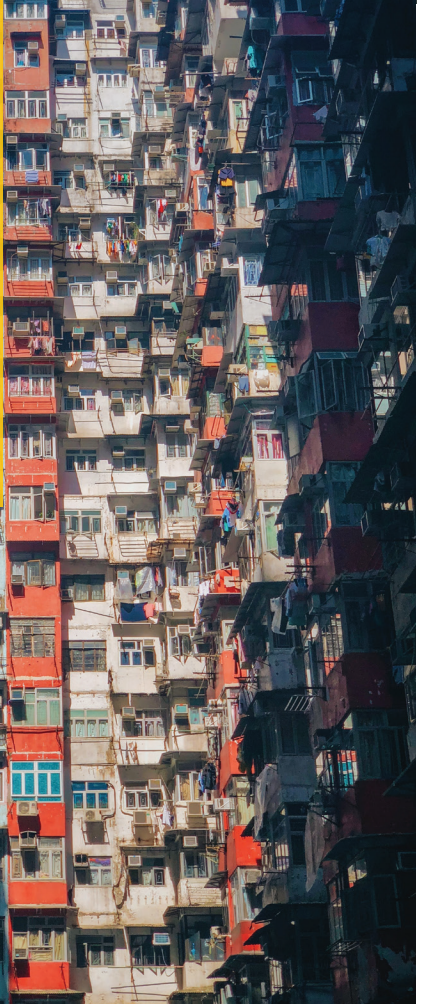




**ANNUAL REPORT  
2018-2019**



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



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The year 2018-2019 was an exciting year for the Drexel Urban Health Collaborative (UHC). After taking the time to collectively reflect on our shared goals and aspirations at a planning retreat in July 2018, we have worked on implementing a new strategic plan to guide us forward for the next three years. We have been incubating and testing new ideas to strengthen our research, training, partnerships, and impact while increasing our connections to the broader field of urban health. Selected highlights from the past year include:

**Collaboration and engagement.** We had the opportunity to gather as a group at over 34 events throughout the academic year, including informal brown bag lunches to share our work as well as social events. We also hosted several distinguished visiting speakers focused on innovative approaches to improving urban health including Jeffrey Hom, policy advisor in the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Natalia Linou, policy specialist at the United Nations Development Programme. A major highlight this year was our partnership with the Department of Public Health to develop the "Close to Home" report, describing the health of Philadelphia neighborhoods. We also partnered with the Health Federation and the Family Practice Counseling Network in the use of electronic health records to characterize the impact of community level social determinants on health care outcomes. The UHC data repository continues to grow and provides a valuable data resource to Dornsife School of Public Health and Drexel University.

**Research and scientific exchange.** UHC researchers have leveraged expertise in geographic and environmental data, in geocoding, and in analytical issues including small area estimation methods across a variety of projects. The UHC houses interdisciplinary projects totaling 3.96 million in direct research expenditures on a range of urban health topics. Exciting research projects housed at the UHC include the ongoing Pediatric Big Data project in collaboration with Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania, the West Philly Promise Neighborhood Project in partnership with the City of Philadelphia, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), People's Emergency Center, Philadelphia Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and other local organizations, and SALURBAL, an international research network on urban health in Latin America. New projects include Community IMPACT, focusing on cancer in Philadelphia, an NIH Early Investigator Award on the health consequences of urban scaling and an AHA Career Development Award on urban greenness and cardiovascular disease.

**Building networks and strengthening partnerships.** The UHC continues to engage with partners locally, nationally and globally. As the Philadelphia partner with the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) we have collaborated with the network of over 30 local partners across the US, to further the development and use of neighborhood information in local policymaking and community building. The Urban Health Network for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC-Urban Health) continues to promote exchanges and collaborations focused on research, training, and translation. Highlights this year include the SALURBAL Knowledge-to-Policy Forum which hosted over 30 academics and policy actors from across the Latin American region to discuss the challenges of policy translation in urban health.

**Training future urban health leaders.** The UHC engaged over 40 trainees, a UHC record, including visiting and postdoctoral scholars, as well as doctoral, masters and undergraduate students. In addition, for the first time this year we hosted WorkReady student Khaya Cliett-Bright from local String Theory Schools. As a rising High School junior interested in pursuing a career in medicine, Khaya worked on virtual audits of street segments using Google Street View with UHC faculty. Another exciting new development was the launch of the Global Alliance for Training in Health Equity Research (GATHER) Traineeship program offering the first cohort of doctoral and postdoctoral trainees a chance to advance their careers and training in global health equity issues.

