Strengthening Our Foundation

Annual Report to the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

By the Implementation Science & Practice Advances Research Center
Department of Psychiatry, UMass Chan Medical School
A Massachusetts Department of Mental Health Research Center of Excellence
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We are continually grateful to the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) for its ongoing support of the Implementation Science and Practice Advances Research Center (iSPARC), a DMH Research Center of Excellence located within the UMass Chan Medical School Department of Psychiatry. In FY22, iSPARC continued to leverage DMH’s investment to rapidly translate research findings into their implementation within best practices for individuals with lived experience, their families, and the providers who serve them across the Commonwealth. iSPARC also continued to grow that foundation of research findings with a focus on particularly vulnerable groups of individuals with lived experience.

FY22 was a year of great growth for iSPARC. We continued to adapt to the changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic and not only sustained our work but began to flourish again. We welcomed new members to our faculty – Dr. Xiaoduo Fan and Dr. Dara Drawbridge.

Additionally, we successfully recruited two new postdoctoral fellows into a pipeline specifically designed to train and retain promising early-stage investigators in the field of public mental health research. With each new addition to our Center, we were attentive to engaging colleagues who live and breathe the mission and values of iSPARC and DMH.
iSPARC's Mission

iSPARC and DMH strive to support and meet the mental health needs of individuals across the lifespan to live, work, and meaningfully participate in their communities. We are fiercely committed to the values of:

- Applying person-centered, family-focused, and trauma-informed approaches to our research;
- Developing, evaluating, and implementing evidence-based practices to ensure highest quality of care; and
- Promoting cultural and linguistic equity of mental health services and resources.

To practice these values, we conduct research in partnership with the people whose lives are most affected—individuals with lived experience, their families, and the providers who serve them—recognizing that those with lived experience have expertise that is essential to conduct impactful research and investigators without lived experience cannot provide that expertise.

iSPARC Faculty & Staff

In FY22, iSPARC made significant strides to build on our already strong foundation:

- Managed a research portfolio totaling $10,396,644 in grants and contract funding
- Submitted 15 new grant and contract proposals
- Were awarded 8 new grants and contracts
- Published 59 peer-reviewed journal articles
- Submitted 40 peer-reviewed journal articles

iSPARC is home to investigators from the UMass Chan Medical School Departments of Psychiatry and Population & Quantitative Health Sciences (PQHS), as well as the Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Our PQHS partners contribute expertise in implementation research and public health research conducted by and for communities that have long been underrepresented as beneficiaries of evidence-based and promising services. Our Boston University partners enrich the overall efforts of iSPARC with their expertise in training, knowledge translation, evidence-based practices in psychiatric rehabilitation, and engagement of adults with lived experience as partners in research activities.

iSPARC faculty are nationally and internationally recognized for their research in:

- Psychosocial intervention development
- Implementation science

Icons by freepik on Flaticon.com
- Public services and supports
- Clubhouse and vocational rehabilitation models
- Forensic/legal and human rights issues
- Child, parent, and family mental health
- Transition age youth/young adults
- Perinatal mental health
- Deaf mental health and addiction treatment

Internal to UMass Chan, we collaborate with investigators embedded in the Departments of Psychiatry, Population & Quantitative Health Sciences, Family Medicine & Community Health, Preventive & Behavioral Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Emergency Medicine, and Commonwealth Medicine. External to UMass Chan, we partner with investigators from other UMass campuses, as well as national and international institutions to optimize our resources. These relationships enable us to build a bigger and stronger iSPARC to help meet the many challenges faced by DMH, those served by DMH, and the Commonwealth more broadly.

**iSPARC Funding Sources FY 2022**

The investment that DMH makes in its funding of iSPARC as a Research Center of Excellence provides an impressive return on this investment in the Commonwealth.

Every $1 invested by DMH in FY22 yielded a return of $9.42 to the Commonwealth to fund our portfolio of research, training, technical assistance, and service delivery.

Chart 1. Funding Sources
Top 5 Research Moments of FY22

We are very excited about the work we have done this fiscal year. The Top 5 we’re most excited about are:

1. In FY22, iSPARC designed and advertised two postdoctoral fellowships – one specializing in clinical investigation and one specializing in psychiatric rehabilitation research.

In August 2022, Nana Yaa A. Marfo will join iSPARC as a clinical investigation postdoctoral fellow. Nana will receive training and research mentorship from iSPARC faculty in the provision of mental health services and conduct of clinical research within underserved populations. She will gain experience with ongoing research, including grant submissions, pilot projects, developing opportunities for publications and presentations, and learning how to prepare independent research grants. Nana will simultaneously conduct supervised clinical work with therapy clients in the UMass Outpatient Psychiatry Department to meet the requirements of independent licensure as a psychologist and health services provider.

In September 2022, Hannah Seward will join iSPARC as a psychiatric rehabilitation research postdoctoral fellow. Hannah will receive training and mentorship from iSPARC faculty to gain experience in disability and rehabilitation research on the transition to employment in youth and young adults with serious mental health conditions. This postdoctoral fellowship is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, (NIDILRR), United States Departments of Health and Human Services (NIDILRR grant number 90RTEM0005). Hannah will be mentoring with iSPARC faculty to gain experience with ongoing research, including grant submissions, pilot projects, developing opportunities for publications and presentations, and learning how to prepare independent research grants.

2. In July 2022, new iSPARC faculty member Xiaoduo Fan was awarded funds for three projects by the Remillard Family Community Service Fund, a foundation dedicated to providing ongoing support for community outreach programs. The projects that will start in September 2022 are:

- **Co-Active Therapeutic Theatre Drama Therapy as an Adjunctive Treatment for Patients with Serious Mental Illness**
- **The Community Education and Mentoring Program: A Workshop-Based Peer Support Model for College Students with Mental Health Challenges**
- **Food for Thought: A Nutrition Outreach Program for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness**
3. New iSPARC faculty member Dara Drawbridge and her research team brought a portfolio of three new projects to iSPARC:

- MA Center of Excellence for Specialty Courts
- Risk-Need-Responsivity: Implementation Support
- Shannon Community Safety Initiative FY22 LARP

4. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) funded Alexander Wilkins’ K23 proposal, Designing Deaf-MET: A Deaf-Accessible Pre-Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder. The U.S. Deaf community – a group of more than 500,000 Americans who communicate using American Sign Language (ASL) – experiences nearly triple the rate of lifetime problem drinking compared to the general population. Yet, there are no therapy approaches that have been developed and formally tested to treat problem drinking or alcohol use disorder among Deaf clients. This study will begin to address this gap by supporting the development and preliminary validation of Deaf Motivational Enhancement Therapy (Deaf-MET), a Deaf-accessible pre-treatment for alcohol use disorder.

5. On May 9, 2022, the MGH Center of Excellence for Psychosocial and Systemic Research and iSPARC hosted the 2022 Annual Conference of the DMH Research Centers of Excellence. The theme of this virtual conference was, In This Together...But Not in the Same Boat: How We Are Supporting Youth, Young Adults, and Families Facing Mental Health Concerns. Nearly 200 individuals attended the conference, including DMH staff, persons with lived experience, family members, providers, and clinicians. (See page 14 for conference additional details).
## Overview

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Chart 1. Funding Sources
On May 9, 2022, the MGH Center of Excellence for Psychosocial and Systemic Research and iSPARC hosted the 2022 Annual Conference of the DMH Research Centers of Excellence. The theme of this virtual conference was, In This Together…But Not in the Same Boat: How We Are Supporting Youth, Young Adults, and Families Facing Mental Health Concerns.

Nearly 200 individuals attended the conference, whose primary goal was to explore the unique but intersecting mental health experiences of youth, young adults, and their families. Presentations focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth mental health and access to mental health care in their communities; innovative strategies for preventing mental health conditions among youth; as well as the parenting experiences of young adults with mental health conditions.

DMH Commissioner, Brooke Doyle, provided opening remarks. Presentations were given by DMH Deputy Commissioner and State Medical Director, Kathy Sanders, and faculty from both Centers – Daphne Holt and Kathryn Sabella. Additionally, audience members were shown two peer-produced films from the MGH Center of Excellence; after the film screenings, Anne Whitman led a panel discussion of persons with lived experience that focused on “Optimizing parent and child resilience when a parent has a mental health concern: What parents and children need.”

Visit our conference website to access the detailed conference agenda, copies of presentation slides, and presentation recordings.
All research conducted by iSPARC faculty falls under the Public Mental Health and Implementation Research Program. The program is co-directed by Maryann Davis, Director of iSPARC, and Stephenie Lemon, Chief of the Division of Preventive Medicine within the Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences (PQHS).

In FY22, the major goal of this program was to continue to nurture research collaboration between iSPARC faculty. Activities to foster this collaboration included presentations and discussions of each other’s work through the iSPARC Interactive Learning (iSPARC-IL) series, as well as research highlights presented during monthly faculty meetings. Grant opportunities building on these collaborations were identified by the Grant Support Team and circulated to faculty. The majority of submitted grants were reviewed by the Grant Support Team, which included several PQHS faculty members, again providing opportunities for greater collaboration between iSPARC and members of other UMass Chan Departments. This enhanced environment has resulted in another increase in the number of grants that were submitted collaboratively, from three in FY21 to four in FY22.

Two new faculty joined iSPARC investigators this year, Xiaoduo Fan and Dara Drawbridge. Each presented about their research programs and opportunities for collaboration with other iSPARC faculty as an introduction to their field of research.

Xiaoduo Fan’s research focuses on psychosocial interventions for individuals with early or established psychosis. His involvement at iSPARC also serves as an opportunity for other iSPARC faculty to locate some of their research at Community HealthLink, which houses his psychiatry clinic. More detailed information about Xiaoduo’s research is located on pp. 16–17.
Dara Drawbridge’s research adds a second researcher to the Law and Psychiatry research program at iSPARC. Dara conducts research to identify optimal strategies to support agencies in their change efforts. Much of her work focuses on Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR), Risk-Needs Assessment, RNR-informed Case Management, and Specialty Courts. More detailed information about Dara’s research is located on page 17.

Another primary goal of the Public Mental Health and Implementation Research Program is to support the conduct of funded research. Activities under this goal remain affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This FY occurred entirely within the pandemic and investigators had to address a variety of challenges. Research recruitment remained a challenge, as did finding clinical/provider sites willing to engage in research activities. One project that was to be conducted with the MA Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) was cancelled due to MRC’s diverted focus due to the pandemic. Another local project that involved qualitative and quantitative interviews with adult smokers with mental illness was unable to recruit young adults within those efforts. The MA programs we worked with were unable to adequately reach their young adult clients, which they felt was due to the challenges of the pandemic. Despite these two setbacks, the majority of iSPARC research has continued and thrived during this past year of the pandemic. This success is clear from the many publications and products reflecting this work. The setback with the research with MRC had a silver lining. It resulted in a shift to the development of a highly innovative remote approach to training and coaching executive functioning skills to succeed at work for young adults with serious mental health conditions that does not require them to be receiving services (i.e., reflecting the majority of young adults with serious mental health conditions). This approach will be feasibility tested in FY23 and FY24. Many of the adjustments to recruitment and data collection made in FY20 and FY21 helped with this success.

