



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2020-2021**



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

**Urban Health  
Collaborative**

*Dornsife School of Public Health*





Members of the UHC.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

3

## ABOUT THE UHC

4

## NEW GRANT AWARDS

5

## HEALTH EQUITY AND URBAN HEALTH

5

## UHC RESPONDS TO COVID-19

6-7

## RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

8-10

## UHC BY THE NUMBERS

11-13

## STUDENT AWARDS

14-15

## SUPPORT FOR TRAINEES

16-17

## TRAINING LEADERS IN URBAN HEALTH AND HEALTH EQUITY

18-19

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

The year 2020-2021 has been another unprecedented year for cities and the UHC. A year in which faculty, staff, and students continued to connect and engage remotely, balancing work, family, and everything going on in the world around us. At the UHC, we continued to support ongoing research, training and policy translation to promote health, health equity and environmental sustainability in cities, all while pivoting where needed to stay relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also came together to reflect and revisit our own practices so that we can be actively anti-racist in all of our work, and we continue that work today. We know that there is still much that we need to do at the UHC and as citizens of the world to achieve the goals of social justice and racial equity in all areas of urban health.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to spread across the globe with new variants developing. Today, the availability of the COVID vaccine has become a critical tool to control the pandemic but there is still a long way to go and for much of the world the pandemic continues with little reprieve. UHC faculty, students, and staff continue to prioritize making visible the impact of the pandemic and its unequal effect on Black people and Latinx people in Philadelphia and in cities worldwide. UHC briefs have highlighted the excess rates of infection, hospitalization and deaths among the African American and Latinx communities in Philadelphia. In another example, the partnership between the UHC and the Big Cities Health Coalition produced a brief examining how indoor dining contributes to spread and transmission and outlined principles for cities to follow for reopening safely. Dashboards showing COVID-19 trends and inequities within Philadelphia, across US cities, and throughout Latin America have emerged as powerful tools with the flexibility to allow updated data to be incorporated and users to interactively control the display.

Despite the continued challenges we all faced this past year, we still engaged with each other and the urban health community through discussions and trainings virtually, including online brown bag seminars, invited speaker events, and our annual Urban Health Summer Institute in June. The West Philly Promise Neighborhood team participated in National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership ignite sessions where they presented on the COVID Vulnerability Indicators Dashboard. Presentations by UHC members throughout the year featured virtual auditing and the importance of evaluating health conditions, lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, electronic health records for children's health disparities research, analyses of spatial processes including causes and consequences of COVID-19, and equity's role in social determinants of health interventions, among many others. SALURBAL team members were instrumental in hosting the 17th International Conference on Urban Health titled "Transforming our Collective Urban Future: Learning from COVID-19," a virtual conference with engagement across Latin America and globally that convened a group of multi-sector and multidisciplinary stakeholders to discuss the critical health challenges facing cities across the globe.

The Urban Health Collaborative also supported Drexel's Climate Year, with members participating as speakers in the Climate Year Speaker Series and developed a course on climate change's impact on urban health for inclusion in this year's Urban Health Summer Institute. Researchers also joined the North American Hub of the Urban Climate Change Research Network and participated in network report development on critical climate topics.

The achievements of the past year were made possible by the hard work and dedication amongst our faculty, staff and trainees, as well as the support from our partners and funders. We look forward to continued collaboration in the year to come!

**Ana V. Diez Roux**

**Gina S. Lovasi**

Directors, Urban Health Collaborative

## About the UHC

The Drexel Urban Health Collaborative (UHC) was created to leverage the power of data, research, education, and partnerships to make cities healthier, more equitable, and environmentally sustainable.

### Our Mission

To improve health in cities by increasing scientific knowledge and public awareness of urban health challenges and opportunities, and by identifying and promoting actions and policies that improve population health and reduce health inequities.

### UHC key themes:

- Place based approaches
- Data for action
- Evidence for policy
- Health equity and social justice
- Community and policymaker engagement

## External Funding

The Urban Health Collaborative is generously supported by a gift from Dana and David Dornsife and by Drexel University. Funding to sustain our growth, scholarship, and engagement is also provided by a diverse set of external funders. This past year the UHC submitted 29 grant proposals as well as collaborating on applications submitted by departments at the Dornsife School of Public Health. The 34 externally funded grants that have been active in the past year, have provided \$5.2 million in direct research expenditures and support the work of faculty, research staff, postdoctoral researchers, and students at both the doctoral and masters levels.

- American Heart Association
- Bloomberg Family Foundation
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Lazarex Cancer Foundation
- de Beaumont Foundation
- Wellcome Trust
- US Department of Education
- National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- National Institute on Aging

## The UHC Team

The Urban Health Collaborative has expanded rapidly in the six years since its inception and is now a robust center known nationally and internationally. The Collaborative is made up of over 31 staff members and engages and supports over 20 trainees from undergraduate to postdoctoral levels, funded internally through UHC fellowships or through external grants and contracts. The UHC also has a visiting scholar program to host emerging and established researchers from around the world. Currently, experts from across the Dornsife School of Public Health lead the four UHC cores (Administrative Core, Training Core, Research and Data Core, and Policy and Community Engagement Core), with input from the UHC Steering Committee. Several tenure track and research faculty are administratively supported by the UHC, and 33 faculty from across the University are engaged as UHC faculty affiliates.

## Steering Committee Members

Amy Auchincloss, PhD, MPH Research and Data Core Co-Lead	Gina S. Lovasi, PhD, MPH Co-Director
Sharrelle Barber, ScD, MPH Research Faculty Representative	Kari Moore, MS Research and Data Core Co-Lead
Sarah Boise Masters Student Representative	Kevin Martinez-Folgar, MD Doctoral Student Representative
Amy Carroll-Scott, PhD, MPH Policy and Engagement Core Co-Lead	Tanisha Barnes Staff Representative
Jane Clougherty, MSc, ScD, Faculty Affiliate Representative	Claire Slesinski, MSPH Staff Representative
Ana Diez Roux, MD, PhD, MPH Director	Katie Livengood, MPH Assistant Director
Alex Ezech, PhD Training Core Co-Lead	Félice Lê-Scherban, PhD, MPH Training Core Lead
Jennifer Kolker, MPH Policy and Engagement Core Co-Lead	Brent Langellier, PhD, MA Affiliate Faculty Representative

## 2020-2021 Accomplishments

During the past year UHC faculty, staff and students developed new resources, secured new funding, published academic papers, presented commentaries, presented at conferences, engaged with local and global media, served on advisory committees, and held various leadership roles. Below we highlight some of the accomplishments of the past year.

