

The Center for Health Equity in Kidney Disease (CHEK-D) Newsletter: Fall 2021



Welcome to the inaugural issue of our semi-annual newsletter! We hope you have had an enjoyable start to the Fall Semester. We initiated this newsletter to provide you with updates regarding our projects, collaborators, mentees and core team. We are always excited to start new projects and collaborations, so please feel free to contact any of our team members!

About Our Center

The Center for Healthcare Equity in Kidney Disease (CHEK-D) is focused on developing and supporting scientists and clinicians in research to reduce and eliminate disparities in health processes and outcomes related to kidney disease. We partner with dedicated faculty, staff and community leaders on projects to increase healthcare equity in underserved, diverse populations. We align our vision with UNM HSC's mission for equity and quality improvement by expanding kidney disease clinical treatment options for vulnerable groups. We are also committed to strengthening the UNM HSC's internal research infrastructure through campus-wide collaboration, professional development, and mentoring a pipeline of minority trainees through undergraduate, graduate, medical, fellowship and early career education.



Meet Our Team



Larissa Myaskovsky, PhD, Director:

Dr. Myaskovsky has more than 20 years of experience as a researcher, educator and mentor. Her research focuses on the social determinants of health and using a multi-method and transdisciplinary approach to understand disparities in healthcare processes and outcomes; and to develop interventions to reduce health disparities in people with kidney disease and other health conditions.



Nila Judd, BA, CCRP, Associate Director:

Ms. Judd manages various collaborative awards with different sponsored entities and oversees program operations and research administration of the center. She combines her personal interest in social aspects of medicine and health equity with her extensive research experience at UNM.



Jamie Loor, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow:

Dr. Loor received her PhD in clinical psychology from the University of New Mexico and completed her clinical internship at the Durham VA Medical Center in 2021. As a clinical scientist, her research focuses on understanding ways to promote health behavior change, including Motivational Interviewing and Cognitive Behavioral Therapies targeting health concerns.

Meet Our Team *(Continued)*



Yuri Leyva, MS, Biostatistician:

Ms. Leyva conducts data management and analyzes data for research publication. She enjoys the multidisciplinary nature of our work at CHEK-D, where we help reduce health disparities and help improve the health of patients with kidney disease.



Claudia Rice, BPH, Research Coordinator:

Ms. Rice works with study teams to conduct health services research along with those who are involved with clinical treatment interventions. She enjoys being a part of broad and innovative explorations and working to identify and address health disparities across New Mexico.