FY23 will focus on helping new investigators successfully launch their iSPARC research programs and will continue to seek new opportunities for collaborations that strengthen the scope of iSPARC research.

**New iSPARC Faculty**

In FY22, iSPARC welcomed two new faculty members:

**Xiaoduo Fan** is a Board-certified psychiatrist and Professor of Psychiatry at UMass Chan Medical School. He is Director of the UMass MIND Clinical and Research Program. His clinical work and research focus on innovative pharmacological and psychosocial interventions for refractory symptoms of schizophrenia, medical co-morbidity, co-occurring substance use disorders, and real-life functioning in patients with schizophrenia. Xiaoduo has received research funding from government agencies, private foundations, and industry. He serves as a
reviewer for various SAMHSA grant programs and served on the PCORI Advisory Panel on Healthcare Delivery and Disparities Research until August 2022. Xiaoduo is a member of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Council on International Psychiatry and Global health and a distinguished fellow of APA.

Dara C. Drawbridge is Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at UMass Chan Medical School and Co-Director of the Massachusetts Center of Excellence for Specialty Courts. At iSPARC, Dara is part of the Law & Psychiatry Research Program with colleague Gina Vincent. She received her PhD in Criminology & Public Policy from Northeastern University and completed her postdoctoral fellowship at iSPARC. Dara’s work is based on the belief that people, organizations, and systems can change, and she aims to support these change efforts. Relationships and trust are central to how she approaches work with agencies and people in the field. She aims to understand agencies’ culture and work environment, help clarify goals and responsibilities, identify areas for improvement, gaps in practice, barriers/facilitators to implementation, and help develop and prioritize strategies to overcome barriers.

New iSPARC Postdoctoral Fellows

In FY22, iSPARC designed and advertised two postdoctoral fellowships – one specializing in clinical investigation and one specializing in psychiatric rehabilitation research.

Clinical Investigation Postdoctoral Fellow

In August 2022, Nana Yaa A. Marfo will join iSPARC as a clinical investigation postdoctoral fellow. Nana is a recent graduate of the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program at the University of Connecticut. Her clinical and research interests include improving the mental health of individuals across the lifespan, developing interdisciplinary approaches to increase health equity, and increasing access to mental health services for underrepresented populations.

Nana will receive training and research mentorship from iSPARC faculty in the provision of mental health services and conduct of clinical research within underserved populations. She will gain experience with ongoing research, including grant submissions, pilot projects, developing opportunities for publications and presentations, and learning how to prepare independent research grants. Nana will simultaneously conduct supervised clinical work with therapy clients in the UMass Outpatient Psychiatry Department to meet the requirements of independent licensure as a psychologist and health services provider.
Psychiatric Rehabilitation Research Postdoctoral Fellow

In September 2022, Hannah Seward will join iSPARC as a psychiatric rehabilitation research postdoctoral fellow. Hannah graduated with a master’s degree (2012) and a Ph.D. in Education - Research, Assessment, and Evaluation - (2022) both from Virginia Commonwealth University. Hannah also worked as a Research Associate for the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VCU-RRTC). Hannah’s primary research interests include improving transition outcomes for low-income youth, the importance of intersectionality research, and the effectiveness of supported employment services.

Hannah will receive training and mentorship from iSPARC faculty to gain experience in disability and rehabilitation research on the transition to employment in youth and young adults with serious mental health conditions. This postdoctoral fellowship is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, (NIDILRR), United States Departments of Health and Human Services (NIDILRR grant number 90RTEM0005). Hannah will be mentoring with iSPARC faculty to gain experience with ongoing research, including grant submissions, pilot projects, developing opportunities for publications and presentations, and learning how to prepare independent research grants.

MA CoE for Specialty Courts Postdoctoral Fellow

In spring 2022, postdoctoral fellow Michelle Christ joined iSPARC with faculty member Dara Drawbridge. Michelle completed her PhD in Sociology at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She has a master’s degree in Sociology, and dual B.A. Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Toledo. At the University of Massachusetts Boston, Michelle studied the role of police officers in the opioid epidemic. While pursuing her degree, she worked on a program evaluation of an intensive-supervision parole opportunity in the MA criminal-legal system. She is excited for the opportunity to continue working with the criminal-legal system and drive change for more equitable outcomes among those impacted by the system.

Michelle will work with faculty, staff, and state partners on equity, implementation, research, and evaluation initiatives related to behavioral health and the criminal legal system. She will work closely with CoE faculty who have expertise in criminology, psychology, health equity, public health, co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, and implementation science. Training activities include research project design and implementation, data collection and management, grant proposal and manuscript development, training design and delivery, policy advisement, and other implementation support activities. Michelle will have opportunities for training and professional development, as well as opportunities for grant development and authorship on manuscripts and presentations.
Spotlights on FY22 Research Projects

Serious Mental Illness

In July 2022, new iSPARC faculty member Xiaoduo Fan was awarded funds for three projects by the Remillard Family Community Service Fund, a foundation dedicated to providing ongoing support for community outreach programs. The projects that will start in September 2022 are:

- **Co-Active Therapeutic Theatre Drama Therapy as an Adjunctive Treatment for Patients with Serious Mental Illness.** Members of the UMass MIND Community Intervention Program will conduct co-active therapeutic theatre drama therapy to evaluate whether the model, proven effective for other behavioral health disorders, is effective for individuals with serious mental illness who do not respond to traditional therapies.

- **The Community Education and Mentoring Program: A Workshop-Based Peer Support Model for College Students with Mental Health Challenges.** This project of the UMass MIND Community Intervention Program will train a team of college student volunteers passionate about mental health advocacy, some with their own lived experience of mental illness, to lead a series of educational workshops to aid fellow students with mental health challenges.

- **Food for Thought: A Nutrition Outreach Program for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness.** Expanded offerings of a UMass MIND Community Intervention Program initiative will help patients with severe mental illness improve their diets by providing food, healthy recipe cards, and cooking equipment and supplies at community locations including the Genesis Club and local group homes, and piloting vegetable gardens at several locations.

Law and Psychiatry

New iSPARC faculty member Dara Drawbridge and her research team brought a portfolio of three new projects to iSPARC:

- **MA Center of Excellence for Specialty Courts.** In partnership with the Massachusetts Executive Office of the Trial Court, the Center of Excellence for Specialty Courts drives equity, implementation, research, evaluation, and policy initiatives in Massachusetts Specialty Courts. The Massachusetts Center of Excellence (CoE) for Specialty Courts
was awarded to Dara Drawbridge and Brian Daly, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at UMass Chan, by the Massachusetts Executive Office of the Trial Court in February 2022.

- **Risk-Need-Responsivity: Implementation Support.** The goal of this project is to support implementation of Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) statewide across 18 Community Justice Support Centers serving persons involved with the criminal-legal system who are at moderate to very high-risk of continued criminal-legal system contact. Aim 1: Assess barriers and facilitators to implementation of RNR via Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR)-informed interviews. Aim 2: Evaluate implementation of risk-need assessment, treatment planning, and cognitive behavioral groups via inter-rater reliability studies, case file review, and direct observations in the field. Aim 3: Deliver high-intensity implementation facilitation to improve fidelity, when benchmarks are not met.

- **Shannon Community Safety Initiative FY22 LARP.** In partnership with the City of Fitchburg, this project provides implementation support, research, and evaluation to local police departments, social support and behavioral health agencies in their efforts to prevent and intervene with delinquency, crime, and gang violence. Current fiscal year activities include updated community needs assessment, design of prevention and intervention program intervention maps and implementation blueprints.

The John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation funded Gina Vincent’s two-year project, *Pretrial Risk Assessment: Behavioral Health and Racial Equity*. Gina Vincent and her team will partner with a network of researchers examining the potential for different types of pretrial risk assessment tools to reduce disparities in carceral decisions by race, and presence of mental health or substance use concerns. They will partner with multiple adult and juvenile justice agencies to examine the impact of risk tool characteristics on system uptake and presence or absence of test bias by race, mental health and substance use concerns.

**Deaf Behavioral Health**

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) funded Alexander Wilkins’ K23 proposal, *Designing Deaf-MET: A Deaf-Accessible Pre-Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder*. The U.S. Deaf community – a group of more than 500,000 Americans who communicate using American Sign Language (ASL) – experiences nearly triple the rate of lifetime problem drinking compared to the general population. Yet, there are no therapy approaches that have been developed and formally tested to treat problem drinking or alcohol use disorder among Deaf clients. This study will begin to address this gap by supporting the development and preliminary validation of Deaf Motivational Enhancement Therapy (Deaf-MET), a Deaf-accessible pre-treatment for alcohol use disorder.
Perinatal Mental Health

Nancy Byatt and Chris Sheldrick, Research Associate Professor at the Boston University School of Public Health, are co-PIs of a 3-year project funded by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) / Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research Centers: 2021 Special Interest Project Competitive Supplements (SIPs). The Roadmap to Evaluating Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs project aims to understand how Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs serve perinatal professionals and their patients in order to develop a “roadmap,” or standard way, of evaluating Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs. This study will pilot an approach to assessing Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs in two Access Programs on opposite sides of the country. The pilot measures will consist of:

- Longitudinal online surveys and qualitative interviews to learn about the experiences and health outcomes of perinatal patients served by Access Programs;
- An online survey of perinatal professionals who have used Access Program services to treat their patients’ mental health concerns; and
- Surveys and qualitative interviews with key informants from 15 Access Programs and community partners.

Using this pilot data, the team will develop consensus guidelines for assessing the impact of Access Programs. Findings from the study will be disseminated to improve Access Programs’ implementation and outcome evaluations to inform policy and funding.

Nancy Byatt is co-investigator on the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) funded Charting the Course for Patient-Centered Research to Address Inequities in Perinatal Mental Health and Maternal Mortality. This engagement project is a collaboration with a multidisciplinary team from SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University School of Public Health (DPL: Thomas Mackie), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School of Social Work (DPL: Karen Tabb Dina), UMass Chan Medical School (Site PL: Nancy Byatt), and Postpartum Support International (Site PL: Wendy Davis). Inequities in perinatal mental healthcare treatment are contributing to the maternal mortality crisis among Black and Indigenous birthing people. The imperative to address perinatal mental health inequities has only increased, considering the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and Indigenous communities.

