Celebrating Leadership
As Penn Nursing marks the passing of Emerita Dean Claire M. Fagin, nursing leadership takes center stage.

Faculty and researchers revolutionize pediatric care at the intersection of science and practice.

P. 32

How Penn Nursing's PhD program is the key to unlocking innovative and equity-focused care and policy.

P. 40
When you donate to the Penn Nursing Annual Fund, you give our students access to additional financial aid, academic enrichment, and opportunities that help them succeed.

Will you make your gift? Your leadership makes a difference and every dollar counts!

“When you donate to the Penn Nursing Annual Fund, you give our students access to additional financial aid, academic enrichment, and opportunities that help them succeed.

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“Donations from friends like you have allowed me to focus on my classes and clinicals without worrying about college expenses. This is truly a blessing and something that I’m very grateful for!”

- Huseyin Cakir, Nu’24

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‘‘You’re not just working with the child. You’re working with their entire family and the larger community.’’

—Holly Rishel msn rn Nu’94, p. 37

“You’re not just working with the child. You’re working with their entire family and the larger community.”

—Holly Rishel msn rn Nu’94, p. 37

“When you’re working clinically, you start to naturally question things and think about how they can be done better.”

—Lucy Andersen OCN GRN’24, p. 41

“Small Patients, Big Discoveries”

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SPRING 2024 — PENN NURSING
“My time at Penn Nursing has given me knowledge, opportunity, and a voice I could have never imagined possible.”

Brianna Garcia-Bissey, MSN, AGNP-C
Adult-Gerontology Primary Care NP

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Dean’s Letter

Bold Leaders Make the Meaning

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

T he leadership lessons imparted in this past summer’s Barbie film speak to many of us. The eponymous title character says, “I want to do the imagining, not be the idea. I want to be a part of the people that make meaning, not the thing that is made.” Claire Fagin did the imagining, brought to life the ideas, and made meaning in all she did. As many of you know, our beloved friend, mentor, teacher passed away earlier this year. She was a transformational leader who made a significant impact at Penn as the former interim president of the University of Pennsylvania and the former dean of Penn Nursing.

As a PhD student in the 1960s, Claire—informed by her work that centered on children and families—made the practice of limiting parental visits to hospitalized children the subject of her dissertation research. Her scholarship and efforts changed this standard, and it is now unheard of for hospitals to disallow parental visits when children are hospitalized (for more on her legacy, turn to page 66).

Bold changes in health and health care happen because of bold nurses like Claire—and the many nurses currently pursuing PhDs in nursing science. These nurses do the imagining and make the meaning that address complex health issues and advance health equity and access. PhD-prepared nurse researchers are in high demand, especially Penn Nursing alumni, and they are changing the world. Check out the feature on the value of PhD nursing education in this issue of Penn Nursing (p. 40) to find out how.

Penn Nursing-prepared nurses across all education levels make a life-changing difference for children and adolescents. Nurses who care for this vulnerable population are at the forefront of incorporating a family-based approach to care. This issue’s feature on how Penn Nursing impacts the world of pediatric nursing puts work—and how it also influences policy and practice—into perspective (p. 32).

We often look to the past to better understand present and future changes in nursing and health care, and our Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing is an extraordinary repository of the history that generates scholarly discourse and informs research, practice, and policy. In this issue we introduce you to the Bates Center’s curator (p. 48), a new role for the Center that promises an exciting future for the Center’s collections.

It is clear from this issue that nurses are at the center of healing and support, just as Penn Nursing continues to play a part in the healing and support that is needed in the wake of the challenges that have confronted the University of Pennsylvania over the last many months. As a community, I am confident we will emerge stronger and better, and I have such gratitude for your support of our School, our students, and our alumni. Together, we are all part of doing the imagining and making the meaning through the work for which our School is known.
A Driving Force

The maze-like backstage. The hot lights on-stage. The incredible acoustics. Last December, more than 150 students in nine student groups from the University of Pennsylvania were able to experience the power of performing at Carnegie Hall in New York City—among them was third-year Penn Nursing undergraduate Jocelyn Hernandez.

Hernandez performed with Fuerza, Penn’s first and only Latinx music ensemble, at the fifth “Toast to Dear Old Penn” showcase on December 8. She says, “[It] was a surreal and memorable experience. The process of getting to the stage and performing in front of hundreds of people brought many emotions, especially nervousness; however, all of those emotions and stressful days blurred away after seeing the crowd stand and cheer our name! This was the moment I knew Fuerza had made a remarkable impact in representing nuestra comunidad Latina en Penn (our Latinx community at Penn). ¡Con Animo Con Fuerza!

Hernandez is a vocalist with Fuerza and serves as its President. Penn groups featured alongside Fuerza include Off the Beat a cappella group, PennSori k-pop fusion a capella group, Penn Masti South Asian fusion dance team, Quadramic theatre troupe, Simply Chaos stand-up comedy collective, Southworks Tap Factory tap dancing group, and Penn Dance with the Penn Glee Club.
"We have to examine how to facilitate appropriate, ethical, and transparent use of AI in aging."  
— George Demiris PhD FACMI, p. 6

Penn Nursing and the Penn Artificial Intelligence and Technologies Collaboratory for Healthy Aging (PennAITech) invited experts from academia, industry, and government to participate in a two-day roundtable discussion to discuss challenges and opportunities in the use of Large Language models (LLMs) and Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in gerontology. LLMs and the platforms they support, such as ChatGPT, have experienced an exponential growth in popularity and use in recent months. In her opening remarks, Penn Nursing Dean Antonia M. Villarruel PhD RN FAAN G’01 said, “Penn Nursing has long been a leader in the care of older adults—both in science and practice. Consistent with the mission and values of our school, we have a strong focus on those most vulnerable. We are elevating our current work by building strength in Artificial Intelligence to address opportunities in research and to see how we can apply this technology to issues confronted by individuals and families in health care settings and in homes and communities. I am confident your time together will generate an important conversation." In the space of gerontology, the use of Generative AI is anticipated to inform new applications, including supporting and automating clinical decision-making. It may even include predicting cognitive decline based on end user data that includes audio and text, providing digital companionship chatbots, imagining new care and increasing the accessibility of health education material for older adults and family members, and assisting in the documentation of care transitions. The meeting was led by George Demiris PhD FACMI, Penn Nursing’s Associate Dean for Research and Innovation. He said, “As artificial intelligence tools continue to advance, we have the opportunity to define what are the parameters for the use of AI in health care and how new tools may disrupt gerontology, we have to examine how to facilitate appropriate, ethical, and transparent use of AI in aging. This meeting helps us think about the role we want AI to have in gerontology and identify challenges and implications as well as strategies to mitigate risks.” Demiris is also the Mary Allen Knapp Professor of Nursing, a Penn Nursing faculty member who has been working on the integration of AI in aging. The current U.S. regulatory framework mandates that methane for OUD is exclusive access through federally approved Opioid Treatment Programs with many individuals required to make daily visits for supervised dosing. This requirement is necessary to ensure reliability in those with competing health needs, limited access to transportation, living in rural areas, or have few or no treatment programs. For persons with cancer and co-existing OUD, the current methadone rules and policies prohibit the integration of methadone treatment into their ongoing cancer care and often negatively affect their access to opioids to manage their cancer-related pain. A per the 2023 Jonas Scholar at Penn Nursing, Dr. Helena A. Addison, noted, “and the perspectives of historically underserved community members, who often possess significant apprehension regarding police involvement in crisis responses. “We can all agree that we want police involved as little as possible as mental health first responders,” Dr. Addison noted, “and the perspectives of community members is essential to effectively identifying and scaling better systems for supporting people in moments of crisis.”

Racial Disparities in Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is a top cause of disability in the United States, with the costs of medicare Part B productivity exceeding $300 billion, according to an Institute of Medicine report. Many people who suffer from chronic pain—such as from a car crash or violence—continue to experience pain in the year after injury. Past research has independently established the existence of racial dis -parities in injury outcomes and in the severity and treatment of chronic pain, but not which factors impact chronic pain after an injury. But a collabora -tive from Penn Nursing, Penn Medicine researchers and published in the journal Injury Prevention provides new insights about what factors relate to an injury progresses to chronic pain. The study enrolled a cohort of 650 accident reporting police officers of various law enforcement agencies—ranging from 8 percent Black, and 26 percent Hispanic—from two Level 1 trauma centers in Pennsylvania and Texas. Researchers collected data from medical records and patient interviews within days of...
Injury, three months after injury, and 12 months postinjury. The researchers also assessed preinjury pain, perceived pain control, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, depression symptoms, discharge with an opioid prescription, and follow-up provider visits. The study found that among seriously injured adults, racial and ethnic-based disparities in chronic pain may be most driven by differences in the nature of and health care response to acute injuries. Factors associated with disparities include mechanism of injury, severity of injury, pain in the hospital, and length of hospital stay. As an example of differences in mechanisms of injury, Black participants—who reported the highest chronic pain severity in the year after injury—were more likely to be injured by violence when compared to White and Hispanic participants.

“Integrating the Transitional Care Model

Managing transitions in care for older adults and their family caregivers, no matter the care setting, is especially challenging in a rapidly changing health care system. Patient discharges which typically require prescription writing, discharge summary creation, and consultations for home care entail more complex coordination and planning. Penn Nursing educators and researchers share practices in a new article in the Journal of Professional Nursing describing how the Transitional Care Model (TCM) has successfully been incorporated into nurse practitioner curricula to address this issue. The article explains how the TCM’s evidence-based interventions have helped better prepare nurse practitioners to engage acute care providers to more effectively manage the care coordination of older adults with complex care needs.

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“I think that the takeaway, for me, was that you can’t take prevention out of the picture when thinking about interventions on racial disparities in long-term recovery,” says Sara Jacoby MPH MSN PhD FAAN GN’05 GN’08 GR’15, associate professor of nursing and the first author on the study. “The absolute best targeted response is to prevent the injury from happening, and that is our responsibility, just like we want to do preventative care to prevent a heart attack or stroke, we want to prevent injury from happening,” says senior author Therese Richmond PhD RN FAAN GN’95, the Andrea B. Laporte Professor of Nursing. She says the second-best targeted response is optimally and equitably treating acute pain during hospitalization.

When the nurse practitioner studentrees became aware of and engaged in the TCM, they learned how to make clinical decisions supporting a smooth transition from one level of care to another among multiple health care team members and across settings, such as hospitals and homes,” says lead author Maria LoGrippo PhD RN MSN NE-BC GN’97, Practice Associate Professor and the Kehler Family Assistant Dean of Curricular Affairs and Innovation. “This competency-based approach prepares adult-gerontology acute care nurse practitioners to identify and address gaps in transitional care, thereby improving cost and quality outcomes for high-risk older adults.”

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Awards and Appointments

PAMELA Z. CACCHIONE PHD
CRNP BC FGSA FAAN, the
Rafael House Term Chair in
Gerontological Nursing, Professor of Geropsychiatric Nursing in the Department of Family and Community Health, and a Nurse Scientist at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, will be inducted in 2024 into the American Academy of Nursing, Orsini Family Chair in Geriatric Nursing, and the Penn Nursing’s prestigious Norma M. Lang Award for Scholarly Practice and Policy. The award, given biennially to a Penn Nursing faculty member, recognizes the faculty scholar who has influenced and advanced the School’s doctoral program who has made a distinguished contribution to nursing through scholarly practice, honors Norma M. Lang PhD, Professor and Dean Emerita of Penn Nursing, for her world-renowned contributions to health policy and practice. Cacchione was recently appointed as co-lead of the Penn Nursing’s prestigious Academic Practice Partnership, she also received a recent innovation award.

DELLI DUNN FLORES PHD
ACRN FAAN, Assistant Professor of Nursing in the Department of Family and Community Health, has been awarded a 2023 grant from the Hillman Innovations in Care (HIC) program. The $600,000 grant will be used to expand a Penn Nursing-led program at supports the well-being of LGBTQ+ adolescents and their families. This grant is awarded by The Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation.

LEA ANN MATURA PHD RN CRNP
FAAN, Associate Professor of Nursing and Vice Chair of the Department of Biobehavioral Health Sciences, with partners from the Annenberg Virtual Reality ColLABorative and New York University’s Rory Meyers College of Nursing, have been awarded a 2023 grant from the Hillman Emerging Innovation: Serious Illness and End of Life program to study the use of virtual reality (VR) in enhancing the treatment experience and reducing loneliness in people undergoing hemodialysis. This grant is awarded by The Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation.

KATHRYN H. DOYLES PhD RN
FAAN FACHN, Professor of Nursing and the van Ameringen Chair in Nursing Excellence in the Department of Biobehavioral Health Sciences, received the Welch/Woerner Path-Paver Award from the Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research. The award is given to a mid-to-late career nurse scientist who has achieved one or more breakthroughs in theory development, research methods, instruments, or subject matter that has paved the way for other scientists and who has influenced and mentored the next generation of nurse researchers.

KAREN GLANZ PHD MPH, the
George A. Weiss University Professor of Epidemiology and Nursing and a Penn Integrates Knowledge University Professor with joint appointments in Penn Nursing and the Perelman School of Medicine, received two top honors in medicine and research. She was named a Fellow of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and a repeat awardee on Research.com’s Best Female Scientist List (2022 & 2023).

Media Spotlight

Camden County Launches Virtual Reality Training Program to Teach People How to Use Narcan for Drug Overdoses

WHYY Radio attended a press conference announcing the partnership between Penn Nursing, Penn’s Annenberg School for Communication, and Camden County, New Jersey to launch virtual reality Narcan training. As part of the story, reporter Nicole Leonard quoted Ann Marie Hoyt-Brennan MSH RN, director of the Penn Nursing’s Helfen Feld Pavilion for Innovative Learning and Simulation. The following is the transcript of the story that ran on October 26, 2023.