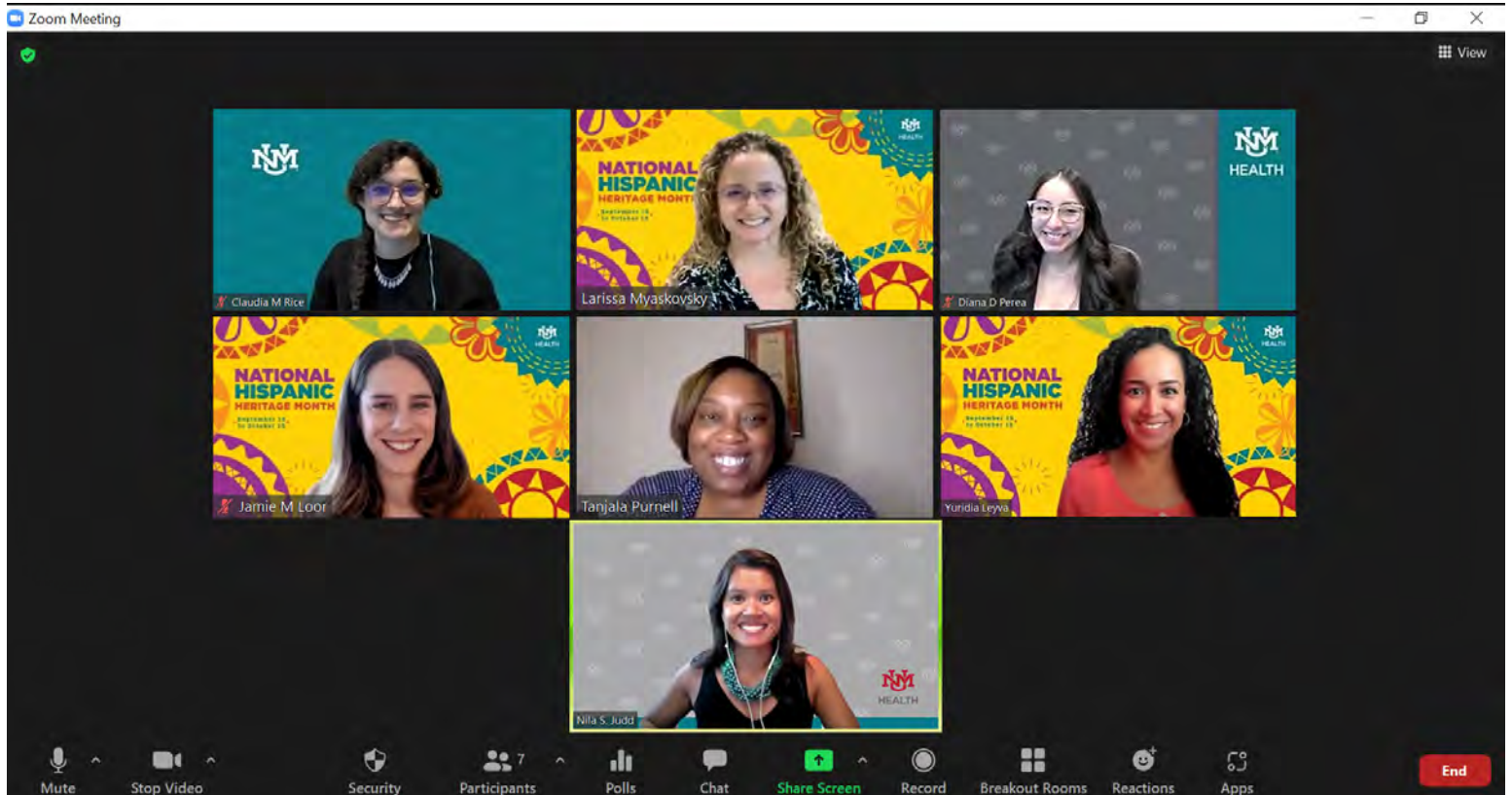


Diana Perea, BA, Research Coordinator:

Being an Albuquerque native, Ms. Perea is excited to serve New Mexican residents on their journey to improve their kidney health. Her interest in health equity grew as an undergraduate student while she was pursuing her bachelors in Psychology and Sociology, and later decided to pursue a Masters of Public Health here at the University of New Mexico so she can continue to improve health systems for underserved populations.

Recent Events

On September 30th, 2021, we co-hosted Dr. Tanjala Purnell, PhD, MPH, a visiting guest speaker, for the Department of Internal Medicine Grand Rounds special series focusing on social/cultural aspects of medicine. Dr. Purnell is an Assistant Professor of Transplant Surgery and Clinical Epidemiology at Johns Hopkins University. Her AHRQ- and NIH-funded research focuses on addressing patient, family, health system, policy, and community factors influencing persistent disparities in transplantation. Her transplant research findings have been published in leading journals, including JAMA, Health Affairs, American Journal of Transplantation, Journal of the American Society of Nephrology, and Transplantation. Nationally, she serves as the Chair of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and is a member of the Governing Board of Directors for National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP).



Ongoing CHEK-D Projects

The following is a list of projects on which our team members are currently engaged:

- **Improving Healthcare Outcomes in American Indian and Hispanic Transplant Recipients Using Culturally-Tailored Novel Technology (IMPACT) – funded by Dialysis Clinic, Inc.:**
This study will test the feasibility and acceptability of a culturally-appropriate, multi-behavior lifestyle intervention for kidney transplant recipients.
- **No-shows in Kidney Transplant Evaluation – funded by Dialysis Clinic, Inc.:**
We will describe the frequency of no-shows for kidney transplant evaluation clinic, and characterize the demographic, socio-cultural, and medical factors in a sample of patients scheduled for evaluation.
- **Adherence in Kidney Transplant Evaluation – funded by Dialysis Clinic, Inc.:**
We will identify differences in baseline characteristics between adherent and non-adherent Early Stage Renal Disease patients.
- **Access to Kidney Transplantation in Minority Populations (AKT-MP) – funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities and National Institute of General Medical Sciences:**
This study will compare the efficacy and cost- effectiveness of two approaches to help patients overcome barriers to completing transplant evaluation and receiving a kidney transplant: a streamlined evaluation process versus a peer-assisted evaluation program.
- **Experiences of Kidney Donors – funded by a Clinical and Translational Science Center DCI Pilot:**
This study focuses on video interviews with a diverse set of living kidney donors, to identify potential gaps in care, and to create an online video library of donor experiences to inform potential kidney donors and their friends/family about the donation process.
- **Neighborhood Built Environment and Racial Disparities in Chronic Kidney Disease – funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases and the University of Pennsylvania:**
This study will use geocoding to evaluate the role of the built environment, including neighborhood healthy food access, neighborhood walkability, and neighborhood racial segregation on kidney disease.
- **Contraceptive Use by Women with Complex Medical Conditions- funded by the UNM School of Medicine Research Allocation Committee:**
This study will examine contraceptive use in reproductive-age women living in New Mexico and the Mountain West region, and compare those with and without high-risk medical conditions.



