

IMPACT  
REPORT  
2024



**SOUTH JERSEY**  
Institute For Population Health

# Projects & Partnerships

Addressing Health Disparities  
in Southern New Jersey





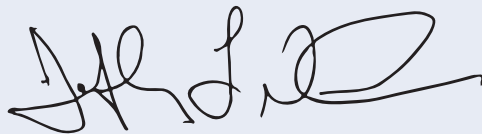
## LETTER FROM THE CEO JEFFREY L. NASH

The Rowan University / Rutgers Camden Board of Governors is honored to present the first impact report for the South Jersey Institute for Population Health. The research featured in this document highlights only some of the health disparities that exist in communities across the South Jersey region, underscoring both the need for additional population and public health research and the critical role SJIPH plays and will play in facilitating this important work.

This impact report, and more broadly the success of SJIPH, is the result of collaboration across our many partners. While we thank everyone who contributed their time, effort, and ideas to starting and growing SJIPH, there are a few individuals to recognize who were particularly instrumental in this work. Dana L. Redd, then acting CEO of the Rowan University/ Rutgers - Camden Board of Governors, was the driving force behind the formation of SJIPH. Recognizing a need for more population health research specific to the region, she secured a planning grant from the State of New Jersey that turned the idea of SJIPH into a reality. Both Rowan University and Rutgers-Camden, along with non-profit partners and community stakeholders, came together in an advisory council committed to building an institute that would produce relevant and meaningful research. A special thanks to Anthony Welch (Cooper University Healthcare), Megan Sheppard (Cumberland County), and Dr. Benedetto Piccoli (Rutgers University - Camden). Dr. Annette Reboli (Cooper Medical School of Rowan University) and Dr. Michael Palis (Rutgers University - Camden) provided leadership and guidance at the institutional level and helped appoint the founding two co-directors of SJIPH. Together, Dr. Nicole Vaughn (Rowan University) and Dr. Sarah Allred (Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs) created the community-engaged "Sandbox" model that has become the Institute's defining characteristic, and now a nationally recognized best practice. From all of this groundwork, SJIPH has gone on to support over 30 research projects with nearly \$1,000,000 in grant funding dispersed.

Now, six years after its inception, we're beginning to see the tangible results of our funding and the impact this research will have on health and wellbeing in the region. We look forward to utilizing the findings from this report, and those to follow, as we work with our partners to achieve our ultimate goal; a healthy and more equitable South Jersey.

Jeffrey L. Nash

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. L. Nash', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chief Executive Officer  
Rowan University / Rutgers - Camden Board of Governors



*Nicole A. Vaughn*

**Nicole A. Vaughn, PhD**  
Faculty Co-Lead  
Rowan University



*Stephen Danley*

**PhD Stephen Danley, DPhil**  
Faculty Co-Lead  
Rutgers University-Camden



## LETTER FROM CO-LEADS DR. NICOLE A. VAUGHN AND DR. STEPHEN DANLEY

Health disparities have impacted residents in southern New Jersey for decades. These disparities are a call to action. We designed the South Jersey Institute for Population Health (SJIPH) to answer that call by funding and supporting health equity research projects. Our region, with its rural, urban and suburban communities, has many beloved community institutions, dedicated community leaders, and community stakeholders addressing health and health outcomes. We believe linking these communities to world-class researchers at Rutgers University-Camden and Rowan University helps us understand what is working and where improvements can be made to further health equity. That is our mission and our vision at SJIPH.

Since its founding in 2021, SJIPH has brought together research institutions with community leaders to develop research projects that address health disparities and the social determinants of health using public health, population health and health promotion approaches. Our focus has been Collaboration, Innovation, Impact. Thus, we recognize that to have an impact, we must collaborate with communities as they are critical to our understanding of the barriers that are faced by residents to achieve optimal health. We must be flexible and open in our approach so that innovative ideas, projects and solutions could be explored. Our approach must be to include communities at the beginning and throughout the research process. We have been successful in bringing together academic researchers and community groups through our call for funding, with our Sandbox Model event and through knowledge dissemination activities. Our approach to supporting this type of research collaboration earned us Acenda Institute of Health Innovation's *2023 Population Health Leader Award!*

As researchers ourselves, with over 40 collective years of experience in community based research, community participatory research, grassroots partnership and civic engagement, we recognize the challenge in front of us. We understand how hard this work is to do and we know that this is the only way we can do it, together, communities and researchers. We know that the health issues we are facing in our region will continue to grow if we do not engage with our community stakeholders in new and innovative ways. We have been able to build a growing portfolio of research that includes projects focused on food access, physical activity, maternal and child health, intellectual disabilities, opioid use and other topics of need in our region.

In conclusion, at the South Jersey Institute for Population Health we believe this work is done better together. We work daily to leverage the expertise of Rowan University and Rutgers University-Camden to support the health equity work of our community partners. In doing so, we build population health projects that serve the needs of the region, promote research and expand the capacity of partners to improve health and health equity across populations and communities both now and in the future.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section A focuses on what you need to know about the *South Jersey Institute for Population Health* and our grant-making process.

- 8 **Mission, Vision and Values**
- 10 **What’s Our Impact?**
- 11 - 13 **Issues/ Interventions/ Impacts**
- 14 **Sandbox Model Overview**
- 16 **2021 Funding Cycle by the Numbers**
- 18 **Outreach and Dissemination**

Section B includes summaries of funded projects with findings for community stakeholders and methods for researchers.

- 20 **Health Equity for Vulnerable Populations**
  - 22 South Jersey Longitudinal Data Project to Advance Health Equity
  - 24 Making the Invisible Visible: Using Augmented Reality Visualization to Look Behind the Scenes at the Community Impacts of the Opioid Epidemic on the City of Camden
  - 28 Transgender and Non-Binary Needs and Protective Factors: A Cross-Sectional Survey
  - 32 Disparities in Broadband Internet Use for Older Adults

## **34 Child and Family Health**

**36** Community-based Bone Health Intervention with Direct Parental Involvement in Hispanic/Latino Children

**40** South Jersey Perinatal Population Health and Data Hub Project

**44** Training Teachers in Trauma Informed Education to Support Students

## **46 Food Access and Nutrition**

**48** Snack, Chill & Chat: Improving Nutrition, Social Interaction, and Stress Reduction among People with Disabilities

**52** Initial Community Food Policy Research & Assessment For Atlantic City, NJ

## **54 Ongoing Projects**

**56** A Resident-Centered Affordable Housing Mobile Resource and Database

**58** Improving Opioid Use Disorder Treatment Retention After Release From Incarceration

## **60 Acknowledgments**

# Mission



We seek to advance collaborative, community-engaged research that improves health and promotes health equity across Southern New Jersey.



# Values

## Collaboration

We seek to actively listen, authentically connect and build partnerships that are mutually beneficial to improve health and health equity in the region.

## Innovation

We approach population health and health equity focused data and projects with an open-mind and seek to explore new ideas that will have a sustainable impact.

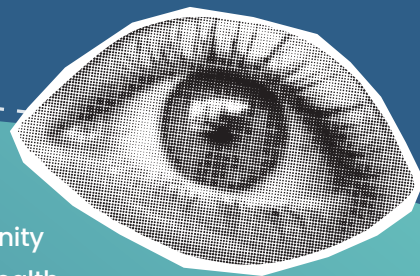
## Impact

We believe that Southern New Jersey is a unique and valuable place to live and work. Our focuses make an impact that is inclusive and lasting.



# Vision

We serve as a hub for research collaboration, community connection and innovation that improves health and health equity in populations and communities throughout Southern New Jersey. We believe that positive change happens when research and data are partnered with action. We believe that by leveraging the work of engaged stakeholders who are focused on research that has direct relevance and benefit for communities of greatest need, we will be able to advance health equity for our region.



Looked at together, the impact of these projects has two dimensions

**impact** in our  
understanding of  
health equity issues,  
and  
**impact** from a  
specific intervention  
to improve health  
equity.

## UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

Many of our projects focused on highlighting health equity issues for vulnerable populations. For these populations, research that shows clear disparities and challenges is often an early step to getting attention and resources for those issues.



Together, these research projects bring attention to issues of health equity, and to various factors that contribute to enhancing or reducing health equity. That lays the groundwork for investment in these areas.

**“We do not only  
want to identify  
disparities.  
We also want  
to invest in  
solutions.”**

That’s why a subset of our projects directly tackle an existing disparity with an intervention designed at improving health equity.

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark braided hair holding a young child who is sleeping peacefully. The woman is looking down at the child with a gentle expression. The child is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with a colorful striped pattern. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting. The overall mood is warm and caring.

# “laying the groundwork for investment in policies and interventions”

We see the impact of these projects as laying the groundwork for investment in interventions that address disparities and policies that may improve health equity. They help us identify and understand challenges in our region and explore specific solutions. Dive into our impact report for more details!

## SANDBOX MODEL OVERVIEW



South Jersey Institute for Population Health is committed to collaboration, innovation and impact while engaging local communities and community-based organizations with researchers at Rowan University and Rutgers University-Camden. The founding co-leads, Drs. Sarah Allred and Nicole A. Vaughn knew that collaboration requires authentic engagement and active listening, while innovation requires the freedom to try and test new ideas and approaches and partners to positively impact the health of people in our region. In this focus on collaboration, the founding co-leads for SJIPH designed a funding model that centered equity in the process. With their decades of community-engaged research experience, they understood the many barriers that community organizations as well as researchers face when trying to address complex issues of health and health inequity while also ensuring a positive impact at the community level. The barriers to funding are high and include long applications that use many staff resources. In addition, researchers are often unable to participate in unfunded projects at the community level which are needed to build the relationships and trust that are needed for successful partnership. Thus, the Sandbox Model was created for SJIPH based on this understanding that partnering early to “play” with research ideas would help community stakeholders and researchers.

# Sandbox Model Overview

## LOI Submission

Applicant teams submitted a brief letter of intent through a submission portal.