### New Grant Awards

#### Cardiometabolic Risk Development and Management in Changing Neighborhoods

Sharrelle Barber, ScD, MPH, assistant professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at the Urban Health Collaborative, was awarded a 5-year, \$3.2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health in August 2020. The research links state-of-the-art epidemiologic data from the Jackson Heart Study cohort with well-characterized neighborhood data over a 20-year period. Barber is leading the research team that is examining how changes in physical and social features of the neighborhood environment influence hypertension and diabetes incidence and management.

#### The Built Environment, Pedestrian Injuries and Deep Learning

Alex Quistberg, PhD, MPH, assistant research professor at the Urban Health Collaborative was awarded a 5-year, \$690,000 K01 International Research Scientist Development Award from the Fogarty International Center at the National Institutes of Health. The study is focused on developing neighborhood built environment indicators using neural networks and examining their association with pedestrian safety in Bogota, Colombia.

#### Contribution of Longitudinal Neighborhood Determinants to Cognitive Health and Dementia Disparities within a Multi-Ethnic Cohort

Jana Hirsch, PhD, MES, assistant research professor at the Urban Health Collaborative was recently awarded a 5-year, \$4,358,351 R01 award from the National Institute on Aging. This study aims to identify actionable, community-level interventions to address and remediate racial and socioeconomic inequalities derived from the unequal distribution of environmental supports for healthy aging. This will provide robust new evidence about pathways between neighborhood environments and cognitive outcomes, with important implications for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) progression research and clinical management of the disease.



Center City, Philadelphia, PA

#### The Relationship Between State-Level Medicaid Policies and Access to Treatment for Substance Use Disorders

Pricila Mullachery, PhD, MPH, formerly postdoctoral research fellow and currently Senior Research Scientist II at the Urban Health Collaborative, was awarded a \$50,000 Cotswold Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship by Drexel University. Mullachery's research is focused on the impact of policies and public health interventions on health equity and examines the role of Medicaid policies on substance use disorder outcomes among poor and racial minority groups.

#### Tracking COVID-19 Testing and Testing Inequities in Cities

Urban Health Collaborative director and Dornsife dean Ana Diez Roux, MD, PhD, MPH and assistant professor Usama Bilal, MD, PhD, MPH, were awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to characterize inequalities in COVID-19 testing, characterize policies that cities have implemented to reduce these inequities, and evaluate the effects of these policies.

#### Integration of Socio-Spatial Data for Neighborhoods with Multi-Omic Profiles to Identify and Mitigate Factors Affecting Risk of Alzheimer's Disease

Gina Lovasi, PhD, co-director of the UHC, was awarded a \$74,924 subcontract on a Pioneer Award from the National Institutes on Aging, to assist the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley on a study looking at why there is a higher proportion of Hispanics experiencing Alzheimer's Disease (AD). This study will test if variations in AD-like cognitive trajectories across neighborhoods are explained exclusively by individual characteristics, or depend at least partly on social and physical elements of neighborhoods relevant to physical disorder and way finding.



# Health Equity and Urban Health

The UHC has conducted research locally in Philadelphia and globally to identify inequities and actions and policies to make cities healthier and more equitable.

## Community IMPACT and Cancer in Philadelphia Neighborhoods

A new interactive site led by the UHC in partnership with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Fox Chase Cancer Center called “Cancer in Philadelphia Neighborhoods,” was released this year. The interactive data tool displays neighborhood maps of cancer, cancer screening and select cancer risk factors in Philadelphia. The tool allows residents to explore and learn more about cancer in their neighborhood. The data tool reveals that cancer incidence and mortality differ across Philadelphia neighborhoods. Although cancer screening rates are generally high across Philadelphia, both cancer risk factors and cancer screening rates also differ by neighborhood. This research was supported by the Lazarex Cancer Foundation as part of the Community IMPACT project in collaboration with the Drexel College of Nursing and Health Professions.

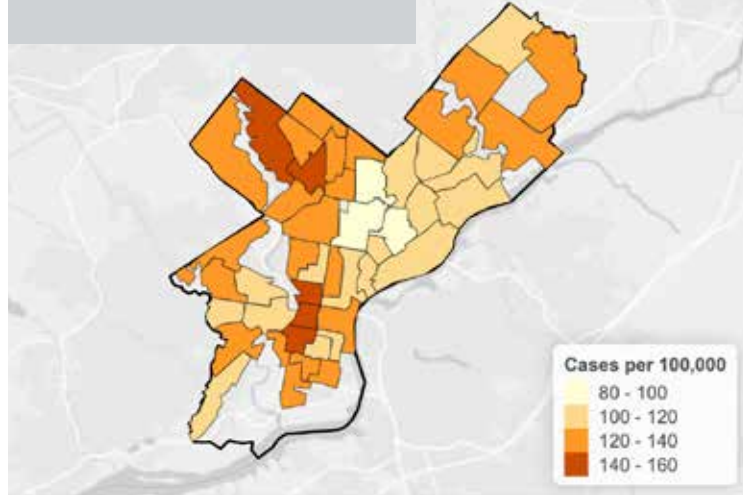
## West Philly Promise Neighborhood and Data Democratization

The West Philly Promise Neighborhood project team continues its work at the intersection of research, practice, and community engagement. This past year the team has focused on its goal to increase access to data by honing its data democratization work: sharing survey data snap shots, producing community indicator briefs, creating community-informed data dashboards, and developing data request processes. The West Philly Promise Neighborhood has also launched a new website ([westphillypn.org/](http://westphillypn.org/)) for users to stay connected within the community. The new website provides information about partners and programs, events and success stories throughout the Promise Neighborhood. A community resource map and COVID-19 information are featured. The site also explains the various ways data is collected to track Promise Neighborhood’s progress.

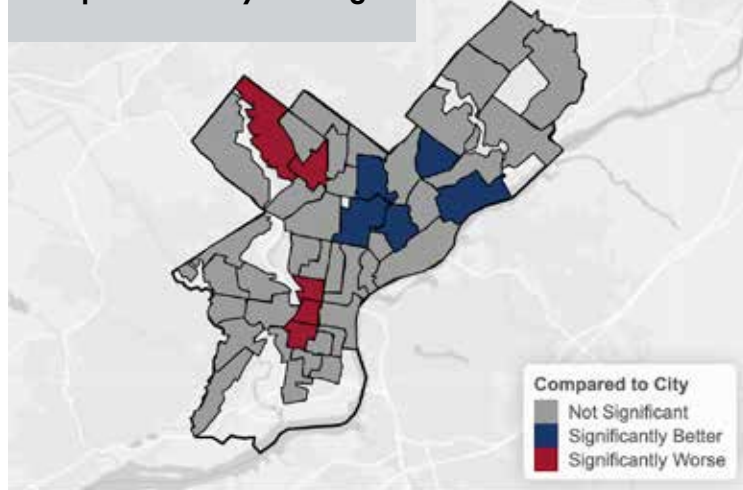


West Philly Promise Neighborhood website

### Breast Cancer Incidence



### Compared to City Average



Maps from the Cancer in Philadelphia Neighborhoods interactive app.