TWo women are standing over their coworker, who is lying unresponsive on the kitchen floor of the Penn Nursing Living Learning Commons.

“He’s not breathing, and his pulse is really slow,” one woman said to the other. The women suspect their coworker might be experiencing a drug overdose, so they break open a box of Narcan, an opioid overdose reversal medication, and spray one dose into his nose. This wasn’t a real drug overdose. Although it’s based on real situations, all the scenarios and characters are fictional, and their lines are scripted. A person wearing a virtual reality headset is viewing the scene as if they were there in-person.

The experience is part of a new training model in Camden County, New Jersey, where officials and public health experts are trying to educate people on how to use Narcan, a brand of naloxone, to prevent opioid overdose deaths.

The goal is to bring the virtual reality training program into schools, workplaces, and private homes and increase the likelihood for someone to use the reversal medication when needed. “If people don’t feel comfortable nor have the knowledge on how to use Narcan and when to use Narcan, all the member who’s in the world isn’t going to help us,” said Camden County Prosecutor Grace MacAulay. About 350 people died in Camden County from drug overdoses last year, according to state data. County officials said another 214 people have overdosed and died so far this year.

The county has worked to expand access by installing emergency “naloxone” in schools, libraries, transportation centers, and in other public spaces. People can get an individual supply of Narcan or generic naloxone at local pharmacies across the state.

Although it’s an easy medication to use—each dose is administered as a nasal spray—MacAulay said experts have heard from people who fear they may use it incorrectly or on someone who doesn’t need it.

The nine-minute virtual reality training program goes over how to identify a potential opioid overdose, steps on how to administer the spray, how to time a second dose if needed, and simulates conversations with emergency responders who are called to the scene. Adolescents and children can access the training with virtual reality headsets, on Android smartphones that can connect to virtual reality headsets, and on-line where users can toggle through the scene in 360-degree views.

The training was developed in partnership and collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Nursing and Annenberg School for Communication. It was funded by a 2022 Overdose Data to Action Operation Helping Hand grant from the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General. Kyle Cassidy, digital design specialist at Annenberg, said this was a prime opportunity to merge new technology with public health education.

“[Virtual reality] is a novel experience right now,” he said. “In the future, fewer people will want to go to YouTube to look at Narcan training videos, but right now, you can say to a room full of schoolkids, ‘Hey, does anyone want to check out VR and watch this video?’ And they will.” Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania studied naloxone virtual reality training versus traditional in-person training. They found that learning through virtual reality was just as effective as in-person workshops, according to 2020 trial results published in Drug and Alcohol Dependence journal. Ann Marie Hoyt-Brennan, simulation education specialist at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, said virtual reality training can be a good alternative option for businesses, organizations, or schools looking to save time and money.

“In addition, the virtual reality component can really immerse people in the application and make it real,” she said. “This really does enhance the learning experience with the trainee and increases engagement.”
Introducing the First Conway Scholars

Earlier this year Penn Nursing received a $1 million grant from the Bedford Falls Foundation-DAF, a donor-advised fund established by philanthropists William (Bill) E. Conway Jr., co-founder and co-chairman of The Carlyle Group, and his wife, Joanne, to support a total of 40 high-merit students over a four-year period who are enrolled in a Penn degree program. Each student will be selected every year to receive this support.

“The inaugural class of Conway Scholars is truly exemplary,” said Penn Nursing Dean Antonia Villarruel. “These scholars build upon their degrees in other fields, which prepares them uniquely to advance health in whatever setting they choose to practice. I’m proud of the partnership between our School and the Bedford Falls Foundation to make a Penn Nursing education accessible—by reducing the burden.”

“This nation desperately needs more nurses, Joanne and I feel blessed to be able to help reduce the financial burden for these of the nation’s best nursing students at Penn Nursing so that they can achieve their dreams and, in doing so, help reduce educational nursing shortage,” said Bill Conway.

The first cohort of Conway Scholars are:

- Connor Antrim (Philadelphia, PA)
- Amanda Ashley Harrison (Philadelphia, PA)
- Christian Knox (Upper Chichester, PA)
- Dena Rachel Levenson (Aurora Hills, CA)
- Jaida Lo (Cupertino, CA)
- Keau Omal (Colorado Springs, CO)
- Barnard Marin Rodgrigs III (Philadelphia, PA)
- Kelly Shi (Fremont, CA)
- Julie Francois Szymaszek (Philadelphia, PA)
- Faith Abigail Victa (Cleveland, PA)

Meet the 2023 Amy Gutmann Leadership Scholars

“Penn Nursing is pleased to welcome our next cohort of Amy Gutmann Leadership Scholars—extraordinary students who are ready to lead improvements in health and health care. We remain grateful to Amy Gutmann and Michael Doyle for investing in the development of leaders in nursing,” said Penn Nursing Dean Antonia Villarruel.

This endowed program—created from a $2 million gift to Penn Nursing by former University of Pennsylvania President Amy Gutmann and her husband Michael Doyle—provides financial aid for exemplary undergraduate and graduate nursing students, supplementing their education with tailored learning to help shape nurse leaders who deliver exceptional evidence-based care, design research to search, inform policy, spark innovation, and advocate for social justice worldwide.

“Growing leaders in nursing is essential for healthier communities. This generous gift provides scholars by first recognizing their leadership skills, then harnessing those skills to reach their full potential. This enrichment not only directly benefits the scholar, but also impacts the nursing profession and the community,” says Maria LoGriggo, Kehler Family Assistant Dean of Curricular Affairs and Innovation.

“We offer students a way to network and take advantage of opportunities at Penn Nursing and the University to advance their career goals and be the change health care needs in order to achieve health and health equity for all.”

Our 2023 Amy Gutmann Leadership Scholars are:

- Adenike Awotundun MSN/Mental Health Counseling (Cotonou, Nigeria)
- Alana Backstrom MSN/Family NP (Philadelphia, PA)
- Sabrina Deutsch ABSN (Cherry Hill, NJ)
- Mershara Galland DNP Anesthesia (Puyallup, WA)
- BJ Hotton DNP Anesthesia (Jenkintown, PA)
- Nicole Jakobowski Adult Gerontology NP0 Primary Care NP (Philadelphia, PA)
- Neillisha Carely Joseph ABSN (North Easton, MA)
- Lindsay Kroett ABSN (North Easton, MA)
- Amanda Ashley Harrison MSN/Psychiatric Mental Health NP (North Easton, MA)
- Connor Antrim (Philadelphia, PA)
- Dena Rachelle Levenson MSN Adult Gerontology NP0 Acute Care NP (Woolwich Township, NJ)
- Brady Middlesworth ABSN (Pineland, NJ)
- Jennifer Smith MSN/Family NP (Mountain Lakes, NJ)

Incredible Success

Earlier in the 2023-2024 academic year, Penn Nursing’s amazing student groups, SNAP (Student Nurses at Penn) and the Sigma Theta Tau Xi Chapter, gathered more than 450 books during their book drive in the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania’s Intensive Care Nursery’s library program.

Supporting Our Community

Penn Nursing was a proud sponsor of the HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy’s second Annual Community Day. It was a day of family fun and activities right on HMS’ campus in West Philadelphia. This is a community-wide celebration of the people and organizations who support HMS and make it possible for them to provide programs like its summer camp; an extended school year; additional speech, occupational, and physical therapies; expressive arts therapies; dance classes; yoga classes; and more—all free of cost to each student at HMS.

First Leonard A. Lauder NP Fellows Join the Workforce

The inaugural cohort of Leonard A. Lauder Community Care Nurse Practitioner Fellows are now in the field providing high-quality primary care to communities in need.

Among them are Rebecca Housey case, Alana Backstrom ABSN Y23 and Julie Nguyen DNP Y23. Housey, with a job at Delaware Valley Community Health, says, “There were so many opportunities to dive deeply into issues [during the program]. The instructors, cohort, coursework, and clinicals were such a gift.”

Nguyen adds, “Those experiences reaffirmed my passion to lower the stigma around mental health.” She now works at The Courage Clinic in Colorado.

A Passion for Learning & Teamwork

Abigail Weiss MSN RN OCN GNP ’23 was the recipient of the 2023 Isabel McIac Scholarship from Nurses Educational Funds (NEF), an award designated for master’s degree candidates. It honors Isabel McIac, the first chairperson of the original memorial fund of Isabel Hampton Robb, the beginning of Nurses Educational Funds. This scholarship recognizes the student with the highest evaluation score in the master’s applicant group. Neff graduated from the Master of Nursing Health Leadership program at Penn Nursing in December 2022. Neff is currently a Clinical Practice Leader for the Network in Penn Medicine’s Department of Radiation Oncology.

She chose to pursue a career in health leadership to feed her passion for learning and teamwork. Through this program, she will advance as a nurse leader. She plans to continue inspiring, empowering, and shaping nurse leadership and practice at the highest possible level. Through collaboration, teamwork, and mentoring colleagues in a supportive way, Neff feels she makes a difference at a higher level and ultimately improves the care patients will receive.

Connecting Changemakers

This past summer, Penn Nursing student Lynne Chow had an amazing experience working at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia as a Nurse Tech in the Emergency Department. She was responsible for greeting patients and their families, obtaining patient vital signs, point-of-care testing, assisting with procedures, and documenting those items. She chose to pursue a career in health equity and health while building a diverse network of leaders who reflect our changing national demographics. Her work will focus on safe nurse staffing, health care access, and care provided in safety net hospitals.

High Honor

Penn Nursing doctoral student Levia Sutton CRNA MSN GNP ’23 was named a 2023 Penn Presidential PhD Fellow. She is one of 15 Fellows from the nine Penn schools that offer doctoral programs. Each Fellow receives a three-year fellowship, including a 12-month stipend, tuition, fees, Penn Student Insurance coverage, and research funds. These students are recognized for their exceptional promise in research and teaching that makes a difference.
**2024 Renfield Winner**

Peru

Hilaria Supa Huamán, Director of Mosoq Pakari Sumaq Kawsay (New Dawn for Good Living Healing Center), is a Peruvian politician and human rights activist. She was awarded the 2024 Penn Nursing Renfield Foundation Award for Global Women’s Health for her lifelong dedication to advocating for the rights and well-being of Indigenous women in Peru, most notably in her fierce work against the forced sterilization that took place in the late 20th century. The award ceremony was held on March 11, 2024.

**New at Perry World House**

David Agor is a Penn Nursing PhD student and now a Graduate Associate at Perry World House for 2023-2024. Students are selected from each of the University’s graduate schools, joining perspectives and expertise from various disciplines to Perry’s flagship program for graduate students. Over the course of the academic year, graduate associates will engage with our community of scholars and experts and develop skills relevant to shaping policy in their areas of study. For more on Agor, see page 23.

**Learning in Dublin**

Ireland

Penn Nursing undergraduate Yeng Shao, as part of Penn’s Global Research and Internship Program (GRIP), traveled to Trinity College’s School of Nursing and Midwifery in Dublin, Ireland. As part of her trip, she learned about how children with type 1 diabetes manage their condition in primary school settings. Ireland has seen a recent upward trend in children being diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Her experience there was not only in the classroom, but also included travel through the country.

“I have learned about the Irish culture through their language, the foods they commonly eat (Weetabix, porridge, black pudding, Irish soda bread), and by exploring scenic routes and nature like Bray, Cliffs of Moher, and Giants Causeway.”

— Yeng Shao, Penn Nursing Student

**Humanitarian Mission**

Sydney Bertrand RN NU’21 (below) and Julia Thomas RN NU’21 W’21 (left) are currently serving in the U.S. Navy, working as nurses aboard the USNS Mercy, currently deployed on a humanitarian mission in the western Pacific region. The ship has 1,000 patient beds and eighty intensive care beds, along with twelve operating rooms. This mission helps prepare the island nations in this region for natural and man-made disasters.

500+ people attended a February webinar organized by Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), with Dean Antonia Villarruel PhD RN FAAN and associate professor J. Margo Brooks Carthon PhD RN FAAN, the Tyson Family Endowed Term Chair for Gerontological Research, as featured presenters. The webinar focused on improving capacities of nurses through graduate education.

17 partner schools on 5 continents, led by Lucy Walker Term Professor Sarah Kagan PhD RN FAAN FGSA AOCN GCNS-BC, participate in a multinational virtual nursing and midwifery exchange on “Response to the Climate Crisis and Sustainable Healthcare.”

40+ current Penn Nursing students are pursuing global health minors to complement their degrees.

Penn Nursing students are planning global experiences this spring and summer.
After earning a master’s degree in psychiatric nursing, she worked with that made her beloved. Many who knew Fagin have a “Claire” story—an interaction with her they remember as profound.

Democratic participation. As Penn’s interim president, Fagin inherited a campus fractured by accusations of racism, assaults on academic freedom, and other conflicts. To address these issues, she established a Commission on Strengthening the Community to promote an academic environment where all members could learn from and be enriched by their similarities and differences. This required soliciting a wide range of opinions and much deliberation about how to foster a culture of collegiality and respect for expression. The resulting reforms laid a foundation for better understanding among interest groups in keeping with Penn’s core values.

Empathy. The ability to recognize and understand different viewpoints was critical to developing the interpersonal competence that Fagin deployed in her various leadership roles. She was dubbed “The Healer” during her term as Penn’s interim president. And while these expert interpersonal skills aided Fagin in leadership roles, it was her personal impact on nurses and others she worked with that made her beloved.

Several principles guided Fagin’s work in every role she undertook: democratic participation, empathy, nurturing/development of peer relationships, and activism. Here are some examples of how they played out in her work:

Democratic participation. As Penn’s interim president, Fagin inherited a campus fractured by accusations of racism, assaults on academic freedom, and other conflicts. To address these issues, she established a Commission on Strengthening the Community to promote an academic environment where all members could learn from and be enriched by their similarities and differences. This required soliciting a wide range of opinions and much deliberation about how to foster a culture of collegiality and respect for expression. The resulting reforms laid a foundation for better understanding among interest groups in keeping with Penn’s core values.

