, they don't change how individual people feel about the role of doulas. I have adjusted my approach and my client education with a more individualized lens. Meeting hospital providers where they are instead of meeting them where the hospital system's policies and procedures are," Eisenberg said.

Shawndel Laughner, MHA, BSN, CNML, RNC-OB, C-ONQS, C-EFM, director of women and children's services at St. Clair Hospital said through the Perinatal Health Equity Champions program, the system partnered with Eisenberg to educate its staff on the role of a doula and their scope of practice.



Shawndel Laughner and Selena Eisenberg meet with hospital staff.

"This [customized] session is an essential and comprehensive dive into what community birth workers bring to the table and why engaging with them makes birthing people experience fewer traumatic experiences and have positive outcomes," Laughner said. "The goal is to make our staff confident in their ability to engage community birth attendants and foster a positive working relationship, creating a better patient birth experience."

Laughner added that they are in the very early stages of planning a Doula Open House for the community, with the vision of birthing families meeting a variety of community and concierge doulas to find out the benefits of doula care throughout the continuum of pregnancy.

"This Champions program has been an amazing experience to connect healthcare organizations and community birth workers to join forces to enhance the birth outcomes for the families we serve," Laughner said.

The work of the Perinatal Health Champion Program, along with Pittsburgh: A Safer Childbirth City partners, will be shared at the Safer Childbirth City Finale on October 19th highlighting how community-based and healthcare organizations are helping to improve Black maternal health outcomes in Pittsburgh.

Patient Safety Technology Challenge Announces Upcoming Competitions and A New Winner

Four new competitions joined the Patient Safety Technology Challenge this month. Funded by JHF and administered by PRHI, the Patient Safety Technology Challenge fuels the engagement of students and innovators in creating solutions to reduce preventable harm and reimagine a vastly safer healthcare system.

HackDuke is Duke University's premier 36-hour hackathon. This year's theme is "Code for Good" and will feature a special prize and track for innovative solutions to improve patient safety. The winning team in this new track will receive \$1,000. Held September 8-10, HackDuke is a weekend of coding, collaboration, speakers, mentorship, and access to hardware labs. Students of all skill levels are welcome to join this hackathon to build technology that drives social change.



Intelligent Safety: Pioneering Patient Safety Solutions with AI/ML and Data Science is the U-BRITE Hackathon organized by the University of Alabama at Birmingham and is focused on patient safety technology. The event aims to revolutionize patient safety through the power of machine learning, artificial intelligence, and data science by challenging participants to utilize these technologies to identify ways to prevent, detect, and address factors that affect patient safety in various focus areas, including medication errors, diagnostic errors, lapses in care, infections, and procedural/surgical errors. The event will be held virtually September 9-10 and participants from all institutions are welcome.

HopHacks is a 36-hour hackathon held at the Johns Hopkins University on Sept. 15-17, encouraging engineers, designers, and entrepreneurs to explore new ideas and create new applications. Teams of up to four university students will work on technical projects from scratch. At the end of the hackathon, teams will present their projects to judges and compete for prizes, including a \$750 prize for the best technology-enabled patient safety solution, which is being offered for the first time this year. The first Patient Safety Technology Challenge event was held at Johns Hopkins and look forward to returning for this event.

The annual Health Innovation Exhibition, hosted by the College of Nursing and Health Innovation at Arizona State University, is another exciting event on the horizon. Freshman Nursing and Health Innovation students will come together to participate in a dynamic competition aimed at fostering innovative solutions in the realm of Patient Safety. Pre-determined teams will immerse themselves in a unique challenge, each focusing on a specific patient safety category, including medication error, patient care, procedure/surgery safety, infections, and diagnostic errors. With an 8-week timeline, these teams will embark on a transformative journey to develop and refine their inventive solutions. The culmination of their efforts will take place on November 17 at the Health Innovation Exhibition where teams will unveil their creative progress through informative and visually compelling posters, showcasing their deep dive into their chosen patient safety realm. Expert judges will evaluate each presentation, recognizing the most outstanding accomplishments. The top team from each Patient Safety category will win a \$500 prize with category champions advancing to the final round, a riveting showdown where they will pitch their solutions against their peers. The pinnacle of achievement awaits the ultimate pitch winner, as judges will bestow a Grand Prize of \$1,000 for the best innovation. In this environment of knowledge, creativity, and competition, the Health Innovation Exhibition promises to be a hub of inspiration, pushing the boundaries of healthcare solutions and emphasizing the critical importance of patient safety.

