

Caitlin Martin, M.D., MPH

Partnership/Collaborative Establishment Award

Virginia Commonwealth University

in collaboration with Urban Baby Beginnings, Rams in Recovery & OB MOTIVATE Clinic

Advancing Health Equity For Birthing People With Substance Use Disorders: Capacity Building Of A Community Partnership Team For Intervention Development And Implementation Research

IMPACT OF JEFFRESS TRUST AWARD

“The Jeffress Trust Partnership/Collaborative Establishment Award has already started to pave the way forward for our community-academic teams to come together and forge actionable collaborative paths forward to address the same goal we all have, but have previously been working on in our siloes: to improve the quality of recovery-oriented healthcare for birthing people with substance use disorders. We have now established and will continue to strengthen collaborations during the award period between our community partners (Urban Baby Beginnings, Rams in Recovery, OB MOTIVATE clinic) with VCU’s In Recovery (IVY) Lab. During this time, we will also harness the expertise of our diverse team, incorporating peer recovery support specialists, doulas, people with lived experience as Black birthing parents and with addiction, as well as researchers, to adapt a pregnancy and postpartum focused patient navigation model to the needs of birthing people with substance use disorders in Central Virginia, with plans to apply for a subsequent Jeffress Trust Research Award to support its evaluation.



Rams in recovery: Tom Bannard, Omri Morris, OB MOTIVATE: Kalie Owen, IVY Lab: Caitlin Martin, Urban baby beginnings: Stephanie Spencer, VCU researchers: Dace Svikis, Amy Salisbury & April Kimmel

AWARD PROJECT SUMMARY

The United States is undergoing simultaneous maternal mortality and overdose crises. In Virginia, overdoses account for over 88% of ‘accidental’ deaths in pregnancy and postpartum. Our team’s prior Jeffress-supported research highlighted disparities in substance use disorder (SUD)-related morbidity and mortality among postpartum people. Specifically, we identified that having an opioid use disorder (OUD) diagnosis prior to giving birth was associated with 11 times the odds of OUD-related morbidity through the 12 months after delivery for Black, Non-Hispanic birthing individuals, compared to double the odds in their White counterparts. Next, using an intersectionality framework, we identified the primary target for reduction of SUD-related postpartum morbidity and mortality: the expansion of evidence-based treatment utilization through the reproductive life course. However, we identified large gaps in treatment continuity among birthing Virginians, reflecting the downstream effects of social determinants of health, including structural racism. In this partner-ship application, we propose to move our prior Jeffress supported research into action. We will establish and strengthen inter-organizational collaborations between community partners (Urban Baby Beginnings, Rams in Recovery, OB MOTIVATE clinic) with VCU’s In Recovery (IVY) Lab to develop, implement and evaluate an innovative version of an effective SUD patient navigation

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model for birthing people. Harnessing the expertise of our diverse team, we will incorporate peer recovery support specialists, doulas, people with lived experience as Black birthing parents and with addiction, as well as experts in contingency management, to adapt a recently published patient navigation model (Cochran 2023) to the needs of birthing people in Central Virginia. Using existing protocols as a foundation, we will focus on the development of collaborative relationships between our partners while simultaneously taking action to create a work product by the conclusion of the award (pilot model), ready for rigorous evaluation in a subsequent Jeffress Research Award.

Gabriela León-Pérez, Ph.D. **Partnership/Collaborative Establishment Award**
Virginia Commonwealth University
in partnership with Waymakers Foundation, Richmond Public Schools, the City of
Richmond’s Office of Immigrant and Refugee Engagement & Virginia Department of
Health

RVA Latino Youth Coalition: A Community-Academic Partnership To Support The Mental Health Of Latino Youth In Richmond

IMPACT OF JEFFRESS TRUST AWARD



Gabriela León-Pérez, Ph.D.

“Latino youth are disproportionately impacted by mental health problems because of the structural and systemic barriers they encounter. The Jeffress Trust Award has been instrumental to create a community-academic partnership to examine the root causes of mental health problems among Latino immigrant youth in Richmond, Virginia, and find ways to make sustainable changes. Funding will be used to leverage our team’s strengths and to address challenges through community capacity building in form of collaborative strategic planning, training, and community engagement. Our ultimate goal will be to promote evidence-based policy change in Virginia and the implementation of programs that effectively address the root causes of Latino youth mental health”

AWARD PROJECT SUMMARY



Alliance for Latino Youth Mental Health & Advocacy - Representatives of Virginia Commonwealth University, Waymakers Foundation, Richmond Public Schools, and the Richmond-Henrico Health District

