



# THE SCARLETTER



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## In this Edition

### School News & Updates

Khiara Bridges Named Lautenberg Recipient and Convocation Speaker | Page 01

New HIV/AIDS Exhibit | Page 02

Graduation & Year-End Activities | Page 03

Admissions Lounge | Page 03

Events | Page 04

Giving Days | Page 04

### Career Development

Alumni April | Page 05

2nd Annual Career Fair | Page 05

LGBTQ+ Inaugural Chair | Page 06

Occupational Health and Safety Program | Page 06

### Our People

Faculty Spotlight | Page 07

Student Spotlight | Page 07

In the News | Page 08

Research | Page 09

## Khiara M. Bridges Named 2024 Senator Frank R. Lautenberg Award Recipient by the Rutgers School of Public Health

Khiara M. Bridges, J.D., Ph.D. – a law professor, anthropologist, and nationally-recognized expert on the intersection of race, class, and reproductive rights – has been named the 2024 Frank R. Lautenberg Award recipient by the Rutgers School of Public Health. She will also serve as the school's 41st graduation speaker.

Hailed as the School's highest honor, the Senator Frank R. Lautenberg Award was established in 2001 to honor those who have made outstanding contributions to public health through a significant record of advocacy, the development of programs, and capacity building has led to expanded education, and service opportunities.

Bridges will be honored with the Senator Frank R. Lautenberg Award during the Rutgers School of Public Health's annual graduation ceremony, where she will address graduates, faculty, staff, and guests.

[Learn More](#)



**Khiara M. Bridges, J.D., Ph.D.** is the Senator Frank R. Lautenberg Award recipient and the Rutgers School of Public Health 41st Convocation speaker, taking place on Friday, May 17, 2024.

### Expect to graduate in May 2024?

Make sure to review updates sent to your school of public health email and visit our website [here!](#)



See more on pg 03

# HIV/AIDS Epidemic

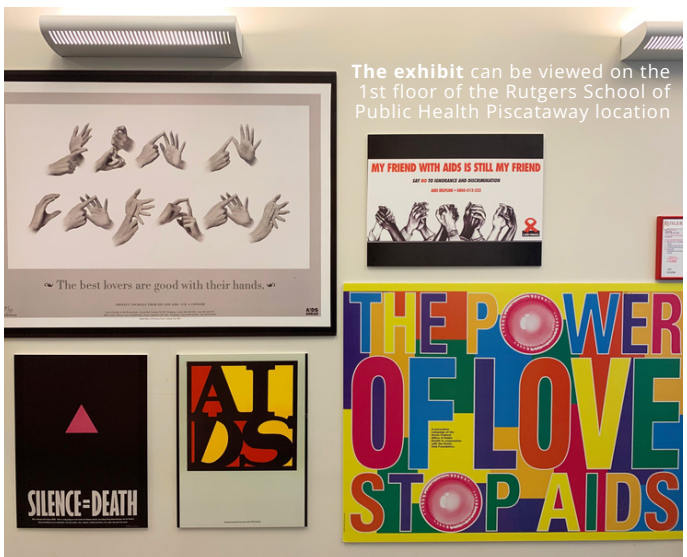
... Weekly Report (MMWR) describing cases of Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia in five previously healthy young men in Los Angeles. One month later, MMWR reported cases of Kaposi sarcoma in men in Los Angeles and New York, leading to the evolution of the term "gay plague."  
Soon thereafter, the disease began to emerge in other populations - including in women, newborns, and injection drug users.



In 1984, We Discovered The AIDS Virus  
In 1850, We Discovered A Way To Stop It  
Unite Against AIDS

## Rutgers School of Public Health Launches HIV/AIDS Epidemic Art Exhibit

The Rutgers School of Public Health unveiled its HIV/AIDS Epidemic Art Exhibit at its Piscataway location this February.



The exhibit can be viewed on the 1st floor of the Rutgers School of Public Health Piscataway location

The exhibit, which commemorates early public health initiatives confronting the HIV/AIDS epidemic, sourced art from the **Wellcome Collection**. The display seeks to offer insight and pay tribute to the efforts of pioneering activists, researchers, and leaders who courageously fought against the effects of HIV/AIDS, laying the foundation for our ongoing endeavors.