The application process was designed with equity in mind. We reduced barriers to access by creating an open application with minimal requirements so that all interested

## LOI Review

LOIs were reviewed by a mixed group of reviewers from academia, community, and local government.

## Sandbox Meeting Invitation

Teams whose LOI aligned with the main goals of SJIPH moved forward in the process and were invited to attend the Sandbox Meeting.

The goal of the Sandbox Meeting was to cultivate a collaborative rather than competitive environment where project teams could interact and make further connections with others in the region. It was designed to serve.

## Sandbox Meeting

Teams attended an in-person meeting to strengthen their initial ideas with a trained facilitator and share ideas with other invited teams of researchers and community skateholders.

## Final Proposal Submission

Teams submitted a full research proposal using the outlines created at the Sandbox Meeting.

## Proposal Decision

Selected teams were notified that their proposal was selected.

## Projects Commence

Selected teams received funding for a period of 12-months and began research.

Once the projects start, SJIPH provides technical assistance on issues such as IRB submission, recruitment of participants, data analysis, and policy implications.

# 2021

## Funding Cycle by the Numbers



# \$230,000

funding dollars to support researchers  
studying South Jersey population health

# 11

## projects

were awarded funds to conduct  
population health research in  
South Jersey, 8 reported in this  
impact report

# 450+

actively involved participants



# 29

researchers from  
**Rowan University** and  
**Rutgers University - Camden**





# 14

community-based organizations collaborated with researchers from non profit, academic, and healthcare sectors

# 95,000+



participants from secondary data source

# 9 university students

worked on research teams



# 8 major populations



were studied, including older adults, Hispanic population, LGBTQ, adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, low income population, children, incarcerated individuals, and postpartum women

# 7 Counties reached

Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Cumberland, Salem, Atlantic, Cape May



## 14 Community Partners Engaged:

- Revive South Jersey
- Inspira Health Network
- Family Resource Network
- Rowan Integrated Special Needs Center
- Hopeworks
- Northeast AIDS Prevention and Training Center
- Cooper University Health Care
- NJ Food Democracy Collaborative
- Communities Revolutionizing Open Public Spaces
- Camden County Department of Corrections
- Camden Coalition
- Health Union, LLC
- Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative
- Borough Administration



# Community

# Researchers



# Policymakers

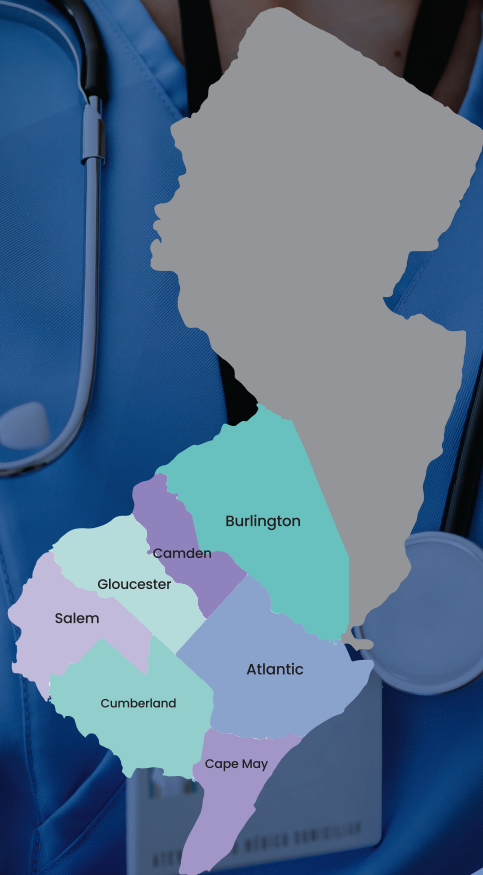




**“Our funding  
initiatives are  
designed to get  
results into the  
right hands.”**

Our goal at SJIPH is to use the information from the funding initiatives to make an impact and inform relevant communities. From community events to academic conferences, we’re sharing our results where they can make the biggest difference in South Jersey.

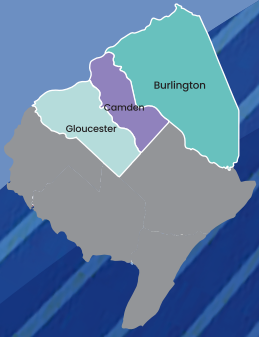
The State of New Jersey



# 01

## **Health Equity for Vulnerable Populations**

- 22** South Jersey Longitudinal Data Project to Advance Health Equity
- 24** Making the Invisible Visible: Using Augmented Reality Visualization to Look Behind the Scenes at the Community Impacts of the Opioid Epidemic on the City of Camden
- 28** Transgender and Non-Binary Needs and Protective Factors: A Cross-Sectional Survey
- 32** Disparities in Broadband Internet Use for Older Adults



# South Jersey Longitudinal Data Project to Advance Health Equity

**Counties:** Camden, Burlington, Gloucester

**Target Population:** Individuals in three-county area who had at least one hospital encounter between years 2017 and 2022

**Funding Received:** \$20,000

## The Issue

COVID-19 highlights racial and ethnic healthcare disparities. In New Jersey, Black and Hispanic residents face over twice the age-adjusted COVID-19 hospitalization and mortality rates of White residents. These disparities persist despite considering clinical conditions and social factors. Systemic racism and inequality limit minority communities' access to health resources, heightening vulnerability to the pandemic. Our project addresses this.

## The Goal

- 1) To ascertain patterns of emergency department use and hospitalizations;
- 2) To compare prevalence of health-related social needs by race and census tract income tier.

## The Takeaway

There is a disparity in access to healthcare resources among individuals of Black race and Hispanic ethnicity. There is a need for policies and interventions tailored to address the specific needs of racial and ethnic groups within various socioeconomic contexts as shown by the complex interplay between socioeconomic factors and racial disparities in healthcare utilization in our study.

## What We Asked / Research Question

What is the impact of race on emergency department usage and hospital admission?  
How much does context, such as living in a high-income neighborhood, matter for emergency department usage and hospital admission?

## What We Did / Research Methodology

Using patient level data from the Camden Coalition Health Information Exchange (HIE) and social needs screening data collected through the Accountable Health Communities initiative we analyzed records for over 900,000 patients. The project studied patterns of hospital utilization by race and ethnicity, census tract level economic measures, and assessed the relationship between race, ethnicity, census tract level economic measures, and the prevalence of health-related social needs.

## What We Found / Research Results

Individuals of Black race and Hispanic ethnicity had significantly higher rates of emergency department utilization and had significantly lower rates of inpatient admissions for many of the disease categories tested. The results suggest a disparity in access to healthcare resources that may be critical for overcoming medical crises and maintaining health. Additionally, in the subset of the data consisting of individuals screened for social needs, individuals of Black race or Hispanic ethnicity had higher prevalence of health-related social needs compared to White individuals, even in the highest income census tracts.

## Why It Matters / Research Implications

Understanding the complexities uncovered in our data is essential for promoting health equity. Health disparities lead to certain groups receiving lower-quality healthcare or facing barriers to accessing care. With more knowledge of how socioeconomic status and race intersect to affect healthcare utilization, policies can be better designed to address these issues. Knowing where the greatest needs lie allows for more effective and efficient allocation of healthcare resources. For instance, areas with high emergency department utilization by low-income minority groups may need more primary care clinics or better chronic disease management programs. Moreover, healthcare systems increasingly rely on predictive analytics to anticipate and meet patient needs. Understanding the interplay between socioeconomic factors and racial disparities is crucial for creating accurate and equitable predictive models.

### PROJECT TEAM

#### Community



Dawn Wiest PhD  
(Camden  
Coalition) (PI)

#### Rutgers University-Camden

Sangita Pudasainee-Kapri,  
PhD, DNP

#### Rowan University

Yupeng Li, PhD  
Kul Kapri, PhD



# Making the Invisible Visible: Using Augmented Reality Visualization to Look Behind the Scenes at the Community Impacts of the Opioid Epidemic on the City of Camden

**Counties:** Camden

**Target Population:** Academic & Community  
Partners in Camden County

**Funding Received:** \$20,000

## The Issue

The opioid epidemic poses a significant public health threat, with devastating effects on communities, including Camden. Despite efforts to combat the epidemic, understanding its full impact remains challenging.

## The Goal

The project seeks to develop an augmented reality visualization platform to provide insight into the community impacts of the opioid epidemic in Camden. By disseminating educational resources through this platform, the goal is to raise awareness and facilitate access to support services for individuals affected by opioid addiction.



## The Takeaway

The development of the Camden Atlas of Care webpage provides a centralized platform offering informational resources and support services to individuals dealing with opioid addiction. Findings suggest that leveraging web mapping visualization can enhance community understanding of the opioid epidemic's impacts and facilitate access to essential resources for addressing addiction, enabling future augmented reality options as platforms are developed.

## What We Asked / Research Question

How can augmented reality visualization be utilized to uncover the community impacts of the opioid epidemic in Camden?

What resources and support services are needed to address the challenges posed by opioid addiction in Camden County?

How can educational resources be effectively disseminated to raise awareness and facilitate access to support services for individuals affected by opioid addiction?

## What We Did / Research Methodology

The project developed a web-based mapping which compiles statewide statistics on the opioid epidemic, provides story-based explanations of its impacts, and offers interactive databases of treatment and support services. Web-based cartography visualization techniques were employed to enhance the understanding of opioid-related community impacts.