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Claire Fagin
Honoring the life and work of this visionary leader

By Jane Barnsteiner, PhD, RN, FAAN and Antonia M. Villarruel, PhD, RN, FAAN

T he nursing profession lost an accomplished and visionary leader with the passing of Claire M. Fagin in January at the age of 97. Fagin’s leadership abilities were widely recognized in nursing scholarship and beyond, with many awards, honorary degrees, and even a stint as a university president. Her remarkable career was memorialized with obituaries in the New York Times and the Washington Post, as well as a shout out on CBS Sunday Morning.

In a 1983 editorial in the New England Journal of Medicine, Fagin and coauthor Donna Diers described nurses as “tough, canny, powerful, autonomous, and heroic”—a description that epitomized Fagin, who over the course of her career emerged as a transformational leader in nursing practice, research, education, and advocacy. Fagin’s early work was in pediatrics, particularly in the care of children with mental health issues. She initially worked with pediatric patients at Sea View Hospital, a dedicated tuberculous hospital on Staten Island in New York City before moving to the adolescent psychiatry unit of the city’s Bellevue Hospital. After earning a master’s degree in psychiatric nursing, she joined the pediatric psychiatry unit at the Clinical Center of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, where she became the first director of children’s programs.

Subsequently, as chair and professor of the Department of Nursing at Lehrman College in New York City from 1969 to 1977, Fagin developed a new baccalaureate program to prepare nurses for primary care practice. Her support of teaching physical assessment skills to undergraduate nursing students, contrary at the time, is now standard in nursing school curricula. From Lehman College, Fagin moved to the University of Pennsylvania to head the School of Nursing. Over her tenure as dean from 1977 to 1992, she transformed the school into a world-renowned center for nursing scholarship. She did this by establishing primary care programs, integrating faculty practice throughout the Penn health system, and emphasizing faculty support and development. Along the way, she launched the first doctoral program in nursing at an Ivy League institution. Her leadership did not go unnoticed.

In July 1993, Penn’s trustees selected Fagin as the university’s interim president, the first woman to lead the university. Fagin went on to head the John A. Hartford Foundation for Nursing, a national philanthropy focusing on academic geriatric nursing capacity, which transformed the specialty of geriatric nursing. Today, more than 300 nurse scientist graduates of the program are making their mark on gerontology research, practice, and education.

Fagin’s contributions have been honored with numerous tributes, including eight honorary doctorates. In 1988, the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) bestowed on Fagin its highest honor, naming her an AAN Living Legend. And, in 2006, Penn’s School of Nursing building was renamed Claire M. Fagin Hall to acknowledge her exemplary leadership.

Claire Fagin’s life and career hold lessons for us all, especially about how fortunate we are to be a part of nursing.

"Whatever I have achieved, the awards I have gotten, the personal rewards I have felt, would not have come my way were I not a nurse," Fagin wrote in Essays on Nursing Leadership. "I feel I have given a lot to the profession, but I am not even near to repaying what it has given me. I shall always be grateful for the stroke of fortune that brought me to this wonderful feld."

Jane Barnsteiner is professor emerita at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, where Antonia M. Villarruel is professor and the Margaret Bond Simon Dean of Nursing.
To The Frontlines

Nursing students at Penn, and all over the country, are more determined than ever to advocate for their patients in the field of reproductive and sexual health—and be a strong voice in policy.

By Miles Howard

Initially formed in 2007 by nursing students at Oregon Health & Science University and Winona State University in Minnesota, NSRH grew nationally with student-led chapters on campuses like Penn’s. In the early days, NSRH focused on pro-choice advocacy and education. But the organization’s definition of sexual and reproductive health has become more inclusive and expansive over the years. “You start to realize that a lot of the conversations that you have with friends or family members about sexual and reproductive health are centered on abortion,” Gonter says. “And while that’s absolutely a core part of it, I think NSRH does a great job of showing how reproductive and sexual health isn’t just that. Topics like gender-affirming care and equity of access for LGBTQ+ populations to care fall under the same umbrella.” As a through line, the NSRH mission is to improve the patient experience by transforming how providers and policymakers think about these forms of care.

The mission is urgently relevant in the U.S. today, as forms of sexual and reproductive health care become even more fiercely politicized. Back in January of 2023, only six months after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, 24 states had enacted abortion bans or were actively working to implement them. By June, another 23 had placed restrictions on gender-affirming care, under penalty of felony charges. And through the COVID-19 pandemic, disparities in access to health care—racial disparities, particularly—have been exposed and more rigorously studied.

Dr. Holly Harner, the Afaf I. Meleis Director for the Center for Global Women’s Health, serves as the faculty advisor for the Penn Nursing chapter of NSRH. As she sees it, nursing students at Penn, and all over the country, are more determined than ever to advocate for their patients in the field of reproductive and sexual health—and be a strong voice in policy.

“[T]he most impactful thing we can do as nursing students [...] is to educate ourselves and [...] vote.” — Ellie Mayers, p. 21

Illustrations by Derek Abella
The result was a gathering attended by NSRH-affiliated students and practitioners, with a wider topical lens than one might expect. “We hosted an interdisciplinary discussion,” said Dr. Sepold, a former resident of Penn Nursing’s NSRH chapter who has since worked in Colorado providing ambulatory care to women and children. “We believe that nurses are well-equipped to advocate for marginalized populations about what’s important and what’s at stake. In other words, it’s the cultivation of advocacy that nurses are well-equipped to engage in. “I remember hearing someone say that physicians treat the disease and nurses treat the individual,” says “Essentially, we’re there for the health of the person. But we’re also there for the person.”
Global View Progress Report

From the impactful experiences of Perry World House Fellows, engaging in policy projects and international collaborations, to the School’s involvement in developing an innovative curriculum at VinUniversity in Vietnam—and initiatives everywhere in between—Penn Nursing’s commitment to global health leadership is critical for building a healthier world. Read on for an update on the exciting progress Penn Nursing is making across the world.

DEVELOPING HEALTH POLICY THROUGH PERRY WORLD HOUSE

For students in the Perry World House Fellows program, access to student collaborations and professional guidance outside their field of study adds dimension to their Penn experience. Working on policy projects, meeting New York Times editors, and translating their own research into op-eds for the public are a few of the activities that make the Fellowship so unique and powerful for learning about global issues and becoming leaders in global policy.

Gloria Mpundu ’22 was inspired to study nursing after volunteering in the pediatric unit of a hospital in her home country, Rwanda, before starting at Penn. But there was another interest she didn’t want to ignore—world affairs and politics. Mpundu was motivated to apply for the Fellows program in 2020 to help keep her abreast of world politics.

For her policy project as a Perry World House Fellow, she worked with Penn School of Arts & Sciences and Wharton students on a presentation that critiqued the kafala system, the legal framework that requires migrant workers to have an in-country sponsor as part of their visa status. Mpundu and her team suggested new policies to improve the lives of female migrant workers in the Gulf states. They had the opportunity to present in front of a panel that included the Chief of the Labor Migration Branch for the International Labor Organization, United Nations and received helpful feedback.

Now a second year PhD student at Johns Hopkins, Mpundu conducts research to understand how places that adolescents and young adults frequent affect their sexual and reproductive health. She plans to pursue policy work through combining her nursing, global health, and research backgrounds.

Just as Mpundu’s passion for public health influenced her own work, public health also inspired Stacey L. Bevan ma ’18—and she learned that the Perry World House Fellowship is not the only option for students: the Graduate Assistant program offers another path to invaluable policy experience.

After earning her BSN and a master’s in statistics from Penn (not to mention a bachelor’s degree in international relations and biology elsewhere), Bevan chose to pursue a doctorate in nursing as well. Bevan had studied abroad in Chile during her undergraduate years, working with nurses to integrate nutrition education into community viewings of telenovelas, but knew she had more to contribute. It was this background and her interest in public health nursing that drew Bevan to apply to the Graduate Assistant program at Perry World House.

The Graduate Assistant program is for students who want to complement their engagement in global affairs, offering monthly seminars centered on developing skills for engaging the policy community and support for publishing policies.

Bevan credits her year-long participation in the Perry World House Graduate Assistant program with helping her to represent public health nursing to a broad audience. “Working with students from all of Penn’s schools helped me to develop a distinct nursing voice,” she says, describing the interdisciplinary atmosphere of the group. She also appreciated the “palpable energy in a group of globally minded people who are excited to be there.” Within the program, Bevan was known for her expertise in China, human rights, international relations, Latin America, and public health.

Since 2017 there have been nine Perry World House Fellows from Penn Nursing, including undergraduates Charlotte Brown and Zarah Huo who are currently participating, and seven Graduate Assistants. Penn Nursing PhD student David Chinyeska Agor mp ’20 ’18-nc is currently the only nurse in the the Graduate Assistant program for this academic year. For his project he is writing an op-ed and receiving guidance from New York Times and Philadelphia Inquirer editors. One topic he is considering is nutritional psychiatry: using nutrients to improve the microbiome that can in turn improve mental health. Agor aims to focus on how nutritional psychiatry affects gender and sexual minority populations.

“Health policy reform needs nursing input,” Agor stresses. And because nurses have the most interaction with patients, they have a unique ability to bring practical insight to the policy setting. The Perry World House program’s opportunities to collaborate with students across disciplines, creatively problem solve, and get feedback from international leaders is invaluable, and his push for any interested nursing students to apply to the program is this: “public sentiment changes policy, and policy changes everything.”

HELPING TO PROFESSIONALIZE NURSING IN VIETNAM

“It’s not Penn in Vietnam,” Julie Sochalski, PhD RN FNP SAYS of the new Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program at VinUniversity in Hanoi, Vietnam. The program is focused on creating nursing leaders who will provide the finest possible health care to the Vietnamese population, and Penn Nursing faculty have been helping to shape the courses and priorities of this breakthrough option for education.

As the Nursing Curriculum Director at VinUniversity or “VinUni,” Sochalski and other Penn Nursing faculty and alumni worked with Vietnamese nurses and professors.
Policy

ADVOCATING FOR CARIBBEAN NURSES
AS A WHO COLLABORATING CENTER

Penn Nursing is an integral part of a global network of nursing and midwifery leaders as a World Health Organization Collaborating Center (WHOCCC) for Nursing and Midwifery Leadership, a designation earned in 1988. Not only is Penn Nursing among the first nursing schools in the United States selected to the WHOCCC, it is also the only one operating at Penn. Director Antonia M. Villarruel PhD RN FAAN GN’82, Margaret Bond Simon Dean of Nursing, and co-director Eileen T. Lake PhD RN FAAN lead the activities of the center, whose primary goals are to “promote health, global human resources for health development, and to advocate for the nursing and midwifery role, leadership, and contribution to the WHO Health For All platforms.”

What’s next for the collaborating center?

Lake is investigating the work environments of nurses in English-speaking Caribbean nations, where there is a nurse-retention struggle. Over the next few years, Penn Nursing will present their findings to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on the working conditions for these nurses, the types of resources available to them, and what their unmet needs are.

Last fall, Penn’s Nursing Program Director Nguyen Hoang Long IM PhD became the first Nursing professor in Vietnam to receive tenure. Sochalski was elated to get that text. She says, “He really deserves it—I’m so inspired by the faculty here.”

Policy

to develop a future-oriented curriculum built from existing Vietnamese education models. For instance, the emphasis on STEM subjects in Vietnam (high schools take three consecutive years of chemistry, biology, and physics) influences the way that systems are taught and problems are solved. This prompted the addition of a biophysics course in the new BSN curriculum, a course not included in most U.S. nursing programs. “It’s a different way to look at the way the heart pumps blood—and it makes complete sense,” she says.

This year the first cohort of eight students will graduate with their Bachelor of Nursing degrees. Since the classes in this program are taught in English, students will be prepared to go abroad to receive specialized master’s degrees if they choose. Initially Sochalski wondered if this would be counterintuitive to VinUni’s goal of improving health care at home in Vietnam. “But the students I spoke with assured me of their dedication to their home country,” she says, “and those who plan to get master’s degrees also plan to return to Vietnam to work as highly trained nurses.”

From beginning construction on the school just five years ago in the Gia Lam District of Hanoi, Vietnam, to completing their ACEN accreditation in the fall of 2023, the development of VinUni is accelerating ahead of schedule.

Sochalski and her colleagues envision future possibilities for Penn Nursing students to learn in Vietnam as well as other international sites, even outside of classroom and hospital settings. “To take our students to see births in rural Vietnamese villages would be an amazing learning experience for them,” she says. Many faculty members have had a hand in planning this international partnership together and thinking about possible research exchange programs for the future.

Lake is also using her role as Editor of the Research in Nursing & Health journal to gather the primary concerns of international colleagues. With help from students, this project focuses on surveying editors of other research journals in Central and South America and assessing what their concerns are regarding accessibility of journals on databases and publication processes. The goal is to compile potential barriers to increase the expansion and exchange of nursing knowledge.

For additional WHOCCC activities, see page 15.

DEVELOPING A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE IN CHINA

T he first ever Penn-China Engagement Forum—held January 2024 in Beijing, China—gave Penn Nursing students extraordinary opportunities to connect and learn. Professor of Nursing Jiayinghong Liu PhD RN FAAN, Marjorie O. Rendell Endowed Professor in Health Transitions, was invited to host a workshop on Traditional Chinese Medicine for Wellness during the event, and as part of Liu’s Penn Global Seminar course, students accompanied her to China.

In addition to travelling to Beijing and Shanghai, touring Chinese pharmacies and museums, and practicing Qigong during the forum, students also had an opportunity to meet with Penn alumni with a variety of global careers at Penn Wharton China Center (PWCC).