Limited evidence exists on the comparative effectiveness of system-level interventions to address perinatal mental health inequities and building this evidence will require partnership with relevant stakeholders. Accordingly, three research collaboratives were proposed, composed of community members critical to partnerships for future PCOR/CER research, including: 1) birthing individuals from communities underserved...
by mental healthcare systems (see more about this council on page 32), 2) obstetric and childbirth professionals that serve these communities, and 3) mental health equity advocates, healthcare system leaders, and PCOR/CER researchers. This project will build the capacity of these relevant stakeholders and researchers to partner in the planning, completion, and dissemination of patient-centered outcomes research/comparative effectiveness research (PCOR/CER) studies to address perinatal mental health inequities among Black and Indigenous communities.

Addiction Treatment Research

Kim Yonkers is co-investigator for the NIMH-funded Supporting Treatment Access and Recovery for Opiate Use Disorders (STAR-OUD) project. This project is led by David Smelson, Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at UMass Chan and Director of the Center of Excellence in Addictions. The study will compare medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) treatment alone or with components of Maintaining Independence and Sobriety through Systems Integration, Outreach and Networking (MISSION) as interventions for OUD with co-occurring mental health disorders (COD). This is a 4-year, 5-arm randomized control trial with a fractional factorial design among 1,000 patients across 9 MOUD programs to test the added benefit of MISSION or its components + MOUD compared to MOUD alone.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH)/National Cancer Institute funded a 5-year study lead by Rajani Sadasivam and Hoa Nguyen, Associate Professor in PQHS Epidemiology. mHealth Messaging to Motivate Quitline Use and Quitting among Persons Living with HIV in Vietnam (M2Q2-HIV) is an adaptation of the team’s current computer-tailored smoking cessation intervention in Vietnam. The team seeks to promote underused government resources for public health (quitline) and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH) in a sustainable manner. These clinical (HIV) and public health resources (quitlines) are not connected, reducing both programs’ impact. To connect these resources, the team will adapt their current intervention for computer-tailored, text-based smoking cessation in Vietnam to be specific to PLWH smoking behavior, for example, by addressing HIV stigma via developing motivational and tailored messages written by PLWH smokers. To further increase message relevance for PLWH smokers, they will add a computer-tailoring innovation: a machine-learning, collective intelligence system.

Rajani Sadasivam and Elise Stevens, Assistant Professor in PQHS Division of Preventative and Behavioral Medicine at UMass Chan, were awarded funding for a one-year project by the UMass Chan PQHS Cancer-Focused Pilot Project Program. The Using Psychophysiological Technology to Develop a Mood-Tailored Intervention for Smoking Cessation pilot project’s goal is to develop Adapt2YourMood — a mood-tailored health communication intervention for smoking cessation.
Technical Assistance/Consultation and External Funding Program

The iSPARC Technical Assistance/Consultation and External Funding Program is co-led by Gina Vincent and Marsha Ellison and managed by Sharon Leahy-Lind. Key evaluation staff include Colleen McKay and Morgan Rao. The program also benefits from coordination by a program implementation specialist (Maryann Preskul-Ricca) and expert consultation from Marianne Farkas from the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Boston University. The program is responsible for providing basic and intensive technical assistance (TA) services to MA DMH and its contracted providers. This program also houses our Communications Division, led by Marsha Ellison and directed by Deirdre Logan, described in detail on pp. 27 – 29.

Basic Technical Assistance

Basic TA consists of up to 16 hours of free TA services per request. Examples include seeking information about best practices and evidence-based intervention models; seeking “how to” advice (e.g., how to leverage social media, how to create advisory councils); discussing grant proposal ideas; conducting literature searches or systematic reviews; and identifying tools for supporting implementation of best practices (e.g., checklists, guides, surveys). Basic TA can be requested by DMH leadership and the larger DMH workforce via the iSPARC website.

Between July 2021 – June 2022, we received 18 new requests for technical assistance, totaling 52 hours of faculty and staff time to fulfill these requests. Requests came from individuals with lived experience or their family members, UMass Chan faculty, DMH-funded agencies, DMH staff, other state agencies (e.g., Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission), and other Massachusetts organizations (e.g., United Way). The requests pertained to:

- Advice on developing fidelity tools
- Providing resources and articles
- Advice on developing satisfaction surveys for individuals served

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Advice on publishing research findings

Advice on conducting needs assessments

Resources and information on best practices pertaining to caseload size

Resources and information with respect to building self-determination among young adult vocational rehabilitation clients

Assisting with connections to other agencies or organizations

Advice on implementation science

Resources for grant proposals

Speaker requests

One especially notable highlight of our FY22 Basic TA is described below:

Sue Plasse, Director of Community Services for the DMH Southeast Area, contacted iSPARC because she and Alexis Romanow, the Southeast Area Child, Youth, and Family Director, were tasked with conducting a needs assessment regarding Transitional Age Youth/Young Adult (TAYYA) programming. They would like to implement a free outcome measure for their TAYYA programs and contacted iSPARC because they are looking for a measure that is applicable across all of their programs (i.e., ACCS, PACT, Outpatient). On August 24, 2021, Marsha Ellison and Gina Vincent met with Sue Plasse and Alexis Romanow to discuss this request. Marsha provided feedback on the Recovery Assessment Scale (RAS), provided another measure to review, and sent some additional resources. In the month of October 2021, Marsha Ellison and Morgan Rao met with Sue Plasse and Alexis Romanow for a second meeting on the evaluation of the Southeast Transition Age Youth (TAY) Initiative. During the meeting, materials previously created for Heidi Holland for evaluating the Reframe the Age
Intensive Technical Assistance

The TA/Consultation Program has been working with DMH to improve fidelity to its Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) model among contracted provider agencies statewide. To that end, iSPARC is following the Active Implementation Frameworks model, which has four stages: (1) Exploration (needs assessment/data-gathering); (2) Installation (development of the strategies/materials/policies to be implemented); (3) Initial Implementation (piloting and refining the strategies in one region); and, (4) Full Implementation (statewide implementation). FY22’s focus was on completing the Installation Phase (2) and beginning the Initial Implementation Phase (3).

In FY21, iSPARC worked with DMH leadership to construct a “Design Team” comprised of personnel from multiple levels of ACCS provider agencies (e.g., clinicians, executives, middle management) to identify and develop strategies that would help provider agencies enhance their implementation of the functional components of ACCS. After months of meetings, the group determined that the primary barriers to implementing ACCS requirements were: (1) hiring and retention of personnel; (2) lack of consistent staff coaching and supervision; (3) treatment team members’ competencies in ACCS methods and buy-in; and (4) need for better cross-system collaboration. After consultation with DMH, iSPARC and the Design Team agreed to focus on the development and initial implementation of the following four key strategies for FY22:

**Strategy 1:** Develop an ACCS Hiring & Retention Interview Packet

**Strategy 2:** Develop a Peer Specialist & Recovery Coach Career Ladder, Supervisory Guidance, and Bridging MH/Addiction Recovery

**Strategy 3:** Hold a Listening Session with DMH to propose solutions to gaps in filling the Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) 1 position

**Strategy 4:** Develop ACCS Orientation & Training Materials to be implemented by all provider agencies for improving competencies of all personnel on integrated treatment teams

From July to September 2021, iSPARC worked with three Design Team workgroups to develop materials that would be piloted in the Southeast area, along with an evaluation plan. The materials included: (1) a three-step hiring packet, including interview materials
and a list of competencies for clinicians; (2) a document outlining guidance for supervising Peer Specialists & Recovery Coaches; (3) a comprehensive set of core competencies outlining required substance use expertise of other personnel that could substitute for the required LADC 1 credential; and (4) 11 training modules covering foundational concepts in working with persons served (e.g., person-centered care, recovery-oriented approach, trauma-informed) and ACCS principles and practices (e.g., importance of evidence-based practices, integrated treatment teams, suicide risk screening and prevention). iSPARC and DMH held a celebration to thank the Design Team in October 2021.

In October 2021, iSPARC drafted a workplan and timeline with DMH Leadership for Initial Implementation of the hiring packet and orientation curriculum across all ACCS community behavioral health agencies in the Southeast area. The other two strategies were managed differently. First, oversight for finalizing the development of Strategy 2 (Peer Specialist Supervisory Guidance) was transitioned to the DMH Directors of Recovery with some consultation from iSPARC. The pilot process for the final document will be co-led by iSPARC and the Directors at a later date. With respect to Strategy 3 (alternate substance use expertise to fill the LADC 1 role), in May 2022, DMH leadership used our recommendations to offer an ACCS Pathway to Licensure and LADC I Substitution Application to all ACCS agencies.

To initiate the Initial Implementation Stage, in late November 2021, iSPARC co-convened the first meeting of the Southeast Area Pilot ACCS Steering Committee, which is comprised of Executive Leadership from the five ACCS contracted agencies and the state operated program. The Steering Committee identified and recruited members for a Southeast Pilot Implementation Team from a diverse group of ACCS Staff from each agency (e.g., clinicians, peer specialists). The Southeast Pilot Implementation Team started meeting in January 2022. With the assistance of this Team, iSPARC identified ACCS personnel volunteers statewide to participate in a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion review of the hiring packet and orientation curriculum materials. iSPARC asked volunteers to examine the materials collectively through an equity lens and held two virtual focus groups in addition to obtaining written feedback in February and March 2022. iSPARC revised the materials accordingly.

By the end of FY22, iSPARC completed the first pilot test of the hiring packet for clinicians and the orientation curriculum with all Southeast agencies. Testing of the hiring packet initiated in April 2022 and agencies were asked to submit data following each interview they conducted. For the ACCS orientation curriculum, iSPARC delivered weekly training sessions to test the curriculum with seasoned and new ACCS staff in the Southeast
during May and June 2022. iSPARC co-led some of these training sessions with other trainers, including two DMH employees (Chris Corriero and Michael Stephansky) and three agency volunteers (Daniela Johnson [Vinfen Director Clinical Practice & Standards], Andy Beresky [Director of Recovery Supports, CHD], and Robert Ortiz [Director of Peer Recovery Services, FHR]). By the end of this year, iSPARC provided DMH with a summary of the outcomes from both pilot tests and was in the process of preparing the materials for one more pilot test to start in September 2022.

**External Funding**

The External Funding component of this iSPARC program is developing infrastructure and resources to build iSPARC’s capacity to provide fee-for-service TA, training, and consultation. The program’s goal is to leverage the expertise of our faculty and staff members to generate revenue and build growth. In FY21, the team convened the primary faculty who provide training and TA services. This group determined that generating more TA revenue would require a program implementation specialist to assist faculty and staff with contract development and project management. The TA Team hired a half-time program implementation specialist consultant - Mary Ann Preskul-Ricca – to serve in this role. Although Ms. Preskul-Ricca’s primary role this far has been to assist with ACCS TA, in FY22 she managed a TA and training contract with the state of Colorado for Gina Vincent and worked with Michelle Mullen to devise a plan for building their training revenue.