## Research and Data Expertise on Neighborhoods and Health Disparities

The research and data teams at the Urban Health Collaborative have continued to build the Philadelphia data repository to support sharing of spatially referenced data. The team has collaborated on a diverse array of projects and publications leveraging neighborhood data and made methodological advances in neighborhood characterization to examine health inequities. Examples include projects that looked at neighborhood context and kidney disease and high ambient temperatures and infant mortality in Philadelphia. The team also has a continued partnership with Temple University Institute for Survey Research to measure perceived gentrification.

## Partnership with Big Cities Health Coalition to Create Healthy, Equitable Cities

The UHC has continued its partnership with the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) to support the Coalition's vision of healthy, more equitable cities through big city innovation and leadership. Currently, the UHC is engaged in three projects with BCHC. The first focuses on building a national urban health agenda by creating a policy tool that will support BCHC with this agenda. The tool, once finalized, will synthesize literature on upstream policies and their effect on various health outcomes. The creation of this tool began when the team interviewed 30 lead health officials and surveyed 75 senior health department staff to gain insights on key priorities and challenges of implementing those priorities for large city health departments.

The UHC is also contributing its data expertise to the partnership by creating a city-level data platform to provide health and health equity metrics for 30 of the largest urban cities in the United States. The revamped platform, [bigcitieshealthdata.org](https://bigcitieshealthdata.org), will provide comparisons of health indicators across BCHC member jurisdictions. A third project also focuses on maintaining and updating a dashboard on COVID-19 health inequities in cities. This powerful data tool enables visualizations of COVID-19 related outcomes such as testing, incidence, hospitalizations, and mortality and examines inequities in outcomes over time and across 30 BCHC member cities. This tool has been disseminated to key stakeholders, community leaders, public health officials, and policy makers.



Big Cities Health Inventory Data Platform

## Identifying Policy Solutions to Law Enforcement Reform

Amy Carroll-Scott, PhD, MPH, and Jennifer Kolker, MPH, received funding from Drexel's Rapid Response Research and Development Fund for Racial Equity Projects for a policy surveillance project entitled, Multi-City Policy Surveillance to identify Policy Solutions to Law Enforcement Reform. This project created a system to monitor, document, and share local urban policy actions that positively impact population health. The project documented law enforcement reforms in four cities: Philadelphia, St. Louis, Louisville, and Birmingham. The team engaged with partners in these cities and is in the process of developing a co-created manuscript that will highlight the incremental nature of reforms in the wake of George Floyd's murder and national calls to action, as well as some best practices for reform.



Image from the International Conference on Urban Health

## A Commitment to Urban Health through a Virtual Lens with SALURBAL

In July 2021, the International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH) was virtually hosted by SALURBAL and organized by the International Society for Urban Health. The 17th conference titled "Transforming our Collective Urban Future: Learning from COVID-19," convened a group of multi-sector and multidisciplinary stakeholders to discuss the critical health challenges facing our cities across the globe. Alongside hosting ICUH, SALURBAL also hosted three webinars as part of their LAC-Urban Health Webinar Series including: Air Pollution and Health in Latin American Cities, Road Safety in Latin American Series, and Inequality in Mortality Outcomes in Latin American Cities. These webinars featured prominent research from the group as well as fostered collaboration amongst the international urban health community. The SALURBAL project also published research on life expectancy and causes of death in Latin American cities. The study reveals shocking differences in life expectancy across cities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and El Salvador. For women living in cities in these countries, life expectancy can vary by more than 8 years; for men, this difference can be as high as 14 years. These variations are observed both between countries, and within countries – raising important questions about the impacts of national and subnational policies and management designed to promote health. These insights can support planning and decision-making processes.





## **UHC Responds to COVID-19**

UHC researchers provided expert commentary to more than 25 media sources to address the pandemic. UHC faculty experts spoke to the media on a variety of topics and pressing public health issues including racism and its impact on public health, disparities in COVID-19 testing, misinformation surrounding vaccines and masking, and racial and ethnic inequities in new coronavirus infection and mortality. UHC experts were featured in local, national, and global media outlets including: Washington Post, CBS News, Philadelphia Inquirer, NPR, WHYY, NY Daily News, Bloomberg, TIME, and The New York Times Magazine, to name a few. The UHC is committed to shining a light on health disparities exacerbated by the pandemic and helping to provide accurate, evidence-based information in the media.