The overarching goal of this proposal is to identify the root causes of the well-documented mental health problems among Latino immigrant youth in Richmond, Virginia and find ways to make sustainable changes. To achieve this, the proposal centers on the creation of a community-academic partnership – the RVA Latino Youth Coalition – to focus on mental health inequities among Latino youth. This community-driven, multi-sectoral partnership includes organizations that engage Richmond’s Latino community in different ways: Waymakers Foundation, Richmond Public Schools, the City of Richmond’s Office of Immigrant and Refugee Engagement, Virginia Department of Health, and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). The team, led by the VCU Clark-Hill Institute for Positive Youth Development, will create Youth and Parent Advisory Groups

made up of Latino community members whose voices, perspectives, and concerns will inform the work of this partnership. To meet the overarching goal, the following objectives will guide the work of the project team: (1) Establish a sustainable community-academic partnership through relationship- and capacity-building; (2) Engage in community-informed strategic planning; and (3) Conduct a participatory community assessment to identify the migration-related factors, structural factors, and institutional challenges related to mental health inequity, as well as the resources and services that exist in Richmond to support Latino youth mental health. The project team will produce a final report with recommendations for next steps which will be disseminated to relevant stakeholders. The

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results from the community assessment, and the experience of collaborating on this project, will set the foundation for the project team to put together a future research program proposal. While based in Richmond, this proposal can help advance health equity in Virginia by promoting evidence-based structural change in the form of new policies and the implementation of programs that effectively address the root causes of Latino youth mental health.

Carol Cleaveland, Ph.D.

Partnership/Collaborative Establishment Award

George Mason University

in collaboration with Gainesville-Haymarket Rotary Foundation & Georgetown South Community Foundation

Building Enclave Solidarity To Improve Health Outcomes

IMPACT OF JEFFRESS TRUST AWARD



Carol Cleaveland, Ph.D.

“The Jeffress Foundation funding will allow two George Mason University researchers to collaborate with community partners in Manassas, Virginia to improve health care access, especially for annual physicals for children and Shingles, COVID-19 and flu vaccinations for older adults by strengthening social networks among low-income Latino immigrant residents. Drs. Carol Cleaveland and Amira Roess designed the project after reviewing previous research that shows that health outcomes in immigrant enclaves improve when accurate information is shared in a timely manner. Cleaveland and Roess are collaborating with two community organizations, the Gainesville-Haymarket Rotary Club/Family Resource Center and George South

Community Council to help conduct outreach in low-income Latino neighborhoods that are home to approximately 10,000 residents. The funding allows us to hire two part-time Spanish speaking health leaders from the community who can do outreach. Our goal is to have contacted 70 percent of Latino immigrants households in Manassas to provide health education and linkages to service. The funding also allows us to pay for the rental of a 24-foot RV that can be used for health events across the city”.

AWARD PROJECT SUMMARY

The public health literature on undocumented Latino immigrants is unequivocal: This population suffers pronounced health disparities compared to other groups, most recently seen in disparate rates of COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths during the pandemic. What is not known is how to address these disparities. A substantial majority (7.5 million of the nation’s 11,047,000) lack health insurance (Krogstad, Lopez & Passel, 2020), a critical issue for Virginia given that immigrants comprise 12.3% of the state’s population, and 22% of them are undocumented (American Immigration Council, 2021). We propose to establish a research consortium that serves as a model for improving undocumented immigrant access to preventative health care by strengthening social networks within local immigrant enclaves, a sustainable, low-cost initiative. Through collaboration with local NGOs, a strategic plan will be developed to ensure that 10,000 low-income Latinos in the neighborhoods that are our foci receive vaccines as well as other preventative health services; this point is critical as NGOs report that many immigrants arrive from countries where there was no preventative health infrastructure, and thus are not aware of its necessity or availability. Training will be provided to neighborhood residents on topics such as childhood vaccines, diabetes prevention and destigmatizing mental health services, among others. Baseline information will be accessed to determine knowledge of locally available preventative health services. To successfully disseminate public health information, we need to know how well neighbors know one another and share information. Using that data, an actionable research proposal will be developed with the goal of



Amira A Roess, Ph.D., MPH

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improving resident contact with preventative care. Our end goal is to develop a model that could be replicated in immigrant enclaves across the state for minimal costs, ultimately improving health for Virginia's immigrants.

Sarah Holland

Research Award

Virginia Health Catalyst

in collaboration with Virginia Tech and Virginia Community Health Workers Association

(Re)Building Trust in Tap Water through Community Advocacy and Action



Sarah Holland

IMPACT OF JEFFRESS AWARD

“Virginia Health Catalyst, in collaboration with Virginia Tech and Virginia Community Health Workers Association, will engage communities around issues related to drinking water in three geographic areas of the state using participatory action research. This project builds on prior research, including our partnership with Concerned Citizens of Charles City County (C5) highlighting insights of residents like the perceived low quality of their well water due to contamination and source concerns. In each geographic area, a variety of participatory sessions ranging from focus groups and water dialogues to action groups will center community members as leaders in

uncovering the local barriers to tap water trust and consumption and testing community-identified interventions and actions to address them. With the support of Jeffress Trust, we anticipate developing impactful programmatic and policy solutions as a result of strengthening our understanding of the root causes of tap water avoidance and equipping community members with the knowledge and inspiration to act. This investment also lays the foundation for sustained systems change through the creation of a cadre of water advocates who opt to engage in continued community capacity building and advocacy efforts”