To learn more about and apply to these competitions [click here](#).



The winning patient safety team with judge Dr. Benjamin Ranard.

The Patient Safety Technology Challenge recently presented a patient safety-focused award at this year's Society of Critical Care Medicine's (SSCM) Discovery Datathon. The award will fund one person from the winning patient safety team to travel to SCCM's Critical Care Congress in Arizona in January 2024 to present their idea and receive an award recognizing their contributions.

The SSCM Datathon was a collaborative event connecting clinicians with data scientists to develop pragmatic data-driven models applicable to the care of critically ill patients using de-identified critical care electronic health record datasets. Over 70 clinicians, data

scientists and students – including two from high school – spent two days on one of three themes: COVID-19, equity, or patient safety. The goals were to: Identify the factors that contribute to patient safety problems in critical care; develop data driven solutions to address these problems; and raise awareness of the issue of patient safety and the need for action.

Benjamin Ranard, MD, MSHP, a patient safety research fellow and a chief fellow in pulmonary and critical care medicine at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, served as one of the eight judges. The team that won the patient safety award was focused on answering the question: "What Are the Key Factors Influencing Glucose Variability in Point-of-Care and Serum Measurements?" Thanks to the funding from PRHI's Patient Safety Technology Challenge the team's work will reach a greater audience at SCCM's Congress next year.

JHF Sponsors WQED Documentary about the Nursing Crisis

In this short documentary, sponsored by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and produced by WQED, highlights the crisis in nursing with nurses sharing how they are being asked to care for more patients than they can safely manage, and viewers learning what patients and families can do to help ensure they receive the best care. [Watch now.](#)



Ryan White Learning Collaborative Informs Local Agencies about OVR Services

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Ryan White Learning Collaborative held their most recent session on August 15 at JHF, once again bringing together the various case managers and community health workers that serve people living with HIV (PLWH) in our region.

The learning collaborative has continued to hold these sessions on a bimonthly basis to facilitate community engagement and foster shared learning and collaboration. Approximately 30 people from 17 different Ryan White funded agencies were in attendance. The participants utilized time to network and discuss new strategies for assisting clients who are navigating various services and care supports.

James Lilley, the Assistant District Administrator for the Pittsburgh District Office of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) also provided an overview on OVR and how PLWH could be eligible for some of the programs and services that OVR offers. The presentation also provided more detailed insight into the application process and how the frontline staff in attendance could assist their clients with getting access to these available services to support opportunities for future employment.



The Ryan White Learning Collaborative convenes at JHF.

JHF Welcomes New PA PQC Quality Improvement Facilitator Kristen Brenneman

Kristen Brenneman, MSN will serve as the quality improvement facilitator for the Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PA PQC), supporting the Foundation's efforts to advance the goals of the PA PQC healthcare teams. Brenneman will coach multi-disciplinary healthcare teams in the PA PQC and create data reports for the teams and stakeholders. Brenneman has over 20 years of experience in maternal child health, including leadership roles in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at UPMC Magee Women's Hospital as unit director and Labor and Delivery at AHN West Penn Hospital as nurse manager. During her time as a nurse leader, she led many new initiatives and presented posters at two national nursing conferences. Brenneman received her BSN from West Virginia Wesleyan College and her MSN in Leadership and Administration from Capella University.



JHF Welcomes Intern CJ Rosado to the HIV Team

AIDS Free Pittsburgh and JHF welcome CJ Rosado as an intern of the HIV team. CJ is a second-year graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh studying social work. Last year, CJ had the opportunity to work with UPMC Children's Hospital to facilitate social learning groups on healthy relationships with middle schoolers attending Pittsburgh Public Schools. He will be assisting with the Ryan White Part B grant and helping to complete the 2023 Southwestern Pennsylvania HIV Regional Needs Assessment.



Salk Health Activist Fellowship Deadline Extended to September 6

The 2023 Salk Health Activist Fellowship deadline has been extended to Wednesday, September 6.

The fellowship is an incubator for emerging health activists seeking to build effective advocacy skills. This year's fellowship will convene creative graduate students and young professionals from diverse healthcare related disciplines who are interested in advocacy and policymaking to strengthen the mental health system and mental health of our communities.