The PWCC opened in March 2015 with the aim of advancing engagement between China and the University of Pennsylvania, and it provides support for the growing numbers of programs and collaborations between Penn’s 12 schools and various academic, government, and business partners throughout China.

Samantha Cueto ’24 was part of the contingent of Penn Nursing students who traveled to China with Liu. She says, “The field trip and forum were a once-in-a-lifetime experience—and I know they will influence my career for the better.”

During the forum, at panels on emerging technologies and innovation in health care, students heard from R. Nicholas Burns, the U.S. Ambassador to China from 2008 to 2011, Ezekiel J. Emanuel, as well as several Penn Deans from the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Wharton, the Graduate School of Education, and the Weitzman School of Design. Max Gerhardt ’24, also in Liu’s class, was intrigued by a discussion with Penn professor Jianbo Shi PhD about the GRASP Lab’s ongoing research into the use of artificial intelligence and computer science to scan brain activity and predict neural responses to stimuli.

He says, “AI’s potential to connect medical research and practice with computer science is really exciting.”

Monai Thompson ’24 valued seeing Penn’s global impact up close during her time at the Penn-China Engagement Forum. She says, “At no other time or space in my life will I be able to interact with such diverse and knowledgeable individuals.”

As she finishes her final semester at Penn, Thompson looks to the future with a new, globally minded perspective. She says, “My classmates and I really are a part of creating a better future for our country and the countries around us, and I feel blessed that I am making a difference in the world to come.”

“At no other time or space in my life will I be able to interact with such diverse and knowledgeable individuals.”
Discovery & Innovation

Building Connections
How innovation in education stands to transform the future nursing workforce for an aging population in nursing homes. By Molly Petrilla

Arriving at Penn Nursing as a freshman from Seattle, Esther Lee knew one thing for sure: her future was in pediatrics—and only pediatrics.

“I was like, the last thing I want to do is work in geriatrics,” Lee remembers. And especially not in a nursing home, where she hadn’t had a great experience as a high-school volunteer back in her home city.

But could a new twist to the course Nursing Care of Older Adults (NURS 2550) shift her perspective? That’s what Penn Nursing has spent the past two years testing out as part of the Revisiting the Teaching Nursing Home Initiative.

The initiative picks up where a much earlier one left off. Nancy A. Hodgson PhD AN PNP GRU’88 GR’99, the Claire M. Fagin Leadership Professor in Nursing and chair of the Department of Biobehavioral Health Sciences, says that back in the 1980s, Penn developed and led an innovative national project that placed students into nursing homes, turning the overlooked facilities into both teaching opportunities and touchpoints for faculty research.

“The idea was that if we could get nursing students into nursing homes during their education, maybe we could really transform nursing-home care,” Hodgson says. At the time, nursing homes were eschewing residents’ social needs to focus only on the medical care they required. Hodgson says discoveries from the project helped change nursing education, nursing home care, and federal guidelines—and expanded the potential for geriatric nursing.

“I loved being with the older adult population and want to build connections with patients who I can continue to follow up with.”

Esther Lee
Chapter 1: Discovery and Innovation

Over the next three years, Penn Nursing will share its lessons and successes from phase one with other nursing schools and nursing homes in the region.

Rebecca Clark
PHD MSEN RN>CN WHNP-BC PNP-BC CCRN GNP-17 GN10

Karen B. Hirschohn
PHD MSN WHNP-BC SNIPR

Karen B. Lasater PhD RN FAAN

First-Time Awardees

From Burnout to Learning Labs, several Penn Nursing faculty were recently awarded their first grants and are poised to change the future of health care and policy.

By Heather Kelley

Four decades later, today’s nursing homes are again in turmoil. Most facilities are still reeling from COVID-19, which revealed just how fragile and vulnerable they are. More than 200,000 nursing home residents and staff died from COVID-19, and employees fled the sector in droves. About 15 percent (210,000 workers) left their jobs at nursing homes during the pandemic—more than any other health care sector—and their staffing levels still haven’t recovered.

“Certainly COVID-19 did shine a lot of light on just how broken nursing homes have been,” Hodgson says. And as more people age into long-term care and the broader nursing shortage continues, even tougher times are likely ahead.

Into that bleak forecast came an idea to revitalize the Teaching Nursing Home initiative. The John A. Hartford Foundation approached Penn and two other Pennsylvania-based schools of nursing about sending their students into nursing homes for the first time in decades. The pilot program launched in July 2021, and since then every Penn Nursing student who takes Nursing Care of Older Adults (a required course) has spent at least one day inside Wesley Enhanced Living Main Line. Undergrads Emma Hovestadt and Traci Meachern even chose to do their full clinical rotations there.

“One of our students has never been in a nursing home before,” Hodgson says. “Many have never given bed baths or interacted with older adults except for their grandparents. So it’s a pretty profound project.”

“Nursing homes have a reputation for being boring or perhaps not valuable places to work, especially among acute-care nurses,” notes Desiree Fleck PhD ACNP-BC PENP-BC CCRN-BC CCNS’96 CCNS’10, the associate director of NURS 2550, “and it’s key to allowing her the opportunity to home experience.”

As the Philadelphia region endures future public health emergencies, “We’re hoping to change that attitude.”

Still, Lee was dubious heading into the Weisels of her disheartening high-school volunteer experience. But what she found there surprised her. “In this nursing home, there was so much life,” she says, remembering her chats with the resident she was paired with and all the personal items, each with a story behind it, that she discovered inside the woman’s room.

Even more to her surprise, Lee has now found herself waveriing from strictly pediatric care. As a direct result of her visit to Wesley, she’s now strongly considering family primary care. “I’m exploring the relationship with the older adult population and want to build connections with patients who I can continue to follow up with,” she says.

First, she spent time at the John A. Hartford Foundation, which has committed an additional $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiative over the next three years. The John A. Hartford Foundation is a national philanthropy that has committed $900,000 to the initiativ...
Finding Solutions For Burnout Among Nurses of Color

The Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research at the School of Nursing brought together nurses and researchers for the Solutions to Health Inequities & Nurses’ Emotional Exhaustion Invitational.

After the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd, J. Margo Brooks Carthon, Tyson Family Endowed Term Chair for Gerontological Research in the School of Nursing, worked on a research study interviewing Black nurse practitioners in the greater Philadelphia area about their efforts to address inequities in care.

She and study co-author Jacqueline Nikpour, postdoctoral fellow in the Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research (CHOPR) at Penn Nursing, spoke about their findings and in particular, issues impacting nurses of color by bringing nursing researchers and practitioners to the Solutions to Health Inequities & Nurses’ Emotional Exhaustion (SHINE) Invitational.

Brooks Carthon said the nurse practitioners (NPs) she spoke to for the study had expressed deep emotional exhaustion, often the result of the uncompensated labor of championing health equity and fighting for organizational change, along with experiences of racism and microaggressions. Yet in ongoing discussions about the burnout crisis in nursing, she said it’s uncommon to hear about the disproportionate burden on nurses of color.

“If we’re going to develop solutions, we need to center their experiences,” Brooks Carthon said, “The reason this is called SHINE is because we wanted to shine a light on the fact that, yes, burnout is at crisis levels, but the disproportionate weight of the burnout crisis is falling on the shoulders of nurses of color, and we need to do something about it. We are the solution we’ve been waiting for.”

The one-day conference brought about 40 attendees not only from Penn and other Philadelphia universities, but also people from New York, Maryland, California, Texas, and elsewhere in the country. The attendees included half of the 16 NPs interviewed for the study.

Charlotte Thomas-Hawkins, associate dean at the Rutgers University School of Nursing and a recipient of two nursing degrees from Penn, shared findings from a study she led. “Effects of Race, Workplace Racism, and COVID Worry on the Emotional Well-Being of Hospital-Based Nurses: A Dual Pandemic.” That study found that nonwhite nurses reported higher emotional distress, more racial microaggressions, and more negative views about the racial climate at their workplace.

Penn Nursing Dean Antonia M. Villarruel addressed the topic in remarks following the presentation, noting that these inequities have an effect. “It’s exhausting; it takes a toll,” she said. But she said those gathered have an opportunity to identify what needs to happen in work environments to support nurses of color.

“I am hopeful because we are here with a common cause, we’re leaders, we’re accomplished, we’re respected in our profession, and we have an equity passion,” Villarruel said. In introductions, attendees shared some of their specific equity passions: maternal outcomes, disparities among LGBTQ+ populations, diabetes, immigrant nurses in long-term care, and Black women experiencing violence in their communities.

The invitational also included small group discussions about experiences with burnout and emotional exhaustion, addressing health disparities, barriers to advancing health equity, policies that could address health equity, and factors contributing to burnout: the presentation of findings from the American Nurses Association’s National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing; and the setting of priority areas for research.

For Brooks Carthon, part of the goal of the gathering was the opportunity to connect nurses who share equity passions. She said she also wanted attendees to be aware of funding opportunities, such as a Notice of Special Interest from the National Institute of Nursing Research seeking research studies to prevent and mitigate nurse burnout and the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses’ announcement of grants to support nursing work environments and health equity.

“We can start the conversation here,” Brooks Carthon said, “and we think the real magic is going to happen because we’re fostering these connections.”

This story originally appeared in Penn Today. It was written by Erica Moser, Science News Officer in University Communications.
"Pediatrics is often thought of as cute people doing cute things for cute children," says Kerry Shields MSN MBE CRNP GN’03 GR’03. "It’s so much more than that. Our work is highly complex." Shields would know. As a lecturer in the department of family and community health at Penn Nursing, she’s got a front row to the panoply of pediatrics innovations coming out of the school. She says, "Childhood illness is often lifelong illness. We’re not just treating what’s in front of you, but changing the trajectory of someone’s entire life, as well as the lives of their siblings, parents, and community."

Penn’s faculty are leading the field of pediatric nursing science and research. Their work ranges from large scale international studies to creating data models that are poised to advance the discipline and question accepted practices. Their queries are uniquely poised through the lens of nurses, meaning, with an eye toward empathy and equality. "We partner with parents, we stand beside them at the bedside, we stay with patients around the clock and address their physical and emotional needs," says Martha A.Q. Curley PhD RN FAAN, Ruth M. Colket Endowed Chair in Pediatric Nursing. "Nursing is a discipline that requires its own science to support it."

Advancements aren’t only coming from research. Faculty and nurse scientists are also thinking about how to better prepare students for clinical practice. "We’ve adjusted and structured the curriculum to focus on the lifespan of a patient’s health," says assistant professor Amanda Bettencourt PhD APRN CRNP-PC ACHPN-P GR’19. "It’s key to clear out a path where students see themselves as really making a difference in the lives of children and families."
That philosophy empowers Penn Nursing alumni and researchers at Penn Nursing to think that the things have always been done—be it a school nurse using data to make school district changes or a pm running a trial to reassess something as standard as how feeding tubes are inserted. And, perhaps most critically, they’re studying the field of nursing itself, helping to address recent industry challenges, like burnout and attrition. “The work is all about improving clinical practice,” says Curley. “You want to be able to be based on the best available evidence. In big ways and small, this thought leadership in clinical practice is helping to set the standards for the broader field.”

Nurses Helping Nursing “Burnout” is an omnipresent word in nursing today. Several researchers, clinicians, and faculty at Penn Nursing are tackling it head-on, hoping to help reverse attrition trends and improve the quality of work life, especially in pediatrics. One stress point that researchers assistant professor Halley Ruppel noticed was the increase in monitoring and digital communications. They produce buzzing, beeping, and constant disruption. “Patients in the pediatric intensive care unit have long been continuously monitored,” says Ruppel, “but we’re seeing more of it in other places because the technology exists, and it’s getting cheaper.” That lead her to question if that’s helpful or harmful. “New technology is often lauded as something that’s going to increase efficiency and reduce cognitive workload,” says Ruppel. “But it’s just not always the case.”

Research published by Ruppel and other colleagues had identified that alerts go off too frequently, create constant noise, and often don’t represent real issues. (If you know the fable “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” you know how this one ends—alarms get ignored.) There’s research to show beeping and buzzing can contribute to burnout, says Ruppel. What’s more: In many hospitals today, nurses get all the alarms from medical devices on mobile phones. There’s also an increase in text and direct messaging between nurses, doctors, and staffers. "Clinicians are experiencing so much information coming at them at all times—they have to determine what to prioritize," says Ruppel. "Sometimes they are actually in patient rooms doing sterile procedures or under personal protective equipment and have to decide, you know, should I look at the phone?" Her work examines ways that new technologies are introduced into nursing. She says, "Ultimately, we want to improve patient safety and outcomes and the well-being of nurses and their job satisfaction." A grant funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality is giving Ruppel the opportunity to develop interventions for pediatrics and beyond. She says, "It includes a lot of design thinking, rapid prototyping, and engagement with stakeholders to ensure we’re finding feasible and meaningful solutions." Her co-investigator is Marion Leary RN MPH PhD MSN ’13 DNSc ’23, Penn Nursing’s director of innovation.

Bettencourt, a clinical nurse specialist, has a particular interest in implementation science. She figures out ways to help nurses adapt to necessary changes in the hospital, something that can be overwhelming to many. She does that by partnering with local pediatric clinicians for different research studies. One example: There’s a specific type of IV catheter that is better for children with infections. Clinicians often don’t want to use it, so she partnered with a team in the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) to design strategies to make it easier for the staff to use the catheter. “It’s better for the kid and better for the hospital,” she says. “It’s critical that the strategies fit into their natural workflow. In today’s environment, where people are leaving the bedside, we don’t want to make life harder.”

