

Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Weekly Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 14-18, 2026



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

NEW BABY IN THE WORLD

CONGRATULATIONS!

MELISSA GOULDING AND HER HUSBAND
SCOTT WELCOMED A BABY GIRL
ELLIOT SOPHIA ON AUGUST 19TH.



CONGRATULATIONS



We are delighted to share that Dr. Sarah Cutrona has been named the Director of CHOIR Bedford. It is my pleasure to announce that Sarah Cutrona, M.D., has been selected as the next Bedford CHOIR Director. For those of you who do not know Dr. Cutrona a short Bio and description of CHOIR are below. **Sarah Cutrona, MD, MPH** is Professor in the Departments of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences and Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School and has been serving as Acting Director for the Center for Health Optimization and Implementation Research (CHOIR) at the Bedford VA since January. She served as Associate Director for CHOIR for five years prior to taking on this role. Dr. Cutrona is board certified in Internal Medicine and Clinical Informatics and served (2019-2021) as Interim Chief of the Division of Health Informatics & Implementation Science at UMass Chan. Dr. Cutrona has been lead investigator on work funded by NIH, AHRQ, industry, VA's Health Services Research (HSR) and QUERI programs as well as partnered VA work, studying the intersection of clinical workflow and innovative technologies. She has over 100 peer-reviewed publications in her areas of expertise which include informatics and optimal use of EHRs, digital health and health communication, chronic disease management and prevention initiatives, and strategies for supporting front line staff development. Dr. Cutrona is a practicing internist and clinical educator, caring for Veterans on the inpatient setting in West Roxbury and at the Bedford VA.

What is CHOIR? Our Center for Health Optimization and Implementation Research (CHOIR) is a dual-site (Bedford/Boston) VA Center for Innovation. **Across CHOIR, 100+ researchers conduct research and evaluation work aimed at improving the care delivered to our Veterans nationwide.** We are recognized nationally for our expertise in use of Whole Health to address health-related and social needs, Virtual care and Informatics (including EHR use and AI evaluation), and Shared Decision Making for Precision Oncology; we additionally have nationally recognized researchers in Long term care/Geriatric care & Safety, Implementation Science, and Methods associated with Veteran Engagement/Co-Design. CHOIR is home to a well-respected OAA post-doctoral fellowship providing training in health services research methodology, with a strong track record of mentoring trainees through fellowship into successfully funded independent investigator careers. Check us out at: <https://www.choir.research.va.gov/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, September 14, 9:00 - 9:30 AM, Zoom



Live Webinar: OAI CORE Knowledgebase

Presenter: Dr. Shao-Hsien Liu, Associate Professor, PQHS

Title: Causal Inference Using Osteoarthritis Initiative Data: Opportunities, Challenges, and Practical Considerations

Description: This webinar will introduce researchers to opportunities for conducting causal inference studies using the Osteoarthritis Initiative's rich longitudinal clinical, imaging, medication, behavioral, and patient-reported data. The presentation will highlight practical considerations for defining research questions, selecting analytic samples and time-varying measures, addressing confounding and missing data, and choosing appropriate causal inference methods.

Click [here](#) to register. For questions, contact the OAI CORE Team at oaiknowledgebase@umassmed.edu.

Monday, September 14, 1:00-2:15 PM



Title: Patient Priorities Care

Sponsored by: Gerontology Speaker Series: UMass Boston, Gerontology and Gerontology Institute and UMass Chan, PQHS

Speaker: Aanand D. Naik, MD, Professor and Chair, Management, Policy and Community Health, Associate Dean for Learning and Health Systems, Director, Institute on Aging, Nancy P. and Vincent F. Guinee, MD Distinguished Chair, and Uzi and Micki Halevey and Carmel Dyer, MD Interprofessional Research Fellowship, School of Public Health, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Houston, TX

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

For more information contact Whitney Mills: whitney.mills@umb.edu

Tuesday, September 15, 12:00 - 1:30 AM, Zoom

Title: Alcohol and Cancer

Sponsored by: [New England ATTC - Addiction Technology Transfer Center \(ATTC\) Network](#)

Description: Alcohol is the third leading preventable cause of cancer in the US. People with Alcohol Use Disorder are at highest risk due to greater alcohol exposure and when combined with smoking, cancer risk can increase exponentially. This webinar explores the relationship between alcohol and cancer, highlighting biological and behavioral connections, and the lived experiences of people who suffer from both conditions. Addiction counseling considerations for cancer patients or cancer survivors will also be addressed.

Click [here](#) to register.