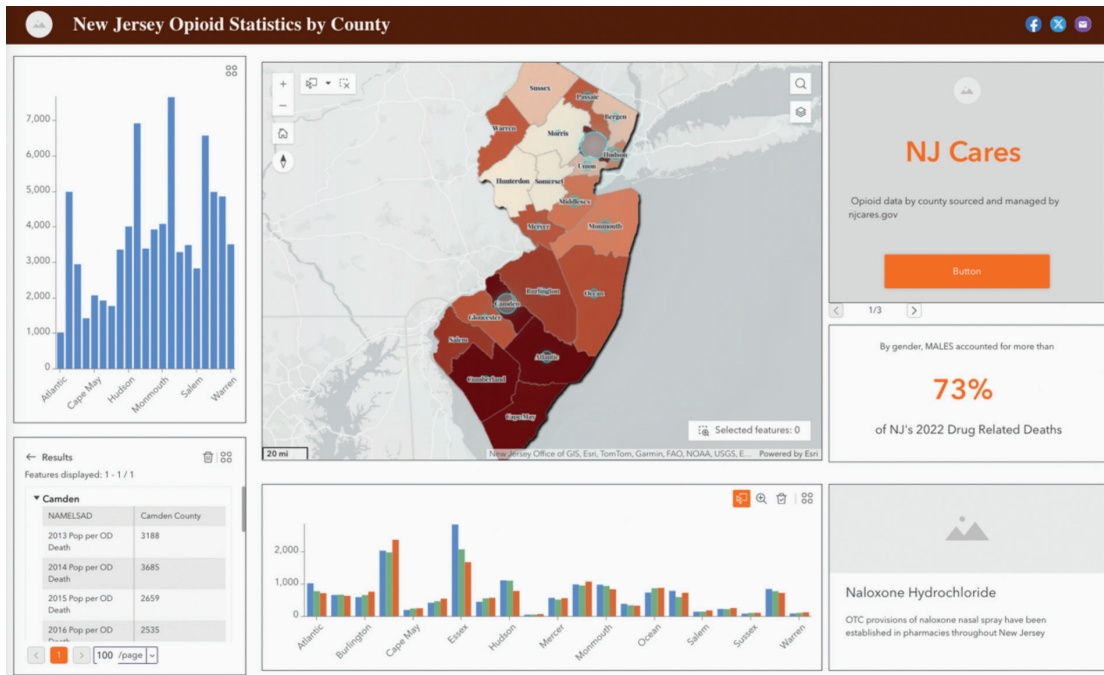
## What We Did / Research Methodology

The project developed an web-based mapping visualization platform, the Camden Atlas of Care, which compiles statewide statistics, individual map visualizations, and a searchable database of treatment and support services related to the opioid epidemic in Camden County.

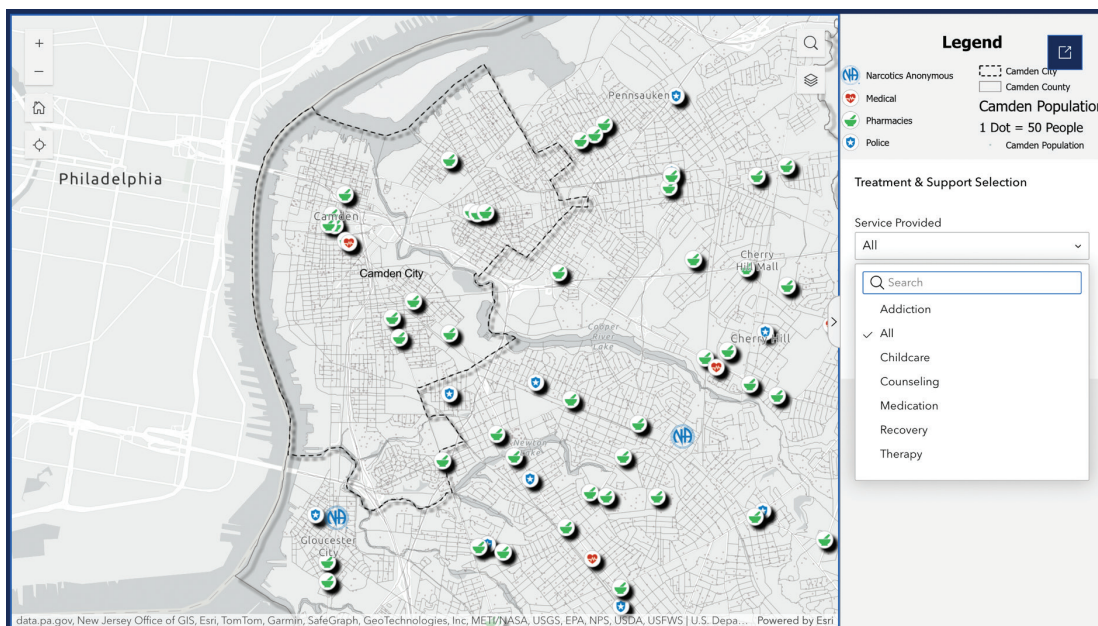
# What We Found / Research Results

The main product of the project is the Camden Atlas of Care webpage, which serves as a central platform offering informational resources to assist individuals dealing with opioid addiction (Fig. 1). It includes statewide statistics on the opioid epidemic, individual map visualizations, and a searchable database of treatment and support services (Fig. 2).

**Figure 1:** Camden Atlas of Care webpage (from <http://go.rowan.edu/opioidcare>).



**Figure 2:** Camden Atlas of Care user interface (from <http://go.rowan.edu/opioidcare>).



## Why It Matters / Research Implications

The developed platform provides a valuable resource for individuals and organizations working to address the opioid epidemic in Camden. It not only increases awareness of the crisis but also facilitates access to vital services and support, ultimately contributing to efforts to reduce the burden of opioid addiction on the community. Additionally, the project assessed the potential of augmented reality visualization as a tool for addressing complex public health challenges and how it may be integrated into current frameworks.

### PROJECT TEAM

#### Community Organization

**Mr. Luis Olivieri,**  
GIS Director  
Hopeworks,  
Camden,  
New Jersey

#### Rowan University



**Dr. Zachary Christman**  
(PI and Coordinator),  
Associate Professor,  
Department of  
Geography,  
Planning, and  
Sustainability, Rowan  
University, Glassboro,  
New Jersey

**Dr. DeMond Miller,**  
Professor, Department  
of Sociology, Rowan  
University Glassboro,  
New Jersey

#### Rutgers University-Camden

**Dr. Cynthia Ayres,**  
Associate Professor  
and Associate Dean,  
School of Nursing,  
Rutgers University,  
Camden, New Jersey

#### Other

**Dr. Sarah Bauer,**  
Assistant Professor,  
School of Engineering,  
Mercer University,  
Savannah, Georgia



# Transgender and Non-Binary Needs and Protective Factors: A Cross-Sectional Survey

**Counties:** Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, Cape May, Gloucester, and Salem

**Target Population:** Transgender &  
Non-Binary Individuals  
Living in South Jersey

**Funding Received:** 20,000

## The Issue

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing challenges for transgender and non-binary individuals (TGNB) in South Jersey, reducing access to gender-affirming resources and increasing mental health risks. Limited availability of TGNB-friendly services in the region further compounds health and social disparities.

## The Goal

Through a cross-sectional survey, the project aimed to assess the social, medical, and mental health needs of TGNB individuals in South Jersey. Specific objectives included describing current health status, identifying barriers to healthcare access, and assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the TGNB community.

## The Takeaway

Findings reveal significant mental health challenges among TGNB individuals, with non-binary respondents experiencing higher levels of distress. Financial barriers emerged as a primary obstacle to accessing medical care, despite high healthcare coverage. The data underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions and resource allocation to support the health and well-being of TGNB individuals in South Jersey.

## The Research: Why It Matters

The study data will be utilized by Cooper University Health Care to assess the needs of the TGNB community in South Jersey and improve LGBTQ+ patient care in various clinical services. The results have been disseminated in the 10th Annual Building a Culture of Health conference, Appearance Matters 10 Conference, and Journal of Body Image. By disseminating these findings, policymakers and community organizations can better understand and address the health and social disparities experienced by TGNB individuals, ultimately promoting inclusivity and well-being in the region. compiles statewide statistics, individual map visualizations, and a searchable database of treatment and support services related to the opioid epidemic in Camden County.

## What We Asked / Research Question

What is the current status of medical, mental health, and community factors among transgender and non-binary individuals in South Jersey?

What are the correlates of preventative health behaviors, such as vaccinations and annual check-ups, among this population?

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the lives of transgender and non-binary individuals in South Jersey?

What are the stress and resilience levels among transgender and non-binary individuals in South Jersey?

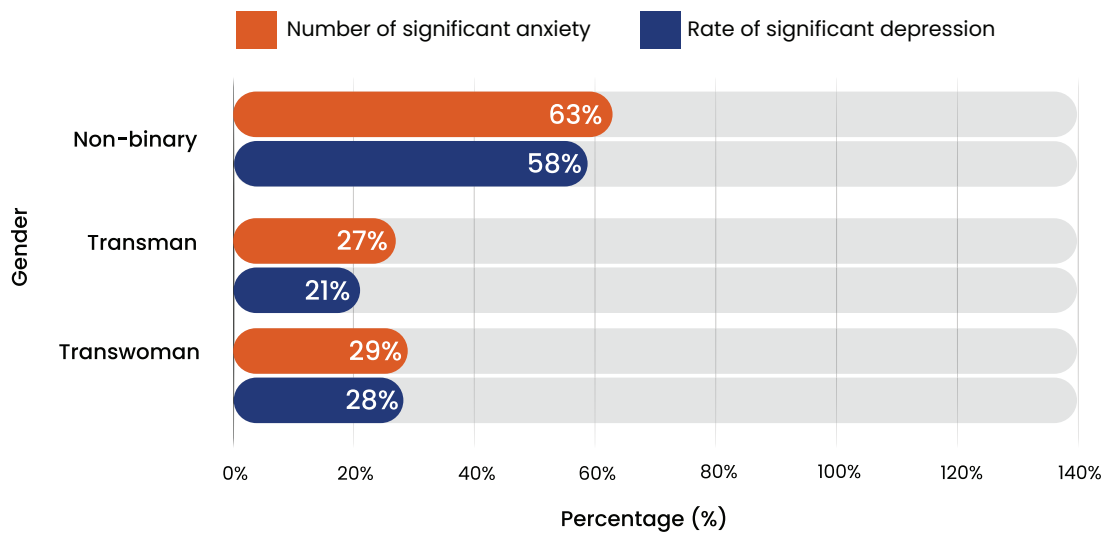
## What We Did / Research Methodology

A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 214 TGNB individuals aged 18 and above in South Jersey. Data on demographics, health status, COVID-19 impact, stress levels, resilience, and access to healthcare were collected through self-reported questionnaires.

