

CHERISH

Center for Health Economics of Treatment Interventions for Substance Use Disorder, HCV, and HIV



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2021

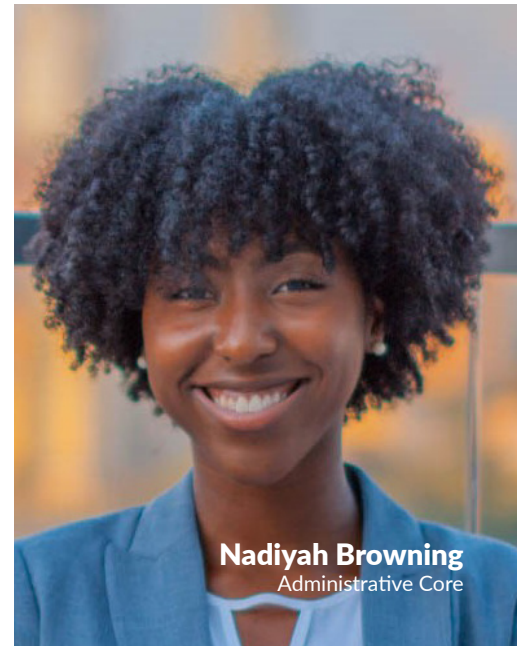
Congratulations Corner



Benjamin Linas, MD, MPH
Population Data & Modeling Core Director

Congratulations to Population Data & Modeling Core Director Benjamin Linas, who has been promoted to Professor of Medicine at the Boston University School of Medicine. Linas is an esteemed CHERISH colleague, an infectious disease physician, and the director of the HIV Epidemiology and Outcomes Research Unit in the Department of Medicine at the Boston Medical Center.

CHERISH is also delighted to welcome Nadiyah Browning, who is working with the Dissemination & Policy Core located at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics at the University of Pennsylvania. Joining in June 2021 as a policy coordinator, she supports the translation and dissemination of health-related research to create impactful policy recommendations for actionable change.

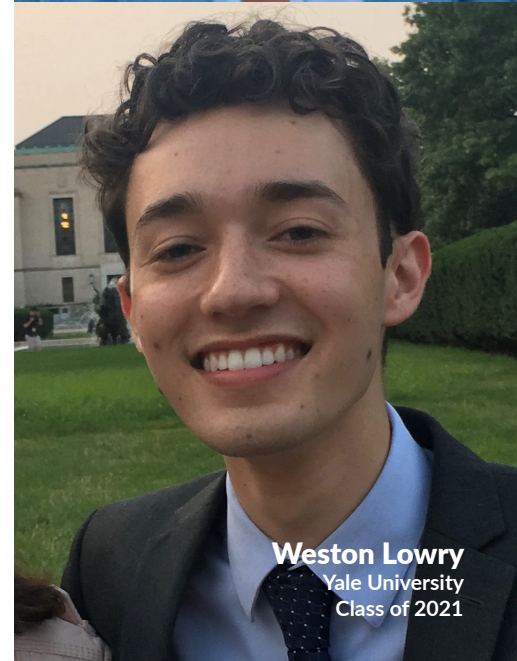


Nadiyah Browning
Administrative Core

Lastly, Sona Fokum and Weston Lowry interned at CHERISH this summer to expand their research experience. Pursuing careers in healthcare, both Fokum and Lowry worked alongside CHERISH investigators and colleagues and recognize that this experience provides foundational insights about health economics and policies related to caring for vulnerable communities, addressing health inequities, and combatting the opioid crisis. CHERISH is committed to engaging diverse students and trainees at all levels in health economics and substance use research, and we were delighted to have Fokum and Lowry on board.



Sona Fokum
University of Illinois at Chicago
Class of 2022



Weston Lowry
Yale University
Class of 2021

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Pilot Grant Recipients Receive Funding to Examine Health and/or Health Care Disparities Related to the Treatment of Substance Use Disorders, HCV, and HIV

After sharing a national call for proposals with a focus on health and/or health care disparities, the Pilot Grant & Training Core selected four recipients to receive the seventh cycle of pilot grant funding from 2021 to 2022.