Efforts to understand, destigmatize, prevent, and treat HIV/AIDS over the course of the last four decades have led

to many advances; however, to date, HIV/AIDS has claimed the lives of nearly 40 million people worldwide, with approximately 1 million people dying from AIDS-related complications each year.

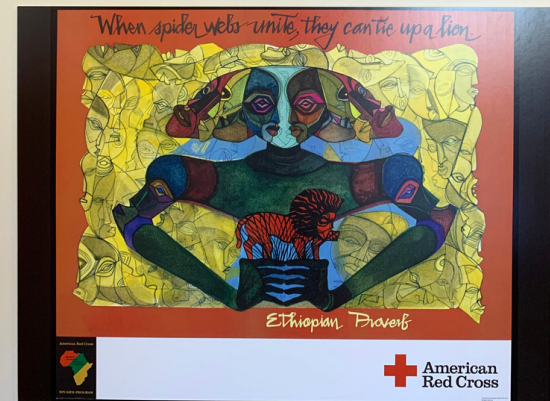
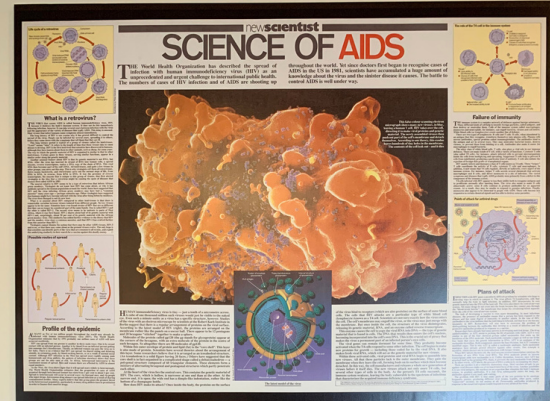
The exhibit is open to Rutgers School of Public Health students, faculty, and staff. Additional art exhibits will be launched at both school's locations throughout 2024.

[Learn More](#)

“ HIV/AIDS - like many other epidemics - disproportionately impacts and overburdens marginalized groups like people of color, sexual and gender minorities, immigrants, older adults, and other populations because of social and structural factors.

“This exhibit allows us to explore the intersection of art and public health through vintage posters that were and are symbols of activism and education.

RUTGERS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
DEAN PERRY N. HALKITIS





### Commencement vs. Convocation

Commencement is the Rutgers University-wide graduation ceremony. Convocation is the Rutgers School of Public Health's own graduation ceremony, where graduates are individually recognized for their achievements. All Rutgers School of Public Health Newark and New Brunswick graduates from the Class of 2024 (those who completed their degree in October 2023, January 2024, and May 2024) are invited to attend both Commencement and Convocation.

[Visit our website to learn more about year-end activities](#)