# COVID-19 Data Tools and Dashboards

## Philadelphia COVID-19 Vulnerability Dashboard

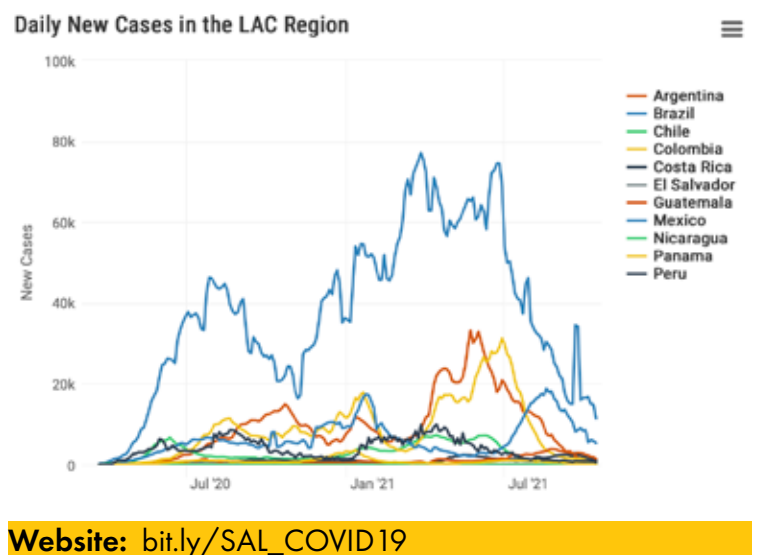
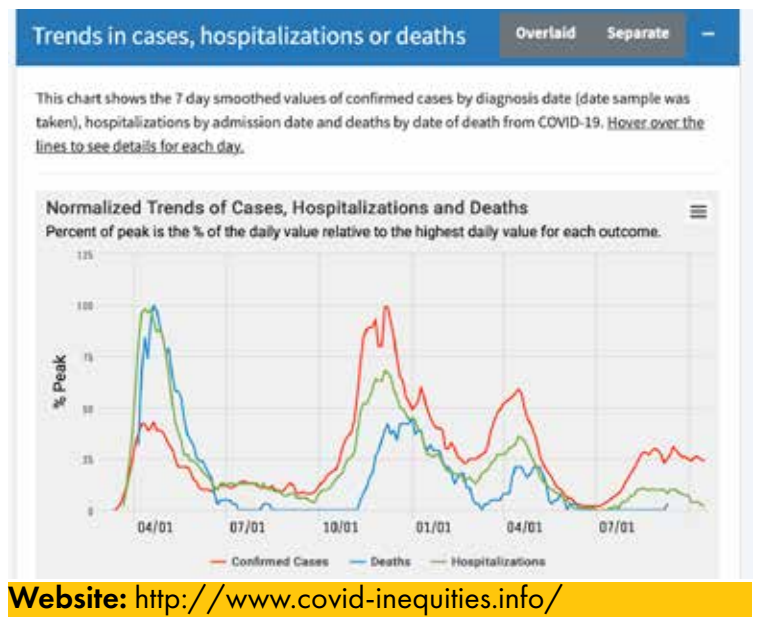
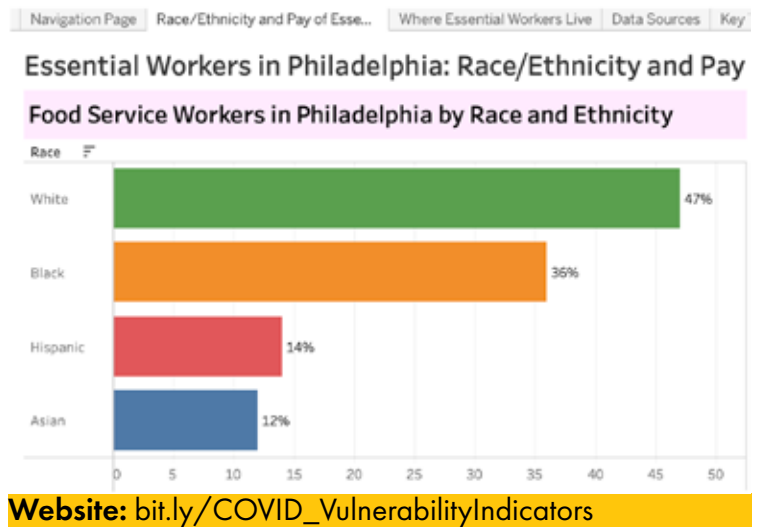
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Drexel West Philly Promise Neighborhood team has created multiple data dashboards to identify areas in Philadelphia that are at highest risk for COVID-19 and its longer-term impacts. The first dashboard shows general vulnerabilities based on the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index. The second dashboard displays data on additional COVID-related vulnerabilities relevant to Philadelphia communities, including health conditions, access to resources, and more detailed housing data. The third dashboard, the Essential Worker Dashboard, shows data on workers in essential industries, including data on race and ethnicity, pay, and where workers live.

## COVID-19 Health Inequities in Cities Dashboard

With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and in partnership with the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC), the UHC created a data platform to track outcomes and inequities in COVID-19 across 29 U.S. cities that make up the BCHC. Launched in January 2021, the dashboard site was created to inform decision-making by public health leaders in BCHC cities and educates the public, policymakers, and public health officials about the ways in which race/ethnicity, neighborhood, and city characteristics influence COVID-19 outcomes. The dashboard also leverages vaccination data allowing users to characterize, track, and compare COVID-19 vaccination inequities on multiple levels: across individuals within cities, across neighborhoods within cities, and across cities.

## COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean Dashboard

The SALURBAL project created a dashboard that allows visitors to plot trends of COVID-19 cases and deaths as well as to map these outcomes at various geographic levels: country, city, and sub-city in Latin American countries and compare the progress of the pandemic across cities. Using data compiled by Johns Hopkins University and from Latin American country governments, this online dashboard generates visualizations which can be tailored to the information needs of website visitors and which can be downloaded and shared. The data is currently being used in various analyses of how city characteristics influence COVID-19 outcomes including a recent SALURBAL publications on "The effect of population mobility on COVID-19 incidence in 314 Latin American cities", (published in August 2021) as well as a data brief on the impact of COVID-19 in Latin America which was translated to Spanish and Portuguese.



## COVID-19 and Health Equity

UHC faculty, staff, and students also researched and made visible how COVID-19 is affecting health and health equity in Philadelphia and in cities nationally and globally.

### Racism, Residential Segregation and COVID-19 in Philadelphia: Mobilizing Data for Action During the Pandemic

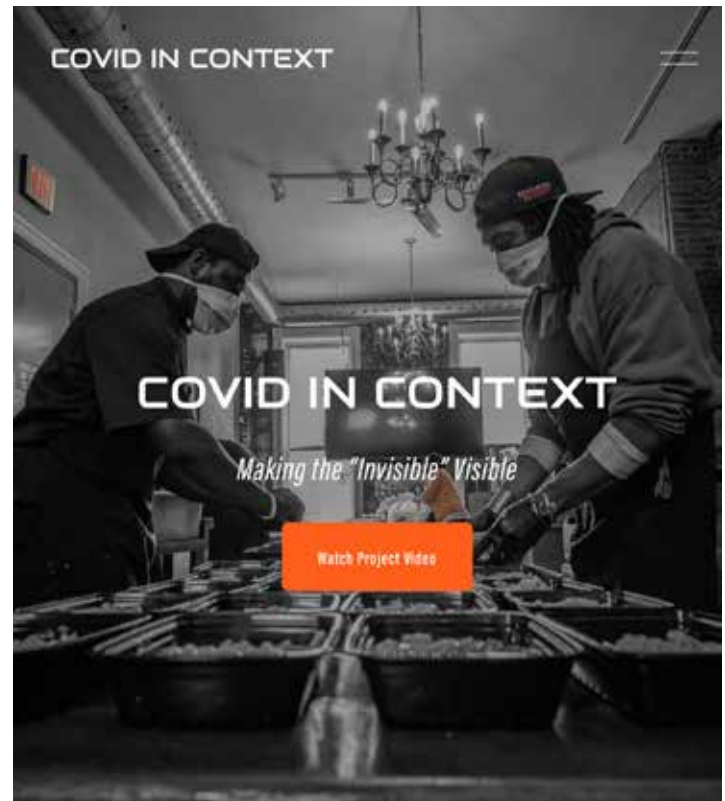
The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed deeply entrenched racial inequities and the disproportionate impact on minoritized groups. Led by Sharrelle Barber, ScD, MPH, assistant professor, the project used descriptive spatial data analyses and digital storytelling to examine the links between structural racism, racial residential segregation and COVID-19 pandemic in the city of Philadelphia. Shaping the narrative around emerging racial inequities and mobilizing data for action has been a key focus of this project. The website [covidincontextphilly.com](https://covidincontextphilly.com) was created to document how structural racism contributes to racial inequities in COVID-19 and shapes the lived experiences of individuals and communities most harmed by racism.

