
March 2021

Training Fellowships at Sheps

The Sheps Center is home to two training programs, both of which have been funded for over 30 years. Both programs are supported by a National Research Service Award (NRSA) Institutional Training Grant. Fellows participate in a weekly core seminar and receive invaluable mentoring from program faculty representing many schools and departments across campus. Alumni from these programs have gone on to perform key research that has made an impact on our state as well as the nation. Both are finalizing their incoming cohorts; the current cohorts are profiled below.

Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowship in Health Services Research

This fellowship is funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and provides an advanced, specialized training opportunity in the methods of health services research for pre- and postdoctoral trainees. The emphases of the training program are the organization, financing, utilization, quality and evaluation of personal health care services and public policies for ensuring access to such services.

Returning Trainees

Jessica Young, MSPH, PhD. Dr. Young is a pharmacoepidemiologist interested in leveraging preexisting data sources to advance methods used in observational research aimed at improving healthcare delivery. Her dissertation research used linked electronic medical records (EMR) and insurance claims data to examine opioid prescribing for post-surgical pain and the risk of prolonged postoperative opioid use. In addition to quantifying discrepancies between EMR and claims data and describing the implications for study findings and interpretation, her current research interests include adequate pain management and use of opioid alternatives. As an AHRQ postdoctoral fellow, Jessica is looking forward to developing methods to combat challenges inherent in using large data, increasing the capability for large health systems to evolve their practice using evidence-based research, ultimately delivering higher-quality care to their patients. Prior to coming to UNC, Jessica worked as a Policy Analyst at a non-profit public policy firm and received a B.A. in Mathematics from Emory University.



Suur Ayangeakaa, PhD, MPH. Dr. Ayangeakaa is a behavioral scientist and HIV/AIDS disparities investigator. She is interested in community- and clinic-based approaches to increasing equitable access to and uptake of innovative HIV prevention and treatment interventions among underserved minority populations in the U.S. and in Sub-Saharan Africa. Her dissertation focused on understanding multi-level influences on HIV Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) service-delivery and uptake among African Americans. As an AHRQ postdoctoral fellow, Suur's research utilizes mixed method approaches to developing and implementing interventions that foster the



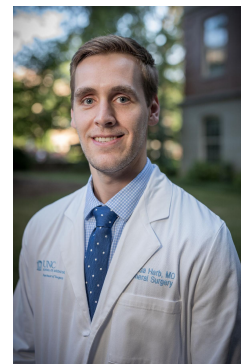
improvement of awareness and access to HIV PrEP and other innovative HIV prevention initiatives among African Americans, particularly cis-gender women (a group highly vulnerable to HIV in the U.S., but largely overlooked in intervention research). Suur obtained her PhD in Public Health Sciences with a concentration in Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences from the University of Louisville, Kentucky.

Maya Wright, MPH. Maya is a doctoral student in the UNC department of Epidemiology. As a scientist, Maya hopes to conduct community-engaged and applied public health research that centers social justice and uplifting marginalized communities. Maya's current research interests comprise two broad areas: 1. Race, racism, and health; 2. Women's health. As a social epidemiologist in training, she hopes to incorporate mixed methods research that combines rich quantitative and qualitative methods. Maya's dissertation work will be exploring inappropriate hysterectomy, including the social factors that are associated with the procedure.



Graduating Trainees

Joshua Herb, MD. Dr. Herb is a second year AHRQ postdoctoral research fellow and a fifth-year general surgery resident with the Department of Surgery. He is currently pursuing a Master's of Science in Clinical Research. Prior to UNC, he completed both his Bachelor's degree in Economics and Medical degree at the University of Virginia. He plans to obtain further training in surgical oncology after completion of his residency. Dr. Herb wants to pursue an academic surgery career with a cancer health services research focus. Ultimately, he wants to help develop policy approaches to address cancer care disparities. His current research explores the rural-urban disparity in the surgical care of non-small cell lung cancer.



Chelsea Osterman, MD. Dr. Osterman is a third year Oncology fellow and second year AHRQ health services research fellow. She completed her medical degree at the University of Connecticut, followed by Internal Medicine residency training at the University of Pennsylvania. Her clinical interest is in genitourinary cancers and geriatric oncology, with a research focus on health outcomes and end of life care for elderly cancer patients. Her current research projects explore the experience of older patients receiving immunotherapy and how the adoption of immunotherapy has influenced utilization of palliative care and hospice.



Ryan Kandrack. Ryan is a PhD student in Health Policy and Management at UNC Chapel Hill, where he focuses on health and labor economics. His research interests include understanding the effects of changes in primary care organization, staffing, and payment on care delivery and patient outcomes; health care labor markets; productivity and efficiency; and applied econometrics and causal inference. In ongoing work through the HRSA-funded Health Workforce Research Center at the Sheps Center, he is analyzing variation in the scope of primary care physician services in urban and rural areas, as well as primary care staff composition across types of practices (e.g. safety net) and ownership structure (e.g. independent vs. system-owned). Prior to coming to UNC, Ryan conducted health services research at the RAND Corporation and evaluated clinical programs and policies at UPMC Health Plan. Beginning in May, Ryan will be a Senior Research Scientist at Aledade, Inc.