**Expanding our vision nationally and globally.** Last but not least, UHC continues to expand engagement with national and international partners through the many initiatives described above and also through convening major events and training programs including our biennial Urban Health Symposium and our annual Urban Health Summer Institute, where we offer training on a broad set of urban health related topics to a range of trainees. We are also proud to have joined the International Society for Urban Health (ISUH) as an institutional member in order to exchange with other urban health leaders and address global challenges.

Thank you to all of the faculty, staff and trainees at the UHC and our partners for making all this great work possible. Please reach out to us with any ideas you have to make our work more useful and impactful. We are thrilled to see our progress and look forward to new opportunities in the year to come!

**Ana V. Diez Roux**  
Director, Urban Health Collaborative

**Gina S. Lovasi**  
Co-Director, 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 health disparities
- Community and policymaker engagement



## The UHC Team

The Urban Health Collaborative has expanded rapidly in the four years since its inception to become the robust center known nationally and internationally for its urban health work that it is today. Currently, six experts from across the Dornsife School of Public Health lead the various UHC cores, several tenure track and research faculty are administratively supported by the UHC, and 32 faculty from across the University are engaged as UHC faculty affiliates. The Collaborative is made up of over 20 staff members and engages and supports over 40 trainees at all levels, funded through UHC fellowships and grants or contracts. The UHC also has a visiting scholar program to host trainees and researchers from around the world. The UHC is organized into four areas to support ongoing team activities: the Administrative Core, Training Core, Research and Data Core, and Policy and Community Engagement Core.

### Administrative Core

The Administrative Core provides administrative and programmatic oversight to the Collaborative and supports a broad range of activities, events, symposia and research submissions.

### Research and Data Core

The Research and Data Core compiles, processes, and analyzes data on health in cities, provides GIS and analytical support, and collaborates on urban health research projects locally and globally.

### Training Core

The Training Core develops training for Drexel students and partners on urban health, including the Summer Institute and UHC fellowships.

### Policy and Community Engagement Core

The Policy and Community Engagement Core partners with policymakers and community stakeholders to promote dissemination and translation of UHC research and evidence on urban health.

Amy Auchincloss, PhD, MPH  
Research and Data Core Co-Lead

Sharrelle Barber, ScD, MPH  
Research Faculty Representative

Amy Carroll-Scott, PhD, MPH  
Policy and Engagement Core Co-Lead

Amy Confair, MPH  
Outreach and Training Manager

Ana Diez Roux, MD, PhD, MPH  
Director

Alex Ezeh, PhD  
Training Core Co-Lead

Jennifer Kolker, MPH  
Policy and Engagement Core Co-Lead

Brent Langellier, PhD, MA  
Affiliate Faculty Representative

Katie Livengood, MPH  
Assistant Director

Félice Lê-Scherban, PhD, MPH  
Training Core Co-Lead

Gina S. Lovasi, PhD, MPH  
Co-Director

Kari Moore, MS  
Research and Data Core Co-Lead

Katie Nelson, MPH  
Trainee Representative

Kelley Traister, MSW  
Staff Representative



## External Funding

The Urban Health Collaborative is generously supported by a gift from Dana and David Dornsife and by Drexel University. Significant funding is also provided by a diverse set of external funders. This past year the UHC submitted 21 grant proposals and also collaborated on applications submitted by departments at the Dornsife School of Public Health. Our 22 externally funded grants, providing 3.96 million in direct research expenditures, support faculty time, research staff, postdoctoral researchers, and students at both the doctoral and masters levels.

### External Funders

American Heart Association

Bloomberg Philanthropies

European Commission

Lazarex Cancer Foundation

National Institutes of Health

PeopleForBikes Foundation

Philadelphia Department of  
Public Health

State of Pennsylvania

UNICEF

US Department of Education

The Wellcome Trust

Urban Health Collaborative faculty and affiliates are internationally recognized as leaders in the study of how cities affect health. In the past year, many at the Urban Health Collaborative contributed to publications, invited talks and commentaries, and served as members and leadership of national and international societies and editorial boards, participated in advisory committees, and received recognitions.

## UHC by the numbers

- 21 grants submitted totaling 10.1 million in direct research expenses
- 22 grants housed at the UHC totaling 3.96 million in annual direct grant expenditures
- 7 doctoral students supported on grants
- 5 postdoctoral research fellows supported on grants
- 9 trainees supported on UHC fellowships
- 5 master's depth experiences funded
- 23 total staff at the UHC
- 26 UHC Brown Bag seminars
- 3 Invited Speaker presentations
- Over 75 Urban Health Summer Institute registrants
- 230 Urban Health Symposium registrants
- Over 100 research publications
- Publications in over 79 different journals
- Over 5,000 social media mentions of UHC publications (and counting!)

