

September 2021

Message from the Director Mark Holmes, PhD



Fall has arrived! Clearly everyone's focus continues to be on the ongoing pandemic, and the recent trends with the Delta variant remind us

how much work remains. With that being said, there are hopeful signs of a return to normalcy. On-campus classes have returned, and Shepsters are venturing back to their offices. This feels like a good time to "welcome back" folks to the Sheps Center.

We are excited that those who are coming back to the building can see the results of the full renovation that the Center went through over the past two years. Each floor was completely gutted and rebuilt, creating a light, bright, collaborative space. I am most excited about the new café area as well as open collaboration spaces that can be found throughout each floor, as these spaces will nurture shared ideas and impromptu conversations that may lead to a new research venture.

Also, over the past two years we have appointed several new Sheps Research Fellows and hired some exceptional staff members who are already contributing to the Center's interdisciplinary culture. In this issue we'll meet some of these new Sheps researchers, be re-introduced to a long-time Center employee, and catch up with Dr. Arnold Kaluzny, a legendary researcher and a key player in the birth of this research center. As we continue to navigate this pandemic landscape, I invite you all to check out what's going on at Sheps. Hopefully soon we will be able to reconnect with each other over coffee in the café.

I will again encourage you to talk to your provider about getting vaccinated. The

New Publication Examines Telemedicine During COVID

A new [publication](#) by a research team including Dr. Saif Khairat, a research fellow at the Sheps Center, shows that telemedicine in correctional facilities – a necessity during COVID-19 – was well received by patients, nursing staff, and providers.

Historically, most incarcerated individuals had to leave their prison facility for care at a local or regional healthcare facility, a process that is expensive, logistically challenging, may fragment care, and pose security risks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, movement within and between prison facilities was severely limited.

The Department of Public Safety (DPS), UNC Health, and UNC School of Medicine partnered to rapidly implement requirements passed into law by the North Carolina General Assembly in late 2019 to enable incarcerated individuals to receive specialty care via telemedicine.

A multidisciplinary team, including Dr. Saif Khairat from the School of Nursing, Terri Catlett of DPS, Barbara Edson of the UNC Virtual Care Center, and Spencer Dorn of the School of Medicine published a cross-sectional analysis of the experience using telemedicine to deliver specialty care to incarcerated individuals. Key findings include:

- 94% of patients reported positive overall telemedicine experience.
- 86% of providers were satisfied with the telemedicine visits, and 90% felt comfortable using telemedicine.
- 94% of telepresenters were satisfied using telemedicine, and 93% were comfortable using telemedicine.

CDC reminds us that COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting you from COVID-19, especially severe illness and death. COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of people spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. For more information, visit UNC Health's portal at <https://www.unchealthcare.org/coronavirus/vaccines/>.

New Spaces at the Sheps Center

Enjoy a quick photo tour of the new spaces for collaboration, research, and study at the Sheps Center.



New Faces at the Sheps Center

Brianna Lombardi, PhD, MSW

Dr. Brianna M. Lombardi PhD MSW was recently named the Deputy Director for the Carolina Health Workforce Research Center at the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research. Dr. Lombardi is an emerging expert in workforce needs related to behavioral health integration in primary care settings. Her work has focused on the expanding role of social workers in integrated health settings and the ways they work with other health professionals to increase behavioral health access for underserved groups and address health disparities.



Dr. Lombardi is currently funded to study the barriers and facilitators to behavioral health integration at Federally Qualified Health Centers and will evaluate how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the delivery of team-based care. Dr. Lombardi will hold appointments at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and a Research Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work.

Follow Dr. Lombardi on twitter [@BriLombardiPhD](https://twitter.com/BriLombardiPhD) or check out her [Google Scholar page](#).

Arrianna Planey, PhD, MA

Arrianna Marie Planey, PhD MA is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management in the Gillings School of Global Public Health at UNC Chapel Hill. She is also a Faculty Fellow in the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research. She is a health/medical geographer with an overarching interest in health and healthcare equity. Her expertise includes conceptualizing and measuring health care access, health workforce issues, and chronic illnesses.