Ida Griesemer, MSPH. Ida Griesemer, MSPH, is a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Health Behavior at UNC Chapel Hill's Gillings School of Global Public Health. Her research is focused on improving quality and equity in the delivery of health care in the U.S. through organizational change. She has contributed to several health services research studies, including interventions to improve pain management among people with osteoarthritis and research investigating the integration of diagnostic genomic sequencing into clinical care. Her dissertation is a mixed methods study examining how the Accountability for Cancer Care through Undoing Racism and Equity (ACCURE) intervention addressed racial disparities in breast and lung cancer care outcomes by intervening at multiple levels of the care system. Ida plans to graduate this spring and will be a postdoctoral fellow in Health Services Research with the Center for Healthcare Organization & Implementation Research (CHOIR) at the Boston/Bedford VA.



Lexie Grove, MSPH. Lexie is a doctoral student in the Department of Health Policy and Management at UNC Chapel Hill. Her research interests include health care access and quality for people with severe mental illness, integration of health and social services, and housing as a social determinant of health. Her dissertation will focus on housing patterns and health services outcomes among individuals with disabilities in North Carolina. Prior to starting graduate work at UNC, Lexie contributed to studies on a variety of health services and social policy topics as a public health analyst at RTI International. After the fellowship, Lexie will be a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Population Health at the University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School.



Primary Care Research Fellowship

This fellowship is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and trains primary care physicians for academic careers that emphasize research. Fellows are based in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, or Pediatrics and have the unique experience of continuing their clinical duties while receiving important research training.

Returning Fellows

Ebiere Okah, MD. Dr. Okah is a 1st year Primary Care Research fellow and a practicing family physician. She was born in Nigeria and raised in several cities in the Midwest. Dr. Okah completed medical school at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and residency at the University of Minnesota's North Memorial Family Medicine Residency Program. Prior to entering medicine, she worked as an associate economist at the New York Federal Reserve Bank and as an analyst at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Dr. Okah's research interests include cardiovascular disease in minority populations, hypertension, physician use of race-based medical treatment guidelines and physician racial beliefs.



Wade Harrison, MD. Dr. Harrison is a 1st year Primary Care Research fellow and a practicing pediatrician. He was born in Asheville, NC and raised in South Carolina before moving to Colorado where he received his undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder. After college he spent several years working at a Federally Qualified Health Center in Fort

Collins, CO before completing medical school at the Geisel (Dr. Seuss) School of Medicine at Dartmouth. While in New Hampshire he also obtained an MPH and completed a research year at The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice. He completed his pediatric residency at the University of Utah, where he served as a Chief Resident. Dr. Harrison's research interests relate to evidence-based medicine, high value care, variations in care, health system and policy interventions, newborn care, and children with medical complexity. Dr. Harrison's current projects include using administrative billing and HER data assessing quality and costs in caring for children with bronchiolitis, examining the utility of routine car seat tolerance screening in the nursery, measuring variation across hospitals in the use of observation status, and pediatric workforce analysis.



Departing Fellows

Andrea Dotson, MD, MPH. Dr. Dotson is finishing up her 3rd and final year with the Primary Care Research fellowship, and she is a practicing family medicine physician. Dr. Dotson is originally from Florida but most recently Durham, NC. She received her undergraduate degree from Florida State University and worked as a teacher for 2 years with Teach for America in Houston, TX. After seeing first-hand the role health plays in our ability to attain education, she pursued a graduate degree from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and a medical degree from UNC. She completed residency training in family medicine at University of New Mexico. Dr. Dotson's research interests include adverse childhood events, trauma informed care for children, social determinants of health. Upon completing the fellowship this summer, Dr. Dotson will be a medical instructor in the department of Family Medicine and Community Health at Duke University.



Bianca Allison, MD, MPH. Dr. Allison is finishing up her 2nd and final year with the Primary Care Research fellowship, and she is a practicing pediatrician. Dr. Allison is from Syracuse, NY. She received her undergraduate degree from Harvard University and spent a service year as a tutor and mentor for middle schoolers through AmeriCorps' City Year in Chicago, IL. She then received her medical degree from the University of Michigan and an MPH degree from the Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She completed her pediatric residency training at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As a health services researcher, her research interests are primarily centered on adolescents, especially patient-centered and reproductive justice-oriented methods to promote risk reduction in adolescent sexual and reproductive health. During fellowship, Dr. Allison has examined disparities in the use of long-acting reversible contraception in adolescents using large databases. Currently, she has intramural funding to study factors associated with long-acting reversible contraception in a statewide study of adolescents using Medicaid claims data. Her work on inpatient use of long-acting reversible contraception, universal screening for gonorrhea and chlamydia, adolescent adherence to HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, and the perspectives of adolescents and their parents on privacy and confidentiality using telehealth services have resulted in multiple abstracts presented at national conferences and multiple manuscripts under review.



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together to support the causes they care about most, like the Sheps Center. Unlike any other day, challenges and matches offered throughout GiveUNC maximize the impact of your gift. Your gift on GiveUNC, along with the collective support of others, can unlock vital dollars or can be matched dollar-for-dollar through a challenge match. Invest in the causes you care about most and see the collective impact Tar Heels across the globe can make in just 24 hours on GiveUNC.



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