**Communications Highlights**

iSPARC has developed state-of-the-art information dissemination strategies to ensure that our work is disseminated as quickly and effectively as possible. These efforts
include live and virtual presentations, creation of dissemination products, as well as web-based and social media campaigns. The goal of this dissemination is to speed the translation of research findings about effective psychosocial services into actual practice in the community.

**Top 5 FY22 Highlights from Communications Activities**

1. **Our top three written products in FY22 were:**
   - *What is a 504 Plan and How Can it Help My Teen?* – 2166 downloads
   - *Supporting Employment for Young Adults Living with Mental Health Conditions* – 2085 downloads

2. **Our top webinar in FY22 was Academic Coaching for College Students with Mental Health Conditions by Peer Students: Pilot Results featuring Maryann Davis, Paul Cherchia and Dorothy Hutchinson with 100 attendees.**

3. **FY22 Presentation/Training highlights include:**
   - Debbie Nicolellis, Emily McCaffrey, and Carlos Teveras (young adult trainee from the FY21 HYPE Training Course) presented at the Alternatives 2021 National Virtual Conference in July 2021.
   - Nancy Byatt gave four presentations at the Marcé of North America 2021 Biennial Perinatal Mental Health Virtual Conference in October 2021.
   - Maryann Davis delivered the keynote presentation for the Annual National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Programs Conference in April 2022.
   - Gina Vincent delivered the keynote address at the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice Probation “What’s in your Playbook?” Conference in April 2022.
   - Celine Larkin presented at the 55th Annual Conference of the American Association of Suicidology in April 2022.

4. **On May 9, 2022, the MGH Center of Excellence for Psychosocial and Systemic Research and iSPARC hosted the 2022 Annual Conference of the DMH Research**
Centers of Excellence. The theme of this virtual conference was, *In This Together...But Not in the Same Boat: How We Are Supporting Youth, Young Adults, and Families Facing Mental Health Concerns*. Nearly 200 individuals attended the conference, including DMH staff, persons with lived experience, family members, providers, and clinicians. (See page 14 for conference additional details).

5. Coming in FY23, the new *S.T.A.Y. Tuned* podcast by the Learning & Working RRTC at the Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research.

**FY22 By the Numbers**

- iSPARC faculty and staff gave 112 presentations to a total of approximately 9,495 audience members. 27 of these presentations took place in Massachusetts and reached 865 Massachusetts constituents.
- iSPARC published 10 issue briefs and tip sheets (see Appendix B).
- 6,827 individuals were subscribed to iSPARC email lists.
- iSPARC websites received 40,824 visits (FY21 = 31,818 visits) from 31,218 unique users (FY21 = 24,427 users) with 62,290 page views (FY21 = 55,505 views).
- More than 46,400 dissemination products were downloaded from iSPARC websites and e-journals.
- There were 4,636 downloads of our tip sheets in other languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Mandarin; FY21 = 3,865).
- Our videos on YouTube have had 5,886 views (FY21 = 6,088).
- There were 1,653 views of our American Sign Language translation videos on our iSPARC YouTube Channel (FY21 = 1,245).
- iSPARC maintained 2,124 Facebook followers across our different accounts, with a total reach of 67,205 people (i.e., the number of people who saw any content from our pages or about our pages).
- Our Twitter pages had 1,967 followers – an increase of 142 followers from FY21 (FY21 = 1,825).
- Our LinkedIn page had over 11,000 page views and 226 followers (FY21 = 64).
- The Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research’s Instagram account had 274 followers.
Stakeholder Engagement Program

The Stakeholder Engagement Program is co-led by Melissa Anderson, Celine Larkin, and Dee Logan. Partnership with persons with lived mental health experience, their family members, and the providers who serve them is critical to all phases of iSPARC research, training, and dissemination. A major part of this engagement is achieved through the guidance of ISPARC advisory boards — the new weSPARC Insight Advisory Board, the Family Advisory Board, the Young Adult Advisory Board, and the Lifeline for Moms Postpartum Mental Health Advisory Council.

iSPARC Advisory Boards

weSPARC Insight

In early FY22, the Stakeholder Engagement Program began recruiting for a new eight-member advisory board for iSPARC, to be comprised of individuals with lived mental health across the lifespan. More than 25 individuals expressed interest in joining the board, we held interviews in the Fall 2021, and hosted our first meeting on January 7, 2022 with our 7 new members. Board meetings are currently co-facilitated by Celine Larkin and Melissa Anderson. The members: (1) review and provide ongoing feedback on methods and results of iSPARC’s implementation science work regarding the DMH ACCS program; (2) review and provide feedback on iSPARC dissemination products, especially to enhance their usability by persons with lived experience as well as DMH and DMH-contracted providers; and (3) review and provide feedback on other iSPARC research proposals and projects that would benefit from the perspective of persons with
lived experience. The board met 5 times between January to June FY22 and focused on cohering as a team, decided on a council name, provided feedback on our annual Diversity and Engagement Survey, listened to an overview of a suicide-related research project idea that Celine Larkin presented and provided feedback on it, and listened to Melissa Anderson speak about the research conducted by the DeafYES Center. In May 2022, we started recruiting for additional members to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the weSPARC Insight Board. We shortlisted three candidates who were interviewed on July 1, 2022 and invited two new members in early FY23.

Family Advisory Board

The Family Advisory Board (FAB) is co-facilitated by Marcela Hayes and Jean Wnuk. The board met 12 times in FY22 and has 6 members who are family members of young adults with lived experience. The board meets monthly to advise and provide a family perspective on all research and communications activities within the Center. During FY22, the FAB drafted a tip sheet on effective family communication and refreshed the content of two older tip sheets, “Applying for a Job: A Young Adult’s Guide” and “My ‘Must’ Have Papers”. They have provided feedback on the Learning & Working RRTC’s Virtual Toolkit project that will assist vocational rehabilitation and mental health agencies develop and sustain advisory councils that consists of young adults with lived experience of a mental health condition. Debbie Nicolellis requested feedback on the competencies most needed by providers who work with young adults with mental health conditions when it comes to supporting them in working, going to school, and exploring/achieving careers. This information is helping to develop the first Learning & Working RRTC’s Directed Training Project module.

Young Adult Advisory Board

The Young Adult Advisory Board (YAB) is facilitated by Maya Ingram, a young adult woman of color, and has eight diverse young adults from around the United States, all
with serious mental health conditions. In FY22, the YAB met 11 times to provide feedback on grant-funded research projects, Learning & Working RRTC knowledge translation projects, RRTC training projects, and provided valuable information for research proposals (e.g., PASS 1.0, Smoker2Smoker, CAPE-Youth toolkit, a CTE proposal, collaboration with our Family Advisory Board, etc.). They also provided feedback on survey methodology proposals, offering feedback on everything from the study design and types of questions asked of young people, recruitment materials, survey feedback, to identifying important themes and aiding our exploration of the implications of our findings. YAB Members have participated in discussions related to our knowledge translation and other communication or dissemination activities, produced 11 new, YA-friendly memes which are culturally sensitive but also fun and relevant to youth voice. Board Members have played an important part in helping to develop comics and tip sheets related to our Center’s efforts and provided input on our social media efforts.

**Lifeline for Moms Postpartum Mental Health Advisory Council**

Nancy Byatt is a Co-I on the Charting the Course for Patient-Centered Research to Address Inequities in Perinatal Mental Health & Maternal Mortality project, which began in December 2021 and will be completed in November 2023. This project will build the capacity of relevant stakeholders and researchers to partner in the planning, completion, and dissemination of patient-centered outcomes research/comparative effectiveness research (PCOR/CER) studies to address perinatal mental health inequities among Black and Indigenous communities.

During FY22, one of the major efforts of the PCORI Charting the Course team was to assemble a council of individuals with lived experience of a mental health condition during the perinatal period. Between December 2021-February 2022, the Charting the Course team focused on recruiting and starting this advisory council. The team put much effort into recruiting a very diverse group of birthing individuals from communities that have been historically underserved by the mental and obstetric healthcare systems. The Lifeline for Moms Postpartum Mental Health Advisory Council is national and has 18 members and meets bi-monthly for 90-minutes. The first meeting was in March 2022 where members were oriented to the purpose of the advisory board and the PCORI Charting the Course project that will be a focus of their work for the initial two years. At the May 2022 meeting, Lifeline for Moms Postpartum Mental Health Advisory Council members provided feedback on patient participant recruitment materials and procedures for Nancy Byatt’s Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs: Evaluating Patient, Provider, and Program Level Outcomes Across the US project. The Lived experience council also reviewed and provided feedback on Module 4: Sampling, Recruiting, and Retaining Study Participants of the PCORI Research Fundamentals
training package. This free comprehensive training package offers different ways to learn about the health research process and be involved in patient-centered outcomes research.

In FY23 the Postpartum Mental Health Advisory Council will focus on participating in a journey mapping activity which provides them the opportunity to have their physical and emotional experiences visually represented allowing for greater insight into the experiences and perspective of perinatal individuals and their providers. The journey mapping activities will be used to facilitate insight into identification of research questions for future patient-centered and comparative effectiveness scientific proposals.

Programmatic Activities

In addition to supporting the activities of the advisory boards, described above, the Stakeholder Engagement Program also delivers data-driven consultation and training to research teams across the Center to help support engagement of those with lived experience. Highlights of FY22 include the creation of two new stakeholder advisory boards and our annual measurement of participatory approaches, the PAR-PAT.

Planning and Assessment Tool (PAR-PAT)

Each year, all funded research projects at iSPARC are requested to complete the Participatory Action Research Planning and Assessment Tool (PAR-PAT), which measures the extent to which the community of focus is involved in designing, executing, interpreting, and disseminating in each research study. We identified several areas where our center excelled at involving communities of focus:

- Developing recruitment procedures
- Identifying/developing data collection measures/materials
- Developing recruitment materials
- Engaging with community partners that will aid recruitment efforts
- Identifying non-academic sources of dissemination
- Supporting development of products
- Conducting community workshops/presentations
- Preparing conference presentations
- Presenting at conferences (i.e., presentation, posters)
- Conducting team evaluation/debrief of project

Based on the FY21 PAR-PAT results, the Stakeholder Engagement team identified a core area where iSPARC investigators needed more support, namely involving stakeholders in dissemination back to communities of focus. To address this gap, Melissa Anderson, Celine Larkin, and Dee Logan presented an interactive workshop “It’s Never Too Late: Engaging Stakeholders for Research Dissemination,” at the March 14, 2022 iSPARC Interactive Learning (iSPARC-IL) Series.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at iSPARC

Under the guidance of the iSPARC Workforce Enrichment Program, each iSPARC Program promotes equity in the work that they undertake. Examples include consulting with diversity experts to cultivate a more inclusive workforce; specifically recruiting interns, postdoctoral fellows, and early career researchers from historically underrepresented groups; and keeping Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) at the forefront of communications and dissemination efforts.