Dr. Planey's ongoing research includes collaborative studies of birth outcomes (preterm birth and low birth weight) among Black immigrants in segregated neighborhoods, travel burdens borne by rural cancer patients, and the racially disparate effects of rural hospital closures on acute care access. At the core of her research agenda is equity in access and outcomes.

Dr. Planey earned her PhD in Geography from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, after earning her Master's and Bachelor's degrees at the University of Chicago and the University of California, Berkeley, respectively. She was previously a predoctoral fellow in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Health Policy Research Scholars (HPRS) program.

David Friedlander, MD, MPH

David F. Friedlander, MD MPH is an Assistant Professor of urology at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. Dr. Friedlander's research interests lie at the intersection of health care policy, surgical outcomes, and everyday clinical care. His research efforts have focused on characterizing and determining factors associated with high-value pathways of surgical care, with a particular interest in the treatment of urinary stones and benign urological conditions. Ongoing research efforts include using mixed-methods to better define surgical episodes of care and understand both clinical and non-clinical drivers of high-value pathways of care.



After graduating from Bowdoin College, Dr. Friedlander spent a year working in the California State Assembly as a research fellow. Dr. Friedlander received his medical degree from Vanderbilt University during which time he also completed an MPH at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He subsequently completed his residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, MA, where he stayed on for an NIH-funded research fellowship. He completed a clinical fellowship in endourology and minimally invasive surgery at the University of California-San Diego.

Saif Khairat, PhD, MPH

Dr. Saif Khairat is an associate professor with joint appointments at the School of Nursing and the Carolina Health Informatics Program. He is also the Director of the Carolina Applied Informatics Research (CAIR) group. With over a decade of experience, Dr. Khairat has led numerous national and international funded projects to enhance healthcare services and research, specifically within the informatics world. His research agenda comprises of two main areas: (1) telemedicine to bridge health disparities, and (2) health IT usability to improve patient safety.



As an informatics expert, Dr. Khairat focuses on using novel mixed-methods data collection approach coupled with complex data analysis for big datasets. He has authored more than 60

scientific articles in 30 different, peer-reviewed journals and conferences, and has served as an investigator for more than \$5.5 million in research grants over the past 5 years. Dr. Khairat was recently awarded \$1.3 million in research grant funding from the [National Library of Medicine of the National Institutes of Health](#) for his project *Improving Providers' Decision-Making and Reducing Information Overload Using Information Visualization in Electronic Health Records*.

Dr. Khairat earned his PhD in Health Informatics and bachelor's and master's in Computer Science from the University of Missouri, and MPH in Health Policy and Management from the Gillings School of Global Health.

Brian Cass

Brian Cass is the Sheps Center's newly appointed Deputy Director for Information Technology! While Brian is not a new face around the Center, we are excited that he will be taking on this role in a permanent capacity after serving as the interim director for the last year. Brian has been with the Sheps Center for 10 years working as a senior programmer, assistant director of the web team, and more recently the interim deputy director for IT. Prior to moving to Raleigh and joining UNC, he was a senior web application developer for Clemson University and led a team building applications to streamline administrative processes. He has more than 19 years of experience leading, designing, and developing IT solutions in education and research environments. Outside of work, Brian's passions are being a father, coaching little league sports, camping, and all things aviation (Brian is a licensed pilot).



In response to COVID-19, Brian led a project in partnership with NC AHEC and NC DHHS Office of Rural Health to create a database of primary care practices in NC and then assess their PPE, financial, and other needs related to the pandemic. The project coordinated regional NC AHEC coaches and NC DHHS ORH tech support staff to follow up with non-responding practices to make sure as many practices as possible were included. That project led to the creation of the [NC Responds](#) system, which will be a permanent resource for those conducting practice-based research.