She’s taken those strategies to help create effective telemedicine treatment plans for pediatric burn victims. “There are very few pediatric burn centers in this country,” says Bettencourt. Meaning, children who suffer burns aren’t necessarily being cared for by clinicians who are experts in this field. “Telemedicine and telenursing are sort of the answer,” says Bettencourt. With a grant from the Department of Defense—who could use her study and recommendations to provide care to members of the military—her team is in the process of designing a tool kit that can be implemented by anyone on-site or via telemedicine. (Or maybe even parents, one day, in the same way they learn CPR.)

Bettencourt also teaches the required clinical pediatric undergraduate class at Penn Nursing. She sees it as an opportunity to shift the way freshman nurses approach their futures, and she has adjusted the curriculum to address issues she sees in the hospital setting. (Bettencourt recently finished a tenure as the president of the Critical Care Nursing Association, which took her around the country to many speaking engagements. “I heard it over and over—that we have to get nursing back to basics,” she says.) The course has traditionally focused on acute care, but she’s shifted it to be as much about promoting the complete health of families, children, and society and the way those factors work together. She’s challenging students to be “curious, thinking nurses”—critical skills for younger generations to master. In class, her students debate hot-button topics like vaccine choice and firearms access; roleplay how to talk to families whose beliefs are different from theirs; work on listening and being present; and engage in addressing mental distress and how to implement the latest care breakthroughs throughout their career. “I have the students use ChatGPT like a family would—arming themselves with facts and information,” says Bettencourt. “We challenge them to understand what they bring to the table. It’s the caring. The listening. The advocacy. The holistic care.”
Nutrition in Critically Ill Children

When Sharon Irving PhD CRNP PCCM FAAN FAANP GNP’93 CRNP was a pediatric bedside nurse, it never made sense to her that critically ill children would get intravenous (IV) fluids for days on end. “A child’s whole job, if you will, is to grow,” says Irving. “And they can’t grow on IV fluids.” That observation launched a deep curiosity into the intersection of sick children and nutrition that has guided her career. Irving—Associate Professor of Pediatric Nursing and the Vice Chair of the Department of Family and Community Health at Penn Nursing—has studied the “what and how” of nutrition in a variety of ways, like how to monitor and best provide nutrition to obese children in the ICU (she knows there’s a lot of attention about malnourished children, but not on kids on the other end of the spectrum). Currently, she’s leading a chart-based inquiry into how and when feeding is started for critically ill infants in the PICU and how the timing impacts outcomes. “When they’re critically ill,” says Irving, “they can’t take food by mouth. Are the other modalities we use to feed appropriate? Is our determination of how much they need appropriate and accurate? It keeps snowballing for me.” She’s published several papers looking at nasal gastric (NG) feeding tubes and how to determine if they are safely placed. “Nurses are taught to use auscultation to determine if the NG is in the right place. But the reality is, it could still be wrong, even if you ‘hear’ it over the stomach, putting the patient at risk for harm.” She’s determined the efficacy of new ways to verify the tubes are in the right place, including monitoring gastric pH levels and using X-rays in a way that minimizes radiation. Her published work is filled with best practices. “When a child is in the hospital, there are competing clinical priorities. It’s seldom that the first thing people pay attention to is nutrition,” says Irving. “But you’ve got to use the gut when somebody is ill. The importance of it cannot be understated.”

Questioning The Status Quo

“That’s how it’s always been done” is not a phrase that Penn Nursing faculty and staff accept. Curley, for example, has taken a fresh look at how seriously ill children are sedated. “How do you keep them comfortable enough so they can participate in their own care? Tolerate therapies, recover faster, without harm?” she says. New, with a new study involving 60 U.S. and international sites, she’s testing two interventions for children with acute respiratory failure—to see if shifting standard practices would improve outcomes. One aspect is positional (does prone or supine yield better results), and the other is about the use of different types of ventilators. “Children come to the ICU with infections and injuries, all things that impact their capacity to breathe,” Curley says. While the study is slated for seven years (COVID-19 slowed it down), it has an adaptive randomized design, meaning “statisticians can move patients into better performing study arms and away from poorly performing arms, so kids get advantages of the best treatment sooner,” explains Curley.

Her work also extends beyond the hospital doors. She recently finished enrollment on a cohort study looking at pediatric post-intensive care syndrome. She’s not just assuming that a patient is okay once they leave the ICU. “Pediatric critical care has done well in helping children survive,” she says, “but we’re investigating the quality of survival. Are they emotionally traumatized? Are they able to sleep? Do they have the resources they need to heal?” Curley’s goal is to understand a patient’s long-term needs so nurses and doctors can target interventions in or after the ICU. She wants to “launch them into the world as best we can.” The bi-coastal study—there’s a team at Seattle Children’s hospital—will follow 750 kids for two years. She says, “We’re also measuring the possibility for resilience because when you go through something traumatic, sometimes you end up being in a better place afterwards.”

“For you’re not just working with the child. You’re working with their entire family and the larger community. Sometimes we serve as their only health care provider.”

For Ruppel, it was a changing societal narrative that inspired her to dig deeper. Studies in adults indicate that pulse oximeters may be less accurate in patients with darker skin, and she sought to explore this phenomenon in pediatrics. She used retrospective data to inform a prospective study that turned into a five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health/National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute to better understand how the accuracy of pulse oximeters differs in children who have different skin colors. The outcome could have critical implications since many practitioners use the pulse oximeter readings to inform care decisions. “When we think about what pulse oximeters do and what they’re approved to do—it’s really an estimate,” says Ruppel. “And yet, in practice, we’ve sort of come to rely on them. We’re seeing how that could potentially be detrimental.”

Data And Decision Making

Everyone is talking about data these days, especially in medicine. But there are two prevailing questions surrounding it for nurses and doctors—how it is collected and how it is used. While big hospital systems and well-funded grants know how to read data, it’s equally important to independent clinicians navigating community health. Just ask Holly Rishel MSN RN CNRN, who has been a certified school nurse at the Central York School District in Pennsylvania for eleven years. “You’re not just working with the child,” says Rishel. “You’re working with their entire family and the larger community. Sometimes we serve as their only health care provider.” That means that Rishel and her team need to be proactive with changes and trends they see. They do that by documenting, tagging, analyzing, and sharing the data they meticulously collect—and are grateful for the technology and systems the district provides. “Obviously, we’re looking to change processes and
“We want these prediction models to work fairly. Some in the data science community believe that if you have enough data, you don’t have to worry about biases.”

project: He and a team are trying to understand how data and artificial intelligence (AI) can help caregivers of children with asthma in southwest Philadelphia execute the right treatment plans. Funded by Penn4C—a collaboration between the nursing and engineering schools at Penn—Wade is identifying what barriers they face when it comes to medication guidance and building out prototypes to make getting the right information at the right time easy, in hopes of seeing this population of kids have better management of their condition.

Cato is also helping to take work he’s done on mining electronic health records (EHRs) for adults and applying it to pediatrics. EHRs were mostly set up for billing and coding, but he sees a wealth of untapped data in them. He hopes with that data he can help pediatric departments phenotype and model predictive outcomes, which could help them with decision-making, staffing, and more.

Additionally, he approaches all his projects with a mind toward bias—things like age, gender, race, language, and ethnicity. “We want these prediction models to work fairly,” he says. “Some in the data science community believe that if you have enough data, you don’t have to worry about biases.” His research has proved that’s not true: He’s published studies highlighting those biases so that others in his field know they exist. In one such published study “we showed that we could predict a person’s race just by the words used in their notes,” he says. “It’s important that people acknowledge and adjust for that.”

Changing Cultural and Political Landscape

The innovations made in prenatal diagnosis and treatment for fetal anomalies have been astounding. It’s something that caught the attention of assistant professor Abigail Wilpers even more so a decade ago when she was charged with coordinating a study following individuals whose pregnancies were complicated by severe fetal congenital heart disease. “My first job out of college was working with these families at the hardest moments of their lives,” she says. “I really got a sense of how groundbreaking this medicine, science, and technology could be.”

That inspired Wilpers to really examine critical aspects of high-risk maternal-fetal care. What she realized is that decisions and outcomes for this patient population are impacted by changing cultural beliefs and reproductive health laws. Take, for example, the straightforward act of communicating with patients who are presented with the option of maternal fetal surgery after the diagnosis of a fetal condition like spina bifida. “These families have gotten shocking, unexpected news,” says Wilpers. Perhaps they are bounced around to different specialists and must make quick decisions about their health and their expected baby’s health, all while the clock is ticking on the options, especially following the overturning of Roe v. Wade. How do you help guide an expectant parent to understand complex information and make decisions in this kind of emotional state? How does mental health play a role in the outcomes? Are there certain regions of the country that aren’t even presenting the option for maternal fetal surgery, or certain groups of people who are less likely to be informed of all their choices? Wilpers has recently published two articles on the health care news site statnews.com about the changes in reproductive laws and their real-world impacts on this high-risk patient population.

In her research, she also examines the impact of being respectful of people’s preferences, needs, and values, acknowledging that social determinants of health are often at play. “Mental health is a big piece of this because not everyone winds up with a live baby. And those who do can struggle to care for themselves and a child with special health care needs,” she says. Her research—in which she’s working with a dozen fetal care centers around the country—aims to determine if person-centered care makes a difference in mental health outcomes. Her work is bringing together experts in fetal diagnosis and treatment, perinatal palliative care, and maternal mental health and led to her team developing the first person-centered care designed for this patient population. Moving outside of the hospital setting is critical, too. Her research as focused on data and patients in fetal care centers. But, she says, “some people don’t even make it to the doors.” She’s partnered with SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective to identify the unique experiences and needs of individuals who have been largely missing from the evidence in this evolving high-risk care.

“How do you help guide an expectant parent to understand complex information and make decisions in this kind of emotional state? How does mental health play a role in the outcomes? Are there certain regions of the country that aren’t even presenting the option for maternal fetal surgery, or certain groups of people who are less likely to be informed of all their choices?”
PhD education at Penn Nursing is setting the bar for advancing innovation and policy.

Before Ellen Munsterman APN AGNCS-BC MSN even stepped foot onto Penn’s campus, she shared a meaningful connection with the Ralston House Term Chair in Gerontological Nursing, Pamela Z. Cacchione PhD CRNP BC FASA FAAN.

Separately, they each studied the use of PARO—the small Japanese robot designed like a baby seal stuffed animal—with dementia patients. Could, perhaps, the intervention mitigate agitation? But while Cacchione, thanks to decades of career achievements, is the 2024 recipient of the School of Nursing’s prestigious Norma M. Lang Award for Scholarly Practice and Policy, Munsterman’s contributions to science are just starting to take shape. Still, they have another thing in common: Both belong to the community of nurses who are passionate about addressing real-world health challenges through well-designed research.

Munsterman, now a third-year doctoral candidate, was drawn to the School’s Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) program because of impactful research by professors like Cacchione, as well as an enduring eagerness to find evidence-based solutions that will improve patients’ lives. The same goes for fourth-year Lucy Andersen.

“When you’re working clinically, you start to naturally question things and think about how they can be done better. Some of those questions can be answered with your knowledge from a BSN or master’s degree,” Andersen says. “For me, I felt like to answer the questions that I was asking, I really needed to conduct my own research.”

Research is, after all, at the heart of the Penn Nursing doctoral degree pursuit, according to Dean Antonia M. Villarruel. She says a good nurse researcher is “somebody who likes to solve problems. It could be taking care of patients. It could be working in communities. It could be policy related. What’s the problem you want to solve?”

They explore their questions by relying on an array of research methods, always applying a lens of health equity. And, in recent years, the School has strengthened three areas through the recruitment of faculty: precision science (tailoring treatment to individuals), data science (gleaning insights from data to improve health care), and implementation science (putting findings from research into practice).

Whatever their method, doctoral candidates also benefit from the School’s network of clinical and community partners. Alumni go on to everything from leading research that benefits community health to running health systems. They are driven by curiosity. According to the Dean, an interest in taste and smell led Paolo Joseph MS RN BC CRNP’15 to her dissertation topic. Joseph went on to a job at the National Institutes of Health—and when COVID-19 came along, “bingo, her research is elevated,” says the Dean. PhD alumna Regina S. Cunningham RN AGN FNP-C’13 is now Chief Executive Officer at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Some students even go directly from BSN to PhD, like Stephen Bonett PhD MA RN Nu’17 GR’21 GRW’21. He is now researching the expansion of equitable access to HIV prevention in Philadelphia.

“What nurses bring to research is a more holistic perspective of the issues that they’re trying to solve,” Dean Villarruel says. “It’s not a disease, but it’s understanding the disease in context of the person, and understanding that the person lives in a family, and the family lives in a community that’s influenced by policy.”

Among our current cohorts of PhD candidates, we talked with five who are using that viewpoint to find health solutions that you may someday see in a setting near you.
Supporting Sepsis Survivors

The potential of research to change the world has been on the radar for Elaine Sang RN MSN since she was an under-grad studying fruit flies (whose genes are similar to those of humans) and triple negative breast cancer. She even spent a summer in Taiwan helping with a study on sleeping disorders among nurses.

Her thirst for science did not abate. Early in her nursing career, at a North Carolina hospital, she was involved with the research committee. There, the patient population was largely rural, and many people she saw had multiple comorbidities, including sepsis. “Many were being readmitted to the hospital because of social determinants of health factors,” she says. Some had to choose between feeding their families and paying for health care. Others had trouble traveling the long distances required to make outpatient appointments.

“All this experience drove me to pursue a PhD,” says Sang, who wanted to determine how technology could be leveraged to improve the health of their patients.

“I knew technology was really growing, especially for patients living in low socioeconomic areas,” she says. She was intrigued by the research of Professor Kathryn H. Bowles, who wanted to examine how technology-enhanced support and lead to policies that establish financial help for informal caregivers and programming for people with dementia that gives relatives some respite.

She’ll recruit subjects from Demiris’s ongoing study focused on hospices but ask different questions. “I want [to explore] earlier access to palliative care services, so they will have a smoother transition to the hospice services in the future,” she explains.