Wednesday, September 16, 10:00 – 11:00 AM, Zoom



Research Methods Meeting

Presenter: Shih-Yen Pan, PhD student in Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst

Title: The Impact of IMF Programs on Tuberculosis Outcomes and Government Health Spending: A Cross-National Difference-in-Differences Analysis, 1980–2019

Abstract: The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set targets (Target 3.3) for tuberculosis (TB) control, including a 90% reduction in TB deaths and an 80% reduction in incidence by 2030 relative to 2015 levels. Progress has fallen far short of these targets, however, as over 10 million people continue to fall ill and over a million die from the disease every year, making TB among the top 10 causes of death worldwide. The International Monetary Fund (IMF)

has faced sustained criticism for the adverse population health consequences of its lending programs, which often require policy conditionalities prioritizing macroeconomic stability and market liberalization over public provision of social protection. These policies may affect TB outcomes both by constraining government health spending and by exacerbating underlying social determinants such as poverty and malnutrition.

This study employs a local projections difference-in-differences design to estimate the impact of IMF programs on TB outcomes and government health spending using cross-national panel data from 1980 to 2019. Focusing on first-time IMF program participation, the approach enables cleaner comparisons between treated and control countries while accounting for prior program exposures. Outcomes examined include TB mortality, prevalence, and incidence rates, alongside government health spending as a key mediating pathway.

The results indicate that IMF programs, on average, lead to a 7% increase in participant countries' TB mortality rate, a 4.8% increase in TB incidence rate, and a 4.8% reduction in government health spending per capita over six years following program entry. These findings suggest that IMF programs may be undermining TB control by weakening health systems and worsening socioeconomic conditions, with important implications for global health policy.

Bio: Shih-Yen Pan is a PhD student in Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His research applies causal inference methods to study how political-economic forces shape population health and incarceration in the U.S. and globally.

Click [here](#) to join.

Wednesday, September 16, 12:00 - 1:30 PM, Zoom

Title: Synthetic Cannabinoids and Hemp-Derived Intoxicants: A Discussion of Policy & Public Health

Sponsored by: [New England ATTC - Addiction Technology Transfer Center \(ATTC\) Network](#)

This webinar will provide participants with an overview of the federal and state regulatory landscape governing hemp-derived cannabinoids, including emerging efforts to address regulatory loopholes and recent legislative actions. Participants will explore the pharmacology and health effects of synthetic cannabinoids and hemp-derived THC products, review current public health surveillance data and poison center trends, and examine the short- and long-term medical and psychiatric consequences associated with use, including intoxication, overdose, and psychosis.

Click [here](#) to register.

Tuesday, September 22, 1:00 – 2:00 PM, AS9.2072 (In-Person only)

Generative AI Seminar



Presenter: [Jeroan Allison, MD, MS](#) - Professor and Chair, PQHS

Title: Artificial Intelligence for Scientific Writing: Friend or Foe?

Join us for an interactive session exploring the opportunities, challenges, and practical applications of artificial intelligence in scientific writing. Whether you are new to AI tools or already incorporating them into your research workflow, this discussion will provide valuable insights into how AI can support scholarly writing while highlighting important considerations and limitations.

This seminar will be **in person only**. Please respond to the invitation sent by Benedicta Treku, if you plan to attend, as this will help us determine the anticipated attendance. Attendees are encouraged to **bring their laptops** to this session. We look forward to an insightful conversation about the evolving role of AI in research and scientific communication.

Tuesday, September 22, 12:30 – 5:30 PM

Health Education Academy for Leadership and Learning (HEALL) Education Day

Location: Paul J. DiMare Center, N1-1200 - N1-1500

Education Day offers an ongoing opportunity to engage in meaningful conversation, connect with like-minded colleagues, plan collaborations, and celebrate our educational activities and scholarship. This annual event serves to highlight the academic scholarly work that happens here, complementing your daily teaching, lab or clinical responsibilities, and curriculum development.

Education Day features plenary speakers who address topics such as the influence of Academies, conducting educational scholarly projects, and innovative trends in Health Sciences education. The event brings together key institutional leaders and educators who shape the future of Health Sciences education at UMass Chan and beyond. It also provides a forum for presenting and discussing novel educational initiatives underway at UMass Chan, enhancing our school's reputation and fostering collaboration within our educational community.

- 12:30-12:45 pm, Welcome Remarks
- 12:45-1:45 pm, Plenary (details coming soon)
- 1:55-4:00 pm Workshops
- 4:10-5:30 pm, Collaborative and Conversations (includes reception)

Click [here](#) to register.