Shoshana Aronowitz, PhD, MSHP, FNP-BC

University of Pennsylvania

Shoshana Aronowitz's pilot project, "An Exploration of Barriers and Facilitators to Buprenorphine Access via Telehealth," will study low-barrier treatments for substance use disorder and expand healthcare services to marginalized populations who use drugs. Her mentors include CHERISH Dissemination & Policy Core Director Zachary Meisel and CHERISH Research Affiliate Laura Starbird.

Ravi Gupta, MD

University of Pennsylvania

Ravi Gupta's pilot project, "Adoption of Extended-Release Buprenorphine Monthly Injections for Opioid Use Disorder," will allow him to examine the potential of extended-release buprenorphine and how racial disparities influence treatment adherence for people with opioid use disorder. He is pursuing his project under the mentorship of CHERISH Dissemination & Policy Core Director Zachary Meisel and former pilot grant recipient Austin Kilaru.

Thanh Lu, PhD

Weill Cornell Medicine

Thanh Lu's pilot project, "Stimulant Use Disorder Treatment Paths and Factors Contributing to Health Disparities," will allow her to identify factors that exacerbate health disparities in treatment outcomes related to stimulant use disorder and address the emerging public health concern of stimulant-related overdoses. Her mentors include CHERISH Methodology Core Co-director Sean Murphy and Yiye Zhang, assistant professor of Population Health Sciences at Weill Cornell Medicine.

Xiao Zang, PhD

Brown University

Xiao Zang's pilot project, "Improving Health Equity and Naloxone Access Among People at Risk for Opioid Overdose: A Distributional Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of Community-Based Naloxone Distribution Strategies," will offer him an opportunity to evaluate and make recommendations to improve naloxone access for different racial and ethnic groups. He is pursuing his project under the guidance of CHERISH Research Affiliate Brandon Marshall.

Welcome New CHERISH Research Affiliates

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Annick Borquez, PhD

University of California San Diego

Mathieu Castry

Boston University School of Medicine

Natasha Martin, DPhil

University of California San Diego

Kosali Simon, PhD

Indiana University

Research Highlights

Economic Evaluations of Pharmacologic Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder: A Systematic Literature Review. Onuoha EN, Leff JA, Schackman BR, McCollister KE, Polsky D, Murphy SM. *Value Health*. 2021;24(7):1068-1083.

In this systematic review, researchers affiliated with CHERISH identified new studies supporting buprenorphine and methadone as economically advantageous medications for people with opioid use disorder. While the authors found no one medication for opioid use disorder is economically superior, this study in *Value in Health* shows growing evidence that medications like buprenorphine and methadone address the economic burden on a national and population level.

Characterizing initiation, use, and discontinuation of extended-release buprenorphine in a nationally representative United States commercially insured cohort. Morgan JR, Walley AY, Murphy SM, Chatterjee A, Hadland SE, Barocas J, Linas BP, Assoumou SA. *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2021;225:108764.

Published in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, this study found that discontinuation, defined by a gap of 14-or-more days in medication coverage, was common across all four medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD): extended-release buprenorphine (XR-BUP) and naltrexone (XR-NTX), both with monthly dosing, and oral formulations of buprenorphine (mucosal buprenorphine or M-BUP) and methadone, both with daily dosing. Results also indicate that those who discontinued treatment by three months were more likely under 30 years of age, managing multiple comorbidities, and diagnosed with concurrent substance use. The authors suggest ways to improve retention and propose several areas for further research and exploration to investigate the high discontinuation rates and carefully parse out the individual effects of XR-BUP compared to other MOUD.