## Highlights

**Sharrelle Barber**, assistant research professor of epidemiology and biostatistics was the keynote speaker at UNC-Greensboro's Symposium on Social Justice and Health Equity and spoke on "Matters of Life and Death: Racism, Health and the Global Struggle for Black Lives".

**Usama Bilal**, assistant research professor of epidemiology and biostatistics was awarded a NIH Director's Early Independence Award to study the health consequences of urban scaling. The \$1.25 million of funding over five years supports exceptional junior scientists to move immediately into independent research positions.

**Amy Carroll-Scott**, assistant professor of community health and prevention was an Invited Colloquium Speaker in December 2018 at the Penn Population Studies Center, on "Combining Population-Based Survey Methods with Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches in the West Philadelphia Promise Neighborhood".

**Ana Diez Roux**, Dornsife School of Public Health dean and UHC director was appointed the President of the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science (IAPHS).

**Jana Hirsch**, assistant research professor of epidemiology and biostatistics was the Public Health Equity Expert Panelist for the Healthy Communities Task Force and Regional Safety Task Force Joint Meeting, "Just Streets: The Intersection of Crashes, Equity, and Health", at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission in Philadelphia.

**Gina Lovasi**, Dornsife associate professor of urban health and UHC co-director served as an International Society for Urban Health (ISUH) board member and on the American Heart Association, Epi Leadership Committee of the Council on Epidemiology and Prevention.

**Alex Quistberg**, assistant research professor of environmental and occupational health led a paper in the Journal of Urban Health on "Building a Data Platform for Cross-Country Urban Health Studies: the SALURBAL Study".

**Leah Schinasi**, assistant professor of environmental and occupational health, was awarded the American Heart Association 2019 Career Development Award, a \$231,000, three year award.

## Doctoral Fellowship Program

The UHC 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 2018-2019



**Catalina Correa Salazar, MS**  
Mentor: Ana Martínez-Donate  
Department of Community Health and Prevention

Catalina Correa works on the UnityPhilly project, which aims to decrease overdoses by training participants in overdose prevention and testing the feasibility of using an app for participants to call for help, and access naloxone and valuable information when they need it.



**Nishita Dsouza, MPH**  
Mentor: Ana Martínez-Donate  
Department of Community Health and Prevention

Nishi Dsouza is examining collaborations among Latino immigrant-serving organizations in Philadelphia to understand perceptions of the availability, accessibility, and accommodation of health and social resources available. She aims to identify key linkages and recommendations.



**Dustin Fry, MPH**  
Mentor: Gina Lovasi  
Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Dustin Fry's research examines physical and social disorder in urban neighborhoods, physical activity and recreation in children, and evaluating clean-air legislation.



**Rosie Mae Henson, MPH**  
Mentor: Robert Field  
Department of Health Management and Policy

Rosie Mae Henson worked on two main projects this year: One on local policymaker perceptions of and activities to address health equity, and the other was a systematic literature review of physical environment upgrading evaluations in informal settlements.



**Rennie Joshi, MPH**  
Mentor: Yvonne Michael  
Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Rennie Joshi's main work is research on evaluating the effects of air pollution on cardiovascular health in Nepal. She also worked with Katie Nelson and a UHC postdoctoral fellow, Ivana Stankov, to record an online lecture series on complex systems in public health for the Center for Public Health Practice at DSPH.



**Katie Nelson, MPH**  
Mentor: Jonathan Purtle  
Department of Health Management and Policy

Katie Nelson's research is focused on understanding the multilevel factors that contribute to the utilization of mental health services in children. She also worked with agent-based modeling and older adults.

As described by Rennie Joshi at the end of her fellowship: "The UHC Fellowship has been an immense support for my doctoral training in several ways. Professionally, I have been able to connect and collaborate with like-minded scholars and researchers at the UHC and with affiliates outside. Similarly, attending guest lectures and the brown bag series at the UHC were very helpful in learning from work being done by urban health researchers in the local and global communities. I was able to attend conferences because of the financial support through the fellowship, which really contributed to my growth as a doctoral student... There is a lot of excitement and positivity about work like this at the UHC and it inspires me to keep at it."

## 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 2018-2019 there were two first-year and one second-year UHC Master's Fellows.

### Master's fellows funded in 2018-2019



**Leah Lombardi**, Department of Community Health and Prevention  
**Mentors:** Amy Carroll-Scott, Department of Community Health and Prevention and Félíce Lê-Scherban, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Leah Lombardi works on the West Philly Promise Neighborhood project, which aims to create a cradle-to-career continuum of support for children who live or attend school in the West Philadelphia Promise Zone, as well as their families and communities, for example, by creating service linkages through data systems.



