

# Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

## Weekly Newsletter

APRIL 6-10, 2026



UMass Chan  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

## CONGRATULATIONS

On Wednesday, March 25 at 7:15 pm **Mary McNally's** beautiful granddaughter, Maeve was born.

6 lbs, 8oz  
20 inches long



On Tuesday, March 31, **Nathaniel David Glassy** successfully defended his PhD dissertation titled "Modeling Developmental Trajectories of Multi-Domain"



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesday, April 8, 6:30 PM, Zoom**

**Urban Public Health & Gerontology, A Public Health Week 2026 Special Event**

**Title:** Food Safety for Seniors

**Speaker:** Patrick "Pat" Maloney is a highly experienced public health leader, educator, and consultant with over four decades of impact at the national, county, and municipal levels. He most recently served as Commissioner of Public Health and Human Services for Brookline, MA, and previously as Deputy Commissioner and Chief of Environmental Health. Today, Pat supports workforce development across Massachusetts as a Public Health Consultant and Instructor, partnering with the Massachusetts Health Officers Association and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. He also serves on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts Boston Urban Public Health Program.

**Abstract:** As adults live longer and remain active in their communities, food safety becomes an increasingly important public health issue. Older adults are at higher risk for foodborne illness due to changes in immune function, chronic conditions, and medication interactions.

This session will explore practical, real-world strategies to protect older adults, whether aging at home, attending congregate meal programs, or living in community settings.

**Who Should Attend?**

Gerontology & MAS students, Urban Public Health students, aging services professionals, senior center and nutrition program staff, health advocates, and anyone interested in aging, public health or food safety

**Co-Sponsored By**

UMass Boston Urban Public Health Program and UMass Boston Gerontology Department



**Wednesday, April 15, 10:00 – 11:00 AM**

**Research Methods Meeting**



**Presenters:** Bruce Barton, Ph.D., Professor of Biostatistics, PQHS, UMass Chan Medical School

**Title:** Statistical Model Building - Best Practices and Cautionary Notes

**Abstract:** In this Research Methods Seminar, we will review best practices for building statistical models, along with cautionary notes, based on my decades of experience. I will present my approaches to model building, using an example from one of my earlier clinical trials and SAS for the analysis. The concepts will be applicable to other software. Whether you are new to model building or have been building models for years, this will be a good way to review the process - along with the Dos and Don'ts!

**Bio:** Dr. Barton also the Director of the U Mass Chan Quantitative Methods Core. He has substantial experience in statistical methods in clinical trials and has been awarded 80+ federal grants and pharma industry contracts to support biomedical research studies. He has over 49 years of experience in medical research, including study designs from observational data to randomized clinical trials. He has also designed pre-clinical (animal) studies, Phase I-III clinical trials for pharmaceutical and behavioral projects, and pragmatic trials for NIH-funded projects. He has been involved in studies covering many areas of medical investigation ranging from pain control in pre-term neonates to hip fracture prevention in nursing home residents, with substantial experience in cardiology, oncology, neurology, dermatology,

anesthesiology, sickle cell disease, cardiovascular disease risk factors, infectious disease, and alcoholic hepatitis. Click [here](#) to join.

**Friday, April 24, 12:00 PM, Zooms**

**Qualitative Research Interest Group Inaugural Meeting**



**Presenter:** Heidi M. Levitt, PhD, Professor, UMass Boston, Department of Psychology  
**Title:** An Introduction to Critical-Constructivist Grounded Theory - Considerations of Methodological Integrity

**Abstract:** Methodological integrity is a concept that was developed to encourage researchers to design methods by thinking about their capacity to reflect the specific phenomenon under study and to produce meaningful findings (Levitt et al., 2017). This concept is central in standards for qualitative research and is used by journal editors to evaluate qualitative studies. In this talk, Dr. Levitt will describe the method of Critical-Constructivist Grounded Theory (Levitt, 2021), a form

of grounded theory that is tailored to the understanding of both internal/interpersonal, and cultural/systemic meanings, and will discuss its features that enhance methodological integrity.