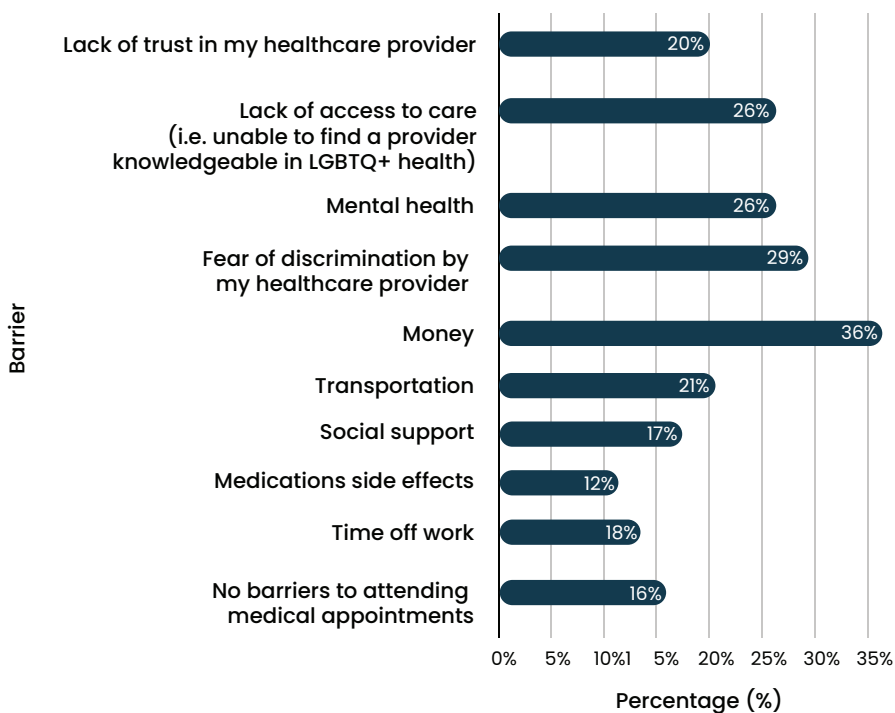
## What We Found / Research Results

The study revealed that most respondents reported having received a diagnosis of anxiety, with non-binary individuals experiencing the highest levels of emotional distress (Fig. 1). Financial barriers were identified as the primary obstacle to attending medical appointments (Fig. 2), despite the majority of respondents having healthcare coverage. Interest in gender-affirming surgeries (Fig. 3), especially mental health services, was high among both transgender and non-binary individuals, highlighting the demand for these services. Approximately two-thirds of respondents reported that their mental health was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating the profound impact of the crisis on TGNB individuals in South Jersey.

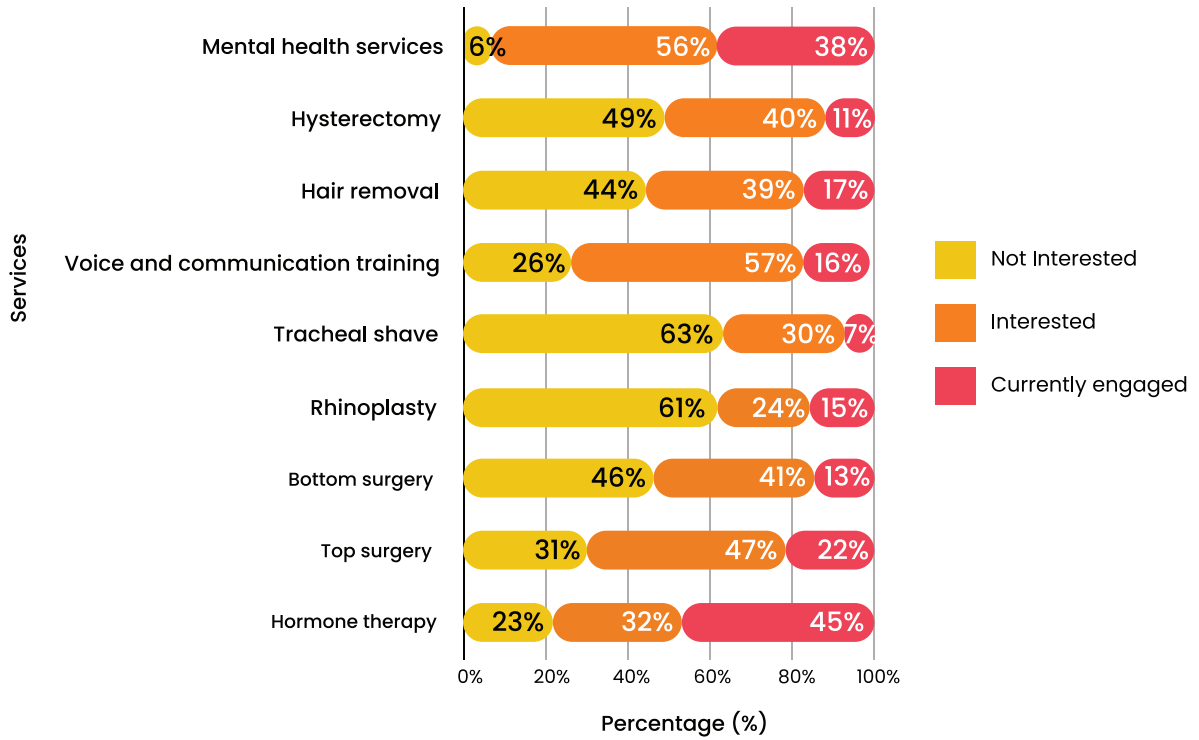
**Figure 1:** Emotional distress (PHQ-4) among participants by gender (N=214).



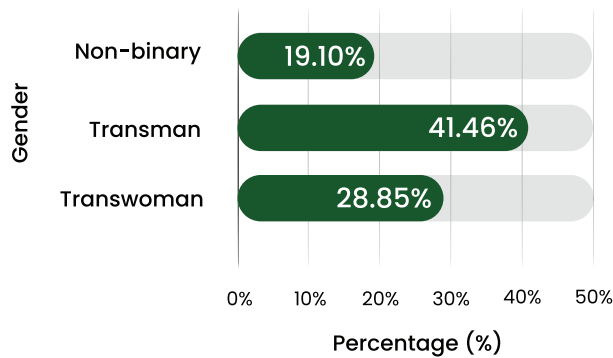
**Figure 2:** Primary barriers to attending medical appointments among participants (N=214).



**Figure 3:** Rates (%) on gender-affirming service and procedure utilization and interest (N=214).



**Figure 4:** Percentage of participants being negatively impacted by COVID-19 by gender.



**PROJECT TEAM**

**Rowan University**



**Christina Goodwin, PhD;**  
Cooper Medical School of Rowan University (PI)

**Rutgers University-Camden**



**Charlotte Markey, PhD;**  
Rutgers University-Camden

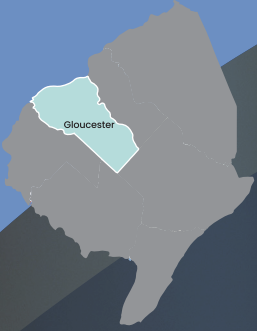
**Healthcare Organization**



**Greg Langan, LSW, MPH, DHSc(c);**  
Director of Operations – Jefferson Health



**Justin Schweitzer, DO;**  
Medical Director, Center for LGBTQ+ Health, Cooper University Health Care



# Disparities in Broadband Internet Use for Older Adults

**Counties:** Gloucester

**Target Population:** Older Adults in living communities (aging at home), independent living, assisted living, and long-term skilled care

**Funding Received:** \$20,000

## The Issue

The lack of broadband internet access poses serious health and medical risks for older adults, exacerbating isolation and loneliness, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research aims to address disparities in broadband availability and usage among older adults in Gloucester County, New Jersey.

## The Goal

This study seeks to gather data on broadband access and perceptions among older adults living in senior living facilities and those aging at home, in order to recommend remedies for disparities and improve digital literacy among this population.

## The Takeaway

Results indicate that internet access is crucial for the mental and physical well-being of older adults, with positive perceptions of broadband usage observed. Older adults are interested in attending workshops to enhance their digital literacy skills.



## What We Asked / Research Question

What are the demographics of older adults residing in Gloucester County compared to the total population?

What is the current level of broadband internet deployment in Gloucester County?

What are the perceptions of older adults residing in senior living facilities versus those aging at home regarding their need for broadband access?

## What We Did / Research Methodology

The study conducted interviews with 44 older adults and analyzed U.S. Census data, as well as FCC broadband deployment numbers to assess broadband access and perceptions.

## What We Found / Research Results

Older adults use the internet for communication, learning, telehealth, and fitness activities. Over 75% of participants are interested in attending workshops to improve their digital literacy. Older adults are interested in learning how to use different internet features more efficiently, the specific solutions when internet features do not work, how to transfer data from phone to laptop, how to find information more quickly, and how to use Windows, Excel and Zoom. They would be more willing to attend the workshops if they are free.

## Why It Matters / Research Implications

The project provides evidence on digital device use among older adults and supports arguments for funding to address broadband disparities. Older adults would benefit from broadband access for the purposes of social connection and getting access to support services they need for physical, emotional, and social health.