Health equity is top of mind in her recruiting. “I’m Korean. I think that our nursing school and Dr. Demiris always try to recruit different populations,” she says. She acknowledges, “In my practice, I do not see diversity in hospice services, unfortunately.” But she notes that the agency connected to their research problems is trying to recruit more people of color. Learning how researchers engage such organizations and build productive relationships with them is one of the skills she is honing—even though, Cho jokes, she might not be the typical PhD student.

“Honestly, I do not like studying,” she says with a laugh. But she suggests that even nurses who don’t look back on their school days with fondness should consider a PhD. A big upside, she says, is “being part of a team that can change what we are doing clinically. What we are studying, what we are exploring, it’s going to make a bigger and broader impact on the health care system.”
Exploring Cancer Insights

Lucy Andersen OCN GRN’24 was working at a Washington DC hospital a few years ago when she first saw cancer patients who had received a cutting-edge CAR-T cell therapy. Seeing firsthand the outcomes of a treatment just approved by the FDA in 2017 would be a noteworthy career marker for anyone, and Andersen valued the experience. But soon, something else got her attention: a lack of nursing research.

“I started to have a lot of questions regarding what the long-term outlook for CAR T-cell patients would be,” she says.

So Andersen decided to search for her own answers at Penn Nursing—a perfect fit, as Penn has been a pioneer in CAR-T cell therapy. An early interview with Professor Jie Deng PhD RN OCN FAAN, Evan C. Thompson Term Chair for Excellence in Teaching, influenced her choice of school, too. “She was someone who I really wanted to work with and really wanted to learn from.”

Now, four years into her doctoral pursuit, Andersen is recruiting subjects for a precision science study of this new patient population and their caregivers.

“We see how someone’s socioeconomic status or their level of caregiver support can really impact their whole illness trajectory,” Andersen says. She will look at the long-term financial impact of receiving such therapy, for patients and their caregivers. Some health insurance covers only part of the cost. “I think ensuring access is one thing, but also ensuring that patients aren’t having other adverse experiences financially after receiving therapy is also important.”

Thanks to a small qualitative study she already conducted, Andersen has found that CAR T-cell therapy patients are doing quite well. However, she says, “most still had some symptoms that they dealt with in their day-to-day life.” Fatigue and neuropathy are common issues. Through her dissertation study, she says, “One goal I have is to develop interventions to address patient symptoms. We can try to offer supportive care and prevention to mitigate those symptoms overall.”

During that initial small study, she cemented relationships with mentors in the Schools of Medicine and Nursing that she believes will be critical to her success. “I have this dream team of scientists who are really passionate about the work I’m doing.”

Her work has continued at the bedside, too, throughout her studies. Andersen still works clinically, to keep her eye on those she wants to help. “I like seeing the patients all the time because it reminds me of why I’m doing this in the first place. It also makes sure that my questions are relevant and the interventions that I’m thinking about are actually useful and could be implemented.”
Addressing Health Inequities

As an ER nurse, Jennifer Gil MSN RN saw the return of plenty of patients who had made little progress. Many didn’t have the “resources to connect to preventative care or mental health services,” Gil says.

She wondered, too, about the connection between crowded ERs and nurses’ burnout. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified her inquisitiveness. “I got intrigued in not only patient outcomes, but also the work environment and health care systems’ deficiencies and the inner workings of care delivery models,” Gil says. “I decided that the best avenue to work through those is with a graduate degree in science.”

For her master’s, she did a class project on integrating social determinants of health into an EHR system. “From that research to be led by nurses was very inspiring,” she says, “that nurses have the power to make an impact on policy and research. And we’re seeing changes in policy.”

Gil, whose family came to the U.S. from Colombia, sees a future in leadership where she can represent “people who look like me.” She currently serves on the ANA’s national board of directors.

Entering the PhD program without much prior research experience hasn’t been a problem, Gil says. “Between the two of them, really, my research interests are covered,” Munsterman says.

Creating Dementia-Friendly Hospitals

For her dissertation, she is examining the concept of the “dementia-friendly hospital,” which is more common in Europe than the United States.

For her, the appeal of implementation science is very much the chance to hasten the adoption of solutions in the real world. “This can be a difficult group of people to take care of, especially when nurses don’t necessarily have the resources that they need to be able to take care of persons with dementia the way that they need to be taken care of,” she says. “My interest in the field of implementation science is a lot about shortening that often perceived length of time in between research being published and research being translated into practice.”

Aware that dementia research has not historically reflected the experiences of all individuals with dementia and their family caregivers, Munsterman chose interview sites “that would give me a more diverse group of people,” she says. “I’ve been thinking a lot about that, especially with the family caregiver inclusion question because I know that there are definite differences in caregiver profiles. Sometimes that caregiver is a spouse and maybe of similar age to the patient, but then oftentimes somebody who is an adult child who is caring for their own children and caring for a parent with dementia.”

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Leadership

Thinking Historically
A new curator sees the future in the past.

Where would you go to research the 1918 influenza pandemic? Or to find out what medical care was like in the field during World War I? If you said Penn Nursing’s Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing, you’d be right. New Bates Center curator Jessica Martucci PhD will be the first to point out that a repository for nursing history is more than about nurses.

She says, “You can understand so many different aspects of the history of our health care system through our collections at the Bates Center. The history of nursing is the history of health care. My goal is to help people see the breadth and depth of health care history that is possible to see in our holdings.” And moreover, that “the Bates Center is more than a repository—it is a center for research and education, too. There is something unique and innovative about having such an inherently interdisciplinary place like this embedded in a nursing school.”

Martucci was appointed as curator in August 2023, a dual appointment to the Center and to Penn Libraries as part of a partnership that’s been in the works since before Patricia D’Antonio PhD RN FAAN transitioned out of her role as Center director in 2023. In addition to being an evangelist for the wider application of its collections, she is tasked with guiding the Center’s teaching and research services, collection strategies, and exhibition programs—and working closely with University Archivist John Bence and colleagues in the Penn Libraries’ Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts.

“The curator role is a bridge between Penn Libraries and the Bates Center,” Martucci says, “and it means more opportunities for collaboration, programming, and outreach through the networks and support of Penn Libraries.” It boils down to visibility: increasing knowledge of and access to the wealth of information at the Center, especially since there’s “a widespread culture around and interest in health care at Penn. I’d love for the Bates to attain an identity on campus and beyond as a resource that people think of and come to when they’re interested in anything having to do with history and health care.”

While Martucci is committed to positioning the Center and its Joan E. Lyneagh Archives & Special Collections as a go-to resource for a broader audience, she emphasizes the rich tapestry of information available on nursing history—something for which the Center is already well-known. But finding the right threads can be a challenge, even for those aware of the Center’s existence. That makes Martucci’s role, as well as those of Archivist Jessica Clark and Administrative Coordinator Elisa Stroh ’14—who have been go-to connections for over a decade—critical for the researchers, photo editors, genealogists, and nursing alumni group members who frequent the Ellen D. Baer Reading Room at the Center. (Visitors are watched over by the reading room’s resident training doll, known affectionately as Creepy Baby Doll, among many weird and wonderful finds at the Bates Center—see p. 52.)

Andre Rosario RN-BC BSN ’16, knows the importance of having the right people available to make the Center’s holdings come alive. His doctoral work at Penn Nursing centers Filipino nurses who migrate to the U.S., especially during times of nursing shortages—but navigating research sources to locate information on nurses based on ethnicity or nationality can be tricky. He chuckles when he says,
Leadership

The Bates Center isn’t the only resource for Penn Nursing students in search of information. Larissa Gordon MS LIS MED MA is the new Nursing Librarian at Penn Libraries as of August 2023, where her role extends beyond the shelves into the dynamic world of health care research. With a liaison position connecting the Libraries and the School of Nursing, not dissimilar to Jessica Martucci’s at the Bates Center, Gordon is assigned to the Holman Biotech Commons.

“We take all kinds of questions,” she says. “My consultation appointments might involve helping students doing research—or maybe faculty who are doing research. It can be simple questions or something more complicated, like developing a search strategy for a systematic review—and acting as a member of the review team.”

Gordon’s role is multi-faceted, but her goal is to set students and faculty up with a solid foundation from which to move ahead with their projects. “Sometimes people just need someone to brainstorm with,” she says, “helping them to figure out a place where they can start on the topic they have an interest in.” Whether it’s in the Biomedical Library itself, online via the chat service, or out in a classroom, helping students develop the skills they need to complete a specific assignment for class, she’s “trying to meet students in multiple places throughout their curriculum”—whether they are nursing students or not.

And it’s more than simple research that she can help with. She does all she can to connect Penn Nursing to other Libraries’ services, departments, events, and workshops. That includes helping authors and connecting people to copyright assistance, data analysis and management, and maker spaces.

Gordon comes to Penn with years of experience as a medical librarian, and the transition to Penn and Penn Nursing has been rewarding. She says, “Everyone at Penn Nursing, from the Dean to the faculty and to the students, really appreciate the help they can get. They are interested and enthusiastic in collaborating and really developing a partnership.”

For those seeking assistance or collaboration, Larissa Gordon can be reached at lgordon2@upenn.edu.

(continued from page 48)

“Research collections aren’t organized that way. The Bates Center staff’s knowledge of historical research in the Philadelphia region and of other archives has given me so much direction.”

He continues, “What’s been interesting is that I might look at several boxes of papers, and even though those individual documents might not be directly related to my research, just seeing those other documents in relation to those that are, puts me a little bit closer to discovering a certain organization or a certain person that I need to find out more about. Being exposed to that context is what makes archival research—especially at the Bates—special.”

With the arrival of Martucci and the new curatorial role comes the potential to greatly expand the Center’s holdings, something that could open up even more avenues of inquiry for researchers like Rosario.

Jessica Clark points to the Penn Libraries mission to expand digital resources, noting, “I’ve seen the Center evolve to embrace new directions, opportunities, and ventures into the digital world.” One of those directions may be adding more oral histories to the archives. Martucci has a background and training in oral history and points to their interesting potential, not just as a documentation tool of nursing history, but as a way to build an institutional history of Penn Nursing.

The new opportunities for expansion are endless, though—because the history of nursing, to Martucci, is fascinating. She says, “I’d like to broaden our collection in terms of the kinds of perspectives we are documenting from within nursing. This includes strengthening our commitment to diversity in nursing, of course, but I’m also thinking about how to better capture the work of nurses, for example, through nursing unions and labor organizing.”

The Center’s changing nature speaks to the heart of Penn Nursing’s philosophy of building a culture of inquiry that values intellectual curiosity and collaboration. Martucci says, “We are here as a service to the larger community. Whether that means bringing fellows in to do research or putting together projects with faculty and students that help expose students to the materials in our collections, the goal is to get them thinking historically.”

Q&A with JESSICA MARTUCCI

Martucci is no stranger to Penn. Not only did she earn her Master’s and PhD in History and Sociology of Science and her MBA here, she comes to the Bates Center from the History and Sociology of Science Department at Penn, where she was associate director of undergraduate studies. We sat down with Martucci to ask a few questions.

Q: What drew you to the role of Bates Center curator?
A: I’ve always had an interest in historical work—I spent some time doing a postdoc in bioethics because I wanted to learn how to take the historical work and arguments that I was making, and apply them in a way that might impact what people were doing on the ground, or maybe shape policies. I’ve also spent time in public history settings, working as an oral history researcher and museum curator at the Science History Institute—taking research and making it accessible for a public audience, which was exciting and engaging and just fun to do. My role at the Bates Center utilizes my background and my interest in the history of gender and health care, and researching nurses—all the different things I had been doing in my career. I get to shape and nurture future research in the areas in which I’m interested, through building collections and running the Bates Center fellowship program.

You mentioned you have a history of researching nurses? Yes, right here at the Bates Center! As a History and Sociology of Science PhD student, the close links between the HSSI department and Bates Center led me to the Center’s seminars. I applied to the Bates fellowship program—at the time I was researching my dissertation on the history of breast feeding. I was interested in understanding how breast feeding knowledge reemerged in the mid-20th century, and I became a common part of medicine and hospital practice, after breastfeeding rates had fallen very low. I was able to do some of that research at the Bates Center by learning about what nurses were being taught in schools changed over time, through tracking changes in teaching materials and curricula.

What is your favorite part of the Bates holdings right now? The Mercy-Douglass Hospital Center in honor of Black History Month—the film explores the history of the hospital and Nurse Training school through the lens of the Black community’s struggle against segregation and health care inequity. The collection includes letters, photographs, and more that document the Black experience in nursing in the U.S.—and historical information about the two hospitals that merged to form Mercy Douglass. It’s a real gem in the holdings.

We also have a full set of the Cherry Ames series, young adult mystery novels starring nurse Cherry Ames as the protagonist that were published in the World War II era (see p. 52). I find these kinds of materials really fascinating and important for understanding the idea that the nurse can reflect broader cultural expectations around gender, sexuality, family, work, and the health care system.

Far left: A group of nurses dressed for the day’s work outside of their office in 1909, from the Visiting Nurse Society of Philadelphia records.

Left: Student nurse Jane Hartman, c. 1953, in the PGH children’s ward. The Bates Center is home to the Alumna Association of the PGH Training School for Nurses.
Weird and Wonderful
The history of nursing is more than, and records. Bates Center treasures that reveal how nursing is embedded in the cultural lexicon and tell the story of nursing education inspire awe and delight.