**Bio:** Dr. Levitt is Editor-in-Chief of Qualitative Psychology and past-president of the Society of Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology (SQIP), section of Division 5 of the American Psychological Association. She chaired the development of the SQIP recommendations for reviewing and designing qualitative research (Levitt et al., 2017). Dr. Levitt also chaired the development of the inaugural APA Journal Article Reporting Standards for qualitative, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods research (JARS-Qual; Levitt et al., 2018). In 2020, she received the University of Massachusetts Boston Chancellor’s Award for Distinguished Scholarship as well as the Distinguished Contributions in Qualitative Inquiry Award from APA Division 5 for a distinguished history of scientific contributions within the field of qualitative research methods.

Click [here](#) to register. For More Information: Email [Qual.Interest.Group@umassmed.edu](mailto:Qual.Interest.Group@umassmed.edu)

**April 10 - 17, 2026**

Please join us as we honor Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW)

For the 3rd year in a row, Worcester is bringing attention to the dire public health statistics around Black birthing mothers. Join us for a week of awareness-raising, education, activism, empowerment, and community building that centers the voices of Black mothers!

Founded by the Black Mamas Alliance, BMHW raises awareness, inspires activism, and strengthens organizing around Black maternal health and coincides with National Minority Health Month and the International Day for Maternal Health and Rights.

Visit <https://www.umassmed.edu/che/bmhw/> for the full line-up of exciting events happening during the week of April 11 - 17. We are so grateful for the strong outpouring of community support and partnership in recognition of BMHW 2026!!!

## BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK 2026

FRI APRIL 10	SAT APRIL 11	SUN APRIL 12	MON APRIL 13
<p><b>THT REP PRESENTS: WHO IS EARTHA MAE?</b> 7:30 PM THE HANOVER THEATRE 2 SOUTHBRIDGE ST WORCESTER, MA 01608</p> <p><b>HANOVER THEATRE &amp; CONSERVATORY</b> <b>Who is Eartha Mae?</b> created and performed by Jade Wheeler</p> <p><b>Patients RWaiting</b></p> <p><b>BUY TICKETS</b> BIT.LY/PRW-EARTHA</p>	<p><b>BLACK BREAST FEEDING CIRCLE SPECIAL EDITION</b> 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM GIRLS INC. WORCESTER 125 PROVIDENCE ST. WORCESTER, MA 01604</p> <p><b>WOO MAMA WELLNESS DAY 2026</b> 10:00 AM - 2:30 PM GIRLS INC. WORCESTER 125 PROVIDENCE ST. WORCESTER, MA 01604</p> <p><b>PREGNANCY POP UP VILLAGE</b> 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM YWCA 1 SALEM ST, WORCESTER, MA 01608</p>	<p><b>KINGS RAISING KIDS: FATHERS EDUCATION AND SUPPORT GROUP</b> 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM YWCA 1 SALEM ST, WORCESTER, MA 01608</p> <p><b>BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK 2026</b> #BMHW26 THEME <b>ROOTED IN JUSTICE &amp; JOY!</b></p> <p><b>BMMA</b> BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH ALLIANCE</p>	<p><b>BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK SUMMIT</b> 10:00 AM - 1:30 PM HOGAN CAMPUS CENTER COLLEGE OF HOLY CROSS 1 COLLEGE ST, WORCESTER, MA 01610</p> <p><b>FILM SCREENING WHEN YOU KNOW. CHILDBIRTH IN THE ASYLUM SYSTEM</b> 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM YMCA 766 MAIN ST, WORCESTER, MA 01610</p> <p><b>CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION</b> 6:00 - 8:00 PM ONLINE</p>
<p><b>TUES APRIL 14</b></p> <p><b>BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK GAME NIGHT</b> 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM THE VILLAGE 4 KING ST, WORCESTER, MA 01610</p> <p><b>MENSTRUAL POVERTY EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS</b> 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM GIRLS INC. WORCESTER 125 PROVIDENCE ST, WORCESTER, MA 01604</p>	<p><b>WED APRIL 15</b></p> <p><b>TOWARD BIRTH EQUITY THROUGH STRONG DOULA-PROVIDER COLLABORATION: NOTES FROM NEW YORK CITY</b> 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM ONLINE</p> <p><b>FILM SCREENING &amp; FIRESIDE CHAT TOXIC: A BLACK WOMAN'S STORY</b> 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM JMAC 20 FRANKLIN ST, WORCESTER, MA 01608</p>	<p><b>THUR APRIL 16</b></p> <p><b>BLACK BREAST FEEDING CIRCLE</b> 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM 16 SHAFFNER ST, WORCESTER, MA 01605</p>	<p><b>ROOTED IN JOY &amp; JUSTICE</b></p> <p>Join us <b>April 11-17</b> for a week of activism and community building for Black Mamas!</p> <p>In solidarity with <b>National Minority Health Month</b> and the <b>International Day for Maternal Health and Rights</b>, BMMA Inc. founded BMHW to raise awareness, inspire activism, and strengthen organizing for Black maternal health. Visit <a href="http://BLKMATERNALHEALTHWEEK.COM">BLKMATERNALHEALTHWEEK.COM</a> to learn more.</p>