### PROJECT TEAM

#### Community Organization

**Ed Malandro,**  
Borough Administrator  
for Glassboro

#### Rowan University

**Michael Milovich Jr., Ph.D.**  
(PI and Coordinator),  
Associate Professor of MIS,  
Rowan University

**Edward Schoen, J.D.,**  
Professor of Management,  
Rowan University

#### Rutgers University-Camden

**James J. Brown Jr., Ph.D.,**  
Associate Professor of English,  
Rutgers University-Camden

**Shreya Desai,**  
Direct Admit to 7-year BS/DO  
with RowanSOM, Rutgers  
University-Camden



The State of New Jersey



# 02

## Child and Family Health

- 36 Community-based Bone Health Intervention with Direct Parental Involvement in Hispanic/Latinx Children
- 40 South Jersey Perinatal Population Health and Data Hub Project
- 44 Training Teachers in Trauma Informed Education to Support Students



# Community-based Bone Health Intervention with Direct Parental Involvement in Hispanic/Latino Children

**Counties:** Cumberland

**Target Population:** Hispanic/Latino(a) Children and Youth

**Funding Received:** \$20,000

## The Issue

The project addresses the significant economic and health burden of osteoporosis in the U.S., emphasizing the importance of high-impact activities during childhood to prevent this bone disease later in life. The lack of research on community-based bone health programs specifically targeting Hispanic parents with children aged 5 to 17 years in Cumberland County, New Jersey (NJ), which is noted as the least healthy county in the state, underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions.

## The Goal

To implement a replicable model for proactive health, health information, health access, and supportive services aimed at improving bone strength, physical activity, and calcium intake behaviors among Hispanic or Latino children aged 5 to 17 years and their parents in Bridgeton, Cumberland County, NJ.



## The Takeaway

The project underscores the need for community-specific interventions to improve bone health awareness and behaviors among Hispanic families, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in engaging this population in health education programs.

This study revealed critical gaps in osteoporosis awareness and varying adherence rates to a bone health education program among Hispanic families, with findings like decreased calcium intake among mothers and children. The project emphasizes the need for tailored educational strategies and highlights the effectiveness of collaborative community engagements to improve bone health awareness.

## What We Asked / Research Question

**Feasibility Question:** What is the feasibility of recruiting, adhering, and retaining Hispanic/Latino children (5-17 years old) and their parents in a 3-month bone health program?

**Impact Question:** What is the impact of a 3-month bone health program on bone strength, physical activity, and calcium intake behaviors in Hispanic/Latino parents and their children (aged 5-17 years)?

**Demographic Factors Question:** What are the demographic factors associated with the knowledge of bone health and osteoporosis among Hispanic/Latino parents?

## What We Did / Research Methodology

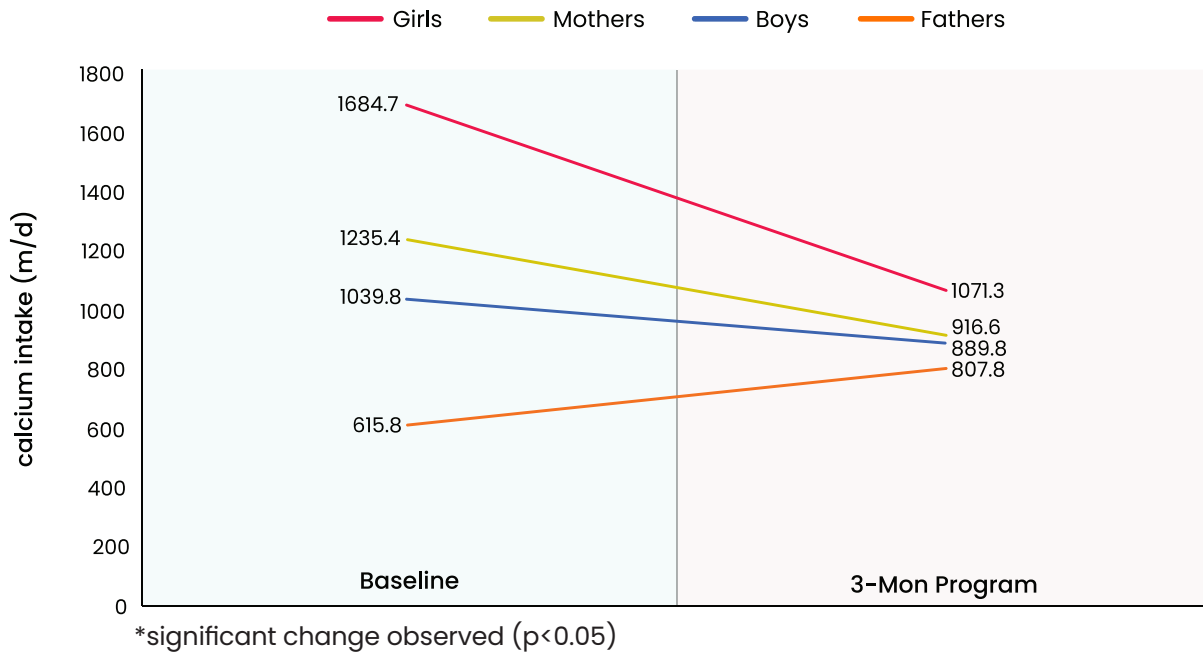
The study engaged 29 child-parent pairs in a non-randomized feasibility study, incorporating physical activities (Dance, Soccer, or Karate) and a 3-month educational program on bone health at the Alms Center in Bridgeton, NJ. The program included monthly 60-minute group educational sessions and optional recorded sessions via YouTube with translation services.

## What We Found / Research Results

**Feasibility:** Recruitment and retention were feasible within the given timeframe, with over 50% of eligible participants recruited and a 73.1% retention rate.

**Impact on Bone Health:** A significant increase in calcium intake was observed in fathers, but no significant changes in bone strength or physical activity were noted among parents or children, except for a decrease in calcium intake among boys (Fig. 1).

**Figure 1:** Impact of 3 month bone health program on calcium intake (m/d) among participants (N=19 pairs (38 in total)).



**Knowledge of Bone Health:** Over 50% of participants were unfamiliar with osteoporosis, with a majority having a household income below \$30,000 and a high school education or less.

## Why It Matters / Research Implications

This project is crucial for understanding the specific health education needs of the Hispanic community in Cumberland County, NJ. It highlights the necessity of culturally and linguistically appropriate health interventions to effectively increase awareness and improve behaviors related to bone health, ultimately aiming to prevent osteoporosis and enhance the overall well-being of this underserved population.

This project addresses the crucial health education needs of the Hispanic community in Cumberland County, NJ, by delivering culturally appropriate interventions that significantly improve bone health awareness. It empowers parents and fosters strong community ties through collaborations with organizations like Revive SJ, BA PAL, Inspira Health, enhancing the well-being of this underserved population and helping to prevent osteoporosis.

The study was presented at the 10th Annual Building A Culture of Health in New Jersey.

### PARTNERS/RESEARCH TEAM

#### Community Organization



**Jonathan Cummings**  
(Principal Investigator),  
Executive Director,  
Revive South Jersey

**Isis Sosa, BS**  
(Research coordinator)  
Family Advocate,  
Revive South Jersey

#### Rowan University

**SoJung Kim, PhD**  
(co-PI) Assistant  
Professor,  
Rowan University

**Tania Asmal,**  
(Research Assistant),  
Rowan University

**Leydi Mesa-Polo,**  
(Research Assistant),  
Rowan University

**Indiana Jenkins,**  
(Research Assistant),  
Rowan University

#### Rutgers University-Camden

**Iris Bercovitz, MA**  
(Research Assistant)

#### Healthcare Organization

**Megan Allain,**  
MPH, CHES  
Director of Community  
Benefits and Outreach,  
Inspira Health Network

**Rachel Altobell, RDN**  
Clinical & Outpatient  
Dietitian, Inspira  
Mullica Hill



# South Jersey Perinatal Population Health and Data Hub Project

**Counties:** Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean, Salem

**Target Population:** South Jersey Mothers and Children

**Funding Received:** \$30,000

## The Issue

Persistent disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes exist in Southern New Jersey (SNJ), exacerbated by barriers to prevention and treatment resources at patient, provider, and systems levels. These disparities are pronounced among marginalized communities and have been further magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, comprehensive data on maternal and infant wellbeing at regional or county levels are limited, hindering efforts to target resources effectively and address disparities.

## The Goal

The SNJ Perinatal Population Health Data Hub aims to reduce disparities in maternal and infant health and wellbeing by leveraging perinatal population health data, community-engaged research strategies, and data-driven practice innovation. The project seeks to identify geographic and racial variations in maternal and infant wellbeing indicators, understand patient perceptions of barriers to perinatal depression screening and treatment, and explore social determinants contributing to disparities in adverse birth outcomes and postpartum depression.





## The Takeaway

Closing geographic and racial disparities in PPD requires specific investment in South Jersey, incorporating better methods of ongoing support for women in the months after birth. Findings suggest the need for conversational screening approaches and more time for discussions with clinicians, highlighting the importance of follow-up and ongoing support beyond therapy sessions or medication management visits.

The project demonstrated significant racial disparities in postpartum depression as SNJ exhibits the highest rate of postpartum depression at birth in the state. Women's feedback underscores the inadequacy of paper-based screenings and a strong preference for ongoing, dialogue-based support. This insight calls for a tailored approach to postpartum care in SNJ, emphasizing personal interaction and sustained assistance to effectively tackle maternal health disparities.

## What We Asked / Research Question

What is the scope of geographic and racial variability in postpartum depression at birth and preterm births in New Jersey's counties and regions, particularly in South Jersey?

What are the perceived patient barriers to perinatal depression screening and treatment among birthing individuals residing in Southern Jersey?

What social determinants and clinical factors contribute to disparities in adverse birth outcomes and postpartum depression among birthing individuals and their infants in NJ?