Rutgers University-New Brunswick and Rutgers Health Commencement

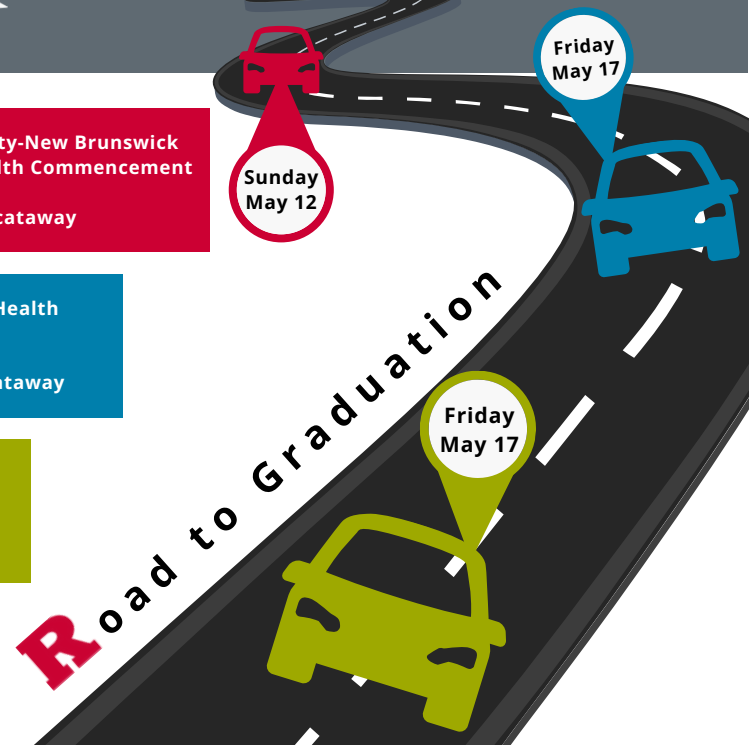
SHI Stadium, Piscataway

Rutgers School of Public Health Convocation

Jersey Mike's Arena, Piscataway

Rutgers School of Public Health Award Ceremony & Delta Omega Induction

*Special invitation only*



## ● Admissions Lounge ●

### Upcoming Application Deadlines

Looking to apply to the School of Public Health? The Fall 2024 master's regular deadline is **May 1, 2024**.

**Applications for Fall 2024 Available NOW**

### Upcoming Events

Attend one of our virtual sessions to learn more about all that the School of Public Health has to offer! Not able to attend the events listed below? Check out our [Admissions Events webpage](#) to see a full listing of all upcoming events.



**Virtual Information Session**

Thursday, April 11 2024 | 2:00 – 3:00 pm

*Hear from the Office for Admissions and Recruitment about the application process and ways to strengthen your application!*



**Departmental Information Sessions**

*Speak directly with program faculty, admissions, current students, and so much more!*

**Department of Environmental & Occupational Health and Justice Information Session**

Tuesday, March 26, 2024 | 5:00 – 6:00 pm

**Department of Urban-Global Public Health Information Session**

Thursday, March 28, 2024 | 5:00 – 6:00 pm

**Contact Admissions**



Professor Jennifer Reich  
University of Colorado Denver



## 21PHirst Signature Series Webinar

### Vaccine Refusal, Abortion Access, and the Meanings of Personal Choice in the COVID Era



March 28, 2024



12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. EDT  
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. PDT

This webinar will examine the intersections between vaccine refusal and abortion politics. Dr. Reich draws on more than 15 years of research on vaccine refusal to explore how vaccine opponents draw on anti-abortion discourse to undermine confidence in immunization and public health programs.

Looking at the overlapping rhetoric of personal freedom and bodily autonomy, this webinar considers how inequality constrains individual choice and increases risks of bad health outcomes in reproductive health and infectious disease.

[Register Here](#)

Check out the Rutgers School of Public Health's event calendar to learn about and/or join various events hosted, co-hosted, or supported by the school.

You can submit an event for consideration on the calendar [here](#).



Your gifts, voice, and passion helped us raise money for scholarships for the next generation of outstanding public health leaders, scholars, and practitioners focused on areas such as cancer health disparities, environmental health and justice, sexual and reproductive health, LGBTQ+ health, gun violence prevention, and many more. Thank you for your support.



# ● ● CAREER DEVELOPMENT ● ●

*Opportunities to enhance your public health professional prospects*



The **School of Public Health's Office for Career Services** is gearing up to host our **4th annual Alumni April series!** Throughout the month of April, Rutgers School of Public Health faculty, staff, students, and alumni will attend networking events and career panels designed to help students and alumni make new professional connections and learn more about post-graduate career options and experiences in the field of public health.

Check out this year's schedule of events below and contact Claire Brown, Director for Student Experiences & Alumni Affairs, at [sphcareers@sph.rutgers.edu](mailto:sphcareers@sph.rutgers.edu), with any questions.