Excitingly, in FY22, iSPARC DEI leadership transitioned from Melissa Anderson to Mallory Shelley – an iSPARC staff person who identifies as a person of color. Since establishing the iSPARC DEI role in FY20, this was the first time we were able to recruit a BIPOC individual into this critical leadership position.

DMH COE Racial and Ethnic Equity Evaluation Plan

To capture Center of Excellence (COE) DEI efforts and measure progress over time, in FY20 iSPARC, the MGH COE, and DMH began developing a Racial and Ethnic Equity Evaluation Plan. Across FY21, iSPARC, the MGH COE, Margaret Guyer-Deason, and Kathy Sanders worked together refine a streamlined assessment battery, feasible procedures for implementing these assessments, and developed specific targets for each Center. The development process also involved input from BIPOC peer consultants at the MGH COE.

This collaborative process resulted in a comprehensive evaluation plan across four primary domains:

1. Equitable Research
2. Equitable Continuous Quality Improvement
3. Equitable Stakeholder Engagement
4. Equitable Center Operations and Workforce Development
Once finalized, it was determined that each Center would begin to implement aspects of the evaluation plan that made the most sense within their unique Center and institutional contexts.

At iSPARC, our FY22 DEI efforts focused on the following implementing subdomains within the area of Equitable Center Operations and Workforce Development:

- **Overall Demographic Data:** We conducted the third annual data collection on the diversity of our Center’s faculty and staff. FY22 strengths and areas for improvement are summarized below.

- **Work Culture:** We conducted the third annual data collection on the perceptions of inclusion and engagement among our Center’s faculty and staff. FY22 strengths and areas for improvement are summarized below.

- **Recruitment and Hiring:** In FY22, iSPARC began exploring how the Equitable Recruitment and Hiring Checklist could be implemented at our Center. Actionable and achievable FY23 objectives are to:
  - Develop language to be included in all iSPARC job postings that emphasizes our Center’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
  - Standardize screening and interview questions to be used by all iSPARC teams, which include diversity and inclusion related questions.
  - Include a BIPOC iSPARC employee in all initial screening interviews.

### Third Annual iSPARC Diversity and Engagement Survey

#### Workforce Diversity

- **FY22 Strengths:**
  - 77% of iSPARC staff and faculty identified as female, as compared to only 51% of the Worcester County workforce.
  - 38% of staff and faculty identified as LGBTQIA+.
  - 25% of staff and faculty identified as an individual with a disability, as compared to only 4% of the Worcester County workforce.
  - 52% of staff and faculty identified as an individual with lived mental health experience.
FY22 Areas for Improvement:

- 83% of iSPARC staff and faculty identify as White, non-Hispanic/Latino. This finding is consistent with 84% within the Worcester County population; however, our Center’s goal is to oversample from populations that have been traditionally underserved and underrepresented in mental health research and services. *FY22 hiring efforts have recently led to successful recruitment of several BIPOC staff and faculty; as such, we anticipate that FY23 survey results will reflect the intentionally increasing diversity of our workforce.*

Inclusion and Engagement

FY22 Strengths:

- More than 90% of staff and faculty reported that “I feel that my work contributes to the mission of iSPARC.”
- More than 85% of staff and faculty reported that “iSPARC values me as an individual.”
- 83% of staff reported that they had “opportunities at iSPARC to develop professionally” in the past year. This was a 15% increase from the previous survey year!
- 64% of staff reported that they “receive support for working with diverse groups and working in cross-cultural situations.” This was a 19% increase from the previous survey year!

FY22 Areas for Improvement:

- Less than 30% of staff and faculty reported that they are “confident that [their] accomplishments are compensated similar to others who have achieved their goals.” *In response to this finding, iSPARC has requested multiple equity reviews from UMass Chan HR, as well as increased our advocacy efforts to encourage the UMass Chan Compensation Department to offer more livable starting salaries to new employees.*

Postdoctoral Fellowship Pipeline

To address FY22 areas for improvement, iSPARC has continued to receive consultation from Margarita Alegría, Chief of the Disparities Research Unit at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Professor in the Departments of Medicine and Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Based on her guidance, one major activity was undertaken in FY22 – the implementation of a postdoctoral fellowship program specifically designed to serve as a pipeline to increase the diversity of future iSPARC faculty members.
iSPARC’s new Postdoctoral Fellowships in Mental Health Services research support two 2-year, full-time postdoctoral fellows. Supported in part by the DMH COE contract, the Clinical Investigation track postdoctoral fellow receives training, mentorship, and clinical supervision in the provision of mental health services and conduct of clinical research within underserved populations.

To specifically encourage diverse candidates to apply, we included this language in the fellowship job posting:

> We strongly encourage candidates who increase the field’s depth in research that addresses the needs of underserved racial or ethnic groups. As an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer, the UMass Chan Medical School recognizes the power of a diverse community and encourages applications from individuals with varied experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds. Recent university-wide diversity initiatives are described here.

Described in detail on page 17, the intentionality of this hiring process resulted in the successful recruitment of postdoctoral fellow Nana Yaa Ampoma Marfo, who will begin her training program in August 2022.

**DEI in Communications Activities**

In FY22, the iSPARC Communications Team coordinated the formal translation of 20 products from written English to other languages (Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, Vietnamese).

There were 4,636 (FY21 = 3,865) downloads of our tip sheets in other languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Mandarin).

There were 1,653 (FY21 = 1,245) views of our American Sign Language translation products (videos).
Successful Collaborations with DMH and Other State Agencies

Partnerships are more critical than ever given the increasingly collaborative and multidisciplinary nature of mental health services research. One of the key components of iSPARC is our provision of intensive and basic technical assistance to DMH and other state agencies (pp. 23 – 27). As such, many of our significant collaborations are described in that section. In addition to technical assistance-related collaborations, iSPARC faculty and staff successfully collaborate with DMH and other state agencies to further the missions of these organizations and to better meet the needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth. Highlights of such collaborations are outlined below.

Helping Youth on the Path to Employment (HYPE) Course

The DMH-funded Helping Youth on the Path to Employment (HYPE) Course is an adaptation of the HYPE model developed by Michelle Mullen. The HYPE manual articulates support strategies to help young adults who experience mental health conditions return to and/or maintain meaningful roles in school and work. The HYPE Course project offers a group intervention based on HYPE values and practices and has two objectives: 1) to offer group and individual services directly to young adults with mental health conditions to help them prepare for meaningful careers; and 2) to ensure sustainability throughout the Commonwealth by training other organizations/ agencies to deliver the HYPE Courses.
Development of an Innovative, Virtual Training Course

The virtual HYPE Course was developed in response to the initial impacts of COVID-19 and engages young adults in the three main content areas: Making Career Decisions, School Preparation, and Work Preparation. Piloted by the HYPE Team in FY21, the HYPE Team began to teach other providers in Massachusetts the skills and information needed to facilitate three 6-to-7-week virtual HYPE Courses in FY22.

The cornerstone of the HYPE Team’s work in FY22 was the development and pilot of the new, innovative HYPE Course Facilitator Training (HCFT), an online training methodology to teach providers to become HYPE Facilitators. The course is hosted on Moodle, HYPECareers.org, and is accessible to registered participants and their trainers.

Recruitment of Trainees and Facilitator Training

In FY22, the HYPE team recruited organizations interested in learning to facilitate the HYPE Courses. The HYPE team interviewed and worked with three potential sites and accepted Madison Park Development Corp (MPDC) in Roxbury/Dorchester to the training. MPDC sent four staff to be trained from their Youth Workforce Development Programs, two of whom were young adult staff. MPDC is a leading developer of affordable housing and takes a multi-dimensional approach to community development by offering impactful programming for youth development, health and community wellness, public safety, resident leadership, civic engagement, and arts & culture. Approximately half of the youth and young adults using MPDC programming have a mental health condition, but they report that their staff has not been equipped to support the needs related to mental health conditions.

Madison Park Development Corp (MPDC) began the HYPE Course Facilitator Training (HCFT) online course in Fall 2021. The online training method allows trainees to learn at their own pace and on their own schedule, interspersed with and followed by live practical demonstration, practice, and consultation. Online instruction includes interactive, recorded videos (VoiceThreads) through which trainees could ask and answer questions as they went through the content, as well as curriculum and supplemental materials to review and utilize. The online, asynchronous training was followed by live Coaching in which questions could be discussed and consultation with HYPE experts was accessed. In addition to recorded practices with each other, MPDC trainees facilitated two full HYPE Courses (HYPE School Prep and HYPE Work Prep) with young adults in the Winter/Spring of 2022 under the supervision of the HYPE team and are now considered qualified HYPE Course Facilitators.

Evaluation

The HYPE Team continues to collect evaluation data from the young adult participants who took part in the virtual HYPE Courses. In addition to HYPE Course participant data, Training Director Debbie Nicolellis recently conducted an evaluative feedback session with
the four Facilitator-trainees at Madison Park Development Corp (MPDC). Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and they also offered important critical suggestions for improving the training and curriculum. Based on feedback from both participants and trainees, the HYPE team is working to enhance both the training experience and curriculum in preparation for FY23 training activities.

Healthy Transitions Evaluation Project (HT2)

In FY20, Alexis Henry and Kathryn Sabella were awarded a 5-year, $360,000 sub-contract for the MA DMH’s Healthy Transitions Initiative, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The UMass Donahue Institute is the lead agency, contracting with researchers from the UMass Chan Medical School’s Division of Commonwealth Medicine carrying out all evaluation activities.

During FY22, the HT2 evaluation team met regularly with the two HT2 sites in Gloucester and Lowell, as well as DMH leadership (Sue Wing and Betsy Edes). The UMass Chan Medical School evaluation team worked to maximize data quality and minimize missing data to strengthen their data collection and quality assurance processes. The UMass Chan team focused effort on increasing completion of follow-up data collection. As the third year of the grant winds down, and the UMass Chan team began to shift efforts towards producing work that can assist with sustainability. The UMass Chan evaluation team partnered with DMH leadership to adjust and revise reporting of quarterly indicators of policy and practice based on revised expectations from SAMHSA.

Kathryn Sabella and the DMH HT2 Evaluation team worked closely with Betsy Edes and Sue Wing to facilitate effective data collection systems and data reporting systems. Year 3 of the grant was completed on March 31, 2022, and the teams are now preparing the annual report for SAMHSA and instituting changes to how they report Infrastructure Development, Prevention and Mental Health Promotion (IPP) data according to recently revised SAMHSA guidelines.

