



# THE SCARLETTER

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## Rutgers School of Public Health Ranked Among Top 20 in U.S. News & World Report's Best Schools in Public Health

The Rutgers School of Public Health has been ranked **#16** among the [2025 Best Schools in Public Health by U.S. News & World Report](#).

The Rutgers School of Public Health jumped from #25 in 2024 to #16 in this year's rankings. It also went from a peer assessment score of 2.3 out of 5 in 2017 to 3.70 out of 5 in this year's rankings.

As public health and science continue to come under attack, Dean Perry N. Halkitis reminds us that "our nation's health depends on well-trained public health professionals, students, researchers, and activists who can respond with evidence-based solutions. At the Rutgers

School of Public Health, we take pride in advancing our communities' ability to do this through research, rigorous education, and community engagement." [Learn More](#)



“Our meteoric rise and recognition by our peer institutions is due to the tireless collective efforts of our faculty, staff, students, and community partners, who are integral to every aspect of our work – we should all be very proud.”

PERRY N. HALKITIS, PH.D., M.S., M.P.H.  
DEAN AND HUNTERDON PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH & HEALTH EQUITY  
RUTGERS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



James E. McGreevey, JD, MEd, MDiv, is the Senator Frank R. Lautenberg Award recipient and the Rutgers School of Public Health 42nd Convocation speaker, taking place on May 20, 2025.

## James E. McGreevey Named 2025 Senator Frank R. Lautenberg Award Recipient by the Rutgers School of Public Health

**James E. McGreevey, JD, MEd, MDiv** – former Governor of New Jersey and a dedicated public servant and advocate for social equity – has been named the 2025 Frank R. Lautenberg Award recipient by the Rutgers School of Public Health. He will also serve as the school's 42<sup>nd</sup> graduation speaker.

McGreevey will be honored with the Senator Frank R. Lautenberg Award during the Rutgers School of Public Health's annual graduation ceremony, where he will address graduates, faculty, staff, and guests. [Learn More](#)

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## Expect to graduate in May 2025?

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

See more on pg. 07



# Public Health in the Caribbean

## Studying Abroad in St. Lucia

Over spring recess, students, faculty, and staff from the Rutgers School of Public Health traveled to St. Lucia for an immersive global public health course. This unique experience provided firsthand insight into the Caribbean's health systems, challenges, and collaborative approaches to improving public health in a Small Island Developing State.

During their time in St. Lucia, students engaged in site visits, interactive lectures, and discussions with local health professionals. They explored national initiatives addressing maternal health, noncommunicable diseases, and vector-borne illnesses while analyzing the role of regional and international partnerships in strengthening health systems.

Beyond the classroom, cultural immersion played a key role, allowing students to deepen their understanding of public health within its social and historical context. This hands-on experience not only expanded their perspectives but also reinforced the power of global collaboration in shaping innovative and impactful public health solutions.

“

On behalf of the Public Health in the Caribbean students, we wanted to express how truly impactful the St. Lucia study abroad experience has been. This program, led by Dr. Merlene Fredericks-James and Christina Rozario, supported by Dr. Leslie Kantor has been extremely impactful and truly unforgettable.

Their leadership, knowledge, and dedication made this trip an extraordinary learning experience, and we deeply appreciate the opportunity to have been part of it. Through our engagements with the Ministry of Health and the local community, we gained firsthand insight into public health, seeing its challenges and successes in real-world contexts. The cultural immersion aspect of this program further enriched our understanding and broadened our perspectives on global health.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work and expertise of Professor Fredericks-James and Ms. Rozario. Their passion, guidance, and commitment to ensuring we had an insightful, well-rounded experience were truly inspiring. We hope future students continue to benefit from such impactful learning opportunities and feel grateful to have been a part of the first cohort.

SEBASTIAN NAUTA, CHES  
MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT, GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH  
RUTGERS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

”



Double click on the photo album to scroll through highlights of the St. Lucia study abroad experience!