The hybrid fellowship will be held on Tuesdays from 4:30-6:30 p.m. from September 19 to November 14. In-person sessions will be held September 19 and 14 with dinner provided from 6:30-7 p.m. The other sessions will be virtual via Zoom. [Apply now.](#)



Applications for the Death & Dying Series for Healthcare Professionals Closes September 7

The Death & Dying Series for Healthcare Professionals takes on a key challenge: the reality that professionals are not well prepared to deal with or talk about death, dying, and grieving families.

This virtual education series, held on Mondays from 3:30-5 p.m. October 9 through November 13, is modeled after the popular Death and Dying Fellowship for graduate students and provides healthcare professionals with an opportunity to learn, confront, and discuss the legal, medical, social, cultural, familial, and spiritual aspects of death and dying within a multidisciplinary group in a low-pressure environment.

Gain the skills you need to have meaningful end-of-life conversations with your patients and their loved ones. CME, CNE, and social work CEUs available. Applications are due by September 7. [Apply now.](#)



Ron Poropatich is Implementing Revolutionary Change in Patient Safety

A retired U.S. Army colonel, director of the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Military Medical Research, and Professor of Medicine in Pitt's Division of Pulmonary, Allergy, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine, Ron Poropatich has played a pivotal role in the advancement of both telemedicine and revolutionizing the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to care for patients in the battlefield and beyond.



Born in Lawrenceville and growing up in Shaler, Dr. Poropatich went onto the University of Pittsburgh receiving his Bachelor of Science in biochemistry, master's degree in science focusing on bacteriology at Wagner College, and received his MD at Drexel University.

"I wanted to go on to medical school. I graduated in 1977 from Pitt. I did okay, but not good enough for med school, so I decided that as a fallback to gain some maturity and experience I would join the ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) during my last two years at Pitt. I used that ROTC to help get a master's degree in microbiology. I came into the Army then as a first lieutenant, and I was assigned to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in DC, where I served as an army officer in the microbiology laboratory," Dr. Poropatich recounted.

By 23 years old, Dr. Poropatich was named the director of that laboratory and became "more serious in purpose," applying to medical school and attending Hahnemann Medical College (now Drexel University) for his medical degree.

He served 30 years in active duty, retiring in 2012 with the rank of Colonel, with extended assignments at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center starting in 1985.

During his time in active-duty service, he led the U.S. Army effort from 1993-2012 in the development and deployment of telemedicine capability across 22 time zones for remote consultation for stateside Army locations, as well as overseas locations, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Kuwait, Haiti, and Croatia. Since 1996, he has served as an associate editor of the "Telemedicine and e-Health Journal," is the former Chair of the NATO Telemedicine Team (2000-2012), and former President and board member of the American Telemedicine Association, where he served from 1995-2004.

"I was doing telemedicine and standing telemedicine up around the world," Dr. Poropatich said. "When I left the Army in 2012 (a mandatory retirement) after 30 years, we were doing about 5,000 telemedicine consults a month across 22 time zones, which at this time was significant. But COVID really exposed the vulnerabilities of face to face clinical care and as a result jumpstarted telemedicine."

He continues to work on telemedicine with an upcoming Department of Defense (DoD) sponsored trip to Warsaw to help stand up a telemedicine training program for Ukrainian doctors and nurses in battlefield telemedicine. Working in telemedicine for some time, he said it was rewarding to see it finally embraced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I read and write the literature on telemedicine – but I think the future is AI/ML," Dr. Poropatich said.

Following his military service, in 2012, he became the leader of the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Military Medicine Research (CMMR), and a tenured Professor of Medicine. At CMMR, Dr. Poropatich works in collaboration with other Pitt researchers addressing the needs of the armed services, particularly those working closely with clinical providers at military hospitals. Their research is an effort to understand the military's current needs and developing solutions to meet future needs. The work of CMMR involves strategic partnerships with industry, academia and government that results in developing medical products that meet both military and civilian health care needs.

"In 2017, I became interested in the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) in health care because it became very clear to me that with large, clinical data sets you can come up with predictive algorithms to treat someone in pre-hospital settings where there is limited or no communication," Dr. Poropatich said.