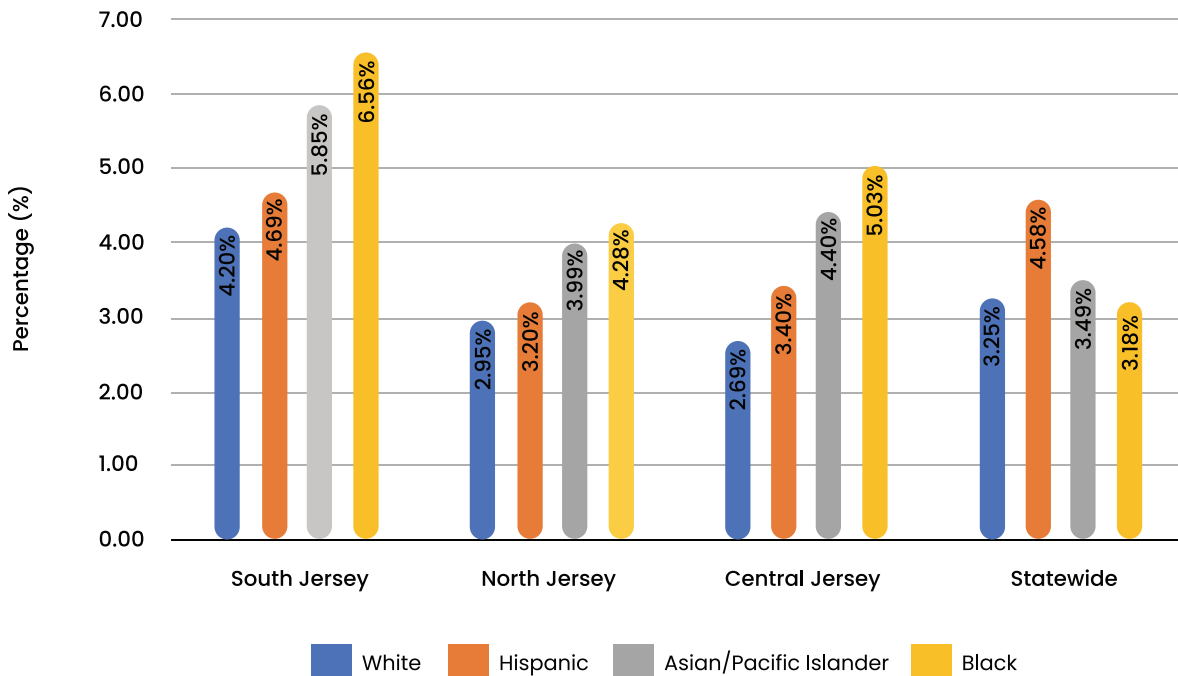
## What We Did / Research Methodology

The project utilized a mixed-method design, combining quantitative analysis of de-identified birth certificate data with qualitative thematic analysis of interviews and quantitative studies on maternal social, demographic, and clinical factors. Data sources included the New Jersey Statewide Health Assessment Data system, NJ DOH Center for Health Statistics, NJ PRAMS, and primary qualitative data from interviews with individuals experiencing postpartum depression in South Jersey.

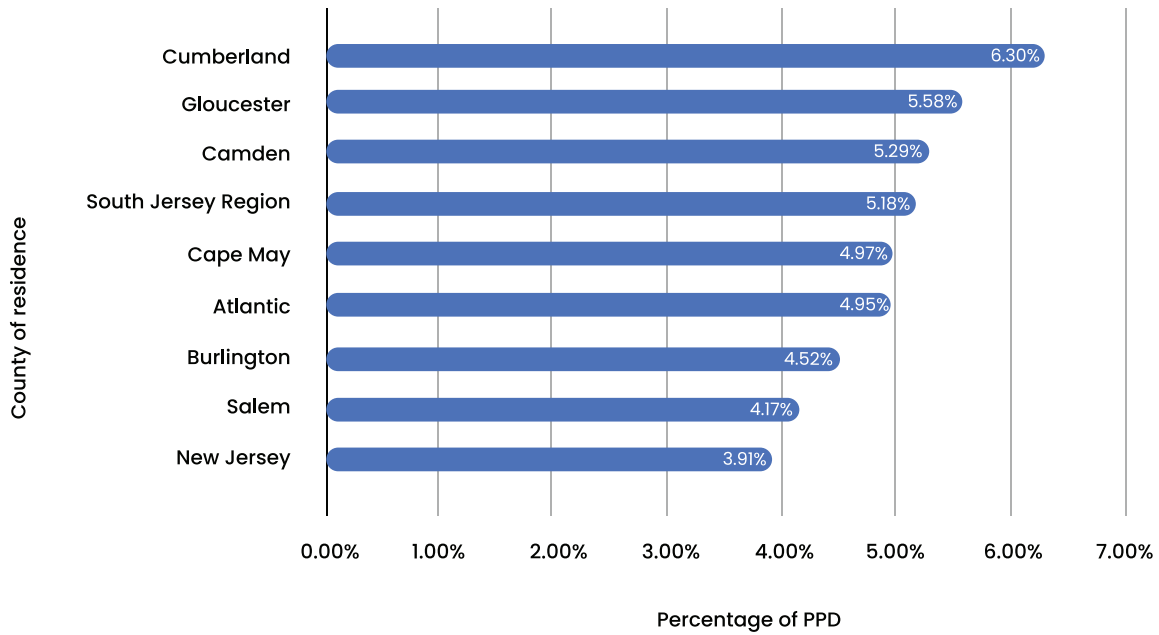
## What We Found / Research Results

The project found significant geographic and racial variability in postpartum depression rates at birth, with South Jersey having the highest percentage compared to other regions across all races (Fig. 1). Cumberland County had the highest rates of postpartum depression and preterm births among South Jersey counties (Fig. 2). Patient barriers to perinatal depression screening and treatment included minimization of symptoms by providers, lack of time and energy to seek mental healthcare, and preference for conversational screening methods (Table 1).

**Figure 1:** Percentage of live births diagnosed with postpartum depression by race and region New Jersey in 2021.



**Figure 2:** Percentage of live births diagnosed with postpartum depression by maternal county of residence 2021 (N=94,591 live births).



## Why It Matters / Research Implications

By understanding the scope of geographic and racial variations in maternal and infant well-being indicators and identifying patient barriers to perinatal screening and treatment, healthcare providers and policymakers can develop targeted interventions to improve access to healthcare services and promote equitable health outcomes. The result was presented at the Culture of Health annual meeting in Atlantic City in 2022.

### PROJECT TEAM

#### Community

##### Organization

Quinn A. Ingemi,  
M.A., LPC.  
Community Partner –  
Southern New Jersey  
Perinatal Cooperative  
Inc.

#### Cathy

##### Butler-Witt,

MA, BSW, NCTTP.

Community Partner –  
Southern New Jersey  
Perinatal Cooperative,  
Inc.

#### Other

Rachel Shmuts, DO, PMH-C.

Clinical Advisor, South Jersey Perinatal Psychiatrist, private practice.

#### Rowan University

Kul Kapri, PhD.

Associate Professor.  
Rowan University,  
Dept. of Political  
Science and  
Economics

#### Rutgers University-Camden



Jeanette

Valentine, PhD.

Rutgers Institute for  
Health - New Brunswick  
(PI and Coordinator)

Sangita Pudasainee-  
Kapri, PhD, DNP, RN,  
APN, FNP-BC, CPN.  
Co-Principle Investigator.  
Assistant Professor,  
Rutgers-Camden  
School of Nursing

Sheila Linz, PhD.,

PMHNP-BC, RN.

Co-investigator.  
Rutgers-Camden  
School of Nursing



# Training Teachers in Trauma Informed Education to Support Students

**Counties:** Camden, Gloucester, Cumberland, Salem, Cape May, Atlantic, Burlington, Philadelphia

**Target Population:** Pre-service and In-service teachers/administrators in Philadelphia and South Jersey

**Funding Received:** \$20,000

## The Issue

Trauma impacts many students inside and outside of school settings. A major issue is that educators do not typically learn about trauma, mental health, and brain science in their preparation programs. This lack of knowledge often puts school-based personnel at a disadvantage in identifying trauma-exposed youth early enough to intervene and make referrals for help. Also, some of the behavior challenges in school that are a reaction to traumatic stress are misinterpreted and met with punishments rather than support.

## The Goal

To enhance educators' understanding and application of trauma-informed practices. To do so, our study utilized a professional development workshop.

## The Takeaway

Ultimately, it is critical to design and deliver learning opportunities for school-based personnel to enhance their knowledge of trauma and capacity to understand and support their students' needs.

## What We Asked / Research Question

How does trauma awareness and resilience science impact school-based personnel's attitudes towards students' behaviors in school?

## What We Did / Research Methodology

To determine what impact a trauma-informed teaching workshop would have on participants across several key areas, we performed a Mann-Whitney U test to compare two independent samples to test the efficacy of the workshops.

## What We Found / Research Results

The workshop on trauma-informed practices has shown to be a valuable intervention for educators, as evidenced by the significant improvements in preparedness (Questions 27, 39, 40), self-efficacy (Questions 31, 33), and responsiveness (Questions 36, 37). This reinforces the necessity of such educational initiatives in fostering trauma-sensitive school environments that cater to the needs of all students, aiding their recovery and growth.

**Table:** Findings Using Mann-Whitney for Pre-Post Significance Item Theme P-Value\*

Item	Theme	P-Value*			
			Q40	Distress Preparedness	0.000*
Q16	Depression Knowledge	0.095	Q41	Depression Knowledge	0.001*
Q17	Traumatic Stress Knowledge	0.769	Q31	Discuss Concern Self-Efficacy	0.002*
Q18	Symptoms Knowledge	0.131	Q32	Refer Student Self-Efficacy	0.055
Q19	Depression Cause Knowledge	0.175	Q33	Where to Refer Self-Efficacy	0.001*
Q20	Treatments Knowledge	0.261	Q36	Discuss Concerns Responsiveness	0.000*
Q21	Traumatic Events Knowledge	0.209	Q37	Refer Student Responsiveness	0.001*
Q27	Behavior Preparedness	0.000*			
Q39	Appearance Preparedness	0.001*			

*Note: P-Values marked with \* indicate statistical significance. \*  $\alpha < .05$*

## Why it Matters / Research Implications

These early results show workshops that train school personnel with trauma-informed techniques are a promising means of supporting trauma-exposed youth. Further research can tie the gains from these workshops directly to impacts for the youth themselves, showing a potentially cost-effective way to improve youth outcomes.