St. Lucia 2025

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# ● ● Celebrating 30 Years of Public Health Symposiums ● ●

“ I learned a great deal about the symposium and its impact from Shirley Smoyak. Over the years, we’ve had the honor of taking lead in shaping this symposium—bringing the public health community together to learn, connect, and support one another while advancing efforts to keep public health strong in New Jersey and beyond.

MITCHEL A. ROSEN, PHD  
DIRECTOR  
CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
RUTGERS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## Rutgers School of Public Health Center for Public Health Workforce Development Hosts 30th Public Health Symposium

For three decades, the Rutgers School of Public Health’s [Center for Public Health Workforce Development](#) has brought together public health professionals, scholars, and students for its annual Public Health Symposium—an event dedicated to knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and forward-thinking solutions.

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of this symposium with [“The Work Ahead: Practical Strategies for Long-Term Impact”](#) on Monday, April 7, 2025, during [National Public Health Week](#), we invite you to reflect on our journey and engage in conversations that will shape the future of public health.

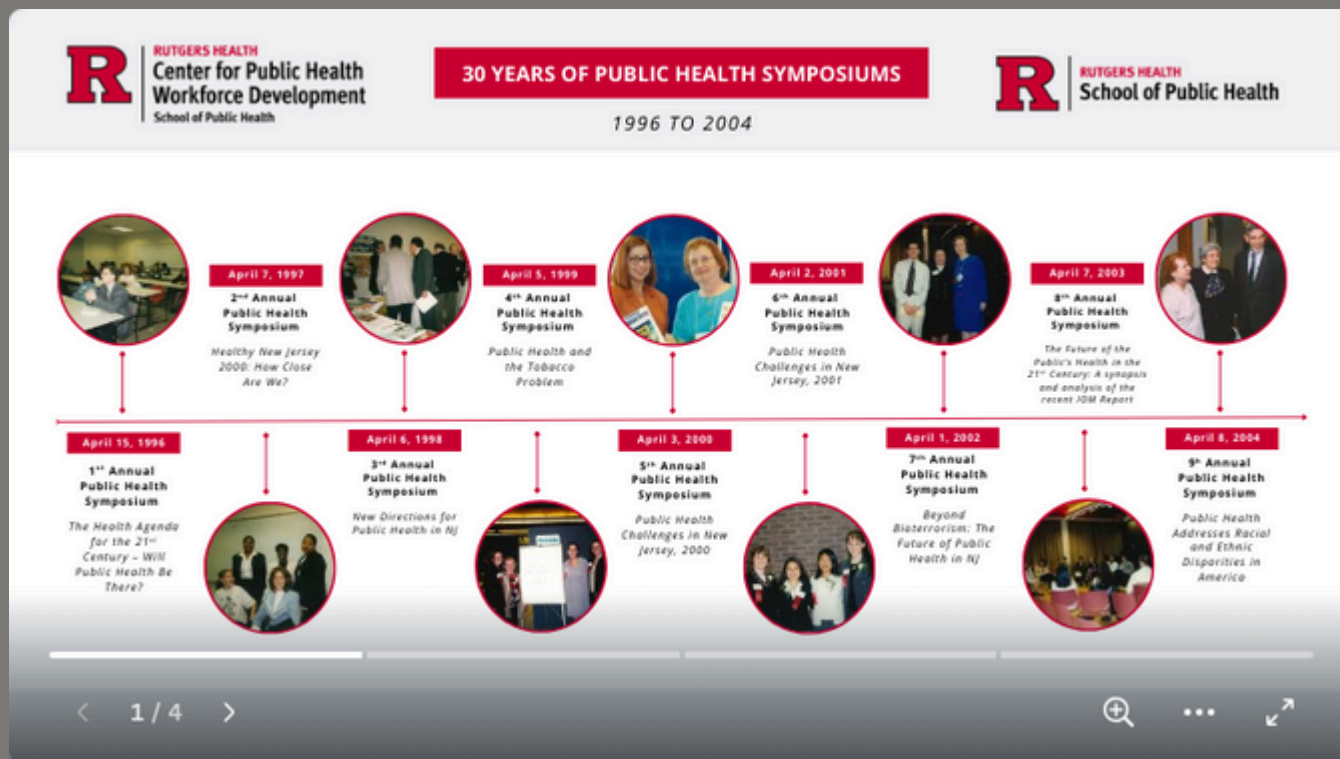
The inaugural Rutgers Public Health Symposium, “The Health Agenda for the 21st Century – Will Public Health Be There?”, was held on April 15, 1996. Since then, the symposium has tackled a wide range of critical public health topics, including global health, aging, occupational safety, health disparities, science communication, climate change, and more.

