

Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Weekly Newsletter

MAY 4-8, 2026



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

WELCOME



Harshada Nagarajan is joining the Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine as a Clinical Research Coordinator 1 and will be working with Grace Ryan, Elise Stevens, and Melissa Goulding to support their research programs. She graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst with her Bachelor's of Science degree in Public Health Sciences and Psychology where she worked as a Research Assistant in the UMass Amherst Family Relationships, Affective Science, & Minority Health (FAM) Lab.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, May 5, 5:00 – 8:00 PM, Faculty Conference Room

2nd Annual UMass Chan Global Health Symposium



Join us for a special spotlight of The Ghana Global Health Initiative featuring Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing Faculty Dr. Akwasi Duah, Dr. Rose Kronziah-Seme and Dr. Rita Amoah as they share insights and reflections from their recent travel experience in Ghana, highlighting the lessons learned, cultural connections and impact on global nursing practice.

Our keynote will be given by Dr. Jennifer Adair, Associate Director of the Horae Gene Therapy Center, on global access to gene therapy for which she has been a strong advocate. We will also highlight the UMass Global Ghana Initiative that our nursing colleagues have developed through the Nursing Global Health Pathway.

Click [here](#) for the program agenda. see the program. The registration link is: <https://bit.ly/GH2026>

Wednesday, May 6, 10:00 – 11:00 AM, Zoom

Research Methods Meeting



Presenter: Lucy Xiaolu Wang, PhD

Title: Health IT Diffusion and Physician Density (with Jason Huh, Jianjing Lin)

Abstract: This paper examines how the diffusion of advanced health information technology (HIT) affects the density of hospital-based (HB) physicians. Leveraging sharp county-level increases in HIT adoption driven by federal incentives, we compare physician density per 100k population in counties with rapid diffusion (treatment group) to those with slower or no uptake during our sample period (control group). Using an event-study framework, we find that HIT diffusion increased the HB physician rate in treated counties relative to control counties, and medical and surgical specialties account for most of the increase. Moreover, the growth in HB physician density is evident, absent major consolidation activities, and contributes to overall growth in total physicians. This growth is concentrated among early-career physicians and in physician shortage areas. Mechanism tests suggest that physicians benefit financially from practicing in treated counties, with higher Medicare reimbursement, services performed per physician, and hospital profits. Physician extenders also increase (rates), though the ratios-to-physician vary. Outpatient surgeries rise most in counties with moderate pre-period care utilization. Various robustness checks support our results. Our findings suggest that strategic HIT investments can attract physicians, expand care capacity, and reduce geographic disparities in health care access. (draft available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5159315>)

Bio: Lucy Xiaolu Wang is a tenure-track Assistant Professor at University of Massachusetts Amherst, a Faculty Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition (Germany), and a Faculty Associate at the Canadian Centre for Health Economics. Her research focuses on the economics of innovation & digitization in health care markets (national and global), particularly in the biopharmaceutical and digital health industries. She is a co-founder of the Digital Health Technology special interest group at the International Health Economics Association and currently serves as the inaugural program chair for the Innovation and Digitization program area at the American Society of Health Economists. Click [here](#) to join.



New England Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC) Presentations

Tuesday, May 5, 12-1:00 PM

[A Primer on the Revised ASAM Criteria for Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents with Substance Use Disorders](#) – click to register

Discover ASAM Criteria 4th Edition updates to support safety and empowerment for pregnant and parenting adolescents, and explore developmentally appropriate approaches, system-level implications, and practical implementation strategies to apply key concepts for improving outcomes in today's behavioral health landscape.

Tuesday, May 12, 1:00-2:00 PM EST

[A Practical Overview of Treating Cannabis Use in the Perinatal Period](#) – click to register

Navigate an evidence-based framework for perinatal cannabis use, covering key clinical considerations and co-occurring mental health factors while applying case-based interventions for pregnancy and postpartum settings.

Tuesday, May 12, 12:00-1:30 PM

[Older Adults and Casino Gambling: Behaviors, Motivations, and Risk](#) – click to register

Learn what motivates older adults to gamble and the factors that increase their risk for Gambling Disorder as this population evolves. Explore key implications for prevention and reducing gambling-related harm among older adults.