### COVID-19 Inequities Among Latinos in US Cities

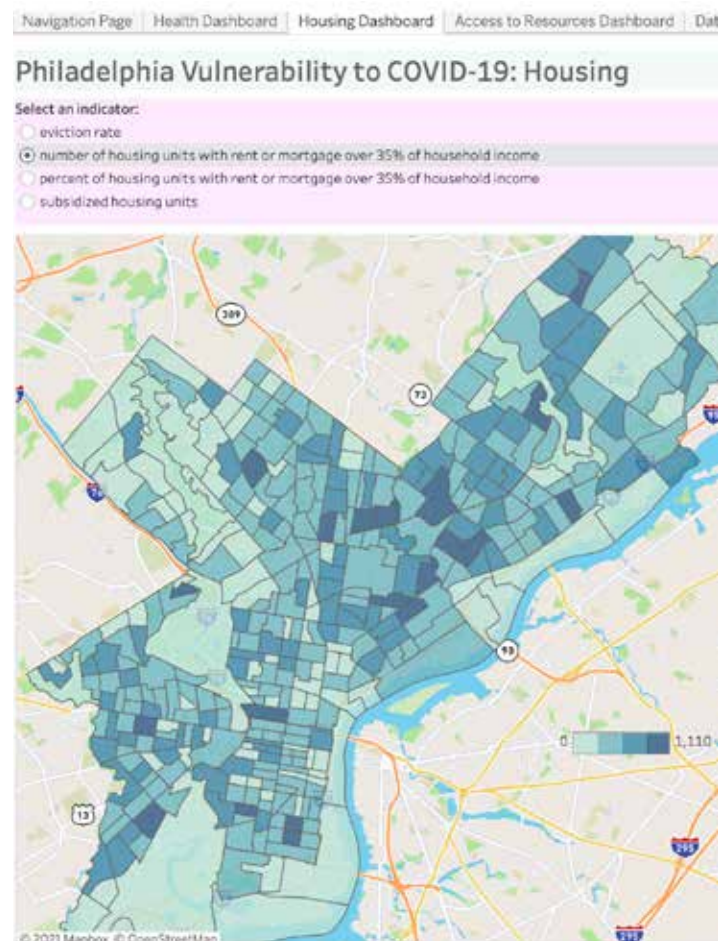
The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed wide inequities across racial and ethnic groups including Latinos. A project led by Usama Bilal, MD, PhD, MPH, assistant professor, and Mariana Lazo, MD, PhD, ScM, associate research professor, has leveraged data on COVID-19 outcomes by race/ethnicity and neighborhood from the 30 largest cities of the US to systematically examine trends and predictors of heterogeneities of health inequities in COVID-19 outcomes between Hispanics and Non-Hispanic Whites. A brief, "The Impact of COVID-19 in Latino Communities in Philadelphia," was created to illustrate the inequities experienced in Philadelphia.

### Developing a Strategy to Support Tenants, Owners, and Buildings Impacted by COVID-19 and Severe Social and Health Inequities in Philadelphia

Amy Carroll-Scott, PhD, MPH, policy and community engagement core co-lead, partnered with Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to develop data indicators demonstrating the connections between COVID-19 and tenant, building owner, and building needs. These included current and projected needs of tenants such as basic daily needs, behavioral health needs, physical health status, job loss due to COVID-19, and the corresponding impact on affordable rental properties. This data was incorporated into Drexel's COVID-19 Urban Vulnerability Data Dashboard, which includes an interactive city map, for data sharing and use among multi-family affordable housing stakeholders.



COVID in Context website



Data from partnership with LISC used in COVID-19 Urban Vulnerability Data Dashboard



## Research and Practice

The UHC has conducted research locally in Philadelphia and globally to identify inequities and actions and policies to make cities healthier and more equitable.

### Working Groups

The Urban Health Collaborative has several active working groups engaging in scholarly activities related to UHC's key themes. These working groups have been supported through UHC working group grants.

#### Maternal and Child Health Research, Training, and Practice Collaborative

The Maternal and Child Health Research, Training, and Practice Collaborative (MCHC) working group is a collaboration between Drexel Urban Health Collaborative, the Dornsife School of Public Health (DSPH), St. Christopher's Hospital for Children and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to support a broader agenda of improving Maternal and Child Health outcomes in the City of Philadelphia. In the past year, the workgroup conducted interviews with maternal and child health stakeholders throughout Philadelphia to assess their training, research, and informational needs. Earlier this year the group also held a symposium, "Identifying Research and Training Needs to Advance Maternal Health Policy and Equity," that highlighted innovations in policy and practice to address maternal mortality and to identify data, research, and training needs. The symposium engaged speakers and shared calls to action on the important topic of maternal mortality that included HRSA leadership, Philadelphia policymakers, Philadelphia Department of Public Health leaders, best practice programs, MCHC partners, and DSPH students and faculty.

#### UHC Community Violence Working Group

The Community Violence Working Group brought together researchers across Drexel University and other key institutions in Philadelphia to develop new ways of understanding and intervening to decrease community violence in urban neighborhoods. The group met throughout the year to discuss community violence and its root causes and effects. From these meetings, they developed a graph of monthly fatal shootings from 2018-2020 in Philadelphia to show the increase in fatal shootings during 2020. This work led to the creation of the brief, "Police Violence is a Public Health Issue." The working group presented these powerful data to a city-wide coalition of city and community leaders who lead violence prevention efforts in Philadelphia.



Members of the UHC.

#### Migration, Ethnicity, Race, and Health Working Group

During the last year, the Migration, Ethnicity, Race, and Health Working Group (MERHG) created and supported an interdisciplinary network of scholars across the United States regarding migration, ethnicity, race and health and facilitated a space to discuss their work in different levels of implementation as well supported lecturers in different stages of their career development. The group also engaged with community-based organizations and city departments to improve immigrant and minority health in Philadelphia. They organized and facilitated eight events featuring a range of experts along with creating a website to disseminate information. MERGH convened and facilitated 20 town halls with Latino-serving organizations, the Philadelphia public health department, the Office of Immigrant Affairs, and migrant health scholars to respond to the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has created for Latino communities in Philadelphia.