The event was founded by the late [Shirley Smoyak, RN, PhD](#), a distinguished Rutgers University professor for over 60 years, with the vision of creating a dedicated space for lifelong learning in public health. Smoyak’s belief that education should never stop remains at the heart of this annual gathering. [Learn More](#)



Shirley Smoyak at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Health Symposium in 2000

Double click the timeline below to explore 30 years of public health excellence and innovation!





## INTERESTED IN BECOMING A STUDENT LEADER?

Questions?

Contact SEAA

As we head into the last half of the spring semester, the [Office for Student Experiences and Alumni Affairs \(SEAA\)](#) has opened applications for their 2025 - 2026 student leadership opportunities - the second cohort of our Wellness PHirst Ambassador program and new student org leader applications! We encourage all eligible students to apply for these exciting programs and leadership roles focused on student wellness and engagement.

**The Wellness PHirst Ambassador program** is a part of the School's Wellness PHirst initiative. Wellness PHirst Ambassadors work directly with SEAA staff to facilitate student support and mentorship services, help incoming students navigate the wellness resources available within the School and across campus, and co-lead SEAA student programming. [Learn More](#)

### Current Wellness PHirst Ambassadors

Click on an ambassador to learn more about the experience!



FNU Neha



Maya Governa



Rihi Jain



Fatima Niangado



Julianna Garvey



Emily Brown



Hannah Heideveld

I joined the Multicultural Student Organization (MSO) to help create a welcoming space where students from diverse backgrounds can connect and thrive. As a student leader, I am passionate about fostering cultural awareness and advocating for inclusivity across the Rutgers School of Public Health Community.

**ANUSHYAA VASUDEVAN**  
MASTER OF SCIENCE STUDENT & MSO STUDENT LEADER

In addition to the Wellness PHirst Ambassador program, [there are multiple student organizations](#) established at the Rutgers School of Public Health to serve student needs, provide community building opportunities, and represent the leaders in our student body. We are currently looking for motivated individuals who are prepared to lead organizations! [Learn More](#)

**Currently enrolled students** are eligible to apply for both programs. The application deadline is **Monday, April 28.**

## Rutgers School of Public Health's Spring 2025 MPH Practicum Capstone Presentations

📅 Thursday, May 8, 2025 ⌚ 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The presentations will be hosted via Zoom. All faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to attend this event. The link to register is available in the **SPH Student Connect Canvas page** for students and in the **SPH All School Calendar** for faculty and staff.



Questions?

[practice@sph.rutgers.edu](mailto:practice@sph.rutgers.edu)



## Upcoming Application Deadlines | Fall 2025 applications are now available!



 Questions? | [Contact Admissions](#)

## Upcoming Events & New Programs!

### INFORMATION SESSIONS

#### GENERAL INFORMATION SESSIONS

Hear from the [Office for Admissions and Recruitment](#) about the application process and ways to strengthen your application!

Thursday, May 15, 2025 | 11 - 12 p.m. [REGISTER HERE](#)

Friday, June 13, 2025 | 12 - 1 p.m. [REGISTER HERE](#)

#### CHAT WITH ADMISSIONS

Chat with an admissions representative in real-time to answer any questions you have about your application!

Thursday, May 1, 2025 | 10 - 11 a.m. [CHAT HERE](#)



Use the Chat feature on the bottom right corner of the webpage.