Alexis Henry officially retired from Commonwealth Medicine effective June 30, 2022. Kathryn Sabella will remain on the project as Principal Investigator for the remainder of the contract. The Evaluation Team continues to support grant reporting activities and will also support the team through some upcoming National Outcome Measures (NOMs) revisions.

The Central Massachusetts Tobacco-Free Community Partnership

The Central Massachusetts Tobacco-Free Community Partnership program enhances state and local tobacco control efforts by exposing tobacco industry tactics, mobilizing the community to support and adopt evidence-based policies, and changing social norms that prevent youth from starting to smoke and help current smokers to quit. Funded by the
During FY22, Colleen McKay and Noriasha Mensah from the Central Massachusetts Tobacco-Free Community Partnership along with the other MA Community Partnerships worked on ways to address social determinants of health and how to help their regions address tobacco usage rates. The FY22 focus of the Community Partnerships was addressing how structural racism affects the social determinants of health and the impact it has on social determinants of health. One key factor identified was food insecurity.

In FY22, the Central Massachusetts Tobacco-Free Community Partnership reached out to various programs addressing food insecurity in Central Massachusetts, started to build a collaborative relationship with these programs, and to provide mini grants to support their work while sharing tobacco resources to address the intersectionality between food insecurity and tobacco usage. The mini grants cover staff time to participate in the information gathering meetings and for agencies to purchase CSA shares. The Central MA Community Partnership partnered with food programs in the South Fitchburg area to address food insecurities in their community (Project Bread, Worcester Families Feeding Families and the highland Baptist Church in Fitchburg) and collaborated with local farmers to purchase CSA Shares for the food programs they are working with.

The Central Mass Community Partnership conducted a focus group with three food pantries in Worcester, whose goal was to identity the problems associated with food insecurity in Central MA. Colleen and Noriasha made efforts to address the best way to get resources in the community, what resources are effective, and the best way to reach smokers who are among the communities they serve. As part of the Central MA Community Partnership’s efforts to address food insecurity, they met with representatives from the El Buen Samaritano Food Program, Maker to Main Market, and Worcester Community Fridges. The Central Mass Community Partnership plans to hold informational gathering meetings with their partners to identify and target upstream factors associated with tobacco use, food insecurity, and racial equity, and explore strategies and barriers.

**Deaf-Accessible Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR) Training**

Melissa Anderson collaborated with DMH and filmmaker Bryan Horch to create a Deaf-accessible version of the "Question. Persuade. Refer." suicide-prevention training. Professional filmmaking took place in August and September 2021. The filmmaking team focused on creating an authentic final training product by hiring Deaf actors and film directors with lived experience of depression and suicide attempts. The final version of the training video was completed and presented to DMH in March 2022. The final product will be disseminated during the
upcoming launch of the new website for the DeafYES! Center for Deaf Empowerment and Recovery – www.deafyes.org

**Risk-Need-Responsivity: Implementation Support (RNR-IS)**

Dara Drawbridge is the PI of a five-year project (July 2021-June 2026), Risk-Need-Responsivity: Implementation Support (RNR-IS) funded by the Massachusetts Office of Community Corrections (OCC), Bureau of Justice Assistance Adult Drug Court Discretionary Grant Subaward. The purpose of the project is to support implementation of Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) statewide across 18 Community Justice Support Centers serving persons involved with the criminal-legal system who are at moderate to very high-risk of continued criminal-legal system contact.

**Massachusetts Center of Excellence (CoE) for Specialty Courts**

Dara Drawbridge is the Co-PI of the Massachusetts Center of Excellence (CoE) for Specialty Courts, which is a three-year project (February 2022-January 2025) funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of the Trial Court. In partnership with the Massachusetts Executive Office of the Trial Court, the Center of Excellence for Specialty Courts drives equity, implementation, research, evaluation, and policy initiatives in Massachusetts Specialty Courts.

**Shannon Community Safety Initiative (CSI) FY22 Local Action Research Partner**

The Shannon Community Safety Initiative (CSI) FY22 Local Action Research Partner is a one-year project (January 2022-December 2022) funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Dara Drawbridge and her team have partnered with the City of Fitchburg to provide implementation support, research, and evaluation to local police departments, social support and behavioral health agencies in their efforts to prevent and intervene with delinquency, crime, and gang violence. FY22 activities include updated community needs assessment, design of prevention and intervention program intervention maps and implementation blueprints.

**Training for Recovery & Engagement in Addiction Treatment (T.R.E.A.T)**

Dara Drawbridge is working with Commonwealth Medicine on the Training for Recovery & Engagement in Addiction Treatment (T.R.E.A.T) project. This project is funded by the MA Department of Public Health and MA Executive Office of the Trial Court and provides Risk-Need-Responsivity in recovery Courts: Building a Shared-Understanding to Foster Change. In June 2022, they held a discussion session with MA Specialty Court clinicians.
Massachusetts Probation Service

Through two new contracts, Gina Vincent and the Law & Psychiatry team are providing TA to the Massachusetts Probation Service to improve decisions related to dangerousness hearings, and to the MA Department of Youth Services and Office of the Child Advocate to design and implement their screening and assessment activities for the new youth Diversion Lab in MA.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Hafsatou Diop, MD, MPH, Director of the Division of MCH Research and Analysis at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) collaborated with Lifeline for Moms in the development of the R-34 multi-site grant of the NIMH ALACRITY Pathways to Advance Perinatal Mental Health Equity Center grant application.
The iSPARC Faculty Development Program is co-led by Stephenie Lemon, William McIlvane, and Kathryn Sabella. The aims of this program are to support iSPARC faculty members’ overall professional development goals, as well as increase their chances of successfully obtaining funding for their programs of research. The main activities of this program are described below and contributed to the FY22 promotions of four stellar iSPARC colleagues:

- Nancy Byatt was awarded tenure! She is now tenured Professor of Psychiatry, Obstetrics & Gynecology, and Population & Quantitative Health Sciences!
- Marsha Ellison was promoted to Professor of Psychiatry!
- Kathryn Sabella was promoted to Assistant Professor of Psychiatry!
- Alexander Wilkins was promoted to Assistant Professor of Psychiatry!

Faculty Coaching

Each year, iSPARC faculty members are offered the opportunity to meet with seasoned faculty (e.g., Stephenie Lemon, William McIlvane, Maryann Davis) to obtain individualized guidance on their professional development path. Coaches review the faculty member’s curriculum vitae and, during an in-person meeting, provide their insights on areas of relative strength and areas for targeted growth.
Professional Development Training Opportunities

In addition to the individualized coaching described above, the Faculty Development Program supports group training opportunities based on faculty members’ shared professional development goals. These goals are identified using the nominal group technique, a structured small-group discussion to reach consensus. The structured process prevents the domination of the discussion by a single person, encourages all group members to participate, and results in a set of prioritized solutions or recommendations that represent the group’s preferences.

In late FY21, iSPARC faculty identified leadership skills as a priority area for professional development. As such, both faculty and senior staff members began participating in Dare to Lead training beginning in early FY22. Based on the research of Dr. Brené Brown, Dare to Lead is an empirically based courage-building program that asserts that the world is in need of braver leaders. In the absence of courageous leadership, we are plagued with problems such as: Inability to have Tough Conversations; Difficulties with Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity; Lack of Innovation & Creativity; Cultures full of Shame & Blame; Poor Work/Life Balance; etc.

The most significant finding from Brené’s latest research is that courage is a collection of four skill sets that are teachable, measurable, and observable. The Dare to Lead program focuses on developing these four courage-building skills:

1. Rumbling with Vulnerability
2. Living Into Your Values
3. Braving Trust
4. Learning to Rise from Failures

The Dare to Lead program delivers new language, operationalized values, and practical tools and frameworks that help leaders and teams better navigate a rapidly changing world. Trainees learn the research behind Dare to Lead and applications to catalyze a movement of courage, trust and resiliency within their personal lives, workplaces, and communities.

iSPARC Grant Support Team

During FY22, the Grant Support Team met regularly to provide iSPARC faculty with scientific and content expertise on their developing grant proposals to strengthen their submissions and increase likelihood of funding. The twice-monthly meetings are routinely attended by iSPARC faculty and staff with expertise in a variety of research topics and methodologies. Standing members include William McIlvane, Stephenie Lemon, Kathryn Sabella, Melissa Anderson, Dee Logan, Gina Vincent, Dan Amante, Morgan Rao, Bo Wang, and Alex Wilkins.
All iSPARC investigators are strongly encouraged to meet with the Grant Support Team as they are working on their letters of intent and grant proposals, to ensure developing research ideas receive as much input and review as possible prior to submission. During these meetings, investigators receive feedback on all aspects of their research and evaluation grants, including research questions, background and rationale, scientific methods, and level of community engagement. Faculty and staff can select when their grants are reviewed, and individual grants can be reviewed multiple times throughout the development process.

In addition to assisting with grant proposal development, the Grant Support Team also helps with the submission process and tracks grant proposals that have been reviewed, submitted, and funded. In FY22, the Grant Support Team reviewed a total of 7 grant proposals across 14 meetings, 2 of which have been funded thus far and others that are still in the process of review by federal funding agencies. One of the proposals that was reviewed by the Grant Support Team many times was a NIMH P50 Advanced Laboratories for Accelerating the Reach and Impact of Treatments for Youth and Adults with Mental Illness (ALACRITY) Research Centers (P50 Clinical Trial Optional). This ALACRITY grant is a large center grant that includes one cornerstone R01 project, three R34 projects, and a suite of smaller initiatives and cores.

Examples of proposals reviewed by the Grant Support Team include:

- Prevention of Perinatal Depression: Improving Intervention Delivery for At-Risk Individuals – NIMH R34 – Kim Yonkers
- Promoting Access, Inclusion, and Success of Students with Emotional Disturbance in Career and Technical Education* – NIDILRR – Marsha Ellison & Colleen McKay
- Pathways to Advance Perinatal Mental Health Equity Center – NIMH P50 – Nancy Byatt
- Examining the Underlying Mechanisms of Stress, Adverse Social Determinants, and Allostatic Load on the Obstetric and Mental Health Outcomes of Black Peri-natal Individuals – F31 Diversity Training Grant – Esther Boama-Nyarko (Nancy Byatt trainee)
- Developing a Scalable Intervention to Prevent Perinatal Anxiety in Obstetric Settings* – Mentored Career Development KL2 – Martha Zimmerman (post-doc with Nancy Byatt)

* Grants funded in FY23
### iSPARC Seed Grant

The purpose of the iSPARC Seed Grant is to provide members of iSPARC and their collaborators with seed money to conduct research activities that will bolster a specific federal grant application. Maximum funding in the amount of $10,000 is made for one award for a 12-month period.