## Briefs

The UHC produces briefs to disseminate information to a range of stakeholders. In the past year the UHC published the following briefs:



### **Public Transportation and Active Transportation During the Pandemic**

This brief by the SALURBAL project outlines key recommendations for adapting and supporting public mass transit and active transportation systems to promote safe, healthy, and equitable mobility in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

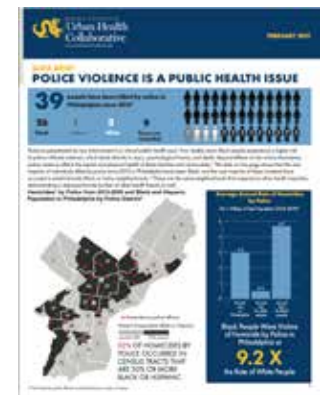
### **Police Violence is a Public Health Issue**

This data brief was created members of the Community Violence Working Group to share available data on police-inflicted violence in Philadelphia. The data showed that the vast majority of victims are Black and these instances of violence tend to occur in predominantly Black or Latino neighborhoods.



### **The Impact of COVID-19 in Latino Communities in Philadelphia**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been disproportionately high among the Latino and Black communities in Philadelphia. This brief uses the framework of differential exposure and vulnerability to illustrate the context in which factors have converged to result in disproportionately large COVID-19 impact among Latinos in Philadelphia.



### **COVID-19 and Urban Health in Latin America and The Caribbean**

This brief describes the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic using data compiled by SALURBAL. The brief includes information on the number of cases, deaths, and vaccinations reported, as well as socioeconomic inequities in these outcomes in Latin American cities.



### **Infant Mortality in Latin American Cities**

This data brief, from the SALURBAL project, uses data to describe patterns of infant mortality across Latin American cities and to better understand what characteristics of urban environments may be contributing to inequities in infant mortality.

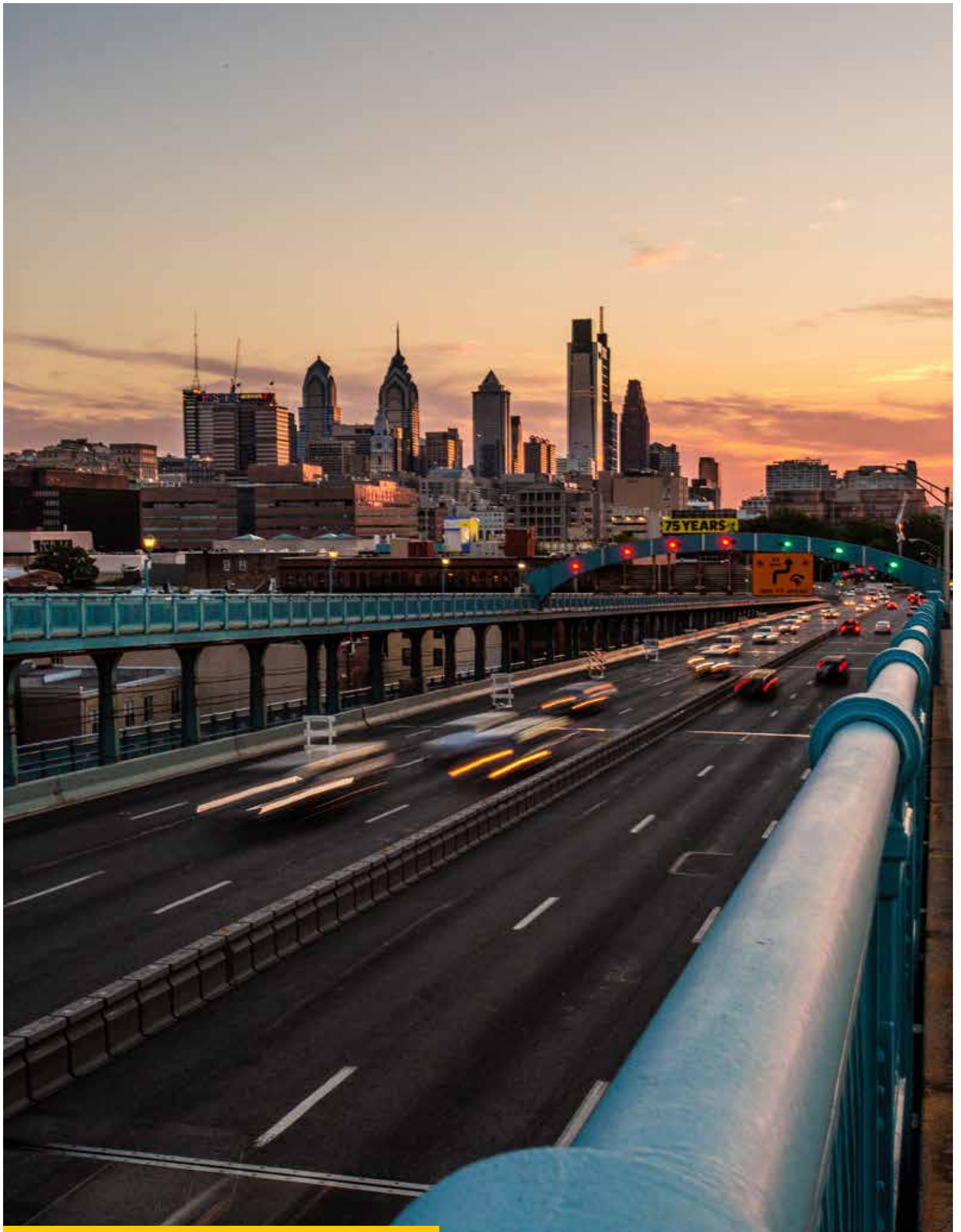


### **Indoor Dining and COVID-19**

This brief explores federal regulations and how decisions on reopening were left to municipal and state governments. An evaluation of the indicators that each city used to make reopening decisions is explored to gain a better understanding of how indoor dining impacts the spread of COVID-19.







## UHC By The Numbers

- 29 grants submitted totaling 19.5 million in research expenses
- 34 grants housed at the UHC totaling 5.2 million in annual direct grant expenditures
- 8 doctoral students, 3 postdoctoral research fellows, and 5 trainees supported on grants
- 2 master's students funded for Applied Practical Experience
- 31 total staff at the UHC
- 27 UHC Brown Bag Seminars
- 75 Urban Health Summer Institute participants
- 90 peer-reviews research publications in 65 different journals and were picked up by 135 different news outlets
- Over 2,400 social media mentions of UHC publications

## Presentation and Publication Highlights

**Ione Avila-Palencia, PhD, MPH**, gave a presentation at the International Conference of Urban Health on "Health and Environmental Co-Benefits of City Urban Form in Latin America: an Ecological Study."

**Sharrelle Barber, ScD, MPH**, was featured in a publication "Sharrelle Barber: at the Intersection of Place, Race, and Health" in The Lancet about how her work has been crucial in assessing the impact of structural racism on racial health inequities among Black people in the USA and Brazil. She was also quoted by several media sources including WHYY, NPR, and The Philadelphia Inquirer on the topic of inequities among COVID-19 in Black communities.