**CHECK OUT WORCESTER'S HUB FOR ALL BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH WEEK EVENTS** [BIT.LY/BMHW-WOO](http://BIT.LY/BMHW-WOO)

2026  
APRIL

Monthly observances:

- \*Autism Acceptance Month
- \*Celebrate Diversity Month
- \*Deaf History Month
- \*Genocide Remembrance
- \*National Arab American Heritage Month
- \*Sikh Heritage Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
			Passover (4/1-4/9)	*World Autism Awareness Day *Lord's Evening Meal *Holy Thursday	Good Friday	*Lazarus Saturday *Holy Saturday
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
*Qingming Festival *Easter	Easter Monday	World Health Day		Day of Valor		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
*The Day of Silence *Orthodox Easter		Vaisakhi				
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Ridvan (4/20-5/2)	*Mahavir Jayanti *Tiradentes Day *Yom Ha'atzmaut begins	International Mother Earth Day	St. George's Day		*ANZAC Day *Freedom Day *Liberation Day
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
*Koningsdag (King's Day)		World Day for Safety & Health at Work	*Ninth Day of Ridvan *Showa Day			

**National Deaf History Month**, recognized in April (or historically March 13–April 15), celebrates the history, contributions, and culture of deaf and hard-of-hearing people. The observance recognizes key milestones in Deaf education and civil rights, including the founding of the American School for the Deaf in 1817 and the establishment of Gallaudet University, the world’s only university designed specifically for Deaf and hard-of-hearing students. These milestones helped expand access to education, language, and community for Deaf individuals.



Deaf History Month is also a time to recognize the importance of accessibility and inclusion, including the use of American Sign Language (ASL) and other communication supports that help ensure equitable participation in workplaces, schools, and communities. By learning about Deaf culture and history, we can promote greater understanding, respect, and opportunities for everyone.

**Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> is World Health Day!**

World Health Day is a global reminder that health is a *shared responsibility*. April 7<sup>th</sup> also marks the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization in 1948.

This year’s theme, *“Together for health. Stand with science,”* encourages us to support accurate health information, strengthen community partnerships, and work together to improve well-being for all.



This day serves as a reminder of the critical role we all play in promoting health, advancing equity, and building trust. Whether it’s through community outreach, education, or simply checking in on those around us, every action contributes to healthier, stronger communities.

## Introducing The Culture Code

We are excited to launch a new series in the Diversity Digest focused on strengthening our cross-cultural interactions. This series draws on concepts from Edward T. Hall's *Beyond Culture* (1976), exploring high–low context cultural patterns, as adapted for our training by Gwen Cochran Hadden. Culture shapes how we communicate, build relationships, approach time, and navigate disagreement — often in ways we don't immediately recognize. Through short, practical insights and weekly challenges, *The Culture Code* will help us build greater cultural awareness and agility in our everyday work.

### The Culture Code

#### Week 1: Culture Is More Than You Think

When we hear the word *culture*, many of us immediately think about race or ethnicity. But culture is much broader than that.


Culture is an integrated system of values, beliefs, norms, traditions, communication styles, and behaviors that shape how we act and react in our environment.

#### Cross Cultural Interactions

That means culture influences:

- How we communicate
- How we define respect
- How we handle time
- How we approach conflict
- How we make decisions
- How we interpret professionalism

One powerful framework for understanding these differences comes from Edward T. Hall's concept of **High Context and Low Context** cultures.