Developing a clinical decision support tool which applies technology noninvasively to a patient to generate meaningful data and autonomously provides computer information to predict and guide treatments are the future frontiers of medicine.

In the research, a multidisciplinary team of Pitt researchers and clinicians from emergency medicine, surgery, critical care, and pulmonary fields will provide real-world trauma data and

medical algorithms that CMU roboticists and computer scientists will assist to incorporate into a platform to render medical care.

Dr. Poropatich is the principal investigator along with a talented team from Pitt and CMU co-investigators on a four-year, \$3.72 million DoD contract driving research that advances health care for service members and veterans. The project, called “Trauma Care in a Rucksack (TRACIR)” aims to develop autonomous, a pre-hospital robotic controlled cardio-pulmonary resuscitation platform that is widely deployed across the battlefield via unmanned air or ground vehicles. He is also the co-investigator on a DoD funded project at CMU “Delivery of Trauma Care in the Field – RoboTRAC), which was started in 2019 and set to end this year.

“We are definitely focused on the military and the civilian need,” Dr. Poropatich said. “What we’ve been able to do with TRACIR is important. It’s an important development of what we’re doing here in Pittsburgh – and in August 2023, we were awarded another DoD grant for \$3.28 million to further advance the TRACIR platform. with prehospital trauma care.”

Capturing patient data from the UPMC Stat Medevac system with Emergency Medicine co-investigators, Dr. Poropatich’s work uses that data to inform and test the algorithms currently on animals with the goal of providing Continuous Precision Resuscitation, work that has the ability to impact and improve patient outcomes, remove stress from frontline workers, and revolutionize the delivery of health care.

Dr. Poropatich continues to participate in DoD-funded telemedicine research efforts in critical care medicine, while also advocating for broader utilization of AI and ML in health care.

“We’ve learned a lot about where mistakes are made and what we need to do to prevent mistakes in patient care. Medical Remote Autonomous Systems (MedRAS) is an exciting initiative that will utilize a lot of the AI, ML, and big data, to best determine how we can avoid medical errors, improve outcomes, decrease patient stays.”

Beyond his research work, Dr. Poropatich said his role at the center is to grow University DoD medical research funding opportunities and to position faculty to compete for those dollars.

“I also serve as the principal investigator or the co-investigator across 10 different projects right now. I’m very active in managing research and finding money for research,” Dr. Poropatich said. Dr. Poropatich has mentored several research teams involved in the MedRAS initiative, providing the lessons he’s learned from telemedicine and assisting in the creation of AI/ML systems of care to work in patient safety. His advice: “Start low with the rollout of patient safety technology, claim success early on and build on that success.”

He explains, “Working in so many technology projects is an incremental process where you bring on more people who understand what you’re trying to do; it’s like a snowball rolling down a hill with more people involved and more successes that make a bigger snowball with more people joining the project and making patient safety a key priority.”

Dr. Poropatich likens the patient safety movement to telemedicine, stressing that for some time no one knew what telemedicine was until the COVID-19 pandemic hit and it was essential to the

delivery of care. Bringing patient safety to the forefront is going to involve heightening awareness over time by strategically underlining successes and bringing communities together, which JHF and Karen have excelled in.

"We spend so much money on health care in this country and yet we're not performing as well as you'd think based on some of our outcome-based metrics. How we identify medical errors and use big data and AI/ML to synthesize solutions to mitigate those errors are key goals Dr. Poropatich said. "It really plays into a lot of what I'm doing with patient safety by improving access to care, improving and utilizing technologies, and improving outcomes and hospital care."

A long-time friend of the Foundation and of JHF's CEO Dr. Feinstein, and serving as a Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative Board member and a member of the RAPS Advisory, Dr. Poropatich draws a parallel of Feinstein's multi-layered approach to the skin of an onion.

"She has her own team, then she reaches out to the region, and then she goes outside of the region to other national and international leaders," Dr. Poropatich said. "Karen is just a dynamo. She has so much energy and she's able to convey these fuzzy ideas very succinctly and very clearly. And she brings wonderful, talented people committed to the mission of making a difference."

"She does a wonderful job of making everyone feel welcome and values their opinions. That kind of relationship garners trust where people are willing to share ideas and be involved in putting pencil to paper to write proposals, educate other people about what it is we're trying to do."