**Usama Bilal, MD, PhD, MPH**, led a publication on "Spatial Inequities in COVID-19 Testing, Positivity, Confirmed Cases and Mortality in 3 US Cities: an Ecological Study" in Annals of Internal Medicine. He was also quoted in numerous media sources including The Philadelphia Inquirer, NY Daily News, and TIME, on the topics of COVID-19 inequities, racial disparities, and vaccines.

**Amy Carroll-Scott, PhD, MPH**, was an invited webinar panelist for the US Department of Education on the topic of "Addressing Health Inequities in Promise Neighborhoods." She was also organizer and moderator for "Philadelphia MCH Programs and COVID-19, a panel discussion", co-hosted by the UHC and the Dornsife School of Public Health's Maternal and Child Health Program.

**Josiah Kephart, PhD, MPH**, gave a presentation at the International Conference of Urban Health on "Extreme Temperatures and Health in Latin American Cities."

**Jennifer Kolker, MPH**, was interviewed for "Stay-at-Home Orders Saved Hundreds of Thousands, Report Finds" in The Hill. She was also quoted in numerous other media outlets about indoor dining, stay-at-home orders, and COVID-19 vaccinations, including The Philadelphia Inquirer, Washington Post, CBS News, and Forbes.

**Jana Hirsch, PhD, Kari Moore, MS, and Gina Lovasi, PhD**, were involved in a publication on "Business Data Categorization and Refinement for Application in Longitudinal Neighborhood Health Research: a Methodology" featured in Journal of Urban Health.

**Mariana Lazo, MD, PhD, ScM**, participated in an expert panel focused on the public health burden of fatty liver disease in Latin America hosted by The Economist Intelligence Unit and the International Liver Foundation.

**Félice Lê-Scherban, PhD, MPH**, led a publication on "Are There Birth Cohort Effects in Disparities in Child Obesity by Maternal Education?" in the International Journal of Obesity.





Members of the UHC.

**Pricila Mullachery, PhD, MPH**, led a publication “Have Health Reforms in Brazil Reduced Inequities in Access to Cancer Screenings for Women?” in *The Journal of Ambulatory Care Management*.

**Ana Ortigoza, MD, PhD, MPH, MS**, gave a presentation at the International Conference of Urban Health on “Air Pollution, Heat, and Climate Vulnerability in Latin American Cities: Lessons from SALURBAL.”

**Amy Auchincloss, PhD**, led a publication on “Are Neighbourhood Restaurants Related to Frequency of Restaurant Meals and Dietary Quality? Prevalence and Changes Over Time in the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis” in *Public Health Nutrition*.

**Alex Quistberg, PhD, MPH**, was involved in a publication, “Bicycle Safety in Bogotá: A Seven-Year Analysis of Bicyclists’ Collisions and Fatalities,” in *Accident Analysis and Prevention*.

**Ivana Stankov, PhD**, led a publication “From Causal Loop Diagrams to Future Scenarios: Using the Cross-Impact Balance Method to Augment Understanding of Urban Health in Latin America” in *Social Science and Medicine*.

**Ariela Braverman-Bronstein, MD, MPH**, led a publication “Association of Education Level with Diabetes Prevalence in Latin American Cities and its Modification by City Social Environment” in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.

**Janene Brown, MPH**, led a publication “The Association of Neighborhood Medical Facilities with Aging in Place and Risk of Incident Myocardial Infarction” in the *Journal of Aging and Health*.

**Amie Devlin, MPH, MA**, led a publication “‘Who is Going to Put Their Life on the Line for a Dollar? That’s Crazy’: Community Perspectives of Financial Compensation in Clinical Research” in the *Journal of Medical Ethics*.

**Dustin Fry, MPH**, led a publication “Land Use Diversity and Park Use in New York City” in *Preventive Medicine Reports*.

**Samantha Joseph, MPH**, led a publication “Colonial Neglect and the Right to Health in Puerto Rico After Hurricane Maria” in *American Journal of Public Health*.

## Student Awards



### Dornsife Student Awarded Mini Grant to Conduct Research at the UHC

Andrea Eleazar, public health '23, was awarded a \$1,500 Undergraduate Research and Enrichment mini-grant from Drexel University to study the heterogeneity of health outcomes among immigrants in the United States with mentors Usama Bilal, MD, PhD, MPH and Mariana Lazo, MD, PhD, ScM at the Urban Health Collaborative. The project will characterize, analyze, and communicate the US immigrant population's heterogeneous nature to inform future public health interventions.

### Doctoral Fellowship Program

The Urban Health Collaborative Doctoral Fellowship program provides funding for incoming Dornsife School of Public Health doctoral students for up to two years. These fellowships include tuition remission, resources for travel and supplies and annual stipend to support research in urban health under the mentorship of faculty research sponsors across the Dornsife School of Public Health.

### Doctoral fellows funded in 2020-2021



**Janelle Edwards, MPH**

Advisor: Leah Schinasi, PhD

Janelle's work focuses on quantifying the link between historical redlining and modern-day markers of segregation. Her research also estimates the association between living in racially segregated and historically redlined neighborhood and the prevalence of the following cardiovascular disease risk factors: obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.



**Kathleen Ward, MSPH, CHES**

Advisor: Alexis Roth, PhD, MPH

Kathleen's research focuses on an evaluation plan for Prevention Point Philadelphia's new drug and alcohol assessment center. Her work with the center created a process evaluation plan and data collection tools. She was also successful in gaining additional funding for this research from the Health Resources Services Administration and was awarded an Interdisciplinary Community-Based Participatory Research for Health grant.

### Master's Fellowship Program

The UHC Master's Fellowship provides a research stipend to outstanding master's degree students who work in the field of urban health under the supervision of a faculty mentor. In 2020-2021 there were three first-year UHC Master's Fellows.

### Masters fellows funded in 2020-2021



**Sarah Boise, MPH '22**

Community Health and Prevention

Mentor: Ana Martínez-Donate, PhD

Sarah Boise works on two projects, the first focused on Systematic Transportation and Recreation Environment Evaluations using Technology (STREET) and the second focused on Retail Environment and Cardiovascular Disease where she completed virtual audits, training, literature reviews, manuscript development, and analyzed longitudinal data.



**Yosselin Turcios, MPH '22**

Community Health and Prevention

Mentor: Ana Martínez-Donate, PhD

Yosselin Turcios works on two projects that seek to understand how substance abuse, violence, HIV/AIDS, and substance use interact and impact the Latino community in Philadelphia. She has transcribed interviews that were conducted with Latino community members and is now supporting the data extraction phase of the project.