AWARD PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Summary: Water is fundamental to health and well-being. Our long-term goal is to ensure all Virginians have access to safe, trusted, fluoridated tap water, and that it is their beverage of choice. Threats to water security are becoming increasingly urgent, while trust in tap water is declining, particularly among the most historically disenfranchised communities. Mistrust in and subsequent avoidance of tap water has critical implications for health equity, such as higher consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, greater likelihood of experiencing food insecurity across all income levels, and disparities in oral health and chronic disease. The project’s research design is based on iterative cycles of participatory action research in geographically focused communities across Virginia that are most impacted by water inequities. Each cycle begins with focus groups to uncover a locally-based understanding of the issue from the perspective of community members and then shifts into a dialogic approach to learning, interpreting findings, and identifying possible actions. The cycle culminates with implementation and evaluation of at least one community-led action in each geographic area of focus. Community health workers serving as water advocates will play an integral role in facilitating the research process, sharing findings back to community members, and (re)building trust in tap water. Acknowledging that water issues and solutions are highly localized, this project lays the groundwork for the development of a statewide network of communities that act, advocate, and engage in local decision-making to advance water security.



Community Fellowship at Focus Group

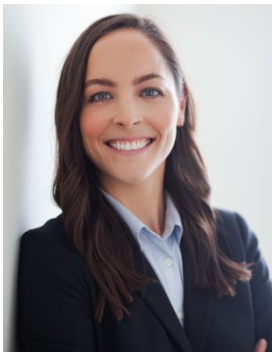
Meaghan Butler

Partnership/Collaborative Establishment Award

Federation of Virginia Food Banks

in collaboration with Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, Capital Area Food Bank, Feed More, Inc., Feeding Southwest Virginia, Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank, Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore, Virginia Peninsula Foodbank

Virginia Healthy Pantry Initiative



Meaghan Butler

IMPACT OF JEFFRESS TRUST AWARD

“The Virginia Healthy Pantry Initiative (HPI) is a health-focused, neighbor-centered transformation of Virginia’s food pantry network. The initiative is led by the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, a collaboration between the seven regional food banks in Virginia that builds partnerships, secures food and funds, shares statewide data, and raises awareness of food insecurity. HPI promotes the implementation of 20 best practices that improve food access, healthy food options, neighbor experience, and health education. All of Virginia’s 1,100 pantries are invited to participate in an annual assessment and apply for funds to adopt one or more practices that address assessment findings. A virtual Learning Center provides free technical assistance for any

pantry. This project expands on pilots that enabled pantries to reach additional demographic groups, especially older adults and people living with chronic health conditions. Pilot practices included everything from language translation devices to medically-tailored groceries. A participating pantry reported to us, “The move towards a healthy pantry felt like someone was finally listening to [neighbors’] needs without judgment.” The award from the Jeffress Trust will allow the Federation to support more pantries through the HPI program, and in turn, increase impact on marginalized communities throughout Virginia.”

AWARD PROJECT SUMMARY

The Virginia Healthy Pantry Initiative (HPI) is a health-focused, neighbor-centered transformation of the food pantry network lead by the Federation of Virginia Food Banks. HPI is a statewide movement of advocates and pantries committed to breaking the cycle of food insecurity and poor health. The initiative’s participants believe that any pantry, regardless of size or capacity, can implement practices that promote health and nutrition for neighbors facing hunger. Thanks to statewide dedication in recent years, more than half of Virginia’s 1,100 pantries have already joined the Healthy Pantry Initiative, but further research is needed. This project builds on existing research, vital community voices, and initial pilot test results that culminated in 20 specific “healthy pantry practices” within four categories: Food Availability, Neighbor Centered Practices, Health Education, and Community Connection. Examples include increased fresh produce distribution, culturally preferred foods, nutrition education, and benefits outreach. The Federation seeks funding to better understand the practices’ successes and challenges at scale, and to ensure equitable access for people and places most in need. With this funding, collaborators in seven distinct regions of the state will work with local partners to tailor one or more of these promising practices to local needs, with a

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focus on racial and geographic disparities. Quantitative and qualitative data will be compared to benchmark data from the annual statewide Healthy Pantry Assessment. Funds will be disbursed by “goal factor,” a collection of equity-based data points about food security, health outcomes, and resource availability in the given region. Collaborators have committed to regular peer support, data sharing, and consistent evaluation practices with a vision to improve hunger and health outcomes for more than 800,000 Virginians facing hunger.



New Vision Produce