Wednesday, September 23, 12:00 - 1:30 AM, Zoom

Title: Hidden Risks: Problem Gambling in Prediction Market Platforms

Sponsored by: [New England ATTC - Addiction Technology Transfer Center \(ATTC\) Network](#)

Description: Prediction markets—platforms where participants trade on the likelihood of future events—are often framed as tools for aggregating information and improving forecasts. However, they share structural similarities with gambling environments, including real-money stakes, rapid feedback loops, and uncertainty-based rewards. Participants will be provided with foundational information on problem gambling, warning signs, and impacts on individuals and loved ones. Additionally, focus areas will include where the line between forecasting and gambling begins to blur, and why that distinction matters for public health and policy.

Click [here](#) to register.

Friday, September 25, 12:30 – 5:30 PM, Zoom

Qualitative Research Interest Group Webinar

Presenter: Katie Sveinson, PhD, Associate Professor, Associate Department Chair Charles J. Dockendorff Endowed Faculty Fellow, Isenberg School of Management at UMass Amherst



Title: Introduction to Discourse Analysis as Theory and Methodology

Abstract: Communication in our multimodal world goes beyond spoken words and written text. Images, videos, symbols, icons, body language, sound, music, body language, and physical arrangements make unique contributions to effective messaging. Discourse analysis allows for the study of these elements of communication in social processes. With a focus on meaning-making, discourse analysis highlights how the relationship between language and what language represents is far from straightforward (Gee, 2011; Sveinson, 2026). This approach offers opportunities to investigate and to be conscious of artifacts that may communicate (un)intended and implicit messaging that may reveal hidden assumptions and power structures encoded in

common documents. It goes past literal words to show how other aspects of messaging content may shape beliefs and behaviors. In this talk, Dr. Sveinson will discuss the inextricably linked theory, methodology, methods, and analysis of discourse analysis, with a focus on the uniqueness of this approach compared to other qualitative methodologies. Emphasis will be placed on how this work links micro-level language use to macro-level structures. Examples of her work will be provided as well as suggested areas of interest to utilize this approach.

Bio: Dr. Sveinson has published 13 articles utilizing (critical) discourse analysis, including empirical pieces, methodological perspectives, and scoping reviews and has received the Isenberg School of Management Outstanding Research Award. She serves on the editorial boards of the Journal of Sport Management, Sport Management Review, and Sociology of Sport Journal and is a NASSM Research Fellow.

Click [here](#) to register.

Sunday, September 27, 12:00-1:00 PM

2026 UMass Cancer Walk

Polar Park, 100 Madison Street, Worcester

Join Us for the Cancer Walk!

We're putting together a team for this year's cancer walk, and everyone is welcome to join! It's a great opportunity to support cancer research, honor those affected by cancer, and connect with colleagues outside of work. If you're interested in participating, please use the team invitation link below. We'd love to have you with us!

To register, click [here](#).



2024 PQHS Team

[Watch Chancellor McManus's video message](#) to learn about how you can help.

Monday, October 5, 1:00-2:15 PM



Title: Implementation Science and Rehabilitation Research

Sponsored by: Gerontology Speaker Series: UMass Boston, Gerontology and Gerontology Institute and UMass Chan, PQHS

Presenter: Lisa Juckett, PhD, OTR/L, CHT, Associate Professor, Division of Occupational Therapy, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, The Ohio State University
via Zoom: <https://umassboston.zoom.us/j/94175483404>, Password: Boston
For more information contact Whitney Mills: whitney.mills@umb.edu

Friday, October 9, 12:00-1:00 PM

Qualitative Research Office Hours

This is an open online meeting for all interested in qualitative research methods, where participants may choose to present to other qualitative researchers their research project, proposal, manuscript, or idea for discussion and feedback. A short basic methods presentation will also be planned, such as using conceptual models, immersion/crystallization, or developing a coding structure. Click [here](#) to join.

UMASS REMINDERS

UMass Chan Farmers' Market



Every Tuesday through October 27

(No market on Sept.15)

10 AM - 1 PM

Two Locations:

- Market Vendors will be set up in the Albert Sherman Center, MPR - East, First Floor.
- Food Trucks and Food Vendors will set up outside on the Medical School Building Terrace.

[Click here](#) for more details and to view the list of attending food trucks and vendors



🚩 Indigenous Peoples' Day – Monday, October 12th

🚩 Veterans Day – Wednesday, November 11th

🚩 Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 26th

🚩 Day After Thanksgiving – Friday, November 27th

🚩 Christmas Eve – Thursday, December 24th

🚩 Christmas Day – Friday, 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.