Attend one of our virtual sessions to learn more about all the School of Public Health offers!

Check out our [Admissions Events webpage](#) to see a full listing of all upcoming events!

NEW!

### CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

The Rutgers School of Public Health is Excited to Offer Two New 100% Online Certificates!

*Gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence to create real change—whether in your community, workplace, or the world.*

#### SUSTAINABILITY, HEALTH, AND HEALTHCARE CERTIFICATE

The 12-credit Sustainability, Health, and Healthcare Certificate trains scholars, workers, advocates, and community leaders to address the complex challenges of sustainability as it relates to health, healthcare, and health systems. Students will **gain skills to advance sustainability initiatives** that contribute to the development of policies that foster environmental stewardship and societal well-being in support of public health.

#### SUICIDE PREVENTION, PRACTICE, AND POLICY CERTIFICATE

The 12-credit Suicide Prevention, Practice, and Policy Certificate is the first and only online certificate offered by a U.S. university that focuses exclusively on suicide prevention. Offered in collaboration with the [Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology \(GSAPP\)](#), the certificate focuses on clinical, organizational, workplace, public health, and policy approaches to suicide prevention. This unique approach to suicide prevention education will ensure that learners acquire knowledge of the economic, political, and social determinants of suicide. The certificate will **prepare learners to implement, evaluate, and critique suicide prevention strategies** at a time when the U.S. is experiencing rising suicide rates.



To learn more about either certificate, contact admissions

[admissions@sph.rutgers.edu](mailto:admissions@sph.rutgers.edu)



# School-Wide Events

## Alumni April Returns for Its Fifth Year!

**Registration is OPEN** for all of this year's Alumni April events, hosted by the Rutgers School of Public Health's [Office for Career Services](#), Rutgers University Foundation, and academic departments. Take advantage of your best opportunity this year to network with SPH students and alumni, learn about new opportunities and pathways, and find inspiration for your public health career.

### Why Should You Attend?

- ◆ **If you're a current student or alum** - this is your best chance this year to network with alumni and gain insights into possible career pathways post-SPH. Prep for the job search by attending as many events as you can!
- ◆ **If you're a prospective or admitted student** wondering if Rutgers SPH is the best place for you - hear from alumni first-hand about their time at the school and how it shaped their post-grad career opportunities!
- ◆ **If you're a Rutgers SPH faculty or staff member** - re-connect with former students and colleagues and learn about the exciting achievements and pathways of our alumni community.
- ◆ **If you're a community member or student/alumni** from outside Rutgers SPH, join us for public health career guidance and perspectives applicable to everyone working in the field of public health right now, whether you're a Scarlet Knight or not!

This year's Alumni April panelist slate includes **25+ esteemed Rutgers SPH alumni** across all departments and career fields! 75% of this year's panelists have never served as panelists before - so even if you attended Alumni April in past years, there will be LOTS of new connections and insights this year!



Questions?

[sphcareers@sph.rutgers.edu](mailto:sphcareers@sph.rutgers.edu)



**VIEW THE PANELIST PROGRAM & RSVP**

## UPCOMING PANELS

**Maternal & Infant Health  
Innovation Authority  
(MIHIA) Info Sessions +  
Careers in MCH**

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. EST

APRIL  
14

**Balancing Family  
& Work**

5:00 - 6:00 p.m. EST

APRIL  
17

**Public Health: The Next  
Generation (featuring  
Class of 2024/25 Alumni)**

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. EST

APRIL  
22

**PHirst Generation  
Alumni**

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. EST

APRIL  
24

**Careers in Health  
Equity & Justice**

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. EST

APRIL  
29

# School-Wide Events

CLASS OF 2025

## RUTGERS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONVOCATION

Convocation is the Rutgers School of Public Health's annual graduation ceremony. All graduates from the Class of 2025 are invited to join us in person at the *State Theater New Jersey* in New Brunswick, New Jersey.