**Tuesday, April 2** – PHirst Generation Alumni

**Tuesday, April 2** – Credentialing Your Career - Health Officer & Civil Service Pathways

**Wednesday, April 3** – Pride in Public Health with Stonewall Alliance for Health

**Thursday, April 4** – Linkages to Leadership

**Monday, April 8** – Leveling Up Your Career: Local, State, and Federal Public Health Careers

**Friday, April 12** – Diversify Your Public Health Career with the Multicultural Student Organization

**Wednesday, April 17** – Interdisciplinary Insights

**Thursday, April 18** – SPH Alums at SPH

**Monday, April 22** – Career SuCCcess: Public Health Communications, Consulting, and Coordination

**Tuesday, April 23** – Careers in Health Equity & DEI with the Office for Justice, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



## Rutgers School of Public Health's 2nd Annual Career & Practice Fair - April 26th

On Friday, April 26, the Rutgers School of Public Health will be hosting our 2nd annual Career & Practice Fair! The fair is **free and open** to all currently-enrolled Rutgers School of Public Health students and alumni. Students/alumni can register through the school's 12twenty platform.

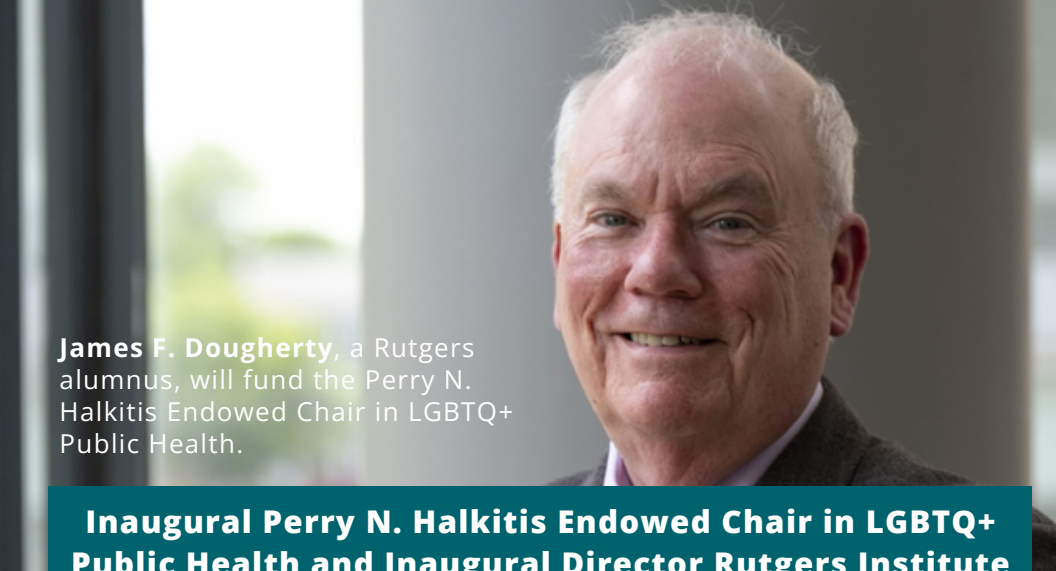
The Rutgers School of Public Health Class of 2024 is set to include 100+ emerging public health professionals and job-seekers from the only CEPH-accredited graduate school of public health in New Jersey. We will have plenty of eager and qualified job-seekers across our four degree-granting programs, post-baccalaureate certificate program, and 15+ concentrations of study. We strongly encourage alumni employers to participate!

### ***We welcome all employers and organizations offering:***

- Full-time and part-time jobs and internships
- Applied Practice Experiences and Practicum Capstone projects
- Volunteer opportunities
- Professional development trainings, career resources, scholarships, networking opportunities, and more!

To register your employer/organization as an exhibitor, **please fill out the form linked [here](#)**. Employer exhibitor registration ends on **Friday, March 29, 2024**. Please contact [sphcareers@sph.rutgers.edu](mailto:sphcareers@sph.rutgers.edu) with any questions in the meantime.





James F. Dougherty, a Rutgers alumnus, will fund the Perry N. Halkitis Endowed Chair in LGBTQ+ Public Health.

**Inaugural Perry N. Halkitis Endowed Chair in LGBTQ+ Public Health and Inaugural Director Rutgers Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health**

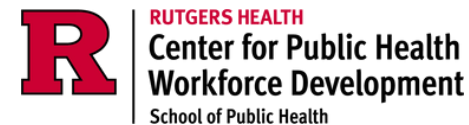
The Rutgers School of Public Health has earned widespread recognition as a leading hub for sexual gender minority health.