### PROJECT TEAM

#### Community Organization



Bukola Ogunkua, MD, MPH, MHS, LPC, CPRP, FAAETS, public health physician, population health researcher, child trauma expert with the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, (PI)

#### Rowan University

Adam Alvarez, PhD  
Assistant Professor,  
College of Education  
(Co-PI)

#### Rutgers

#### University-Camden

Denise Davis,  
Senior Training  
Consultant(Co-PI)

The State of New Jersey





# 03

## **Food Access and Nutrition**

- 48** Snack, Chill & Chat: Improving Nutrition, Social Interaction, and Stress Reduction among People with Disabilities
- 52** Initial Community Food Policy Research & Assessment For Atlantic City, NJ



# Snack, Chill & Chat: Improving Nutrition, Social Interaction, and Stress Reduction among People with Disabilities

**Counties:** Atlantic, Camden, Gloucester, Cumberland

**Target Population:** Adults aged 18 and older with intellectual and developmental disabilities

**Funding Received:** \$20,000

## The Issue

Amidst the pandemic, people with disabilities (PwD) – in particular, those disabilities that are intellectual or developmental in nature – faced increased challenges, including social isolation, distress, and poor dietary habits. These issues are particularly prevalent in South Jersey, exacerbating the existing health disparities among this population.

## The Goal

To develop and evaluate a virtual intervention called “Snack, Chill & Chat” to boost dietary habits, nutrition knowledge, social interaction, and lower distress among adults with disabilities. By assessing the feasibility, validity, and effectiveness of this intervention, the goal was to create a replicable model for improving the well-being of PwD.





## The Takeaway

The study highlights the need for longer interventions, improved survey instruments, and larger sample sizes to effectively address the multiple needs of PwD. Despite challenges, the program showcased promising results, with participants demonstrating improved knowledge of healthy breakfast options. However, significant changes in other areas, such as overall nutrition habits and distress levels, were not observed.

The 'Snack, Chat & Chill' program primarily improved PwDs' knowledge of healthy breakfast choices, with no other significant changes in nutrition knowledge or behaviors among PwD or their caregivers. This singular improvement highlights the need for longer interventions, improved survey instruments with high reliability, and larger sample size. Engagement in the program was higher among PwD with structured activity preferences and caregiver support, indicating that program reach may be enhanced through targeted recruitment and supportive environments for these individuals.

## What We Asked / Research Question

What is the feasibility of a weekly, virtual intervention conducted in 8 75-minute sessions to improve nutrition knowledge, dietary habits, increase social interaction, and reduce distress among adults with disabilities?

What is the validity and reliability of the surveys and focus group tools developed in this study to assess dietary habits, social interaction, and perceived distress among adults with disabilities? To what degree are caregivers of PwD a reliable proxy for assessing their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors around dietary habits, loneliness, sleep, and perceived distress?

To what degree do PwD demonstrate improvements in their nutrition knowledge, dietary habits and confidence, loneliness, sleep, and perceived distress after participating in the intervention? How satisfied are they with the intervention?

## What We Did / Research Methodology

To determine what impact a trauma-informed teaching workshop would have on participants across several key areas, we performed a Mann-Whitney U test to compare two independent samples to test the efficacy of the workshops.

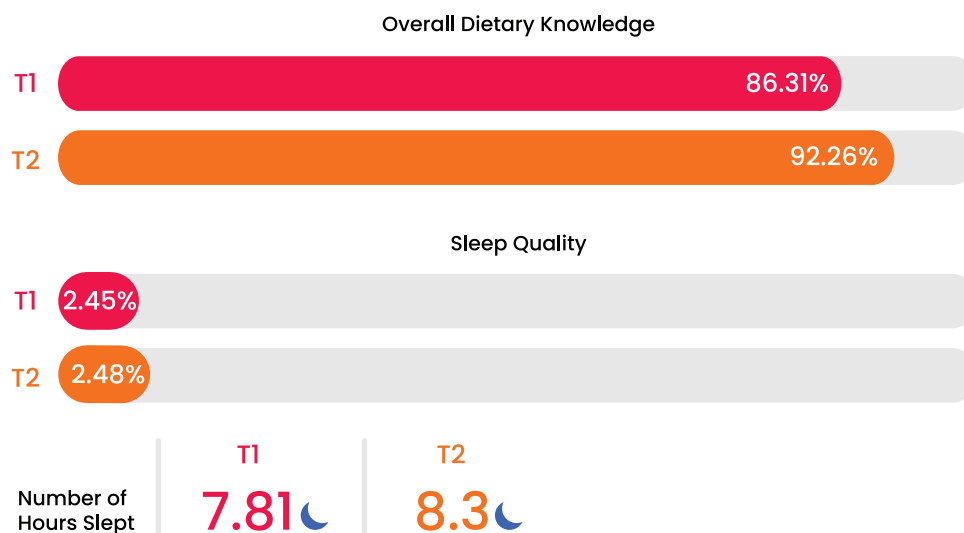
## What We Found / Research Results

**Feasibility:** While completion rates varied, participants with structured activity preferences were more likely to complete the program. Non-completers had lower self-reported blood pressure. Caregivers with more resources found the program more feasible, indicating potential disparities in access.

**Survey Reliability:** Survey instruments showed varying reliability and validity when assessing dietary behaviors, suggesting the need for improvement in this area.

**Changes in Participants:** Significant improvements were observed in participants' knowledge of healthy breakfast options. There was marginal improvement from T1 to T2 in participants who participated 5 sessions and more for measures like overall dietary knowledge, sleep quality and number of hours slept (Fig. 1), but not in overall nutrition habits or distress levels. Survey limitations and sample size constraints may have impacted the results.

**Figure 1:** Changes in the participants' overall dietary knowledge, sleep quality and numbers of hours slept before and after the program (N=27).



## Why It Matters / Research Implications

The study provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by PwD ages 18 and older and the effectiveness of virtual interventions in addressing their needs. By identifying areas for improvement in survey instruments and intervention design, the study contributes to the ongoing efforts to enhance the well-being of this vulnerable population. The program has been presented at Rowan Research Day Spring 2023 and the 10th Annual Culture of Health YMCA Alliance.

### PROJECT TEAM

#### Community Organization

**Jenna Bottiglieri, MA**  
(Research Assistant),  
Health Advocacy  
Coordinators Family  
Resource Network

#### Rowan University



**Leslie Spencer, PhD,**  
Professor (PI and  
Coordinator)

**Dara LoBuono,**  
Ph.D., R.D.  
(Co-I and  
Assistant Professor)

#### Rutgers University-Camden

**Kristin August, PhD,**  
(Co-I and  
Associate Professor)

#### Healthcare Organization

**Wendy Aita, PhD,**  
(Collaborator,  
Co-Director Rowan  
Integrated Special  
Needs Center)

#### Other University

**Joan Perks, PhD APN-C CNE CEN CRNI**  
(Co-I and Associate Professor Stockton University)

**Karroll Jordan, PhD,**  
(Collaborator, Professor, Rowan College of South Jersey  
Cumberland Campus)



# Initial Community Food Policy Research & Assessment For Atlantic City, NJ

**Counties:** Atlantic

**Target Population:** Atlantic City Residents,  
Low-income &  
Food Insecure Communities

**Funding Received:** \$20,000

## The Issue

Food insecurity and inequitable food access pose significant challenges for low-income and SNAP-eligible populations in Atlantic City, exacerbating health disparities within the community. The lack of comprehensive food policies and programs tailored to address the unique needs of vulnerable populations perpetuates these disparities. Understanding existing barriers and opportunities within food policy governance is essential for developing effective strategies to improve food access and security in Atlantic City.

## The Goal

The project seeks to strengthen the relationship between Stockton University and Atlantic City leaders and communities while addressing food insecurity and inequity. By assessing existing food system governance, engaging decision-makers, and promoting the development of Food Policy Councils, the project aims to inform policy changes that enhance food access and security in Atlantic City and beyond.

## The Takeaway

The food audit in Atlantic City revealed a discrepancy between the reported policies on equitable food access, particularly in emergency preparedness and food provision, and the lack of evidence for these policies in official documents. While the actual implementation of these policies is uncertain, there have been ongoing revisions to the city master plan, including a focus on urban agriculture. The identification of existing policies, gaps, and opportunities informs the development of targeted interventions and policies to improve food access and security for vulnerable populations.

## What We Asked / Research Question

Which food security/equitable food access policies are currently in place in the City of Atlantic City?

Where is the city missing opportunities to support equitable food access and foster food security, and what is the level of interest in closing those gaps?

How do city officials view the city's role in supporting equitable healthy food access to residents?

## What We Did / Research Methodology

The project developed a tailored food policy audit tool customized for Atlantic City and conducted a comprehensive assessment of food system governance. Data collection involved two phases: a survey comprising 91 yes-or-no questions and validation meetings with city officials to confirm the audit results.

## What We Found / Research Results

The assessment revealed that while there is a perceived presence of food policies related to equitable food access and public health in Atlantic City, there is a lack of documented evidence to support these claims. Significant gaps were identified in economic development policies supporting healthy food outlets, indicating a need for targeted interventions to promote food access and equity. Despite these challenges, city officials expressed a positive view of Atlantic City's role in supporting food access and equity initiatives, highlighting opportunities for collaboration and policy development.

## Why It Matters / Research Implications

Food insecurity and inequitable food access contribute to adverse health outcomes and perpetuate disparities within communities, particularly among low-income and food-insecure populations. Understanding the landscape of food policy governance is crucial for identifying areas of intervention and implementing effective strategies to address these challenges. By engaging community stakeholders and decision-makers in the assessment process, this research fosters collaboration and promotes collective action to improve food access and security for all residents.