**Tuesday, May 20, 2025**



**3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.** *Graduates must arrive by 1:30 p.m.*  
Doors open for guests at 2:30 p.m.



**State Theater New Jersey** ([15 Livingston Ave, New Brunswick, NJ 08901](#))

During this special ceremony, graduates will hear their name called, walk across the stage in front of their invited guests, and have their photo taken by a professional photographer. All Rutgers School of Public Health graduates from the Class of 2025 (**October 2024, January 2025 and expected May 2025**) are eligible to attend.

**Visit the Convocation webpage for more info!**

**DEADLINE  
EXTENDED!**  
**\*\*Last Call\*\***

**FINAL Deadline to Order Regalia**  
(REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE)

**April 15, 2025**



**Questions?**

[studentaffairs@sph.rutgers.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@sph.rutgers.edu)







# • • Our People • •

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### How a First-Generation Student's Public Health Journey Led Her to a Crown

Osasenaga Iyamu, a Rutgers School of Public Health Class of 2025 graduate, is earning her Master of Public Health in [Environmental Health Sciences](#). Her journey is one of resilience—defying societal expectations while merging public health, pageantry, and mentorship into a force for change.

As a first-generation student from Newark, Iyamu's passion for environmental health and sustainability is deeply rooted in both her academic experiences and her hometown.



"Newark is rich with history, culture, and talent," she said. "It is filled with so much hidden talent, especially in our younger generations, and it's amazing how much beauty and creativity shines through despite the hardships and lack of resources we may face over time. As a proud South Ward, Newark native, I have the privilege to represent what is often overlooked and stigmatized about this very city."

She is also working to amplify environmental justice efforts in the city, such as collaborating with the South Ward Environmental Alliance and local restaurants in Downtown Newark to bring greater visibility to sustainability initiatives.

Crowned Miss Newark USA on August 10, 2024, Iyamu has used her title to extend her impact beyond the stage. She actively engages in public speaking, community events, and initiatives that celebrate Newark's resilience.

She is also working to amplify environmental justice efforts in the city, such as collaborating with the South Ward Environmental Alliance and local restaurants in Downtown Newark to bring greater visibility to sustainability initiatives.

"I have learned that embracing your beauty is one thing, but being one with grace, poise, intentionality, ambition, and purpose is even more powerful."

"By sharing your story, you can move mountains and inspire hope. I want to pass on the wisdom of navigating college as a first-gen, first-born, inner-city kid to others who share the same dreams and desire to make an impact."

[Learn More](#)

### IN THE NEWS!

Iyamu was featured on *NJ Spotlight News*, where she reflected on her journey as a first-generation immigrant student, her path to public health, and how she turned adversity into purpose.

Double click the video to watch the segment or view [here](#).





## Min-Jeong Yang Joins the Rutgers School of Public Health and the Rutgers Institute for Nicotine & Tobacco Studies

**Min-Jeong Yang**, has joined the Rutgers School of Public Health's Department of Health Behavior, Society, and Policy as an assistant professor. She has also joined the Rutgers Institute for Nicotine & Tobacco Studies as core faculty.

Yang is a clinical psychologist and behavioral scientist whose research program aims to promote health behaviors among individuals who are at increased risk for negative health outcomes, are medically underserved, and are marginalized. Her current research focuses on developing and evaluating novel mHealth smoking cessation interventions informed by cognitive-behavioral theories of addiction and mindfulness-based approaches, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods.

[Learn More](#)

“ I am excited to join the strong interdisciplinary team of scholars, staff, and students at the Rutgers School of Public Health. I look forward to contributing to the school's mission of advancing the health and well-being of our communities and populations by reducing health disparities and pursuing social justice through my research in developing novel smoking cessation interventions for priority populations. ”

## Faculty Receives Society of Behavioral Medicine's HIV and Sexual Health SIG Rising Star Award

**Kristen D. Krause**, assistant professor in the Department of Urban-Global Public Health, has received the HIV and Sexual Health SIG Rising Star Award from the Society of Behavioral Medicine.