Under the leadership of Rutgers School of Public Health dean, Perry N. Halkitis, the school established the world's first Master of Public Health concentration in LGBTQ+ Health, recruited faculty with complementary LGBTQ+ research programs, and launched the academic journal Annals of LGBTQ+ Public and Population Health with the aim of advancing the dissemination of research on health disparities and interventions.

This position, supported with a **\$3 million gift by James F. Dougherty**, will ensure a lasting foundation for a science-based, human rights approach to LGBTQ+ health and well-being at Rutgers University. The endowed chair will also serve as the inaugural director of the Rutgers Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health.

[Learn More](#)

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**



**October 15 - December 10, 2024**

**Hybrid Learning:** ONE in-person leadership workshop followed by SEVEN online learning modules

In Occupational Safety and Health, **leadership skills make all the difference.**

Designed for Occupational Health and Safety Professionals from all sectors looking to improve their leadership skills and prepare for advanced roles.

Modules will focus on developing leadership skills and advanced safety management strategies to improve safety performance:

- *Leadership Workshop and Reinforcement Session*
- *Understanding Risk and Human Behavior*
- *Safety Performance Improvement*
- *Innovation and Technology*
- *Strategic Planning for Occupational Health and Safety Programs*
- *Communications for Health and Safety Leaders*
- *Ethics in Occupational Safety and Health*

**Register Here\***

**\*The cost to register is \$1,425 for the 8-week program. Register by June 1 using code **EBIRD** and receive a **10% discount!****

✉ [rutgerstraining@sph.rutgers.edu](mailto:rutgerstraining@sph.rutgers.edu)

📞 (732) 235-9450





**Koshy Koshy, PhD**, at the NYC Building & Construction Industry Safety Fund First Annual Education & Training Awards Breakfast on January 30th.



**Lisa and Jillian Gulla**, celebrating Jillian's undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina before beginning her journey with Lisa at Rutgers School of Public Health.

## Faculty Spotlight

### Faculty Receives 2024 NYC Building & Construction Industry Safety Fund Leadership in Training Award

**Koshy Koshy**, associate professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Justice at the Rutgers School of Public Health, has received the 2024 Leadership in Training Award from the NYC Building & Construction Industry Safety Fund.

The award is given annually by the NYC Building & Construction Industry Safety Fund, which raises money for families of fallen construction workers, at its annual event. The event was attended by over 400 city, state, federal officials, and major construction companies. [Learn More](#)

## Student Spotlight

### A Family Affair: Mother-Daughter Duo Pursue Public Health Degrees

Lisa and Jillian Gulla's individual pursuits in public health reflect a shared dedication, echoing their family's commitment to improving health outcomes.

Lisa, a retired health officer, is a Doctor of Public Health candidate. With a background in psychology, she initially focused on addiction treatment through one-on-one interactions. Over the years, her career evolved, leading her to work in local public health and eventually to pursue a DrPH. Her daughter, Jillian, a neuroscience graduate from the University of South Carolina, is embarking on her Master of Public Health in Health Systems and Policy. Motivated to effect systemic change in health administration, Jillian's decision to return to New Jersey for her graduate studies was driven by Rutgers' reputation in research and academics.

The Gulla family has a deep connection to the public health profession. Lisa Harrison Gulla and her daughter Jillian Gulla are both pursuing graduate degrees at the Rutgers School of Public Health. Their story, rooted in a family legacy of health sciences, showcases a shared commitment to advancing public health, each through their unique perspective and expertise.

[Read the Full Interview](#)



• • I N T H E N E W S • •

How are we prepping the public health workforce for the next pandemic?

Rutgers School of Public Health Dean, [Perry N. Halkitis](#), shares his insights on the importance of preparing public health professionals to leverage technology and improve their interpersonal skills.

[Listen to FYI](#)

[Michael Anestis](#), associate professor in the Department of Urban-Global Public Health and executive director of the New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center, discusses how improving gun storage habits may help suicide prevention efforts.