1 Training doll, c.1910s. Philadelphia General Hospital Nurse Training School. Research suggests that this is a Martha Jenkins Chace doll, the first in a line of simulation dolls for nursing training purposes. It’s a fascinating glimpse at the early days of simulation in nursing education and training that continues today. 2 Cherry Ames, 1943–1968. A 27-book series for young readers that chronicles the adventures of Cherry Ames as she goes through nurse training, now works in settings from hospitals to summer camps, solving mysteries along the way. These books helped spark girls’ imaginations and career ambitions throughout the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and beyond. 3 Auzoux Uterus and Fetus Model, c.1925. Chestnut Hill School of Nursing. The Auzoux company, founded by Dr. Louis Thomas Jérôme Auzoux (1797–1880), created a series of pregnancy stage models. The pregnant uterus was just one of many anatomical pats that Auzoux designed and marketed to educate nurses and doctors in human anatomy and development. 4 The Nurses Game” board game, c.1963. The Nurses Game features nurses Liz Thorpe and Gail Lucas, characters from a popular 1960s television show, allowing you to make your way through nursing school, attend social events with medical residents, highlight the way that society understood and portrayed nursing throughout much of the twentieth century as the perfect female career before marriage. 5 The “Frill” iron, c.1890. Philadelphia General Hospital Nurse Training School. Alice Fisher was a nursing pioneer who trained at Florence Nightingale’s Training School and named The Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing to honor her. 6 The Bates Center hosts the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the History of Nursing in Philadelphia. 1994 The Center celebrates its 10th anniversary and achieves its fundraising goal of building a one-million dollar endowment. 1995 Karen Buhrer-Wilkins RN PhD FAAN assumes the role of Director of the Center. 2002 Barbara Bates passes away (May 5, 1928 – December 18, 2002), physician, historian, and long-time friend of founding director Joan Lynaugh RN PhD FAAN and a staunch supporter of the Center.

BATES CENTER TIMELINE

1983 ad hoc History Committee is appointed by Dean Claire Fagin.
1985 The Center for the Study of the History of Nursing is opened.
1986 The Center is officially recognized by the University and governed by the under the direction of an Advisory Board, chaired by Lilian Sholtis Brunner, and run by Director Joan E. Lynaugh RN PhD, and Archivist Karen Buhrer-Wilkins RN PhD.
1990 The Center grants its first fellowships.
1995 The Center hosts the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the History of Nursing in Philadelphia.
1994 The Center celebrates its 10th anniversary and achieves its fundraising goal of building a one-million dollar endowment.
1995 Karen Buhrer-Wilkins RN PhD FAAN assumes the role of Director of the Center.
2002 Barbara Bates passes away (May 5, 1928 – December 18, 2002), physician, historian, and long-time friend of founding director Joan Lynaugh RN PhD FAAN and a staunch supporter of the Center.
2004 The Center is officially renamed the Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing.
2006 Karen Buhrer-Wilkins retires and Julie Fairman PhD RN FAAN assumes role of Director.
2006 Ellen D. Baer PhD RN FAAN assumes role as Chair of the Advisory Board.
2000 The Bates Center hosts the AANHPS 25th Annual Conference.
2010 Karen Buhrer-Wilkins passes away. Nicole Strumpf PhD RN FAAN assumes the role of Chair of the Advisory Board.
2015 Julie Fairman steps down as Director. Pat D’Antonio PhD RN FAAN assumes the role of Associate Director. The Bates Center launches the History, Health and Humanities minor.
2018 The Center names The Joan E. Lynaugh Archives and Special Collections in honor of the Bates Center’s founder. $1 million endowment to assure our Future fundraising campaign reaches its goal.
2023 Pat D’Antonio steps down as Director, Jessica Martucci is appointed as the Center’s Curator in partnership with The Penn Libraries.

A Growing Faculty
As this new year unfolds, we look back to July 1, 2023 and take stock of our newest faculty members. Each offers their own unique contributions to our students, our university, and the nursing profession writ large.

Heather Bromme PhD RN FAAN
Research Assistant Professor
Researching organizational policies that impact nurses and influence patient outcomes and implementing multi-level solutions focused on increasing health equity.

Daniela Goldini PhD
Research Professor
Making substantive contributions to the important public policy priority areas of homelessness, criminal justice, mental health interventions, and substance use.

Kathleen O. DeMuth DMN HPD CNCRF
Practice Assistant Professor
Teaching a series of primary care courses (N6470, N6480, N6490, N6560) designed to teach students how to care for patients across the lifespan. Serving as a clinical preceptor for nurse practitioner students. Directing the Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner program.

Wendy A. Henderson PhD MSN CRNP FNP-BC AGACNP
Gal and Ralph Reynolds President’s Distinguished Professor
For more on Henderson, see page 8.

Liming Huang PhD
Research Assistant Professor
Serving as a biostatistician in the BECCA (Biostatistics * Evaluation * Collaboration * Consultation * Analysis) Lab. Applies innovative statistical and computational methods to analyze complex medical and health data and solve nonstandard statistical problems.

Jessica Strohm Farber
Assistant Professor, Clinical Educator
Teaching in Response to Living with Chronic Illness (N8280). Researching to improve chronic illness self-care by focusing on patient-caregiver dyad decision-making. Serving as a Nurse Scientist at Princeton Medical Center.

Practice-Associate Professor
Teaching in both Advanced Microbiome Metabolomics (NUTR6460) and Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy I & II (NUTR6230/6250) using virtual and augmented reality techniques. Serving as Clinical Educator and Practice Specialist in the Clinical Nutrition of Nursing Practice (N1010), Situating the Practice of Nursing (N1020), Narrative Matters in Health and Illness Experiences (N3050), Nursing in the Community (N3060), and Public Health Nursing Care in the Community (N3080).

Michael Stawnychy PhD CRNP FAAN
Assistant Professor, Clinical Educator
Teaching in Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy I & II (N6460, N6480, N6490, N6560) designed to teach students how to care for patients across the lifespan. Serving as a clinical preceptor for nurse practitioner students. Directing the Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner program.

Liz Zorzanello Emery
EMD/MS RN CRNP CCHLW
Practice-Associate Professor
Teaching in both Advanced Microbiome Metabolomics (NUTR6460) and Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy I & II (NUTR6230/6250) using virtual and augmented reality techniques. Serving as Clinical Educator and Practice Specialist in the Clinical Nutrition of Nursing Practice (N1010), Situating the Practice of Nursing (N1020), Narrative Matters in Health and Illness Experiences (N3050), Nursing in the Community (N3060), and Public Health Nursing Care in the Community (N3080).
Running to Doja Cat

The biennial story slam brings together nurse storytellers from Penn Nursing and Penn Medicine to share their true, personal stories that explore the breadth, depth, and diversity of nursing. Seven participants shared their tales of perseverance, the theme for this year’s event. Penn Nursing undergrad Maddy Brunson kicked off the event, and an edited transcript of her story follows.

FIRST WANT TO ASK: HOW MANY OF YOU ARE RUNNERS?

I’ve been an athlete to some degree all my life. And recently I’ve been trying to run a half-marathon, which on paper doesn’t seem like a lot—but if you measure it by how many times the song “Need To Know” by Doja Cat could fit into the time needed to run one, it would be around 34 times. That’s not bad. I can listen to that song 34 times. My uncle, Jeremy, told me he listens to Doja Cat when he runs. Now, I’ll never be able to imagine this 52-year-old-something man running down the street, listening to Doja Cat, but he claims the time in the home of my deceased great-aunt. Her home echoes when you walk, and you can hear your own bones creaking when you walk. The house is built like a museum, not a home.

Once we’re out of the city, we drive to the parts of the state where there’s nothing but Waffle Houses and Jesus Saves signs. I can’t remember if my uncle believes in God or not. And with my head out the window, I watch the sky turn from orange to purple into black. I typically enjoy this drive, but this time I don’t know what I’m driving into—so I grow anxious as I see the Houston skyline appearing in the front windshield. We pull up to the house. The rubber tires of the car crunch on the front driveway, and we leave our bags in the car, walk up to the front door, and I watch my mom’s hand hover over that front door handle. We walk slowly throughout the house, calling out his name at each step.

“Jeremy!” No response.

“Jeremy!” Silence.

“Jeremy!” No response.

Penn Nursing undergraduate student Maddy Brunson

We find our way to the living room, and we leave our bags in the car, walk up to the front door, and I watch my mom’s hand hover over that front door handle. We walk slowly throughout the house, calling out his name at each step. “Jeremy!” Nothing. “Jeremy!” Silence. “Jeremy!” No response.

Penn Nursing — SPRING 2024

We see a pair of feet sticking out from behind the couch. I run to them, and Jeremy lay incapacitated in a pool of his own blood, vomit, and urine. His chest slowly rises and falls. His eyes flutter open and shut. He’s able to mumble out a few indiscernible words. I look around the living room and see that the room is lined with bottles of liquor. He is caged by his disease, literally trapped by the very thing he’s been trying so very hard to fight.

By the end of it, Jeremy’s blood alcohol was .4, so 40 percent of his blood was alcohol. Death was living in that house. Death’s icy hands dragged across those 70 bottles of alcohol he had consumed over two weeks. Death’s long black coat was draped over that couch that Jeremy had been sitting on. My uncle has known death for a long time, constantly trying to decide whether to run from death or run straight into Death’s open arms.

What I have learned from caring for my uncle is something I integrate into my ideas of patient care as an undergrad. When a patient is lost in their illness, we are the ones that must be their guiding light. They must look past the fog of doubt, frustration, and fear by using a lantern of empathy, determination, and patience. We have been called to protect the tenderness of the human soul from the claws of illness, and I’m graced with gratitude that I get to be a protector, a guide, and a healer.

The last time I spoke with my uncle, he sent me a message saying Doja Cat was coming to Philly. As a broke college student, I couldn’t afford tickets. Instead, I ran that day to the songs of Doja Cat. As my feet pounded the pavement, I hoped one day Jeremy would stop running from his disease and, instead, just run to the beat of Doja Cat.

Penn Nursing — SPRING 2024

The Story Slam is a partnership between Penn Nursing, Penn Medicine, and First Person Arts—and it is made possible through the generosity of Penn Nursing alum Sandy Samberg and her husband, Joe Samberg.

“ When a patient is lost in their illness, we are the ones that must be their guiding light.”

Leadership

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The Story Slam is a partnership between Penn Nursing, Penn Medicine, and First Person Arts—and it is made possible through the generosity of Penn Nursing alum Sandy Samberg and her husband, Joe Samberg.
As a high school student, Jill Fallows Macaluso Enq, an ‘98 applied to one university: Penn Nursing. It was more than just her family’s long roots in Philadelphia—her grandfather owned Bill’s Diner that used to stand on the corner of 36th and Market. It was seeing her sister—a nurse—take care of her terminally ill father at home.

Pride in her sister’s caregiving gave Macaluso a push, and she came to Penn, not knowing what kind of nurse she’d become. She says, “I knew I wanted to help people—and feel powerfully equipped to do so.”

During Macaluso’s senior year clinicals, she landed at Catherine Elementary School in southwest Philadelphia, working with the school nurse. She says, “[She] was doing much more than health care—she was trying to understand what was going on at home and how she could help with preventative care. She had me go into the classrooms and educate kids on healthy eating and dental health.”

It was a rewarding experience in community health, in line with her constant motivational prompt: “How can I make the world a better place?”. Macaluso spent two years at a law firm after receiving her J.D. from Rutgers, plotting her next move. “I thought maybe I’ll get a degree in health care administration, maybe I’ll come back to Penn,” when in 2003 she got a call from a recruiter at Novo Nordisk, at the time a small Danish company with limited U.S. presence. Today they are one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in the world, known for medicines treating the chronic diseases of diabetes and obesity, and for supplying fifty percent of the world’s insulin.

Macaluso’s role: to focus on building out the compliance program based on guidance from the federal government—things like general company policies and structures for employee training. Since then, ethics and compliance has come to mean much more for the company than simply following regulations. “We’re very focused on not only compliance but on that taller order of doing right by society,” she says. It’s a perfect intersection of law, nursing, and Macaluso’s quest to make the world a better place.

Her current role is Corporate Vice President and Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer at Novo Nordisk. She recognizes that pharmaceutical companies have significant responsibilities to patients, health care professionals, and society. That’s why she is proud of Novo Nordisk’s social responsibility strategy to improve public health through preventative health care initiatives. One such initiative, Cities Changing Diabetes, partners with the cities of Houston and Philadelphia to support health advocacy in settings like churches. Some patients describe their experience as being listened to like a real person for the first time. “It’s why I stay there every day,” Macaluso says.

Penn Nursing was critical to her success. As a mother to three daughters with their own careers looming ahead, she’ll recommend a nursing degree if they show an interest in health care because of its flexibility and direct experience with people. She says, “I knew with my nursing and law background that I could work in health care administration, medical malpractice, a law firm, or a pharmaceutical company, but that really only scratches the surface. Successful nurses are everywhere.”
1960s

Debbie Bell, HUP’68, Nu’72, shared that she is “enjoying retirement while spending lots of time on the golf course.”

Audrey Considine, HUP’69, Nu’72, received the 2023 Richard Krugman Distinguished Service Award from the University of Colorado Medical Alumni Association.

Judy Molnar LoGrasso, HUP’69, works as a Volunteer Access Guide at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Judy shared, “From Nurse Childbirth Educator I diverted to a Masters of Theological Studies and Clinical Pastoral Education to serve as a Board Certified Chaplain in Health Care Ministry for the Archdiocese of Boston. My retirement avocation, in addition to being a Nana, is guiding Access Tours at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. It’s amazing how Nursing is a springboard to new adventures! Looking forward to 55th HUP reunion with classmates (and Zoom pals) this May.”

1970s

Kathleen Clark Jesiolowski, Nu’71, volunteers as a certified registered nurse practitioner in Lebanon, PA. Kathleen shares, “Still enjoying employment as a provider for the uninsured in my community. Living every moment of my 55 years as a nurse. Fitting in beach time in Lewes, DE as much as I can.”

Ruth Miller Coreniti, Nu’75, is a Pediatric Nurse at Aveon Health.