**Kristin Giordano**, Department of Health Management and Policy  
**Mentor:** Ana Martínez-Donate, Department of Community Health

Kristin Giordano worked on improving the health and resilience of Latino immigrants in Philadelphia, specifically on these four projects: Cultivating Resilient and Strong Opinion Leaders (CRiSOL) project, Latino Immigrant Network of Services (LINKS).



**Eliza Ziegler**, Department of Health Management and Policy  
**Mentor:** Alexis Roth, Department of Community Health and Prevention

Eliza Ziegler works on Project S.H.E., which focuses on preventing HIV in women who inject drugs by pairing pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) with community-based syringe exchange programs.

Kristin Giordano, MPH 2019 said at the conclusion of her fellowship: "Through this fellowship I have had the opportunity to develop qualitative analysis skills through two program evaluation projects using Dedoose and quantitative analysis skills using SPSS. The opportunity to work with community partners, design curricula and conduct research and evaluation has given me valuable work experience and deepened my understandings of the complex underpinnings of urban health in Philadelphia."

### Depth Experience Funding

The UHC provides funding for first-year master's students engaged in urban health practical experiences over the summer. Students work for 120 hours at a community-based placement, developing professional skills with guidance from their practice-based preceptor while contributing to the organization's mission.

### Depth Experiences funded in 2019

**Madison Sehn** working with the University of Pennsylvania's Breast Health Initiative

**Rebecca Hosey** working with the Health Federation of Philadelphia's Opioid Program

**Maura Boughter-Dornfeld** working with the St. Christopher's Foundation, Farm to Families program

**Hannah Conner** working with UC Green, cooperative community greening in University City, Philadelphia

**Amanda Hazen** working with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Opioid Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Prevention Program



### Student's reflections upon completing a UHC-funded depth experience:

*"I am now part of a Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) work group on infectious complications of injection drug use. This work group is tasked with identifying best practices to identify, measure, and understand the epidemiology of non-reportable bacterial and fungal infections associated with injection drug use. I plan to share my findings from Philadelphia with other epidemiologists through CSTE to increase scientific knowledge about this topic."*

*"In addition to advancing my skills using SAS for data analysis... I gained additional experience presenting results, critiquing research studies, and preparing written reports... learning how to communicate one on one with members of the community who attended the Narcan giveaway days... I worked closely with program managers, harm reduction coordinators, outreach specialists, and health policy advisors."*



## Pilot Research Awards

To promote research to improve urban health, the UHC awards funding for pilot research to Drexel University investigators. The UHC has awarded over \$344,500 in funding to 17 pilot projects in the past four years. Many of these projects collaborate across Drexel, engage locally with partners in Philadelphia and support student trainees in their work. This past year \$30,000 was awarded to Sheila Tripathy, postdoctoral fellow for her research in urban environmental health on “Using emerging air sensors to identify community air pollution exposures specific to South Philadelphia.”

## Doctoral Dissertation Awards

In spring 2019, the UHC initiated a new mechanism for funding doctoral students’ dissertation research. After a competitive review process, two student projects were awarded \$10,000 each:

**Samantha Joseph**, third year doctoral candidate in community health and prevention, received funding for “Development of a Community Trauma Index to Prevent Community Violence in Urban Neighborhoods.”

**Rennie Joshi**, rising third year doctoral candidate in epidemiology, received funding for “Evaluating effects of ambient air pollution on cardiovascular health outcomes in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal.”

# 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 2018-2019

**Ione Avila-Palencia, PhD, MPH**

**Allana Forde, PhD, MPH**

**Irene Headen, PhD, MS**

**Jingjing Li, PhD, MS**

**Pricila Mullachery, PhD, MPH**

## Doctoral Research Fellows in 2018-2019

**Ariela Braverman-Bronstein, MD, MPH**, doctoral research fellow, department of epidemiology and biostatistics

**Janene Brown, MPH**, doctoral research fellow, department of epidemiology and biostatistics

**Kim Daniels, MS**, doctoral research fellow, department of epidemiology and biostatistics

**Amie Devlin, MPH, MA**, doctoral research fellow, department of epidemiology and biostatistics

**Samantha Joseph, MPH**, doctoral research fellow, department of community health and prevention

**Ana Ortigoza, MD, PhD, MPH, MS**, doctoral research fellow, department of epidemiology and biostatistics

**Niko Verdecias, MPH**, doctoral research fellow, department of community health and prevention





### 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:

**Julia Diez**, doctoral candidate in epidemiology at the University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain.

**Nelson Gouveia, MD, MSc, PhD**, associate professor in preventive medicine at the University of São Paulo Medical School, Brazil.