 **Important:** High and Low do *not* mean good or bad. They describe how much meaning is carried in context versus words.

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#### Low (Individual) Context

- Meaning is carried primarily in spoken or written words
- Messages are explicit and direct
- Clarity and efficiency are highly valued
- Relationships may begin and end more quickly

#### High (Group) Context

- Meaning is carried through tone, gesture, history, and social relationships
- Messages may be indirect or implicit
- Trust builds slowly and deeply
- Group harmony and relational awareness are important

Most of us are not purely one or the other.

We may operate differently at work than at home.

And these tools should never be used to stereotype individuals.

They are simply tools to help us navigate interactions with greater awareness.

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#### Cultural Agility Challenge

##### Notice:

This week, pay attention to moments when someone's communication style feels unclear, too blunt, overly detailed, or overly subtle.


##### Try:

Before reacting, pause and ask yourself:

"Is this a personality difference — or a context difference?"

##### Reflect:

What assumptions do I hold about what "professional" communication should look like?

 **Next:** Direct vs. Indirect — What's Really Being Said?

## UMASS REMINDERS

### April 1 through May 1, 2026 - Annual Benefit Enrollment

The [Annual Enrollment](#) period runs from April 1 - May 1, 2026. Annual Enrollment is your opportunity to [review your benefit options](#) and make benefit changes for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2027, July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027.

Each year GIC benefit plans provide GIC members with a [virtual benefits fair](#) for your review. Please [contact the benefit plans](#) you're evaluating to ask questions about guidance or assistance regarding plan benefits and network coverage, tiering, costs, finding a provider, and more.

If you do not want to select a different health plan during [Annual Enrollment](#) no further action is needed to remain in your current health plan.

Note (employees only): You must re-enroll if you wish to participate in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) effective July 1, 2026.



### Use Your Excess Vacation Leave by June 27, 2026

As we get closer to fiscal year end, we want to remind you of the maximum accruals outlined in the [UMass Chan Holiday, and Personal and Vacation Time Policy](#) so you can plan accordingly.

As of the last full pay period of the fiscal year, the maximum number of vacation hours employees may carry over into the next fiscal year is 240. During the fiscal year, employees are allowed to accrue hours over

240. Hours over this accrual limit are automatically re-set in the payroll system to the accrual maximum. This year, **the relevant pay period ends Saturday, June 27, 2026**. You are encouraged to use any vacation balances that exceed the 240-hour maximum before that date. To avoid the loss of accrued vacation hours, review the following recommendations:

- Take all vacation over 240 hours before Saturday, June 27, 2026. Keep in mind that the vacation accrual for the pay period ending on that date that will not appear on your paycheck.
- Any hours over the cap will automatically be reset to 240 and will appear on your paycheck **on Friday, July 3, 2026**.
- If you are approaching 240 hours of accrued vacation time, talk with your manager about planning time off before June 27 and make sure it is approved by them.
- Ensure your vacation time has been entered into the Time Reporting system **by June 27, 2026**.



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| ✚ Patriots' Day – Monday, April 20 <sup>th</sup>                       | ✚ Veterans Day – Wednesday, November 11 <sup>th</sup>        |
| ✚ Memorial Day – Monday, May 25 <sup>th</sup>                          | ✚ Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 26 <sup>th</sup>     |
| ✚ Juneteenth National Independence Day – Friday, June 19 <sup>th</sup> | ✚ Day After Thanksgiving – Friday, November 27 <sup>th</sup> |
| ✚ Independence Day – Friday, July 3 <sup>rd</sup> (observed)           | ✚ Christmas Eve – Thursday, December 24 <sup>th</sup>        |
| ✚ Labor Day – Monday, September 7 <sup>th</sup>                        | ✚ Christmas Day – Friday, December 25 <sup>th</sup>          |
| ✚ Indigenous Peoples' Day – Monday, October 12 <sup>th</sup>           |  |

*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](mailto:judi.saber@umassmed.edu)) & Sarah ([sarah.yeboah@umassmed.edu](mailto:sarah.yeboah@umassmed.edu)) by Friday each week.*