Collaborator Spotlight: Junior Faculty

In addition to the research projects run out of CHEK-D focused on kidney disease, we take great pride in mentoring and collaborating with junior faculty on their health equity projects focused on other vulnerable clinical populations. In this section, we spotlight these outstanding faculty and their cutting-edge research.



Jennifer Crawford, PhD:
Assistant Professor, Department
of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences,
Community Behavioral Health Division

Dr. Crawford is a clinical psychologist with research and clinical interests centered on the behavioral health needs of underserved women and strategies for meeting those needs. She has recently completed a CTSC pilot study focused on identifying the behavioral health needs of patients seen in women's health specialty settings using a national electronic medical record database; and published a proposed framework for integrating behavioral health providers more broadly into Obstetrics and Gynecology medical settings. She collaborates with Jay Schulkin, PhD, Director of the Pregnancy-Related Care Research Network (University of Washington); and is currently examining survey data from a national sample of ACOG Fellows to estimate the current availability of behavioral health providers in their practice settings. Dr. Crawford plans to build on this research, working with Dr. Myaskovsky, on a health services research related K01 award application that will measure facilitators and barriers to implementation of integrated behavioral health in women's health specialty settings. Through the Division of Community Behavioral Health, Dr. Crawford serves as Evaluation Director for a SAMHSA-funded grant, in partnership with the New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD), focused on state-wide implementation of a novel substance use prevention and intervention program for adolescent and transition age youth. She has also collaborated with the Family Medicine and Pediatrics providers in the FOCUS clinic to evaluate expansion of adult psychosocial services, including leading submission of a SAMHSA grant that will expand access to medication-assisted treatment and psychosocial services for adults parenting young children.



Naomi George, MD, MPH:
Assistant Professor, Department of
Emergency Medicine

Dr. George is a critical care and emergency medicine physician who serves in the medical and cardio-thoracic intensive care units (ICU), and a health services researcher working at the intersection of health equity, intensive care, and palliative medicine. Her research focuses on improving the quality of intensive care for older adults and their families by identifying and addressing disparities in ICU communication and decision-making among diverse patient groups. Dr. George's previous work has contributed extensively to understanding emergency physicians' attitudes and behaviors around end-of-life communication and palliative care and developed and evaluated interventions to improve communication and palliative care in the emergency department that have transformed the process of care for patients near the end of life. Dr. George will prepare a K-award grant submission under the mentorship of Dr. Myaskovsky to identify end-of-life treatment preferences and needs for diverse ICU and post-ICU patients and families in New Mexico and will also look at structural factors contributing to disparities in the quality of end-of-life care for ICU patients. This work will inform future interventions aimed at improving the quality end-of-life care for diverse ICU patients by matching patient and family preferences to more equitable communication and decision-making practices.



Margaret Greenwood-Ericksen, MD, MSC:
Assistant Professor, Emergency
Medicine, Psychiatry and Behavioral
Sciences

Dr. Greenwood-Ericksen is an emergency physician and health services researcher whose career is focused on transforming the structure of rural healthcare delivery to improve outcomes for vulnerable communities. Her research explores rural emergency care delivery models and associated outcomes to identify disparities and inform policy-level interventions. She has published on rural emergency care quality and outcomes, health related social needs, and care delivery models - and serves on national committees dedicated to rural quality and delivery. Through her secondary appointment, Dr. Greenwood-Ericksen collaborates with the Consortium for Behavioral Health Training and Research (CBHTR) on evaluations of behavioral health and substance use disorder in the NM Medicaid population. She serves as a hub team member on Project ECHO's First Responder Resiliency Program working to increase capacity and resiliency in front-line emergency clinicians. She is the

Director of Engagement and Dissemination for the newly established NM Bridge (<https://nmbridge.org/>), a New Mexico Behavioral Health Services Division Initiative. NM Bridge's mission is to create a better life for people with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) by supporting development, implementation, and sustainability of programs that use medications for the treatment of OUD. Inspired by this work and her desire for additional training on mental health disparities, she is preparing a K-award grant submission under the mentorship of CHEK-D Director, Dr. Myaskovsky, to target the ED as a key locus of mental health care delivery for rural Medicaid beneficiaries. This work will examine the mechanisms associated with rural mental health care disparities in relation to ED-based care with the goal of identifying state Medicaid policy interventions that will improve rural mental health care equity for New Mexico and scale nationally.