**Pedro Gullón MD, PhD**, postdoctoral research fellow from the University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain.

**Camila Vaz**, professor at Federal University of Juiz de Fora and doctoral candidate in public health at Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

### Undergraduate Co-op Funding

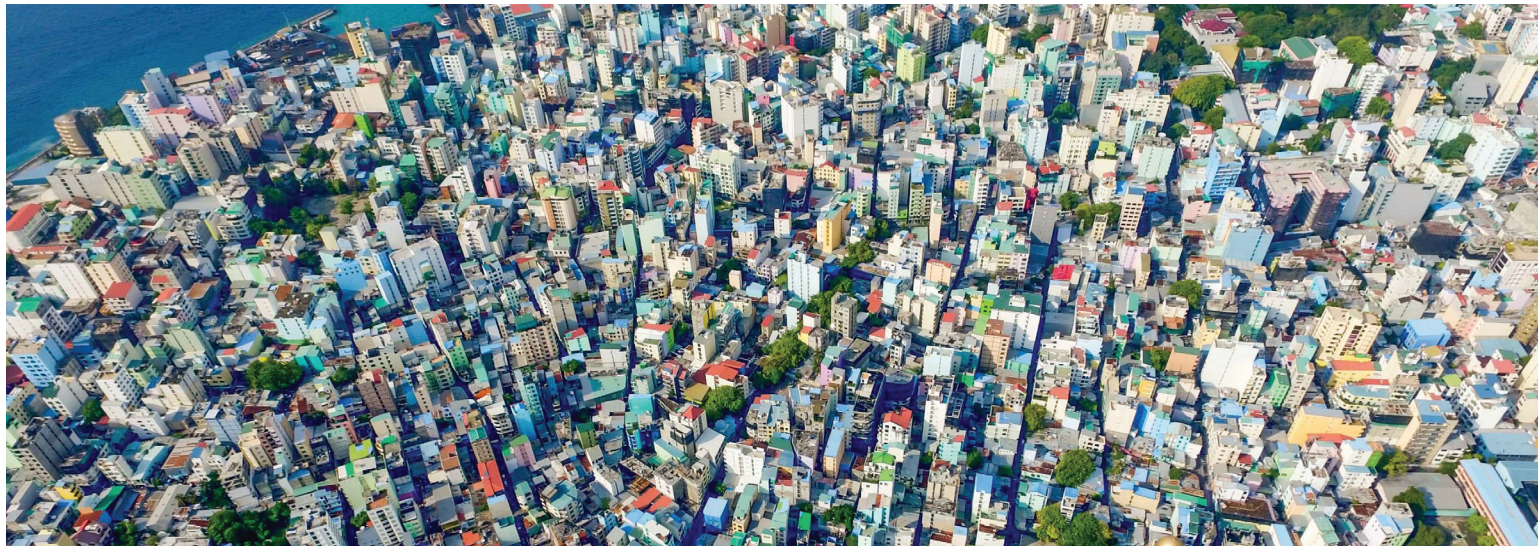
The UHC works to engage undergraduate students in various activities. In the past year, the UHC supported two undergraduate co-op placements.

**Tais Idi-Infante**, Spring and Summer 2019 undergraduate co-op, third-year global studies student concentrating in arts, media, and cultures at Drexel University, supported the UHC as a project assistant for the Urban Health Summer Institute and Urban Health symposium.

**Taylor Andrews**, Fall and Winter 2019 undergraduate co-op, third-year game design and production student with a minor in fine arts at Drexel University supported UHC communications and graphic design.

## Excellence and Engagement

The Urban Health Collaborative aims to be a center of excellence in urban health research and aligns its work with the strategic goals of the Dornsife School of Public Health and Drexel University. In the past year, the Urban Health collaborative has enhanced Drexel's visibility in urban health through work in Philadelphia, nationally and globally; supported policy makers and practitioners through training, research partnerships and translation; and engaged students in urban health at all levels.



## Community IMPACT Project

Drexel University has partnered with the Lazarex Cancer Foundation to establish Community IMPACT, a program focusing on reducing cancer and improving health outcomes in Philadelphia, starting in West Philadelphia neighborhoods. Beginning in January 2019, the program involving the Dornsife School of Public Health, College of Nursing and Health Professions and College of Medicine combines health qualitative and quantitative assessment and research methods with grassroots engagement in local communities.

The project team based at the Drexel Urban Health Collaborative. The UHC is leveraging its robust data resources and analysis capabilities to look at the burden of cancer in Philadelphia and its neighborhoods as well as to identify disparities in cancer outcomes and incidence by neighborhood, race and socioeconomic characteristics. The team will disseminate its findings to the broader Philadelphia region as well as make the information accessible for empowering community residents.