The Rising Star Award recognizes an aspiring independent investigator whose work has already signaled outstanding innovation, significance, or impact with great potential for their continued contribution toward moving HIV, sexual health, and/or LGBTQ+ population science forward. [Learn More](#)

“ It's an honor to receive this award from the Society of Behavioral Medicine's HIV and Sexual Health SIG, especially at this time when so much of this work feels like it's under attack. It's more important than ever to keep lifting this research and supporting junior investigators who are working hard to advance the science and ensure positive health outcomes for LGBTQ+ populations and people with HIV. ”

## Rutgers Leaders Are Recognized as Most Influential Health Care Leaders in New Jersey

Rutgers School of Public Health's Dean **Perry N. Halkitis** has been named to the [2025 NJBIZ Health Care Power List](#), which recognizes top influencers in health care across New Jersey.

Dean Halkitis was credited by NJBIZ for using his expertise as an infectious disease epidemiologist, applied statistician and public health psychologist to further research, teaching and activism and “serve as an expert voice and source – appearing frequently across the media spectrum.” [Learn More](#)





### Alumni Spotlight: Becky Ofrane, DrPH '24

In May 2024, Becky Ofrane became part of the inaugural cohort of [Doctor of Public Health \(DrPH\)](#) graduates at the Rutgers School of Public Health. With a career spanning biochemical engineering, environmental health, and maternal and child health, she has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to improving public health systems and outcomes.

We sat down with Ofrane as she reflected on her journey, the impact of her DrPH education, and her ongoing contributions to maternal and reproductive health. [Learn More](#)

“My public health career has been anything but linear. My advice is to be focused but open to opportunities, always keep learning, and just keep chipping away at your end goal. It feels like higher education and public health are under attack with the new administration, but as someone who has been impacted by administration policies, I believe you will find a way through.”



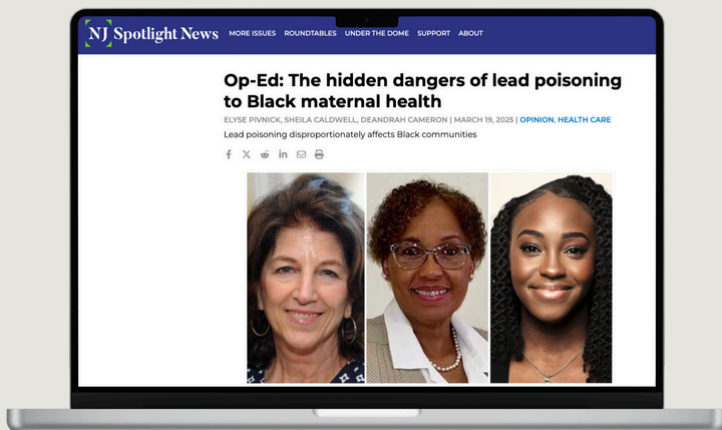
Becky Ofrane at the 2024 Convocation ceremony with Rutgers School of Public Health's Dean Perry N. Halkitis (right) and Leslie Kantor (left), Chair and professor within the Rutgers School of Public Health's Department of Urban-Global Public Health.

## IN THE NEWS!

### Deandrah Cameron, MPH '20

Deandrah Cameron, a Rutgers School of Public Health alumna who earned her Master of Public Health degree in [Health Systems and Policy](#), recently co-authored an op-ed on *NJ Spotlight News* addressing the urgent and preventable issue of lead poisoning in Black communities.

[Learn More](#)



### Ursula Blanc, MPH '11

Ursula Blanc, a Rutgers School of Public Health alumna who earned her [Master of Public Health](#) degree, was featured on Fox 5 for her home bakery, [Blanc Sweet Shoppe, LLC](#)!

[Learn More](#)





# ● ● AWARENESS IN ACTION ● ●

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## African Americans and The Labor Movement: A Conversation with Teri Lassiter

This year's [Black History Month](#) theme, African Americans and Labor, explores the significant role of Black labor throughout history—spanning from enslaved Africans' forced agricultural work to the organized labor movements fighting for justice and economic equity.