The proposal can focus on an area of study that is new to the researcher or can be an extension of an existing study (e.g., gather data from a different participant population, add a follow-up data collection phase to an existing baseline sample). The intention of iSPARC seed grants is to enhance the researcher’s likelihood of success for obtaining federal research grant funding in an area that matches their career goals and the mission of iSPARC.

Awardees are required to receive ongoing mentorship from a senior member of the iSPARC faculty. Preference is given to projects that address underrepresented populations and/or implementation science themes. Ideally, the research should also map onto the MA Roadmap to Behavioral Health Reform.

This year’s awardee was postdoctoral fellow Martha Zimmerman, who proposed a study to collect pilot data for a future K award submission. Her goal was to develop a brief, sustainable, trauma-informed intervention to prevent perinatal depression and anxiety that could be integrated into obstetric care pathways and meet the needs of perinatal individuals who are underserved by the mental healthcare system. In early FY23 Martha submitted her Mentored Career Development KL2 titled *Developing a Scalable Intervention to Prevent Perinatal Anxiety in Obstetric Settings* based on her SEED grant for review, and it was funded. She will start working on this project in November 2022. Her primary mentor is iSPARC Faculty member Nancy Byatt, but she will also be mentored by Stephenie Lemon.
Fiscal Year 2023 is off to a strong start. Several new grants have already received funding, and we continue to explore innovative opportunities to help us diversify our funding portfolio. We continue our commitment to the shared DMH and iSPARC goal of providing the best, state-of-the-art recovery-oriented, patient-centered care to all citizens of the Commonwealth. We look forward to another productive year in partnership with DMH!

**Research Activity**

These numbers represent both ongoing and new iSPARC research during Fiscal Year 2022:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>FY20</th>
<th>FY21</th>
<th>FY22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of research projects approved by DMH¹</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of research proposals submitted &amp; approved by an IRB²</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of grants submitted³</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of grants approved for funding⁴</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The number of ongoing iSPARC research projects during the fiscal year.
2. The total number of projects that had IRB approval during the fiscal year.
3. The total number of grant applications that iSPARC submitted during the fiscal year, regardless of their approval status. Some submitted grants may have received funding during the fiscal year, some may receive funding next fiscal year, and some may receive no funding.
4. The total number of new grants that either received money during the fiscal year or are approved for funding in the upcoming fiscal year.
New Grant Funding

The ongoing financial support provided by DMH confers iSPARC the ability to leverage monies from a variety of other sources in support of research and training. The figure reported below includes the portion of each grant/contract awarded in the 2022 Fiscal Year, not the total funds for life of the grant. The total is inclusive of both direct funds (monies which go directly to the project) and indirect funds (monies that support overhead on the project, the operation of iSPARC, the UMass Chan Department of Psychiatry, and the UMass Chan Medical School).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>FY20</th>
<th>FY21</th>
<th>FY22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External funding obtained</td>
<td>$8,224,124</td>
<td>$10,565,941</td>
<td>$10,396,644</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Peer Reviewed Publications

iSPARC faculty and staff publish in a variety of venues. Although most of our publications appear in peer-reviewed journals, iSPARC faculty and staff also publish books, book chapters, monographs, reports, conference papers, and reviews of academic manuscripts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>FY20</th>
<th>FY21</th>
<th>FY22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of papers submitted &amp; accepted for publication</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. This number does not include self-published tip sheets and research briefs.
Other Dissemination Efforts

iSPARC continued to conduct trainings and give presentations at a wide variety of venues throughout Fiscal Year 2022. The following numbers represent the efforts of iSPARC to distribute and disseminate information to DMH state and provider clinical workforce as well as individuals with lived experience and family members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>Accomplished in Fiscal Year 2020</th>
<th>Accomplished in Fiscal Year 2021</th>
<th>Accomplished in Fiscal Year 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of presentations/trainings/webinars by iSPARC faculty and staff shared information with DMH state and provider clinical workforce, individuals with lived experience &amp; family members</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of state and provider workforce members, individuals with lived experience and family members with whom research information was shared</td>
<td>4,281</td>
<td>1,887</td>
<td>865*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6. This represents the number of individuals attending iSPARC faculty and staff presentations at conferences, webinars, and trainings in Massachusetts during FY22. This does not include Massachusetts individuals accessing research information through other iSPARC mechanisms (i.e., website, listservs, and social media).

7. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the number of state and local dissemination opportunities were limited in FY21. Those events that did occur were virtual and seemed to have less attendance. iSPARC faculty and staff presented nationally to more than 8,500 individuals in FY21.

8. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the number of state and local dissemination opportunities were limited in FY22. Those events that did occur were virtual and seemed to have less attendance. iSPARC faculty and staff presented nationally to more than 9,495 individuals in FY22.
Appendix A
NEWLY-FUNDED iSPARC
RESEARCH & CONTRACTS
Title: Training Pretrial Screeners in the Pilot-Version of the Colorado Screening Detention Tool  
**PI:** Gina Vincent, PhD  
**Funding:** Colorado Department of Youth Services  
**Budget:** $8,450  
**Time Frame:** 7/1/2021–12/31/2021

**Description:** Developed protocols and trained 60 pretrial screeners across eight districts in Colorado to complete the pilot version of the Colorado youth detention risk tool for data gathering.

Title: Technical Assistance and Training for Behavioral Health Specialists in RNR-Based Case Planning with the YASI  
**PI:** Gina Vincent, PhD  
**Funding:** Colorado Division of Youth Services/Colorado Department of Public Safety and Juvenile Justice Reform  
**Budget:** $65,920  
**Time Frame:** 7/1/2021–6/30/2022

**Description:** Development, pilot testing, and implementation support for risk-need-responsivity based case planning training for behavioral health specialists in all Diversion of Youth Services’ juvenile facilities.

Title: Risk-Need-Responsivity: Implementation Support (RNR-IS)  
**PI:** Dara Drawbridge, PhD  
**Funding:** Massachusetts Office of Community Corrections (OCC), Bureau of Justice Assistance Adult Drug Court Discretionary Grant Subaward  
**Budget:** $1,296,103  
**Time Frame:** 7/1/2021–6/30/2026

**Description:** Support implementation of Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) statewide across 18 Community Justice Support Centers serving persons involved with the criminal-legal system who are at moderate to very high-risk of continued criminal-legal system contact.  
Aim 1: Assess barriers and facilitators to implementation of RNR via Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR)-informed interviews.  
Aim 2: Evaluate implementation of risk-need assessment, treatment planning, and cognitive behavioral groups via inter-rater reliability studies, case file review, and direct observations in the field.  
Aim 3: Deliver high-intensity implementation facilitation to improve fidelity, when benchmarks are not met.

• **Supplemental Project:** Community Service Program Redesign: Assist OCC leadership with a redesign of the Massachusetts Community Service Program that shifts community service from a sanction-oriented program to a restorative justice approach and redesign the program to provide meaningful experiences to people involved with the criminal-legal system, particularly in employment and civic engagement.
• **Supplemental Project:** Community Advisory Board: Assist OCC leadership with the design and piloting of community advisory boards comprised of people with lived experience in the Massachusetts criminal-legal system. Community advisory boards will provide policy, program, and practice recommendations to Community Justice Support Centers.

**Title:** A Multicenter, Randomized, Double-blind, Placebo-controlled, Parallel-arm Study to Assess the Efficacy, Safety, and Tolerability of AVP-786 (Deudextromethorphan Hydrobromide [d6-DM]/Quinidine Sulfate [Q]) for the Treatment of Negative Symptoms of Schizophrenia

**PI:** Xiaoduo Fan M.D., M.P.H., M.Sc. (site PI)

**Funding:** Avanir Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

**Budget:** $229,600

**Time Frame:** 7/1/2021–12/31/2022

**Description:** The purpose of this research is to evaluate the efficacy, safety and tolerability of AVP-786 compared to placebo for the treatment of negative symptoms of schizophrenia. Negative symptoms of schizophrenia can include difficulty in displaying emotion through facial expressions, apathy (lack of interest), slowed speech production, loss of ability to anticipate or experience joy or pleasure, loss of motivation, and reduced social drive or interest.

AVP-786 is targeted to treat negative symptoms. About 370 participants and approximately 50 study centers in the United States will participate in this study. Participation in this study will last approximately 23 weeks (including screening and follow-up). AVP-786 is being developed by Avanir Pharmaceuticals, Inc. This is a research study to test an investigational drug. An investigational drug is one that is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The investigational drug, AVP-786, will be compared to placebo.

**Title:** Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services through National Partnerships to Improve and Protect the Nation’s Health: Improving Ob/Gyn’s Ability to Support COVID-19 Vaccination, Mental Health, Social Support

**PIs:** Nancy Byatt, DO, MS, MBA & Tiffany Moore Simas, MD, MPH, MEd, FACOG

**Funding:** American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

**Budget:** $160,687

**Time Frame:** 9/1/2021–12/31/2022

**Description:** Mental health conditions are the most common obstetric complications of the perinatal period, and emerging research suggests COVID-19-related grief and health concerns are exacerbating mental health challenges and symptoms for perinatal individuals. They are reporting concerns about the health of themselves and their babies, financial worries, social isolation, anxiety, and other pandemic-related stressors. According to the CDC, social distancing, specifically, has contributed to isolation and loneliness and increased stress and anxiety.
It is critical for ob-gyns and other women’s health care clinicians (WHCCs) to conduct mental health screening, as they play an important role in identifying and addressing perinatal mental health conditions. However, they lack education and training to address mental health conditions, do not have the necessary workflows and processes in place, and have limited access to resources and referrals.

To address these needs, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has licensed perinatal mental health content developed by Lifeline for Moms to provide ob-gyns and other WHCCs with resources to strengthen their knowledge and skills in identifying and managing patients with perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and help obstetric practices integrate perinatal mental health and obstetric care. With this funding, Lifeline for Moms will disseminate these valuable resources to ob-gyns and other WHCCs.

Project activities include:

- Record 30-minute “how to” trainings on using the new provider resources.
- Host a 60-minute webinar that provides an overview of the perinatal mental health toolkit and lean implementation tool for ob-gyns and other women’s health care clinicians.
- Host meetings with ACOG section leaders in states with a perinatal psychiatry access program, which is designed to build the capacity of frontline medical providers to address perinatal mental health conditions by providing education, consultation, and resources and referrals.
- Hold two virtual meetings with the Lifeline for Moms advisory council to present the perinatal mental health resources and discuss how the materials can be adapted to address social determinants of health.