## West Philly Promise Neighborhood Project

Funded in 2017 until 2021 through a US Department of Education grant, the West Philly Promise Neighborhood aims to improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children in the West Philadelphia Promise Zone by targeting lifelong literacy, behavioral health, and trauma-informed family and community supports. In early 2018, the West Philly Promise Neighborhood team completed surveys with caregivers from households with children in the Promise Zone. The survey provides the baseline for a 5-year evaluation of the individual, family, and community impacts of programs and interventions supported by the Promise Neighborhood grant. Surveyor teams, including community members and Dornsife graduate students, knocked on the doors of households within the Promise Zone. A total of 299 caregivers completed the baseline survey, answering questions about 507 children and providing valuable information on health, housing, safety, education, employment and community connectedness.

Participating and newly identified families will have the opportunity to participate in the survey again, now that the team is back in the field this fall. In collaboration with project partners, People's Emergency Center, Philadelphia Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and neighborhood civic associations, survey results are shared publicly through a series of community conversations and residents are encouraged to discuss and contribute to how survey results will be used to improve Promise Neighborhood programs and services as well as to inform community program- planning and advocacy efforts.





### **SALURBAL's Knowledge-to-Policy Forum**

The Salud Urbana en América Latina (SALURBAL) Project, which studies to what extent urban environments and policies influence health and environmental sustainability in Latin American cities, was developed from the beginning to use innovative methods to facilitate the dissemination of scientific findings to key audiences, including collaboration with policy- and decision-makers. One of these approaches is a series of "Knowledge-to-Policy" events that facilitate exchange between SALURBAL researchers and invited policy stakeholders from the region. In November 2018, the first forum took place at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Mexico City, bringing to fruition the efforts of over a year of planning.

Over the two-day event, SALURBAL researchers and policy engagement experts facilitated the forum's program, which fostered dialogue and group reflection focused on identifying high priority research questions for policy action and the development of effective dissemination tools for policy stakeholders. Attendees included representatives from municipal governments, health secretariats, and NGOs and community-based organizations. Organizations known to be leaders in urban health and sustainability such as Pan American Health Organization, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, World Resources Institute, Cities Alliance, and Techo were also represented, contributing to the diversity of participants. By the end of the forum, researchers and invited participants identified concrete actions and next steps to strengthen the translation of scientific knowledge into policy.



### **Welcoming 2019-2020 GATHER Trainees**

The UHC was pleased to host the first group of GATHER Trainees at a welcome event in September 2019. 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 (NIMHD) at the Drexel Dornsife School of Public Health (DSPH). Trainees from Drexel or other Universities advance their careers in global health equity through mentored and skills-based research training in Philadelphia and one of four sites in Brazil, Kenya, Mexico or Burkina Faso. The cohort includes two postdoctoral fellows and four doctoral fellows:

**Diana A. Burnett, PhD** in Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania

**Yan Wang, PhD** in Biostatistics, University of California, Los Angeles

**Marina Armendariz, MS**, PhD Candidate, Biobehavioral Health, The Pennsylvania State University

**Rosie Mae Henson, MPH**, PhD Candidate, Health Services Research and Policy, Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health

**Regina Y. Fuller, MA**, PhD Candidate, Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Elizabeth H. Morgan, MEd**, PhD Candidate, Human Development, University of California, Davis

## Partnership with Philadelphia Department of Public Health

UHC recently partnered with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health to understand health disparities across Philadelphia neighborhoods. The project was made possible through the 500 Cities Data Challenge — a \$1 million, one-year grant from The Urban Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) was one of only 10 awardees selected to receive the grant, which encourages grantees to design innovative solutions that address social factors that influence health. PDPH partnered with UHC researchers for their expert guidance on geographic information, biostatistics methods, and neighborhood health topics relevant to their grant.

The resulting report from the collaboration, published in August **“Close to Home: The Health of Philadelphia’s Neighborhoods”** offers extensive new insights into the health of Philadelphia’s neighborhoods. Using methods modeled after the national County Health Rankings, the report provides rankings, by neighborhood, for both health factors and health outcomes. It leverages Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 500 Cities data by pairing it with local and census information. Through these rankings, the report highlights the behavioral, clinical, environmental, social and economic determinants, such as access to healthy foods, smoking, income, housing-cost burden, and education that underly neighborhood health disparities across the city. The Close to Home neighborhood health rankings provide key insights into community health and well-being and can serve as a baseline for improving health in the future. Maps from this project are featured at The Franklin Institute exhibit, **“The Giant Heart.”**