Brian's near-term goals for the IT unit are to conduct a listening tour to get a good understanding of IT needs in relation to existing services offered, track ROI, properly staff the IT teams, partner with ITS to obtain 3rd party certification of the Sheps Computing Cluster for FISMA (federal security) compliance, and initiate a campaign to get the word out about the great IT services that Sheps offers to researchers. Please feel free to reach out to Brian with any IT needs or questions you have.

Updates from NCIOM



Starting August 2021, the North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM) will convene the [Task Force on the Future of Local Public Health in North Carolina](#). The goal of this work, supported by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, is to assess our state's local public health needs, strengths, and challenges, and develop a vision for the future. More on the Task Force on the Future of Local Public Health in North Carolina: <https://nciom.org/nciom-launches-task-force-on-the-future-of-local-public-health-in-north-carolina/>

NCIOM and the South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health launched the [Carolinas Pandemic Preparedness Task Force](#) in July 2021. The task force is chaired by North Carolina Secretary of Commerce M Michelle Baker Sanders and the University of South Carolina Interim President Dr. Harris Pastides, and the work is supported by the Duke Endowment, the North

Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, and Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. Task force members will develop evidence-based recommendations to support future state and local planning efforts and ensure a resilient response to future disease outbreaks. More on the Carolinas Pandemic Preparedness Task Force: <https://nciom.org/north-and-south-carolina-institutes-of-medicine-announce-joint-pandemic-preparedness-task-force/>

Innovations Born of COVID-19: Lessons Learned and Changes Made in North Carolina Public Health and Health Care: The latest issue of the [North Carolina Medical Journal](#) details how organizations and people from around the state came together, across disciplines and typical priorities, to meet the ever-changing needs of North Carolinians during the COVID-19 crisis.

Catching Up With...

Catching Up With Arnold Kaluzny, Ph.D.

Arnold (Arnie) Kaluzny is professor emeritus of health policy and management at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and senior research fellow at the Sheps Center. His affiliation with the Center spans 54 years, beginning in 1967. That year, he served as co-principal investigator for a research grant included in the proposal submitted to the U.S. National Center for Health Services to establish the UNC Health Services Research Center.



The following answers are edited for brevity. Dr. Kaluzny's complete answers are available on the [Sheps Center website](#).

What is your favorite Sheps memory?

In spring 1988, late on a Friday afternoon, [Tom Ricketts](#) walked into my Sheps office, holding the current Commerce Business Daily, which posts recently approved federal contracts (RFAs). He sat down and pushed the paper toward me. "Arnie," he said, "This has your name on it." The RFA requested proposals to evaluate the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) newly funded Community Clinical Oncology Program (CCOP II) and was due within three weeks of the posted date. As it happened, the UNC/Sheps proposal was completed in record time, along with approved subcontracts. Our so-called "best and final" was submitted and approved, and the rest, as they say, "is history."

I selected this particular memory because it demonstrates the character of the Sheps Center as a university-based research center: its singular focus on providing support to faculty from various departments and schools within UNC, its ability to work with other entities within the university community, and its capability to provide rapid access to references, computer and IT expertise, and grants management support throughout the life of the project. All this is done within a culture of collegueship and collaboration, of which I have been the beneficiary for all these many years.

What is your current hobby/interest at the moment?

While I officially retired from UNC in 2000, my affiliation with the NCI in various capacities continued over the years. In downsizing my Sheps office in preparation for the long-awaited and needed renovation of the building, I discovered the oral history of NCI commissioned in 2008/2009 by Dr. Peter Greenwald. Joined by my colleague, Donna O'Brien, who played an important role in the NCCCP, we prepared a manuscript, "[How Vision and Leadership Shaped the U.S. National Cancer Institute's 50-year Journey to Advance the Evidence Base of Cancer Control and Cancer Care Delivery Research.](#)" The publication of the paper in the Elsevier Journal of Health Policy OPEN in December 2020 aligned with the 50th anniversary of the passage of the 1971 National Cancer Act.