To commemorate Black History Month and deepen our understanding of this theme, we sat down with [Teri Lassiter](#), Assistant Dean for Justice, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion for Education and an assistant professor in the Department of Urban-Global Public Health at the Rutgers School of Public Health, to discuss the historical and modern implications of Black labor, its connection to social justice, and the lessons we must take forward. [Learn More](#)

### How have Black workers and professionals responded to labor exploitation and discrimination?

Over the years, in response to the super-exploitation of Black labor, wage disparities, and employment discrimination based on race, sex, and gender, Black professionals—including teachers, nurses, musicians, and lawyers—have organized for better working conditions and compensation. Workers in various occupations, such as steelworkers, washerwomen, dock workers, and sex workers, as well as those in sports, arts, and sciences, have also joined these efforts.

Notably, Black women like [Addie Wyatt](#) became involved in union work and leadership, advocating for job security, reproductive rights, and wage increases.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the [Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids](#), founded by labor organizer and civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph. This was the first Black union to receive a charter from the American Federation of Labor. Martin Luther King Jr. incorporated issues highlighted by Randolph's March on Washington Movement, such as economic justice, into the [Poor People's Campaign](#), which he established in 1967. For King, it was essential for Black people to be recognized as full citizens.

### What broader reflections can be drawn from the theme African Americans and Labor?

The theme, African Americans and Labor, aims to foster reflections on the connections between the work of Black individuals and their workplaces, considering various aspects and significant moments in Black history and culture across different and locations, including the U.S., Africa, and the Diaspora. Like religion, social justice movements, and education, the study of African American labor and labor struggles is an essential focus for developing new interpretations and reinterpreting the Black experience—past, present, and future. These new perspectives are especially vital as the historical forces of racial oppression regain strength in the 21st century.

## BOOKS

- *Climbing the Rough Side of the Mountain: The Extraordinary Story of Love, Civil Rights, and Labor Activism* | Norman Hill and Velma Murphy Hill (2023)
- *Building a Latino Civil Rights Movement: Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Justice in New York City* | Sonia Song-Ha Lee (2016)
- *Household Workers Unite: The Untold Story of African American Women Who Built a Movement* | Premilla Nadasen (2016)
- *There's Always Work at the Post Office: African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice, and Equality* | Phillip F. Rubio (2010)
- *Rising from the Rails: Pullman Porters and the Making of the Black Middle Class* | Larry Tye (2005)



**Teri Lassiter, PhD, MPH**, is Assistant Dean for Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion for Education and an assistant professor at Rutgers School of Public Health.

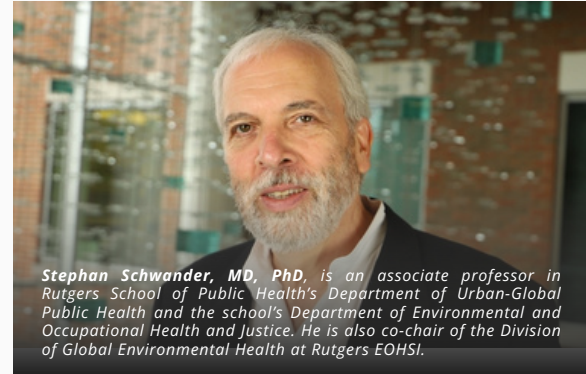


## Tuberculosis: The World's Leading Cause of Infectious Disease Death

Tuberculosis (TB) is likely the world's leading cause of death from a single infectious agent, according to the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO). In 2023, 10.8 million people fell ill, and 1.25 million people died from TB, which is a curable and preventable disease of poverty.

We sat down with [Stephan Schwander](#), associate professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health, ahead of [World TB Day](#) to raise awareness for the disease and highlight ongoing research and efforts to eradicate it.