### PROJECT TEAM

#### Community Organization



Anthony Disen, EdD  
(Stockton University) PI

Jeanine Cava, MS (NJ Food Democracy Collaborative)

Alicia Newcomb, BFA (NJ Food Democracy Collaborative)

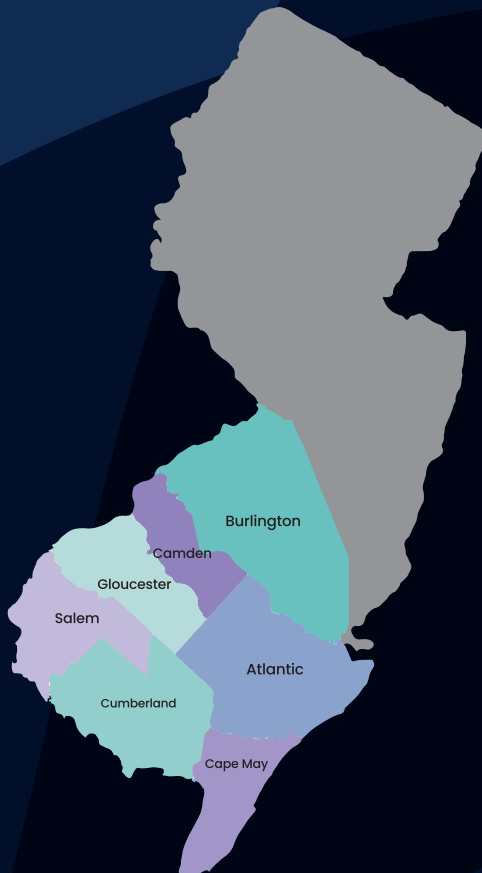
#### Rowan University

Keyanna Meade, BS  
Research Assistant

#### Rutgers University-Camden

Anthony Sbarra  
Research Assistant

## The State of New Jersey



# 04

## Ongoing Projects

- 56** A Resident-Centered Affordable Housing Mobile Resource and Database
- 58** Improving Opioid Use Disorder Treatment Retention After Release From Incarceration



# A Resident-Centered Affordable Housing Mobile Resource and Database

**Counties:** Camden

**Target Population:** Camden residents,  
community stakeholders,  
public housing agencies

**Funding Received:** \$20,000

## The Issue

While many people qualify for subsidized affordable rental housing, qualifying is just the first step. The next is to find a landlord who will accept your voucher in an area where you want or need to live. This project directly addresses this by aggregating publicly available data from various subsidized affordable housing programs to create a mobile-optimized, easy to use website to search for affordable housing.

## The Goal

This project aims to (1) produce a mobile website that will contain eligibility information and how to apply for housing assistance, income limits, location of units, and walking radius to amenities (parks, schools, businesses, etc), and (2) create a report on subsidized housing usage in Camden.





## What We Are Asking / Research Question

To what extent do residents of subsidized housing programs feel secure in their homes?

What is these residents' relationship like with their landlord, neighbors, and other community members?

What amenities do residents prioritize when searching for housing?

## What We Are Doing / Research Methodology

The project is conducting a quantitative review of subsidized affordable housing in Camden and qualitative interviews with residents and stakeholders to gather insights on housing aspects and website usability. It is also refining pilot versions of webmap interfaces with a housing subsidy database and contextual data.

## Why It Matters / Research Implications

This project plans to provide a direct solution to the challenge of finding landlords willing to accept Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) in desired locations. It achieves this by aggregating publicly available data from various subsidized affordable housing programs. The project also involves stakeholders in testing the resource website. This helps ensure that the final version is user-friendly and meets the diverse needs of both individuals seeking affordable housing and social service coordinators and housing navigators.

### PROJECT TEAM

#### Community Partners

Dan Krause  
(Hopeworks)

#### Rowan University

Zachary Christman, Ph.D., PI  
Associate Professor,  
GIS Program Director

#### Rutgers University-Camden

Sarah DeGiorgis, MCRP  
Doctoral Student

Natasha O. Fletcher, Ph.D  
Researcher



# Improving Opioid Use Disorder Treatment Retention After Release From Incarceration

**Counties:** Camden

**Target Population:** Opioid addicts being released from the Camden County Department of Corrections

**Funding Received:** \$20,000

## The Issue

The post-released incarcerated individuals carry a high risk of opioid overdose death due to the inadequate support and treatment access. Community providers received limited medication referrals and only a small fraction of these individuals actually receive treatment. The additional burden of COVID-19 in prisons exacerbates the situation, and the reduction in prison populations due to pandemic measures has led to a surge in released individuals with substance use disorders, further straining resources and support systems.

## The Goal

This project (1) evaluates socioeconomic and medical factors associated with post-release treatment visit attendance, and (2) explores barriers and facilitators to treatment engagement after release from incarceration.

## What We Are Asking / Research Question

What are the barriers and facilitators to treatment engagement after release from incarceration?

How do socioeconomic and medical factors influence buprenorphine treatment retention in individuals recently released from incarceration?

## What We Are Doing / Research Methodology

The project team works with Camden County Correctional Facility (CCCF) and has already obtained clearances, and IRB approval for interviews. The team examines factors affecting treatment visit attendance with existing data and CCCF assessments. We also seek to understand and scale interventions for treatment retention through qualitative interviews and mixed method analysis.

## Why It Matters / Research Implications

This project aims to fill a critical gap in understanding post-release buprenorphine treatment engagement among incarcerated individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD). It will shed light on socioeconomic and medical factors affecting treatment engagement. The findings will inform stakeholders in southern New Jersey about social determinants of health and treatment facilitators, enabling the development of a model referral system to improve substance use treatment transfer from correctional facilities to community providers. Ultimately, the project aims to develop evidence-based interventions and expand our efforts statewide.

### PARTNERS/RESEARCH TEAM

#### Rowan University

Bethany Raiff,  
Ph.D., BCBA-D,  
Professor

#### Jonathan Mathias

Lassiter, Ph.D.,  
Assistant Professor  
of Psychology

#### Rutgers University-Camden

Jane Siegel, Ph.D.,  
Professor of Criminal Justice, Associate  
Dean for Undergraduate Education

#### Cooper University Health Care



Matthew Salzman, MD, PI  
Assistant Professor of  
Emergency Medicine

Valerie S. Ganetsky,  
PharmD, MSc,  
Clinical Pharmacist

Jessica Heil, MSPH,  
Research Coordinator

Kaitlan Baston,  
MD, MSc,  
Division Head,  
Addiction Medicine

Rachel Haroz, MD,  
Associate Professor of  
Emergency Medicine

#### Camden County Correctional Facility

Sharon Bean, MPA,  
Camden County Jail Population Manager

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Leadership

**Nicole A. Vaughn, MS, PhD**

Founding Co-Lead  
Associate Professor  
(Health and Exercise Science)  
Rowan University

**Stephen Danley, D. Phil**

Co-Lead  
Director of the Center for Urban Research  
and Education (CURE)  
Associate Professor  
Rutgers University - Camden

### Academic Institutions

**Anthony Lowman, PhD,**

Provost, Rowan University

**Antonio Tillis, PhD,**

Chancellor, Rowan University-Camden

### Managing Committee

**Annette Reboli, MD**

Dean  
Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

**Tom Risch, PhD**

Vice Chancellor for Research  
Rutgers University - Camden

**Jeffrey L. Nash, ESQ**

President & CEO  
Rowan University/Rutgers -  
Camden Board of Governors

### Oversight Committee

**Darrin W. Anderson, Sr., PhD, MS, CSCS,**  
Urban League Philadelphia

**Carly Melchert,**

Meals on Wheels Salem County

**Angela Beale-Tawfeeq, PhD, MPH-**

Rowan University-School of Education

**Anthony Welch, MBA,**

Cooper University Health Care

**Gladys Antelo-Allen, RN, NP-**

Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers

**Sarah Allred, PhD,**

Rutgers University-Camden

**Paschal Nwako, PhD, MPH, HO, CHES,**

**REHS, DAAS,**

Camden County Department of Health  
& Human Services

### SJIPH Staff

**Emily Herrberg, MPH**

Operations & Research Coordinator  
South Jersey Institute for Population Health

**Betty Cui, MS**

Data Analyst  
South Jersey Institute for Population Health

### Rowan University Staff

**Robert R. Weaver, PhD**

Associate Co-lead  
Professor (Health and Exercise Science)  
Rowan University

**Charalampos (Babis) Papachristou, PhD**

Senior Biostatistician  
Associate Professor of Statistics  
Rowan University

**Talha Mobin, MPH**

Public Health Analyst, MPH

### Center for Urban Research & Education Staff

**Mariah Casias, MS**

CURE Department Administrator  
Rutgers University- Camden

**Melissa A. Thompson, M. Ed**

CURE Graduate Assistant  
Rutgers University- Camden

**Yanan Li**

CURE Research Assistant  
Rutgers University- Camden

## **RURCBOG Leadership & Staff**

### **Corey Hoffmann, MPA**

Director- Programs & Partnerships  
Rowan University/Rutgers -  
Camden Board of Governors

## **Past Leadership and Staff**

### **Dana Redd, MA**

(RURCBOG CEO 2018-2022)  
Rowan University/  
Rutgers - Camden Board of Governors

### **Michael Palis, PhD**

(SJIPH Managing Committee (2021-2022))  
Provost  
Rutgers University-Camden

### **Donna Nikitas, PhD, RN, NEA-BC,**

**CNE, FNAP, FAAN**  
(SJIPH Managing Committee 2021-2022)  
Provost  
Rutgers University-Camden

### **Benedetto Piccoli, PhD**

(SJIPH Managing Committee 2021-2022)  
Vice-Chancellor for Research  
Rutgers University-Camden

### **Naomi R. Marmorstein, PhD**

(Co-Lead 2022-2023)  
Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs  
Rutgers University-Camden

### **Sarah Allred, PhD**

(Founding Co-Lead 2021-2022)  
Associate Professor (Psychology)  
Rutgers University- Camden

### **Crashell A. Allen, M.Ed, MS, CCC-SLP**

(Public Health Analyst 2021-2023)  
Rowan University

### **Shania Terry, BS**

(Operations & Research Coordinator-2023)  
South Jersey Institute for Population Health

### **Amanda Ekelburg, MA**

(Operations & Research Coordinator-2022)  
South Jersey Institute for Population Health

### **Kristin Kelly, MA**

(Research Project Assistant-2021-2022)  
Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs  
Rutgers University-Camden

### **Mary Godleski-Cantin, MA**

(Research Marketing Associate -2021)  
Rutgers University- Camden







**SOUTH JERSEY**  
Institute For Population Health

Visit us at [www.sjiph.org](http://www.sjiph.org)