What is the best thing about retirement?

Retirement, in my case, has only been a reality over the past year. The publication mentioned above and the conclusion of formal affiliation with the NCI provided time and opportunity to

reflect on life as I lived it. The period of reflection was aided by the pandemic, the COVID lockdown over the past few months, the growing reality of my own mortality, and the fact that my two grandsons – one, a freshman in college, and the other soon to follow – are beginning their own adult lives. Since so many of these reflections involved UNC, and in many respects, the Sheps Center, I completed a manuscript – a memoir, if you will – titled [*Reflections on a Life Well-Lived*](#). The manuscript has been digitally archived at UNC Wilson Library. I'm not sure I would recommend this emotionally laden process for others as they move into retirement, but in retrospect, I am pleased I made the effort. With that, I move on, hopefully with grace and good will, to meet the new challenges ahead.

Upcoming Events

Enduring Racial and Ethnic Inequities in Travel Times to Access Acute Care in the Rural U.S. South, 2007-2018

- September 22, 2021, 10:00-11:00 am EST
- **Arrianna Planey, PhD**; Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management, Sheps Center Research Fellow
- Zoom link: <https://unc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMkdemtqDgiH9DqPI-4MPfrJyCjOo314Dso>

Can we really advance Health Equity? Five key strategies to consider

- September 24, 2021, 10:00-11:00 am EST
- **Angela Bryant, JD**; NC Parole Commissioner; Co-Founder, VISIONS Inc; Former Legislator and State Senator
- **Crystal Cené, MD, MPH, FAHA**; System Executive Director for Health Equity, UNC Health; Associate Professor of Medicine, UNC School of Medicine; Deputy Director for Research and Director of Program in Health Disparities Research at the Sheps Center.
- Register: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYvcuiuj4uH9DR2iY9XQI9rCU1mw-CYzDi>

Library Presentation: Literature Searching for Qualitative Evidence Syntheses (QES)

- October 8, 2021, 10:00-11:00 am EST
- **Christiane Voisin, MSLS**; Sheps Center Associate Director for Information Services
- Zoom link: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/92408415934?pwd=NUF3TE5vdFg0eEpNczVjSDU1ZWVaZz09>

NCIOM Annual Meeting

- October 20, 2021, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm EST
- *Community, Resilience, and Hope: Achieving Health NC 2030 Behavioral Health Goals*
- **Keynote Speaker: Wizdom Powell, PhD MPH, MS**; Director of the Health Disparities Institute and Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Connecticut
- Register: <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07eifstk4wb8cd19f9&llr=lfczmzdab>

ADVANCES IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH POLICY SEMINAR SERIES – FALL 2021

All seminars are from 4-5pm EST and will be at this link: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/96203302391>

Managing Psychotic Disorders in Low-Income Country Contexts

- September 23, 2021
- Joy Noel Baumgartner, PhD; Associate Professor, UNC School of Social Work

Substance Use Disorders

- September 30, 2021
- Joanna “Asia” Maselko, PhD; Associate Professor of Epidemiology, UNC Chapel Hill

Substance Use Disorders

- October 14, 2021
- Harold Pollack, PhD; Helen Ross Professor, Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, University of Chicago

Mandated Treatment

- October 28, 2021
- Marvin Swartz, MD; Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Duke University

Mental Health of LGBTQ Youth

- November 4, 2021
- Will Hall, PhD; Assistant Professor, UNC School of Social Work

Recovery

- November 18, 2021
- Larry Davidson, PhD; Professor of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine

Sheps In the News

- [The Greensboro News & Record's article](#) on the looming nursing shortage and the implications for higher education included **Erin Fraher** and Sheps Center research.
- **Dr. Jacquie Halladay**, Co-Director of the [North Carolina Network Consortium](#), has been named a UNC site co-PI, alongside Dr. Michael Forbes, for a \$29.9 million grant awarded to Wake Forest School of Medicine and UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. This is an extension of "COMprehensive Post-Acute Stroke Services Study" (COMPASS) with which Dr. Halladay was an investigator. [Read more.](#)
- [WECT](#) highlighted the shortage of oral surgeons in Wilmington in this piece, which included **Tom Ricketts**.
- **George Pink** is quoted talking about the new Rural Emergency Hospital model in [The Washington Post](#).
- **Sheryl Zimmerman** discussed the importance of social connection for older adults in this [article from AARP](#) on reconnecting after the pandemic.
- On August 31, **Mark Holmes** was a panelist on life expectancy, education, and rural populations on [Charlotte Talks on WFAE \(Charlotte\)](#).
- **Pam Silberman** was featured in this [News & Observer article](#) about North Carolinians losing health benefits during the pandemic.
- [The News and Observer](#) cited the 2020 North Carolina Medical Journal article on the impacts of climate change on North Carolina.
- Sheps Center research on **rural hospital closures** has been featured in a number of media outlets recently, including this [National Geographic article](#)
- [The Duplin Times](#) highlighted NCIOM's county health data.

Recent Publications

Khairat S, McDaniel P, Jansen M, Francis T, Edson B, Gianforcaro R. Analysis of Social Determinants and the Utilization of Pediatric Tele-Urgent Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Cross-sectional Study. *JMIR Pediatr Parent*. 2021 Aug 30;4(3):e25873. doi: 10.2196/25873. PMID: 34459742.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34459742/>

Jonas DE, Crotty K, Yun JDY, **Middleton JC**, **Feltner C**, Taylor-Phillips S, Barclay C, Dotson A, **Baker C**, Balio CP, **Voisin CE**, **Harris RP**. Screening for Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes: Updated Evidence Report and Systematic Review for the US Preventive Services Task Force. *JAMA*. 2021 Aug 24;326(8):744-760. doi: 10.1001/jama.2021.10403. PMID: 34427595.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34427595/>

["COVID-19 And HIV: Overlapping Pandemics For Criminal Justice-Involved Individuals."](#) *Health Affairs Blog*, August 24, 2021. DOI: 10.1377/hblog20210818.753807 <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20210818.753807/full/> (**Kate LeMasters**)

Swietek KE, **Domino ME**, Grove LR, Beadles C, Ellis AR, Farley JF, Jackson C, Lichstein JC, DuBard CA. Duration of medical home participation and quality of care for patients with chronic conditions. *Health Serv Res*. 2021 Aug 17. doi: 10.1111/1475-6773.13710. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34402047.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34402047/>

Khairat S, Zalla LC, Adler-Milstein J, **Kistler C**. US Nursing Home Quality Ratings Associated with COVID-19 Cases and Deaths Introduction. *J Am Med Dir Assoc*. 2021 Aug 7:S1525-8610(21)00682-4. doi: 10.1016/j.jamda.2021.07.034. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34454922.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34454922/>

Moore RA 2nd, Fried MW, **Wright B**. Primary Care Providers in Federally Qualified Health Centers Can Treat Hepatitis C Effectively Without Ongoing Consultative Support From Specialists. Med Care. 2021 Aug 1;59(8):699-703. doi: 10.1097/MLR.0000000000001582. PMID: 34081677.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34081677/>

Young JC, Pack C, Gibson TB, Yoon F, Irwin DE, Shiv S, Cooper T, Dasgupta N. Machine Learning Can Unlock Insights Into Mortality. Am J Public Health. 2021 Jul;111(S2):S65-S68. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2021.306418. PMID: 34314195.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34314195/>

Miller KEM, **Miller KL**, **Knocke K**, **Pink GH**, **Holmes GM**, Kaufman BG. Access to outpatient services in rural communities changes after hospital closure. Health Serv Res. 2021 Jun 25. doi: 10.1111/1475-6773.13694. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34173227.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34173227/>

To see a full listing of Sheps-affiliated publications from recent months, please [click here](#).

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