Aileen Goddstein Staller, Nu’76, is the Department Chair and Assistant Professor of Nursing at Ave Maria University in Florida. Aileen shared, “I obtained my MSN, then Nurse Practitioner post masters certification from University of South Florida (USF), and finally a DNP from USF. I also received my AOCNP certification and went on to practice in neurosurgery and neuro-neurosurgery for 30+ years. Now spending my pre-retirement time in academia.”

1980s

Kathleen Brewer-Smyth, GNu’85, GRu’89, authored a book, Adverse Childhood Experiences: The Neuroscience of Trauma, Resilience, and Healing throughout the Life Course, which won four American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Awards. It was awarded first place in three categories (Community Health, Creative Works, and Psych/ Mental Health) and third place in the Consumer Health category. No book has ever won this many AJN awards since the organization first began acknowledging high-quality publications on nursing and health care topics in 1969. Any publisher may submit books for this recognition; authors are not required to be nurses, making it very competitive. It weaves powerful stories from nurses across the globe, science-based practices, and the healing potential of nature, the arts, activism, and advocacy while navigating the ever-shifting and often tumultuous health care landscape. Donna earned her doctorate from the inaugural DNSC program under Florence Downs. Donna is currently an advanced practice psychiatric mental health nurse, psychotherapist, and educator.

1990s

Madelyn Trupkin Herzfeld, Nu’96, W’96, is the Founder and Vice Chair of Carevive Systems. Founded in 2013, Carevive is an oncology—centered health technology company committed to understanding and improving the patient experience. The platform enables providers to monitor patient symptoms remotely using electronic patient-reported outcomes and to provide timely interventions that improve survival outcomes and patient quality of life.

Darlene D. Pedersen, GNu’97, is an advanced practice psychiatric nurse. She has authored two new editions of her titles for psychiatric professionals—PsychNotes: Clinical Pocket Guide (first edition) and Pocket Psych Drugs: Point-of-Care Clinical Guide (second edition).

2000s

Jennifer S. Graber, GNu’99, serves as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Practice Initiatives in the School of Nursing at the University of Delaware. Jennifer was elected to the board of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society as Regional Chapters Coordinating Committee Chair. She oversees international and national coordination between the 15 North American chapter regions as well as across Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania, Latin America, and Caribbean in the Middle East. As committee chair, she is responsible for leading 11 elected regional coordinators by advancing initiatives that meet the needs of the global chapters and fulfills the mission and vision of Sigma. She also serves as the program track coordinator for the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner program at the University of Delaware, where she has taught graduate and undergraduate students for the last ten years. She was also chosen as a Faculty Fellow for the UD Award program out of the Provost’s Office to mentor faculty in the promotion and tenure process.

2010s

Hannah Rabinowitz, GNu’10, is the Vice President of Clinical Education at HCA Healthcare.

Victoria García-Albea, Nu’13, GNu’16, works as a Dermatology Certified Nurse Practitioner. Since 2019 she has served as the Director of the Lacey Dermatology Nurse Practitioner Training Program, which has just celebrated its 20th year in September 2023. The Program received ANCC accreditation in August 2022. This program was the first training program for NPs in the entire country and is the first dermatology NP training program to receive ANCC accreditation.

2020s

Loretta Sarocco, GNu’12, GNu’99, who currently serves as an Advanced Senior Lecturer at Penn Nursing, was awarded the University-wide Provost’s Award for Teaching Excellence by Non-Standing Faculty in the Spring of 2013.

Rachel McFadden, Nu’14, received a 2023 National Magnet Nurse of the Year Award from the American Nurse Credentialing Center. Rachel, who works as a clinical nurse at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, was awarded the Transformational Leadership Award.

Jaya Sondhi, Nu’16, graduated with her MBA from NYU Stern School of Business in September 2022 and recently launched Virtual Constant Observation at NYU Langone Health, which uses Artificial Intelligence to observe patients.
FROM THE PENN NURSING ALUMNI BOARD PRESIDENT

To my fellow Penn Nursing Alumni,

As the President of the Penn Nursing Alumni Board, I am delighted to connect with you and share some exciting updates about our dynamic community.

Our commitment to cultivating a robust network of alumni has been unwavering. We are tasked with fostering loyalty to the School of Nursing and the University of Pennsylvania, supporting the School of Nursing’s goals, maintaining professional and social bonds amongst alumni, and promoting professional development. Over the past year the board has been hard at work, creating meaningful connections among our alumni through engaging events. In November, we hosted a webinar with Dean Villaruel and 2023 Outstanding Alumni Award winner Loretta Sweet Jemmott, GNu’82, GR’87. Events like this not only celebrate our shared legacy but also provide valuable opportunities for professional growth.

A notable success includes our recent networking events, where alumni came together to share experiences and insights. In January and February, our events committee hosted two regional happy hours in Philadelphia and New York City. The exchange of knowledge and the establishment of new connections were truly inspiring, reinforcing the strength of our Penn Nursing family.

Beyond networking, our board actively supports initiatives contributing to the growth and development of the nursing profession. In December the Student Alumni Connections Committee hosted a Q&A panel for graduating ABSN students. With our mentorship initiatives, we are dedicated to ensuring that Penn Nursing alumni continue to make a positive impact in the health care field.

In recognition of outstanding achievements within our alumni community, the Awards Committee has selected the 2024 Alumni Award recipients, who will be honored at this year’s Alumni Weekend ceremony on May 17. These exceptional individuals will be honored for their remarkable contributions to the field of nursing. Their dedication, leadership, and impactful work serve as an inspiration to us all.

As we reflect on these achievements, we also look ahead to the future. Your involvement is key in maintaining the momentum we have built. We encourage you to share your recent accomplishments and experiences, playing a vital role in inspiring the next generation of nursing professionals. Are you interested in getting involved? Email us at NursingAlumni@nursing.upenn.edu. We’ll send you a Penn Nursing onesie (6-month size). Photos are encouraged.

To all in Colorado, particularly to our undergraduate.” Breanne is a Registered Nurse with Valley Health System.

2020s

Eligio David P. Soliman Jr., GN’22, is a clinical associate professor of the doctor of nursing practice program at the University of San Diego. He writes, “This year, I advanced within my clinical role at Kaiser Permanente in Southern California, within the inpatient endocrinology team, and joined the council for the Advanced Management for Inpatient Diabetes. I participated in research undertakings in developing prediction models for hypoglycemia and readmission.” Julie Nguyen, GNu’23, is excited to start her Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner career at The Courage Clinic, a women-owned mental health telehealth clinic working to increase accessibility to all in Colorado, particularly to our underserved populations.

Jodi Feinberg, Nu’15, President, Penn Nursing Alumni Board

Penn Nursing Babies

Do you have a new baby? We want to celebrate with you! Send a birth announcement and a picture to NursingAlumni@nursing.upenn.edu. We’ll send you a Penn Nursing onesie (6-month size). Photos are encouraged.

Jennifer Newcomer, Nu’11, GNu’16 and her wife welcomed their son, Victor Davis, into the world on September 1, 2023. Jennifer has been working as a nurse practitioner in the cardiothoracic surgical ICU at Rush University in Chicago, IL for the past seven years.

Marcus D. Henderson, Nu’17, GNu’20 and Jennifer Gil, GNu’20, GR’26 welcomed their first child, Caleb James, on January 29, 2024. Marcus is currently a PhD candidate at the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing and Jennifer is a 2nd year PhD student at Penn Nursing.

Lauren Artigoni, Nu’11, GNu’16, GR’22, and husband Andrew welcomed son, Henry Louis Weller Naisawald. He was born on his exact due date: October 16, 2023. Lauren shared, “Fun fact: Only four percent of babies are born on their due date!” Lauren works as a pediatric nurse practitioner for a $40 million NIH study at Children’s National and the NIH examining the long term effects of COVID and MIS-C on children.

From the Penn Nursing Alumni Board President

Lauren Arrigoni, NU’11, GNU’16, GNU’22, and Jennifer Gil, GNU’20, GR’26

Breanne Mastromarino, Nu’19, shared, “2023 was a thrilling and exhilarating year as I returned to classes after submatriculating into the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care NP program and began working in critical care. Though I live far from Penn, I love spending time on campus and reliving some of my best memories as an undergraduate.” Breanne is a Registered Nurse with Valley Health System.

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In Memoriam

1940s
Mary Jane Bensel, HUP’48, on December 16, 2022.

1950s
Mildred E. Kryzwicki, Nu’51, on June 29, 2023.
Mary Noel Connolly Gurnu’54, on September 28, 2023.
Viola G. Little, HUP’54, on December 7, 2023. She graduated from The University of Texas with a Bachelor of Science degree and worked as a dietician of the College’s library staff.

1960s
Alice Mullendore Thomas, HUP’56, on February 12, 2023. Alice received her BSN from Penn Nursing and continued to serve as an Air Force nurse at Wilford Hall Medical Center, San Antonio, TX, where she met the love of her life, Dr. Charles Norman Thomas—who with whom she married in 1960. Alice was independent, determined, and generous, as well as a loving nurse, wife, mother, and grandmother.

1970s
Patricia Gaskill Eckerles Nu’70, on September 14, 2023. Tatjana Balabkins May, Nu’64, on December 21, 2023. Upon graduation from Penn Nursing in 1969, Sharon’s adventurous spirit led her to Vietnam, where she was responsible for the development and implementation of a care center for premature and malnourished infants abandoned or orphaned during the Vietnam War. Her wartime service led to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Humanitarian Achievement from the U.S. Department of State in 1972.

1980s
Janet Sala, Nu’81, on October 24, 2023.
Virginia Hart Rials, Gnu’85, on August 23, 2023. Virginia was a nursing instructor at the University of Virginia. Earlier in her career, she was a nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

1990s
Cheryl Neisser-Frankson Gnu’93, Gku’95, Gnu’15, on October 9, 2023. Cheryl was an advanced senior lecturer in Penn Nursing’s department of biobehavioral and health science. She served as a teaching assistant on Penn Nursing’s faculty from 1991 to 2021. In 2004 she joined the faculty full time as a lecturer. She was promoted to advanced senior lecturer in 2017.

2020s
Rosalyn “Roz” Watts, an emerita associate professor in the nursing and behavioral health sciences departments of Penn’s School of Nursing, died on October 19, 2023. She was 85.

Dr. Watts had a distinguished academic career at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing that spanned four decades and combined teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. She joined Penn Nursing’s faculty as an instructor in 1969, moving through the ranks to become an associate professor in the graduate division of nursing in 1982. She also held a secondary appointment in the department of nursing and biobehavioral health sciences. She retired in 1999 and assumed emeritus status.

Dr. Watts’ impact at Penn was wide. In 1984, she developed the Critical Care Clinical Nurse Specialist Program, which evolved over the next ten years into the first Critical Care Nurse Practitioner program in the country. Alumni commonly refer to themselves as “a graduate of Roz’s program.” Combining “superb professional leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration,” Dr. Watts was an advocate and mentor for minority students and spearheaded the Neonatal Black Health program at Penn Nursing, which addressed health disparities for African Americans. When Dr. Watts received Penn’s coveted Lindback Award in 1997, a former graduate student wrote: “a teacher should enable students to think and create as they might say in today’s re-engineering circles ‘out of the box.’ Roz Watts has been out of the box for years. She always insisted on high standards. She insisted that we write ‘elegantly,’ think ‘critically,’ and perform expertly.”

A colleague noted: “The School of Nursing is justifiably proud of its advising program and Dr. Watts serves as a role model for excellence in undergraduate and graduate and doctoral advising.”

Dr. Watts’ passion for advancing marginalized groups’ presence at Penn did not end with her retirement from Penn; shortly thereafter, Dr. Watts returned to Penn Nursing to lead the Office of Diversity Affairs. As the director of this office, she interacted with faculty, students, and staff to help facilitate the school’s diversity agenda with emphasis on recruitment of under-represented groups, curriculum development on cultural competency, and faculty development [regarding] diversity.

“We have lost one of our most respected, and most beloved scholars whose impact was felt by many,” said Professor and Nursing Dean Antonia Villarruel in an email to faculty. “She was a trusted colleague and friend who inspired, supported, and touched students, faculty, and all with whom she met.”
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Katelyn A. Kuwata Esq.
NU’08
Attorney, Kendall Brill Kelly

Path
1. Katelyn breaks her arm in a soccer game in the sixth grade; spends a week in the hospital. Her nurses leave an impression. Combined with volunteer work in high school that affirms her interest in helping people, the idea of a nursing career clicks.

2. Matriculates at Penn Nursing. During her final clinical rotation (Labor & Delivery), patient experiences a stillbirth—a situation that shapes Katelyn’s desire to care for people in their most terrible moments.

3. High patient-nurse ratios at her first nursing job on a West Coast hospital telemetry unit opens Katelyn’s eyes to patient safety issues. She takes an interest in how to influence hospital policy to improve ratios and safety.

4. Katelyn considers that combining her nursing skills with a law degree might better help her impact patient-nurse ratios and other policy. Takes a position in an outpatient surgery unit and studies for the LSAT. She is admitted to law school.

5. During law school, her experience as a nurse Spurs her to write an article advocating for federally mandated nurse-to-patient ratios; it is chosen for publication in her school’s Law Review.

6. Her nursing background helps land her in a corporate law firm, where she is chosen to help craft a federal case challenging TRAP laws on behalf of a reproductive rights organization. Her nursing skills are invaluable for interviewing clinicians and working with expert witnesses.

7. Pivots to smaller law firm to work directly with clients; routinely uses the therapeutic conversation skills learned as a nurse. Katelyn likens working with clients facing potential jail time with working with patients facing a scary diagnosis.

8. Katelyn looks forward to putting her nursing experience to work in more pro bono cases, particularly in reproductive rights. She says, “My Penn Nursing instructors set an amazing example, and with all that is happening in this country, I have the right combination of skills to contribute to that important cause.”
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