Title: Validation and Statewide Implementation of Risk Screening for Youth Prosecutorial Diversion Decisions: Bill 19-108
PI: Gina Vincent, PhD
Funding: Colorado Department of Public Safety
Budget: $55,000
Time Frame: 7/1/2021–6/30/2022

Description: Local validation and statewide implementation of a risk screening tool (ARNA) to inform prosecutorial decisions about youth pre-filing diversion from formal juvenile justice processing in Colorado.

Title: Designing Deaf-MET: A Deaf-Accessible Pre-Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder
PI: Alexander Wilkins, PhD
Funding: NIH - National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
Budget: $778,335
Time Frame: 9/1/2021–8/31/2026

Description: The U.S. Deaf community – a group of more than 500,000 Americans who
communicate using American Sign Language (ASL) – experiences nearly triple the rate of lifetime problem drinking compared to the general population. Yet, there are no therapy approaches that have been developed and formally tested to treat problem drinking or alcohol use disorder among Deaf clients. This study will begin to address this gap by supporting the development and preliminary validation of Deaf Motivational Enhancement Therapy (Deaf-MET), a Deaf-accessible pre-treatment for alcohol use disorder.

Title: Roadmap to Evaluating Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs  
PIs: Nancy Byatt, DO, MS, MBA & Chris Sheldrick, PhD  
Funding: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Special Interest Project  
Budget: $930,000  
Time Frame: 9/30/2021–09/29/2024

Description: The Roadmap to Evaluating Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs study (the Roadmap study, for short) aims to understand how Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs serve perinatal professionals and their patients in order to develop a “roadmap,” or standard way, of evaluating Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs. The Roadmap study will pilot an approach to assessing Access Programs in two Access Programs on opposite sides of the country. The pilot measures will consist of:

- longitudinal online surveys and qualitative interviews to learn about the experiences and health outcomes of perinatal patients served by Access Programs;
- an online survey of perinatal professionals who have used Access Program services to treat their patients’ mental health concerns; and
- surveys and qualitative interviews with key informants from 15 Access Programs and community partners.

Using the pilot study data, the team will develop consensus guidelines for assessing the impact of Access Programs. Findings from the study will be disseminated to improve Access Programs’ implementation and outcome evaluations to inform policy and funding.

Title: Charting the Course for Patient-Centered Research to Address Inequities in Perinatal Mental Health and Maternal Mortality  
PIs: Thomas I. Mackie, PhD & Karen Tabb Dina, PhD  
Co-I: Nancy Byatt, DO, MS, MBA  
Funding: Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)  
Budget: $51,032 (UMass Chan)  
Time Frame: 12/1/2021–11/30/2023

Description: Inequities in perinatal mental healthcare treatment are contributing to the maternal mortality crisis among Black and Indigenous birthing people. The imperative to address perinatal mental health inequities has only increased, in light of the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and Indigenous communities.
System-level interventions, such as Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs, hold unique opportunities to provide scalable solutions to address these inequities. Yet, limited evidence exists on the comparative effectiveness of system-level interventions to address perinatal mental health inequities and building this evidence will require partnership with relevant stakeholders. Accordingly, three research collaboratives were proposed, composed of community members critical to partnerships for future PCOR/CER research, including: 1) birthing individuals from communities underserved by mental healthcare systems, 2) obstetric and childbirth professionals that serve these communities, and 3) mental health equity advocates, healthcare system leaders, and PCOR/CER researchers.

This project will build the capacity of relevant stakeholders and researchers to partner in the planning, completion, and dissemination of patient-centered outcomes research/comparative effectiveness research (PCOR/CER) studies to address perinatal mental health inequities among Black and Indigenous communities. Over the course of this 24-month project, the aims include:

- **Aim 1**: To convene three collaboratives through interactive workshops that will build capacity for stakeholder engaged PCOR/CER studies to address perinatal mental healthcare inequities.
- **Aim 2**: To develop and disseminate a Roadmap generated during the interactive PCOR/CER workshop series.
- **Aim 3**: To conduct both formative and summative evaluations of our engagement approach and the work products developed to support PCOR/CER.

Interactive workshops will generate journey maps, research questions, infographics, and brief videos that will be collated into a Roadmap to promote partnership in future PCOR/CER studies of system-wide interventions to address perinatal mental health inequities.

The short-term outcomes are to: 1) assemble and convene three collaboratives, 2) foster co-learning through interactive workshops, and 3) develop a Roadmap to promote partnership in PCOR/CER to address perinatal mental health inequity. After the project period, the mid- and long-term outcomes are to disseminate the Roadmap through our community partnerships and to advance perinatal mental health equity by deepening capacity for PCOR/CER partnerships in research.

The engagement strategy for this project engages the six PCORI Engagement Principles, catalyzing and expanding upon the existing collaborations and a PCORI-sponsored award, Comparative Effectiveness of Perinatal Psychiatry Access Programs. Engagement includes partnership with stakeholder groups holding complementary and relevant expertise, including birthing people with lived experience, perinatal mental health disparities researchers, the perinatal professionals that serve these communities, mental health equity advocates, federal agency and healthcare system leaders, and PCOR/CER researchers.

This engagement project is a collaboration with a multidisciplinary team from SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University School of Public Health (DPL: Thomas Mackie),
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School of Social Work (DPL: Karen Tabb Dina), UMass Chan Medical School (Site PL: Nancy Byatt), and Postpartum Support International (Site PL: Wendy Davis). The team brings the expertise required to build capacity for future PCOR/CER studies to identify patient-centered and evidence-based system-wide solutions to perinatal mental health inequities.

**Title:** Shannon Community Safety Initiative (CSI) FY22 Local Action Research Partner
**PI:** Dara Drawbridge, PhD
**Funding:** Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
**Budget:** $54,421
**Time Frame:** 1/1/2022–12/31/2022

**Description:** In partnership with the City of Fitchburg, this project provides implementation support, research, and evaluation to local police departments, social support and behavioral health agencies in their efforts to prevent and intervene with delinquency, crime, and gang violence. Current fiscal year activities include updated community needs assessment, design of prevention and intervention program intervention maps and implementation blueprints.

**Title:** Massachusetts Center of Excellence (CoE) for Specialty Courts
**PI:** Dara Drawbridge, PhD & Brian Daly, MD
**Funding:** Massachusetts Executive Office of the Trial Court
**Budget:** $1,730,140
**Time Frame:** 2/1/2022–1/31/2025, with optional 3-year renewal

**Description:** In partnership with the Massachusetts Executive Office of the Trial Court, the Center of Excellence for Specialty Courts drives equity, implementation, research, evaluation, and policy initiatives in Massachusetts Specialty Courts.

**Title:** Pretrial Risk Assessment: Behavioral Health and Racial Equity
**PI:** Gina Vincent, PhD
**Funding:** John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (subaward from Policy Research Associates)
**Budget:** $350,000
**Time Frame:** 6/1/2022–5/31/2024

**Description:** This is a two-year research project to partner with a network of researchers examining the potential for different types of pretrial risk assessment tools to reduce disparities in carceral decisions by race, and presence of mental health or substance use concerns. We will partner with multiple adult and juvenile justice agencies to examine the impact of risk tool characteristics on system uptake and presence or absence of test bias by race, mental health and substance use concerns.
Title: Developing the Implementation Toolkit for Young Adult Access Centers in Massachusetts
PI: Kathryn Sabella, PhD
Funding: Massachusetts Department of Mental Health contract
Budget: $89,217
Time Frame: 7/1/2022–3/31/2023

Description: This project will create a professional development training for young adults and supervisory staff at Young Adult Access Centers across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to develop competency in delivering the DMH HYPE Course to young adults with mental health conditions. This will assist in creating a sustainable model of service delivery in career decision-making and preparing for work and school.

Title: Developing the Capacity of Young Adult Access Center Staff to Provide Career Development Activities through the HYPE Course
PI: Kathryn Sabella, PhD & Michelle Mullen, PhD
Funding: Massachusetts Department of Mental Health contract
Budget: $52,400
Time Frame: 7/1/2022–6/30/2023

Description: Leveraging the LMS platform previously used to train Facilitators of the HYPE Course in Massachusetts in FY2022, the HYPE team will create a sustainable model of service delivery in career decision-making and preparing for work and school. In this Scope, the HYPE team proposed a Professional Development Training for YA and supervisory staff at Young Adult Access Centers across the Commonwealth to develop competency in delivering the HYPE Course to young adults with mental health conditions.

Title: HYPE System of Care Project: Creating Sustainability for Career Development through a Train the Trainer Model
PI: Kathryn Sabella, PhD & Michelle Mullen, PhD
Funding: Massachusetts Department of Mental Health contract
Budget: $73,500
Time Frame: 8/31/2022–8/30/2023

Description: In this project the HYPE team will create a sustainable model of service delivery for young adults with mental health conditions in career development. Participants in the training of trainers will learn how to coach young adult and other staff at Young Adult Access Centers as they learn how to facilitate the HYPE Courses. Two Young Adult Access Centers will receive HYPE Course Facilitator Training through this contract, including Young Adult staff, creating sustainability in additional regions throughout the state.
Appendix B

iSPARC DISSEMINATION PRODUCTS
Written Products

- Emotional Support Animals: The Basics
- Can I Bring My Emotional Support Animal to College with Me?
- 5 Simple Ways to Create More Accessible Social Media Content
- Child Talks+: A New Intervention to Support Families Affected by Parental Mental Illness
- Seven Tips Mental Health Care Providers Can Use to Address Patient Tobacco Use
- Adulting Shorts: The “TEA” on IEPs Part 1
- How to Share Research about Education and Employment with the Deaf Community
- Creating Welcoming Environments for Workers with Disabilities: Managing Cognitive Demand
- Advancing Employment for Secondary Learners with Disabilities through CTE Policy and Practice
- The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Clubhouse Model

Webinars

- Academic Coaching for College Students with Mental Health Conditions by Peer Students: Pilot Results
- Pathways to Self Sufficiency: Career & Technical Education for Youth with Emotional Disturbances
- Promoting Positive Youth Development in Juvenile Justice Settings: What Do We Need to Know?

Videos

- Making MS Word Documents Accessible for Screen Readers
- The College Faculty Guide to Academic Supports for College Students with Serious Mental Health Conditions video series
- Making MS PowerPoint Accessible for Screen Readers
- Incorporating CTE in Transition Planning for Students with Emotional Behavioral Disturbances

Webpages

- iSPARC LGBTQ+ Blog on Mental Health and Employment
- Providing Culturally Competent Mental Health Care to LGBTQIA+ Youth & Young Adults

Coming in FY23

- S.T.A.Y. Tuned: Supporting Transition-Age Youth Podcast!
Appendix C
NEW iSPARC PUBLICATIONS


* Publications by our Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Collaborators are not included in iSPARC publication counts.
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