Hepatitis C Treatment by Nonspecialist Providers in the Direct-acting Antiviral Era. Kapadia SN, Johnson P, Marks KM, Schackman BR, Bao Y. *Med Care*. 2021. Epub ahead of print.

General medicine physicians have a critical opportunity to address national and global disparities in viral hepatitis C treatment. This study published in *Medical Care* found that after direct-acting antiviral agents (DAAs) were approved in 2014, there was an increase of non-specialists who prescribed HCV treatment. The authors also saw similar treatment completion rates across specialties: more than 94% for gastroenterology and infectious diseases, general medicine and non-physicians, and other or unknown specialties. This study provides additional evidence to support removing policies that restrict coverage of HCV treatment based on provider specialty.

This study was funded by a CHERISH pilot grant and awarded to Shashi Kapadia, MD, MS, in 2018.

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Mandates and Opioids Dispensed Following Emergency Department Encounters for Patients With Sickle Cell Disease or Cancer With Bone Metastasis. Zhang H, Kilaru AS, Meisel ZF, Bao Y. *JAMA*. 2021;326(3):274-276.

Published as a research letter in *JAMA*, this study found that implementation of comprehensive prescription drug monitoring program mandates was associated with reductions in opioids dispensed within three days of emergency department encounters of patients with sickle cell disease or cancer with bone metastasis. Patients with sickle cell disease had a relative reduction of 27% in the likelihood of obtaining an opioid in states with a comprehensive mandate compared to other states with no such mandate. Patients with cancer with bone metastasis had a 23% relative reduction. The authors also found that

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Rachel Epstein, MD, MSc
Boston University School of Medicine

**Margaret Lowenstein,
MD, MPhil, MSHP**
University of Pennsylvania Perelman
School of Medicine

CHERISH Research Affiliates make up an expansive network of investigators in North America who have robust experience in health economics, health services, and clinical trials research that focus on the treatment of HIV, HCV, and substance use disorder. CHERISH aims to foster collaboration across research disciplines by bringing CHERISH Research Affiliates together through curated webinars and training opportunities.

Laura Starbird, PhD, RN
University of Pennsylvania School of
Nursing

Joseph West, SM, ScD
University of Miami Florida Institute for
Health Innovation

the amount of opioids prescribed to patients with sickle cell disease was significantly lower after implementing a comprehensive mandate; there was no significant difference in this outcome for patients with cancer with bone metastasis. Because opioids are considered first line treatment for patients with sickle cell vaso-occlusive crisis or with bony cancer pain – and are specifically excluded from guidelines recommending reduced opioid prescribing for chronic non-cancer pain – the reductions documented may indeed reflect unintended consequences of PDMP mandates.

This research was funded by a CHERISH pilot grant awarded to Hao Zhang, PhD, in 2020. The article is co-posted on the Penn LDI Health PolicySense blog in June 2021.

Robust Prescription Monitoring Programs and Abrupt Discontinuation of Long-term Opioid Use.

Bao Y, Zhang H, Wen K, Johnson P, Jeng PJ, Witkin LR, Nicholson S, Reid MC, Schackman BR. *Am J Prev Med.* 2021. Epub ahead of print.

Published in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, the authors found that robust PDMPs policies were not associated with substantial increases in abrupt discontinuation of long-term opioid therapies. In fact, findings suggest that strongly robust PDMPs may have been protective for older Medicare Advantage patients as the policies were associated with a lower likelihood that these patients discontinued long-term therapies at a high dose. The authors found that an overwhelming majority of long-term opioid therapies discontinued without tapering and suggested further research to address barriers to tapering.

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CHERISH

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Find CHERISH at these conferences:

Addiction Health Services Research (AHSR) Conference
October 13-15, 2021



Brandeis THE HELLER SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
Institute for Behavioral Health

2021 International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU) Conference
October 13-15, 2021



Society for Medical Decision Making (SMDM) 43rd Annual North American Meeting
October 18-20, 2021



AMERSA 45th Annual Conference
November 3-5, 2021

