

Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Weekly Newsletter

NOVEMBER 10-14, 2025



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Dear PQHS Faculty, Staff, and Students,

Jeroan Allison and Sharina Person invite you to schedule a 30-minute confidential meeting with them. These sessions are an opportunity for you to discuss any topic of your choice in confidence. Whether you have ideas to share, concerns to address, or simply want to connect, this is your chance to speak directly with leadership in a private setting.

If you would like to schedule a meeting with PQHS leadership, please use the scheduling link to reserve your time: [Sign up here](#) ~They look forward to connecting with you.

CONGRATULATIONS



Starting November 10th, **Edgard (Alex) Granillo** will serve as Research Program Manager I as part of the TEAM CGM Administrative Supplement to Broaden Clinical Research Workforce, funded by NIDDK. Alex will champion efforts to improve study recruitment and retention of patients with diabetes at UMass Memorial and Baystate Health, particularly those who are Spanish-speaking.

UPCOMING EVENTS

LAST DAY TO SIGN UP

Wednesday, November 12, 1200-1:30 PM

Thanksgiving Pot Luck Lunch Come celebrate the season with great food and even better company. Please sign up to bring a dish or item of your choice—appetizer, main dish, side, bread, dessert, beverage, or paper goods.

 [Click here](#) to sign up.

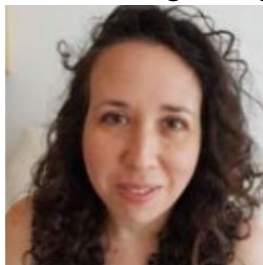


We can't wait to gather together, share a delicious meal, and enjoy some time with colleagues. Hope to see you there!

Monday, November 10, 2025, 1:00-2:15 PM

Gerontology Speaker Series

Title: Growing old together: Connections and perceptions



Speaker: Dikla Segel-Karpas, PhD, Chair, Department of Gerontology, University of Haifa

Abstract: Aging is not only a biological process but also a deeply social one. Our relationships across the life course shape how we age, affecting physical and mental health as well as the ways we think about and experience aging itself. This presentation will review evidence on the role of social connections in later life, highlighting their impact on cognitive functioning, physical health, emotional well-being, and subjective views of aging. I will then turn to the couple as a central context of aging, examining how older romantic partners influence each other's aging process. Beyond the couple, I will consider intergenerational relationships with

adult children and their significance for both parents and children. The talk will conclude with discussion of ongoing and future research aimed at advancing theoretical and empirical tools to better understand how our closest relationships, including spousal and intergenerational relationships, shape the process of growing old.

In-person (Gerontology Classroom, Wheatley Hall 3rd Floor, Room 125) and via Zoom: via

Zoom: <https://umassboston.zoom.us/j/94175483404> Password: Boston

Sponsored by:

University of Massachusetts Boston

Department of Gerontology and Gerontology Institute

Donna M. and Robert J. Manning College of Nursing & Health Sciences &

University of Massachusetts Medical School

Department of Population Health and Quantitative Health Sciences

For more information contact Qian Song: Qian.Song@umb.edu

Interested in learning more about gambling? Mark your calendars and register now for these upcoming trainings hosted in collaboration with the RI Council on Problem Gambling.

Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 1:00-2:30 PM

Register: [The Intersection of Gambling and Domestic Violence: Empowering Survivors](#)

Join consultant Kristen Beall for a critical training on the intersection of gambling disorder and domestic violence. This session examines how economic abuse and coercive control create a dangerous connection. You will learn evidence-based approaches for identifying financial coercion, concrete strategies for supporting survivors' path to safety, and practical intervention techniques you can implement immediately.

Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 12:00-1:30 PM

Register: [Exploring the intersection of HIV and tobacco use for addiction and behavioral health professionals](#)

Join the New England ATTC and Dr. Trish Cioe, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, to learn about the high rates of tobacco use among people living with HIV, its impact on health outcomes. Dr. Cioe will discuss biological, psychological, and social factors contributing to tobacco dependence, as well as barriers to cessation. Dr. Cioe will also discuss evidence-based strategies for tobacco screening, counseling, and pharmacotherapy, emphasizing the importance of integrating cessation support into HIV care and behavioral health settings. By the end of the session, attendees will understand the importance of addressing tobacco use as part of comprehensive, trauma-informed, and responsive HIV care.

Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 1:00-2:30 PM

Register: [Gambling Disorder: Relationship to Suicide and Resources for Help](#)

Kristen Beall is offering a second training on a critical topic: Gambling disorder, which is recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as a behavioral addiction with the highest rate of suicide risk. This session provides crucial information on identifying warning signs using DSM-5 criteria, understanding co-occurring disorders, and initiating life-saving conversations. Leave equipped with essential resources and mitigation strategies to address this public health concern in your community.

Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 1:00-2:30 PM

Register: [Impact of the Games We Play](#)

Ted Hartwell is back to the impact of the games we play. Digital gaming has become one of the most dominant forms of entertainment worldwide—surpassing the movie and music industries combined. But with growing popularity comes growing concern. This training explores the line between healthy and problematic gaming, highlighting features in video games and social media that can quickly lead to harm, especially among younger users. Participants will gain insight into how gaming and gambling behaviors intersect, learn to identify warning signs, and discover practical resources to address gaming-related harms.

Please feel free to share this with anyone who may be interested. We hope to see you there! Keep checking our [website](#) and our [LinkedIn](#) page for updates!

The New England ATTC Team

New England ATTC

Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

UMass Chan Medical School

New England ATTC - Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC) Network

NewEnglandATTC@umassmed.edu

Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Research Methods Meeting

Presenter: Lisa Lix, BSHEc, MSc, PhD, PStat

Title: Leveraging synthetic data to mitigate cohort imbalance in algorithm validation studies

Abstract: This talk will examine the use of synthetic data, artificially created datasets that retain the properties of real-world data, to improve the representativeness of clinical registry data for evaluating the validity of case-finding algorithms for administrative health data. My team assessed the effect of data augmentation, supplementing real-world data with synthetic data, on the performance of algorithms to measure smoking status in administrative health



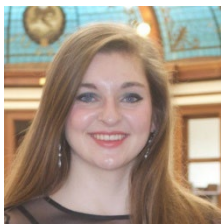
data. We compared the effect of synthetic data generation model on validity estimates for augmented and non-augmented model training datasets. We found that the choice of synthetic data generation models influenced algorithm performance estimates for males and younger adults, who were under-represented in the clinical registry. Synthetic data can improve subgroup equity in validation studies, but must be used with caution.

Bio: Dr. Lisa Lix is a Distinguished Professor of Biostatistics in the College of Community and Global Health at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. She holds a Canada Research Chair in Methods for Electronic Health Data Quality. Dr. Lix's expertise lies in developing and applying statistical and machine-learning methods to evaluate and improve the quality of administrative health data, electronic medical records, and clinical registries. She is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association and Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

Click [here](#) to join.

Thursday, November 20th from 3pm – 5pm

Gretchen Weaver, a UMass graduate student, will be competing in the 3 Minute Thesis Competition. Click [here](#) to RSVP. It is open to the UMass Chan community. Gretchen will be giving a 3-minute pitch on my research amongst 10 finalists, and we will be competing for a \$1,000 cash prize. Also, there is a fan favorite award of \$750, so the more people who come and support her, the better chances she has of winning!



FYI



This is the start of our annual employee giving campaign, UMass Chan Cares, a time when our Medical School community comes together to demonstrate care and compassion for our friends and neighbors. Over the years, our students, faculty and staff have contributed millions of dollars to employee giving campaigns to strengthen our communities and make a difference in thousands of lives.

The dollars you have raised help support research and education initiatives on our campus, break down barriers to academic success for K-12 students in Worcester and bolster many charitable organizations close to your hearts. Your donations help to relieve the economic pressures that charitable organizations face.