Friday, June 5, 1:00-2:30 PM

[Understanding ASAM Criteria: A Foundational Overview and 4th Edition Highlights](#) – click to register

This session provides a foundational overview of the ASAM Criteria, including key updates in the Fourth Edition (2023) and major changes from prior versions. The ASAM Criteria offers a patient-centered, evidence-based framework for assessing and treating substance use and co-occurring conditions, with an increased emphasis on a chronic care model and continuity across the care continuum. The training will also highlight practical applications in correctional settings, including screening, level-of-care decision-making, and care transitions during reentry—areas further emphasized in the Fourth Edition.

ATTC Monthly Blog Posts

[National Nutrition Month: Centering Nutrition in Substance Use Recovery](#)

[Brain Injury Awareness Month: Why it Matters for Substance Use Services](#)

The New England ATTC

Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

UMass Chan Medical School

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

SHOUT OUT

[Grace Ryan, PhD, MPH](#) and [Melissa Goulding, PhD](#), along with Hannah Seay (UMass Chan Medical School Class of 2021), led an interactive workshop to train 75+ people titled "Qualitative Research Within Reach: Template Based Rapid Qualitative Analysis" at the Pediatric Academic Societies Conference in Boston on April 25 and 26. Please reach out to Grace and Melissa if you're interested in learning more about this methodology!



DIVERSITY DIGEST

2026
MAY

Monthly observances:

- * Asian American & Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month (AANHPI)
- * Jewish American Heritage Month
- * Mental Health Awareness Month
- * National Military Appreciation Month
- * Older Americans Month

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	1 *Beltane *May Day *Buddha Purnima	2 National Day of Prayer
3 *Constitutional Memorial Day *Feasts of St. Philip & James	4 *Greenery Day *Lag BaOmer (5/4-5 sundown to nightfall)	5 *Children's Day *Cinco de Mayo *Liberation Day	6	7	8 *Iris Day *Victory in Europe Day *Military Spouse Appreciation Day	9
10	11	12	13	14 Ascension Day	15	16
17 International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia	18 *Victoria Day	19 *Malcolm X Day	20	21 *Navy Day *World Day for Cultural Diversity *Shavuot (5/21-23 sundown to nightfall)	22 Declaration of the Báb (5/22-23 sundown to sundown)	23
24 *Buddha Day *Battle of Pichincha Day *Pentecost	25 *Whit Monday *Memorial Day *Waqf al Arafah (5/25-26 sundown to sundown)	26 Eid al-Adha (5/26-27 sundown to sundown)	27 *Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	28	29	30
31 Trinity Sunday	1	2	3	4	5	6

Jewish American Heritage Month was first recognized through congressional action in 1980 as Jewish Heritage Week and later expanded into a month-long observance in 2006. The month highlights more than 350 years of Jewish life in America, beginning with the arrival of the first Jewish settlers in New Amsterdam in 1654. It offers an opportunity to reflect on the longstanding impact Jewish Americans have had on our nation's history, culture, and civic life.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Jewish American Heritage Month.



National Military Appreciation Month



was established in 1999 to create a dedicated time each May for honoring the service and sacrifice of our nation's Armed Forces, veterans, and military families. This annual observance acknowledges the unique challenges faced by those in uniform and invites the country to reflect on the immense contributions that sustain our national defense.

As we observe National Military Appreciation Month this May, we especially take a moment to honor Military Spouse Appreciation Day on May 8. Military spouses routinely provide an emotional foundation for their partners. They create space for the peace of mind and domestic stability that service members need to thrive in demanding roles. Whether they are managing a household through frequent moves or providing a reliable, steady presence during long periods of separation, these partners are the heartbeat of the service member's resilience. Their day-to-day commitment ensures their loved ones can navigate the complexities of their careers while remaining grounded and supported, making them a foundation of strength behind every individual who serves.

By bringing these celebrations together along with Loyalty Day, VE Day, Armed Forces Day, and Memorial Day, the month serves as a unified effort to express gratitude for the enduring commitment of military personnel and their families.