## Student's reflections on the UHC Fellowship experience:

"The UHC summer course was extremely helpful and I really appreciated that it was included in my fellowship. It was also great to connect with PhD/MPH students from other programs with similar interests." – Janelle Edwards, PhD(c), MPH

## Student's reflections on the UHC Master's Research Fellowship experience:

"The most valuable aspect for me has been the mentorship I've received. Loni is an incredible mentor and she's allowed me to see firsthand the struggles with starting a research project from scratch." – Shelby Spohn, MPH '22

"The UHC fellowship is the reason I chose to attend Drexel University. It is incredibly hands-on and skills-based and I know that I am learning valuable skills that will support my future public health career." – Yosselin Turcios, MPH '22

## Student's reflections upon completing a UHC-funded Applied Practical Experience:

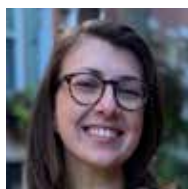
"I learned a great deal about the importance of a well-articulated program strategy for evaluation. In my research on empowerment evaluation, I developed a deeper understanding of logic models and ways to organize programs to easily measure success." – Oladoyin Onawole, MPH '22

"Aside from the administrative and management skills that I gained, I learned how to manage many competing interests, and how to establish a middle ground between opposing parties." – Katie Singley, MPH '22

## Applied Practical Experience

The UHC provides student funding to support select Applied Practical Experience placements for students wishing to focus on urban health as part of the practical experience required of all first-year MPH students.

## Applied Practical Experience funded in 2020-2021



**Katie Singley, MPH '22**

Katie Singley worked with Philadelphia Overdose Prevention Network (POPN) engaging with key stakeholders such as Kensington residents, community-based organizations, and the city government.



**Oladoyin Onawole, MPH '22**

Oladoyin Onawole worked with Every Murder is Real Healing Center (EMIR) to develop an improved evaluation strategy and conduct an inventory of EMIR's current data collection methods.



## Support for Trainees

The Urban Health Collaborative is committed to engaging trainees at all levels as they advance their careers in urban health and supports many research trainees working on grant-funded projects.

### Postdoctoral Research Fellows in 2020-2021

- Ione Avila-Palencia, PhD, MPH
- Allana Forde, PhD, MPH
- Jingjing Li, PhD, MS
- Josiah Kephart, PhD, MPH
- Pricila Mullachery, PhD, MPH
- Ana Ortigoza, MD, PhD, MPH, MS
- Alina Schnake-Mahl, ScD, MPH

### Doctoral Research Fellows in 2020-2021

- Ariela Braverman-Bronstein, MD, MPH
- Janene Brown, MPH
- Amie Devlin, MPH, MA
- Dustin Fry, MPH
- Zach Fufeld, MPH
- Samantha Rivera Joseph, MPH
- Kevin Martinez-Folgar, MD
- Bricia Trejo, MPH

### Visiting Scholars and Postdoctoral Fellows

Visiting scholar and postdoctoral fellows visit the UHC from around the world, engaging with faculty on research projects and fostering global collaborations. Scholars visiting at the UHC in the past year include:

**Lilah Besser, PhD, MSPH**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and the Institute for Human Health and Disease Intervention, Florida Atlantic University



Members of the UHC.

## Training Leaders in Urban Health and Health Equity

### Welcoming 2020-2021 GATHER Trainees

In the past year, the UHC was pleased to continue supporting our 2020-2021 cohort and welcome a new cohort for 2021-2022. The Global Alliance for Training in Health Equity Research (GATHER) is a T-37 training grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities at the Drexel Dornsife School of Public Health. Trainees from Drexel or other universities advance their careers in global health equity through mentored and skills-based research training.

The 2021-2022 cohort included one postdoctoral fellow and three doctoral fellows:

- **William Lodge II, MSc, PhD Candidate** in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences, Brown University
- **Macceau Médozile, DrPh, MPA**, in Public Health, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University
- **Sara Jane Samuel, MPH, PhD Candidate**, in Sociomedical Sciences, Columbia University
- **Jamile Tellez Lieberman, MPH, DrPh Candidate**, in Community Health and Prevention, Drexel University

The 2020-2021 cohort included two postdoctoral fellows and two doctoral fellows:

- **Cinthya Alberto, PhD**, in Health Services Research and Policy, Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health
- **Amilcar Matos-Moreno, PhD Candidate**, in Epidemiology, University of Michigan
- **Adedotun Ogunbajo, PhD**, Behavioral & Social Health Sciences, Brown University
- **Kristefer Stojanovski, PhD Candidate**, Health Behavior & Health Education, University of Michigan

A special thanks to Rosie Mae Henson, GATHER 2019-2020 scholar, for co-chairing the UHC task force on anti-racist organizational changes.



## Urban Health Summer Institute

More than 75 attendees from across the country gathered online to engage in a training at the sixth annual Urban Health Summer Institute, June 21-28. This was the second year that the Summer Institute has been hosted online. This year's institute attracted participants from across the country working in diverse fields: health departments, healthcare institutions, non-profits, community-based organizations, and other academic institutions.

*Courses from the 2021 Urban Health Summer Institute:*

- Introduction to GIS
- GIS Spatial Analysis for Urban Health
- Introduction to R for Public Health Research
- Introduction to Multilevel Analysis for Urban Health Research
- Data Storytelling in Tableau: How to Convert Analytics into Insights
- Applied Policy and Program Evaluation for Urban Health
- Utilizing Electronic Health Records in Epidemiological Analysis
- Climate Change and Health in Cities: Evidence to Action

*We heard feedback from participants in the summer institute:*

**"Instructor was very personable, engaging and tried to involve the participants."**

**"This course taught program and policy evaluation with efficacy in mind. There was thoughtful consideration given to balancing aspects of rigor with aspects of feasibility in real world settings."**

**"I found the instructors to be wonderful. Very engaging, welcoming, and kind. They encouraged a collaborative space where I felt comfortable asking questions, and never felt like I had a stupid question."**

**"I feel like I now have the abilities needed to start working in R at a basic level in order to build up my comfort level and skills further. The course materials will be a great guide as I keep advancing in my abilities in R."**

Special thanks to all internal and external advisors that provided input in planning the Summer Institute courses.



West Philadelphia, PA.

## DORNSIFE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AT DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Dornsife's mission is to provide education, conduct research, and partner with communities and organizations to improve the health of populations. Dornsife views health as a human right and has a special commitment to improving health in cities, eliminating health disparities, and promoting health in all policies.

The UHC and the Dornsife School of Public Health are committed to creating an environment that supports intellectual exchange and debate and promotes diversity and inclusion in all our activities.

### Partner with us

Knowledge generation and action cannot happen without partnerships. At the UHC we engage with communities, governments, nonprofits, and other stakeholders locally and globally to conduct research and translate evidence into effective action.

The Urban Health Collaborative is a member of the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, coordinated by the Urban Institute in Washington, DC and a member of the International Society on Urban Health.



DREXEL UNIVERSITY  
**Urban Health  
Collaborative**  
Dornsife School of Public Health

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