By visiting UMassChanCares.org, you may donate by payroll deduction, check or credit card, and direct your donation to a variety of worthy organizations and causes. They are:

- **UMass Chan's North Quadrant Support Services** initiative, which is our partnership with the Worcester Public Schools providing support to address socioeconomic barriers to academic success faced by students in our community.
- Several funds administered by the UMass Chan Medical School Foundation:
 - **The Research Fund** supports UMass Chan research that advances treatments and cures for a range of diseases, creating a better future for all of us.
 - **The Student Financial Aid Fund** provides students who are financially disadvantaged with opportunities to pursue education here at UMass Chan—opportunities that otherwise may not be accessible otherwise.
 - **The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Fund** supports institution-wide efforts to raise awareness among members of our community about the importance of diversity and inclusion and address bias.

- **The Max Baker Resources Center** is available to students in all three schools facing food insecurity or barriers to accessing food and essential supplies including personal hygiene products.
- **The UMass Chan Medical School Fund** provides important unrestricted financial support to our world class institution and allows UMass Chan to put the funds to use wherever and whenever the mission-critical need is greatest as situations arise throughout the year.
- **United Way of Central Massachusetts** or more than 1,000 nonprofit organizations through our partnership with the United Way of Central Massachusetts

I continue to be proud and inspired by your incredible generosity and look forward to another successful and impactful campaign. Thank you, in advance, for your participation in this year's UMass Chan Cares Employee Giving Campaign.

Please email our department lead, Carla McDonald, if you have any questions or need assistance.

DIVERSITY

Working Wisdom: Celebrating Diversity in How We Work

Diversity shows up in many ways — not just in our backgrounds, but also in our **behaviors, communication styles, and energy sources**. Some of us thrive in bustling group settings, others prefer quiet reflection, and many move between both.

This new *Education Corner* in the **Diversity Digest** will offer **short, engaging insights** into how personality and behavior shape our workplace experience. Each installment will highlight a different angle — from introversion and extroversion to communication, decision-making, and well-being — with quick takeaways and fun polls to spark reflection.

Together, we'll explore the **full spectrum of diversity in how we work** — and celebrate the strengths each style brings to our community.

Week 3




Working Wisdom: Celebrating Diversity in How We Work

Communication Styles — Talking It Out vs. Thinking It Through




We've talked about where we fall on the introvert–extrovert spectrum and what fuels our energy. This week, we're looking at how those differences shape the way we **communicate**.

Some people find their best ideas by talking them out loud in the moment, while others prefer to think things through before speaking. Neither style is right or wrong — they simply reflect different ways of processing information.

The Science Behind It

- **Extroverts**  often “talk to think,” finding clarity as they speak.
- **Introverts**  usually “think, then talk,” forming ideas internally before sharing.
- **Ambiverts**  shift between both, depending on the setting.

At a Glance

| |  Extrovert |  Introvert |  Ambivert |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| Definition | Expressive, process ideas verbally | Reflective, process ideas internally | Flexible, draw on either approach |
| Conversation Style | Speaks to explore and develop ideas | Thinks first, shares once ideas feel formed | Adjusts depending on group and context |
| Style in Action | Thrives in brainstorming sessions | Prefers time to prepare before discussion | Can brainstorm, but also values prep time |

✦ Your Turn

In meetings, do you:

- Speak up quickly and develop ideas as you go
- Prefer to reflect before sharing
- Move between both, depending on the situation

Take this quick, two-question poll and see where our department lands

👉 <https://arcsapps.umassmed.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=HXP44NKJ38NC9MTT>

💡 Practical Tip

When leading a meeting, pause for a few seconds after asking a question. This gives reflective thinkers space to contribute — and makes the conversation richer for everyone.

✦ **Next Week:** We'll explore **Risk & Decision-Making** — how personality influences whether we leap quickly or plan carefully.