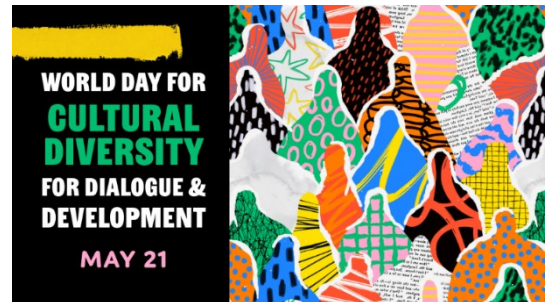
Click [here](#) to learn more about National Military Appreciation Month.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Celebrating loved ones on Military Spouse Appreciation Day.

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, observed on **May 21** and recognized by UNESCO, highlights the importance of understanding and respecting the diverse backgrounds that shape our community. At UMass Chan Medical School, cultural diversity strengthens our mission in education, research, and patient care. By fostering open dialogue and embracing different perspectives, we enhance our ability to serve patients with empathy, collaborate effectively, and drive innovation. This day offers an opportunity to reflect, learn, and continue building an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and heard.

Why does cultural diversity matter?

Cultural diversity enriches learning by bringing a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas into the classroom, lab, and clinical setting. It strengthens patient care by helping us better understand cultural differences in health beliefs, communication styles, and needs—leading to more compassionate and effective care. In research, diverse teams ask broader questions and develop more innovative solutions that better reflect the communities we serve. Most importantly, an inclusive environment fosters a sense of belonging, allowing every member of our community to contribute fully and thrive.



May Day (International Workers' Day)



Observed globally on May 1, May Day recognizes International Workers' Day, honoring the contributions of workers and the ongoing struggle for labor rights. The day traces its origins to the Haymarket Affair in Chicago, where workers were striking for an eight-hour workday, a movement that became a lasting symbol of collective action and labor rights worldwide. Today, May Day is marked by marches, rallies, and advocacy for fair wages, safe workplaces, and equitable working conditions. In the United States, immigrant and international workers

make up nearly 19% of the workforce and are essential across sectors such as healthcare, research, and service industries. At UMass Chan Medical School and within PQHS, international scholars, staff, and trainees are vital contributors to our mission, bringing diverse perspectives, expertise, and lived experiences that strengthen our research, enrich our community, and advance innovation in population health.

Mental Health Awareness Month



Founded in 1949 by Mental Health America. The theme for this year is *More Good Days, Together*. This theme encourages us all to reflect on what a “good” day looks like, both for ourselves and for our communities. Together, we can use that insight to connect people to the right support at the right time, and shape advocacy, education, and community engagement to make more good days possible for all. Find a helpful Action Guide [here](#).

The Culture Code

Week 3: Relationships vs. Tasks — How Teams Get Work Done

Have you ever worked on a team where one person wanted to “just get to the point,” while another wanted to spend time building trust first?

That tension may not be about personality. It may be about cultural orientation.

In the High–Low Context framework, cultures often differ in whether they prioritize **relationships and group process** or **tasks and outcomes**.

● High (Group) Context — Relationship-Oriented

- Trust builds slowly and is foundational
- Work gets done through strong relational connections
- Group harmony and inclusion matter
- Identity is rooted in the group
- Process may be as important as outcome

● Low (Individual) Context — Task-Oriented

- Relationships can begin quickly
- Work gets done by following procedures
- Goals and efficiency are prioritized
- Identity is rooted in individual accomplishment
- Outcome often outweighs process

Neither approach is more “professional.” They simply reflect different assumptions about how collaboration works best.

When these styles collide:

- Relationship-oriented colleagues may feel others are rushing or being transactional.
- Task-oriented colleagues may feel others are inefficient or unfocused.

Often, both sides are trying to ensure success — just through different pathways.

Cultural Agility Challenge

Notice:

In your next team interaction, observe what seems to matter most — relationship-building or task completion.


Try:

If you lean task-oriented, start your next meeting with two minutes of relational connection.

If you lean relationship-oriented, clearly name the goal and timeline at the beginning.

Reflect:

When I feel frustrated in collaboration, is it because the task isn't moving — or because the relationship feels unsettled?

 **Next:** Time & Change — Why “on time” doesn't mean the same thing everywhere.

UMASS BENEFIT REMINDERS

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

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.