[Read The New York Times](#)

Did you know that bacteria may be lurking in your Stanley cup?

[Robert Laumbach](#), associate professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Justice, explains the black spots in your water bottle and what to do about it.

[Read Prevention](#)

[Elissa Kozlov](#), assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior, Society, and Policy discusses psychological issues in palliative care on a recent podcast appearance.

[Listen to Geripal](#)

Tired? Us too.

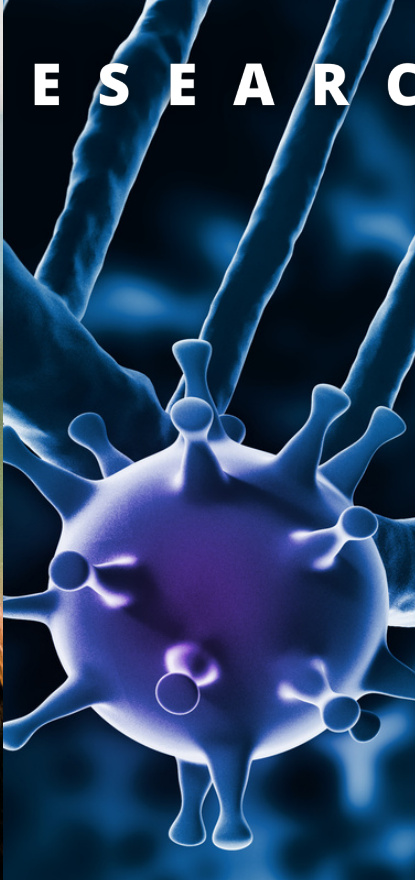
[Helmut Zarbl](#), professor and Chair of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Justice, provides tips and tricks to beat fatigue associated with Daylight Savings Time.

[Read NJ.com](#)

*\*This section highlights select media mentions from the Rutgers School of Public Health. This is not a complete list of all faculty, staff, student, and unit media mentions.\**



# ● ● R E S E A R C H ● ●



A study led by [Jaya Satagopan](#), professor in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, found that broadcast media, such as radio, is an effective recruitment tool for South Asian American women to increase participation in breast cancer research.

[Learn More](#)

User data from Google, YouTube and other online platforms can be used to predict, prevent and even mitigate loneliness, potentially lowering the risk of suicide for at-risk individuals, according to a Rutgers study co-authored by [Vincent Silenzio](#), professor in the Department of Urban-Global Public Health.

[Learn More](#)

Women with HIV experience accelerated DNA aging, a phenomenon that can lead to poor physical function, according to a study led by [Stephanie Shiau](#), an assistant professor in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology.

[Learn More](#)

Pregnant women exposed to specific classes of flame-retardant chemicals may face an increased risk of preterm birth, especially for baby girls, or higher birth weights, according to Rutgers Health research led by [Emily Barrett](#), professor and vice chair of the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology and a member of the Rutgers Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute.

[Learn More](#)

Medical cannabis legalization is associated with a decrease in the frequency of nonmedical prescription opioid use, according to a Rutgers study led by [Hillary Samples](#), assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior, Society, and Policy and member at the Center for Pharmacoepidemiology and Treatment Science in the Rutgers Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research .

[Learn More](#)

*\*This section highlights select research and reports from the Rutgers School of Public Health. This is not a complete list of all faculty, staff, student, and unit research.\**



# THE SCARLETTER

## Call for Submissions: Share Your Voice in The Scarletter!

Do you have a story to tell, research to share, or an achievement to celebrate? We invite all members of the Rutgers School of Public Health community to contribute to the next edition of The Scarletter. Whether you're a faculty member, student, alumni, or staff, we welcome submissions that showcase your experiences, insights, and expertise in public health.



Share your perspectives, highlight your accomplishments, and engage with our readers as we continue to build a vibrant and inclusive community through our newsletter.

Submit your content ideas by **May 1st, 2024** for consideration. We look forward to featuring your contributions in our upcoming edition!

[SUBMIT HERE](#)

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