## Data and Community Briefs

The UHC produces briefs to disseminate information to a range of stakeholders, including neighborhood profiles which use existing, publicly available data to describe the health and neighborhood factors that can impact health in a community. Recently, UHC published the **“Community Health Profile: Kensington, Philadelphia”** of the area situated between North Philadelphia and the lower Northeast. The UHC creates profiles like this to provide a snapshot of factors affecting health in a particular neighborhood. This tool can serve as a resource for community leaders, local organizations, providers, and other stakeholders in the area.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH PROFILE: KENSINGTON, PHILADELPHIA**

This community profile focuses on Kensington and its surrounding neighborhoods, the most isolated borough in Philadelphia. The goal of this profile is to describe health in the Kensington area and neighborhood factors that may impact health. This profile may help residents and advocates understand opportunities for and challenges to health in the area.

**What Do We Know About Kensington Residents?**

Indicator	Kensington	Philadelphia
Population (2018) [1]	21,475	1,577,000
Age 18-34 young adult [2]	27.7%	20.3%
Age 65 and older [2]	10.7%	16.4%
Age group for or more in 10-year age [2]	13.1%	10.3%
Female population [2]	49.7%	50.4%
Hispanic population [2]	42.7%	15.1%
Black population [2]	51.1%	22.3%
White population [2]	18.1%	60.1%
Asian population [2]	1.1%	5.1%
Native American population [2]	0.1%	0.1%
Adult with high school degree [3]	54.7%	52.7%
Adult with college degree [3]	42.7%	44.7%
Adult with some college [3]	21.7%	23.7%
Adult with no high school [3]	21.7%	18.7%

Researchers at the UHC have also focused on understanding gentrification as a neighborhood change process that occurs over a period of time. In exploring what gentrification means and how we measure it, Jana Hirsch, PhD, MES, and Leah Schinas, PhD, published a methods brief in August 2019 entitled **“A Measure of Gentrification for Use in Longitudinal Public Health Studies in the U.S.”** The brief will inform measurement of gentrification in public health research.

**A MEASURE OF GENTRIFICATION FOR USE IN LONGITUDINAL PUBLIC HEALTH STUDIES IN THE UNITED STATES**

**What is gentrification?**  
Gentrification is a commonly discussed and often positively charged topic in the media and among residents. But what does gentrification mean and how do we measure it? In this, gentrification is a type of neighborhood change process. Table 1 shows several definitions that have been used in scholarly literature. While there is no universal definition, common themes include investment in a neighborhood other than a period of decline and gentrification conceptualizations.

**Key findings:**  
Gentrification is a complex process that occurs over time, involving a diverse mix of actors and processes. It is not a uniform process and can vary significantly across neighborhoods. It is often associated with the displacement of lower-income residents and the influx of higher-income residents. It is often associated with the renovation and improvement of housing stock and the arrival of new businesses and services.

SALURBAL released a housing and neighborhood interventions focused policy brief in May 2019. **“Planning Health Evaluations of Housing and Neighborhood Interventions: Lessons from Latin America”** discusses opportunities to integrate health evaluations into the design and implementation of urban policies. Housing and neighborhood interventions can be important interventions that deliver packaged benefits to improve urban health and well-being, but more evidence is needed regarding their effects under different conditions and the pathways underlying these effects to inform policy changes. The policy brief details potential health effects and evaluation designs, recommendations for intersectoral planning, and shares three case studies of recent evaluations from the SALURBAL project.

**HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD INTERVENTIONS: LESSONS FROM LATIN AMERICAN CITIES**

**Key points:**  
Housing and neighborhood interventions are important strategies to improve health in cities and reduce urban health inequities. Evaluation of the health effects of housing and neighborhood interventions can provide valuable evidence to guide future policy decisions. Partnerships between policymakers, researchers and communities can help to design and implement effective evaluations and facilitate learning across domains of practice and across cities. National and local policymakers should plan for and support health evaluations to generate evidence that can guide policy decisions.

## Urban Policy and Program Surveillance Project

Cities play an important role in developing and implementing policies and programs that impact population health. The Policy and Community Engagement Core initiated a policy surveillance project in 2017 as a way to identify best practices that select cities around the United States are employing including policy, programmatic, and budgetary initiatives to promote health equity. The result of this project is a database of policies and programs at the city-level that can be used to identify trends and potential gaps.