Upcoming diversity calendar events:

• Highlighting Men's Health in November

November is both American Diabetes Month and International Men's Day on November 19, offering an opportunity to focus on men's health. Men experience higher rates of preventable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and lung cancer, and are more likely to smoke or delay seeking care. Diabetes also affects some groups of men more than others. According to the CDC National Diabetes Statistics Report, between 2019 and 2021 the prevalence of diagnosed diabetes was 13.4 percent in American Indian or Alaska Native men, 12.2 percent in Hispanic men, and 11.5 percent in non-Hispanic Black men, compared with 7.7 percent in non-Hispanic White men. Smoking shows a similar pattern. Men smoke more than women in many countries, contributing to higher rates of lung cancer and cardiovascular disease. In Vietnam, over 90 percent of smokers are men, and this is reflected in our own research, including the M2Q2 smoking cessation studies led by Drs. Rajani Sadasivam and Hoa Nguyen. At PQHS, we conduct interdisciplinary research to create health-relevant knowledge, develop innovative interventions, and evaluate strategies that advance prevention, equity, and population health. Yet despite experiencing a greater burden of many chronic conditions, men are less likely to participate in health research, highlighting the need to better engage them in prevention, care, and discovery.

- Each November, we observe Transgender Awareness Week (**Nov. 13–19**) leading into Transgender Day of Remembrance (**Nov. 20**). These observances give us a dedicated time to learn, reflect, and act in support of transgender and gender-diverse individuals.

Transgender Awareness Week is about visibility, education, and inclusion — helping us recognize gender-diverse people as full, whole, and valued in our community. Transgender Day of Remembrance is about remembering the lives lost to anti-transgender violence, acknowledging the urgent work that remains, and recommitting to equity and justice.

Local note: If you are in the Worcester/Central MA area, the YWCA Central Massachusetts has hosted TDoR vigils, and Pride Worcester offers a calendar of LGBTQ+ community events. We'll keep you updated if any additional local gatherings are announced.

- **November 13** kicks off an **entire week of kindness!** The day was first dedicated in Tokyo in 1998, and is now celebrated around the globe! Kindness is good for everyone. Beyond benefitting the recipient of the kind act, research has found many benefits to the person who is helping another person without expecting anything in return. Not only has been shown to [boost happiness](#) and [reduce anxiety, but also has been shown to improve the immune system and lower blood pressure](#). Plus, it benefits our community by making this world a better place, one act at a time. Now that is something worth celebrating (and doing)!
- Thanksgiving (United States & Canada) **November 27**. A major harvest holiday focused on gratitude, togetherness, and a classic shared meal — including turkey, potatoes, and pumpkin pie.

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------------|--|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Monthly observances: * National Family Caregivers Month * National Native American Heritage Month | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| | | | *Armistice Day *Cartagena Indep. Day *Veterans Day | | Transgender Awareness Week (11/13-19) | | *Nativity Fast (11/15-12/24) *Republic Proclamation Day |
| | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| | | Revolution Day | | International Men's Day | *Black Consciousness Day *Transgender Day of Remembrance | | |
| | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| | *Feast of Christ the King *Labor Thanksgiving | | | | *Thanksgiving Day *The Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha | Native American Heritage Day | |
| | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | *Advent (11/30-12/24) *Bonifacio Day *Native American Women's Equal Pay Day *St. Andrew's Day | | | | | | |

UMASS CHAN REMINDERS

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Remaining Holiday Schedule for 2025:

- Veterans Day – Tuesday, November 11th
- Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 27th
- Day After Thanksgiving – Friday, November 28th
- Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24th
- Christmas Day – Thursday, December 25th

PQHS Weekly will be sent to all members of PQHS on Monday mornings. The intent is to provide a snapshot of what is going on that week in PQHS and to share our faculty and staff activities with the department. We depend on you to provide the items we need to share. Please send suggestions of events, faculty invited seminars & talks, honors, student thesis presentations, and news – new babies born! – to Judi (judi.saber@umassmed.edu) & Sarah (sarah.yeboah@umassmed.edu) by Friday each week.