Miria Kano, PhD: Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Preventive Medicine

A medical anthropologist by training, Dr. Kano is passionate about conducting participatory population based and multi-level cancer research with diverse populations across New Mexico. Dr. Kano began conducting collaborative research with sexual and gender minority (SGM) communities more than 15 years ago, building capacity to enhance care in behavioral health and primary care settings. She founded the New Mexico Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Queer Health Collaborative that published best practices to facilitate clinic and treatment improvements to support SGM individuals; and has worked on a national team developing a National Cancer Institute (NCI) R25 curriculum for early career investigators interested in SGM cancer research.

Building on these research efforts, Dr. Kano is collaborating with a multidisciplinary research team including CHEK-D Director, Dr. Larissa Myaskovsky, Dr. Cathleen Willging (Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation), Dr. Shine Change (MD Anderson Cancer Center), Dr. Gwendolyn Quinn (New York University), Dr. Ronit Elk (University of Alabama, Birmingham) and Dr. Kristen Wells (San Diego State University) to develop an R01 to assess organizational attributes and provider/staff attitudes at five NCI cancer centers. The team on this project will document patient and caregiver perspectives on cancer and survivorship care to enhance culturally-responsive, informative, supportive care for SGM cancer patients and their caregivers.



Jamie Krashin, MD, MSCR: Assistant Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Dr. Krashin is an obstetrician-gynecologist fellowship-trained in Complex Family Planning and has more than 10 years of research experience collaborating with academic, government and non-profit sector teams in the United States and abroad. She spent two years working on contraceptive guidelines at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention before joining UNM faculty in 2018. Her interest in rural health disparities arose after working in New Mexico. She regularly cares for people who travel long distances from rural areas to access miscarriage and other abnormal early pregnancy care at UNM. She is currently working on three research studies examining access to miscarriage care in rural New Mexico. She has recently submitted a grant to measure the prevalence of miscarriage complications and management methods in New Mexico as well as barriers and facilitators of care. To further understand and address disparities in miscarriage care, she is working on a K-award submission under the mentorship of Dr. Myaskovsky. The goal of the proposed research is to implement evidence-based, equitable miscarriage management in a manner that best fits rural health facilities and their communities.



Jean McDougall, PhD, MPH: Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Preventive Medicine

Dr. McDougall is a cancer epidemiologist whose research focuses on health-related social needs and socioeconomic disparities in cancer outcomes. Dr. McDougall is working with Dr. Larissa Myaskovsky and other CHEK-D investigators to understand the relationship between food insecurity and kidney cancer incidence and survival. For these projects, Dr. McDougall is using data on population-based kidney cancer survivors obtained from the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program. She will also work on the CRIC Opportunity Pool grant awarded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) to CHEK-D to evaluate the role of the built environment, including neighborhood healthy food access, neighborhood walkability, and neighborhood racial segregation on kidney disease.

Collaborate with CHEK-D

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CHEK-D Faculty Collaborators

CHEK-D partners with a diverse team of faculty collaborators throughout UNM to achieve its' mission of research and clinical excellence. We are deeply grateful to our colleagues for helping ensure the success of our Center!



**Christos Argyropoulos, MD: Associate Professor,
Department of Internal Medicine, Division Chief of Nephrology**



**Cindy Blair, PhD: Associate Professor, Department of Internal Medicine,
Division of Epidemiology Cancer Center - Cancer Control and Population Science**



**Elizabeth Jimenez, PhD, RND, LD: Research Associate Professor,
Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Epidemiology,
Department of Pediatrics, Adolescent Medicine, Cancer Center**



**Janet Page-Reeves, PhD: Director of Research and Evaluation,
Office for Community Health Associate Professor,
Department of Family and Community Medicine**



**Nancy Pandhi, MD, PhD, MPH: Community Engagement Specialist,
Professor SOM - Family and Community Medicine, CNAH**



**Tassy Parker, PhD, RN: Center for Native American Health Director,
Associate Vice Chancellor for American Indian Health Research and Education,
Family and Community Medicine**



**Vallabh (Raj) Shah, PhD: Professor of Medicine, Department of Internal
Medicine and Biochemistry Senior Fellow, New Mexico Center for the
Advancement of Research, Engagement & Science on Health Disparities**

Pooja Singh, MD: Associate Professor, Department of Internal Medicine,
Division of Nephrology, Medical Director of Renal Transplant



Lisa Cacari-Stone, PhD, MA, MS: Associate Professor, Director
Transdisciplinary Research Equity and Engagement Center



Mark Unruh, MD: Department Chair of Internal Medicine,
Translational Science Base Director Community and Collaboration
Module Lead, Research Methods Module Lead



Yiliang Zhu, PhD: Department of Internal Medicine,
Division Chief of Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Preventive Medicine,
Research and Design Module Lead



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**Developing and supporting scientists
and clinicians in basic, clinical, and translational
research to reduce and eliminate disparities in
health processes and outcomes in patients with
chronic and end-stage kidney disease**