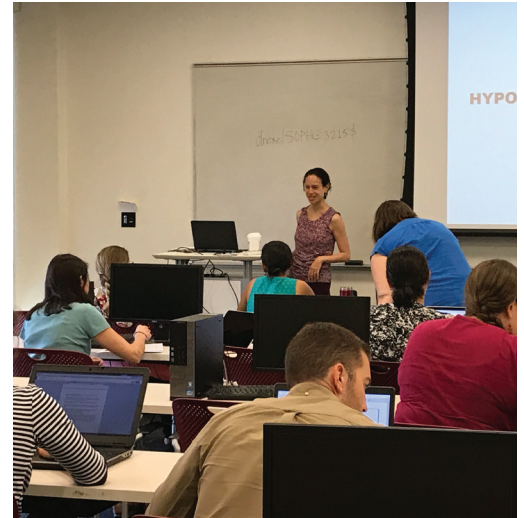
In the 2018-2019 academic year, the Core enhanced surveillance and monitoring methods to increase efficiency at capturing the most relevant data. After reporting on results from the initial phase of the project, the team has created a training manual to share the methods with other researchers. In addition, the team created a strategy to expand the project from four cities to eight, which has begun implementation in Fall 2019.

## Urban Health Summer Institute

The Urban Health Collaborative held the fourth Urban Health Summer Institute in June 2019. This year's institute attracted 75 participants from across the country working in diverse fields: health departments, healthcare institutions, non-profits and community-based organizations, and other academic institutions.

Courses from the 2019 Urban Health Summer Institute:

- Introduction to Multilevel Analysis for Urban Health Research
- Introduction to Community Based System Dynamics
- Introduction to Bayesian Analysis for Public and Urban Health
- Data Visualization in R for Urban Health
- Community-Based Participatory Research: Practical Applications in Urban Health
- GIS for Urban Health



## We heard enthusiastic feedback from participants in the summer institute:

"Our instructor was a wealth of knowledge and experience. My outlook and trajectory have been enhanced because of her."

"I liked the focus on application (while grounded in theory and concepts). The content was distilled to a level that was understandable."

"The instructors were wonderful. They packed in a lot of dense material into a few days, and delivered the content with enthusiasm!"

## International Training

SALURBAL completed two training and collaborative workshops for its researchers in 2019, one in May in Belo Horizonte, Brazil and one in October in Lima, Peru. During these workshops, more than 30 SALURBAL researchers and trainees presented their plans for various studies and received coaching and feedback from senior researchers.

In May 2019, SALURBAL held an urban health policy symposium in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The event focused on the topic of housing and neighborhood interventions and was hosted by the project's headquarters in Brazil, the Belo Horizonte Observatory for Urban Health at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). The symposium titled "Health, housing and urban policies in Brazil" highlighted the importance of understanding the impact of housing and urban interventions in Brazil on health outcomes, SALURBAL's ongoing work to evaluate such interventions, and encouraged debate among the speakers. At the event, SALURBAL launched its latest policy brief, Planning Health Evaluations of Housing and Neighborhood Interventions. Invited speakers for the symposium included external stakeholders involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of urban interventions.

Postdoctoral research fellow Ana Ortigoza, MD, PhD, MPH, MS, and doctoral research fellow Ariela Braverman-Bronstein, MD, MPH also taught a course in Advanced Epidemiology at the National Institute for Public Health (INSP) in Mexico in August for 22 students.



### Mortality Research Pre-Symposium

In September 2019, the Drexel Urban Health Collaborative's Salud Urbana en América Latina (SALURBAL) project organized the half day event, **"Levels and determinants of urban mortality: A focus on cities of Latin America"**. The meeting brought together project researchers and regional experts to discuss challenges of collecting and working with mortality data in Latin America, and what we can learn about how urban environments might be influencing mortality and life expectancy across the region. The event featured four invited speakers, including Hiram Beltram-Sanchez of the Department of Community Health Sciences at the Fielding School of Public Health, University of California – Los Angeles, who gave the keynote address, focusing on levels and trends of mortality across Latin America. This event also marked the launch of the SALURBAL data brief, **"Mortality and Life Expectancy in Latin American Cities"**, which details the experience of the SALURBAL project in harmonizing and describing mortality data across 366 cities in 10 countries in Latin America.



### Urban Health Symposium

The biennial Urban Health Symposium brings together over 200 attendees—researchers, practitioners, and policy makers from diverse fields to spark conversations and new ideas on how to make cities healthier for all. The event takes place every other year in Philadelphia at the Dornsife School of Public Health. In September 2019, the Collaborative organized the symposium focused on **"Reimagining Health in Cities: Challenges and New Directions"** featuring two jam-packed days of inspiring speakers, poster presentations, and professional networking opportunities. Highlights included a lively session with urban health leaders; an innovative session on novel uses of data; and a keynote address from Thomas Farley, MD, MPH, Health Commissioner, City of Philadelphia. In addition to the informative and insightful sessions, the Symposium also featured over 50 posters, covering a broad range of research topics related to urban health.



## 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  
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