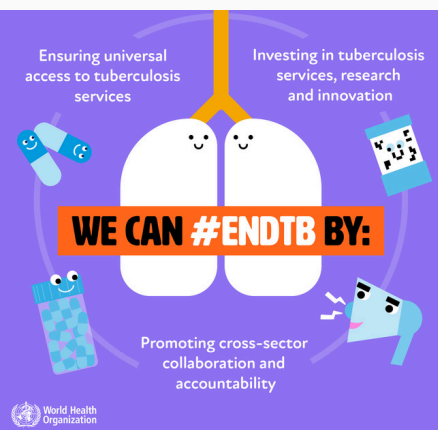
World TB Day is commemorated annually on March 24 to raise public awareness of the "[devastating health, social, and economic consequences of TB](#)." This year's theme is "Yes! We can end TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver," which aims to serve as a call for hope, urgency, and accountability by the World Health Organization. You can find additional resources, challenges, and information by visiting [WHO's World TB Day website](#). [Learn More](#)



### What are the most pressing issues in TB control and prevention today?

The most pressing issue is the political will to end TB, alongside sustained financial support for global TB control programs, as well as the recognition that "[TB anywhere is TB everywhere](#)." TB remains a global health crisis and a significant cause of death among individuals with AIDS. Despite being treatable, drug-resistant TB is on the rise due to the lengthy and complex treatment regimen, which increases the likelihood of errors and incomplete treatment.

Strengthening global TB control programs requires a focus on diagnostics and treatment delivery but also addressing the social determinants of TB. Ending poverty and reducing environmental risks perpetuating Mtb transmission would strongly contribute to TB control.



Continued research is critical. We still don't understand enough how our immune defense responses, together with Mtb strain differences, influence the course of an infection and the transmission of Mtb between persons. Such information is required in the context of TB vaccine design and identifying biomarkers that could help guide therapeutic or prophylactic interventions. A new TB vaccine for adults and improved diagnostics and treatment options are urgently needed.

Strengthening TB control efforts also requires addressing the social determinants of TB—poverty, malnutrition, and environmental factors like air pollution—that seem to increase progression to and rates of active disease.

My research explores whether the environment and air pollution modify the transmission of Mtb in low-income communities where TB incidence rates tend to be high. While epidemiological studies show that household and ambient air pollution exposures increase the

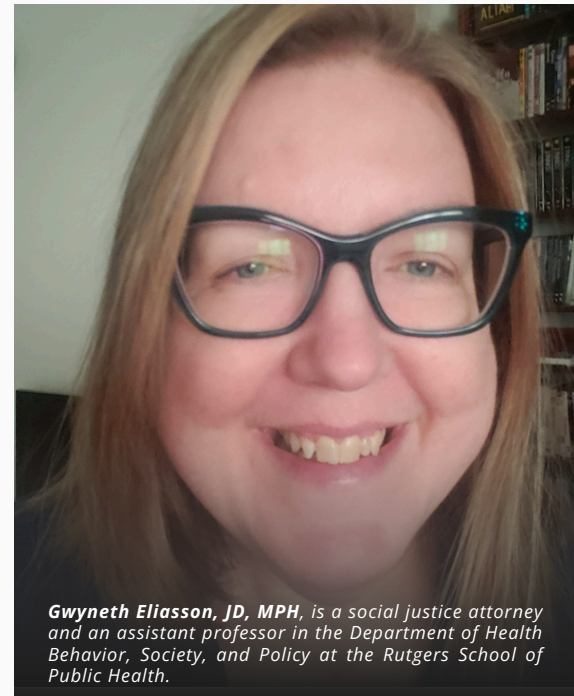
rate of new TB, it is not yet understood if air pollution exposure modifies or facilitates the transmission of Mtb. Interrupting the transmission of Mtb is a significant goal in ending TB. In low- and middle-income countries, low-income communities often reside in informal urban settings. In these settings, the risk of being exposed to household air pollution from the combustion of solid biomass (e.g., wood, charcoal, dung) during cooking and heating is high—cleaner fuels for cooking need to be made available. Household air pollution is compounded by ambient urban air pollution from vehicular traffic, industries, resuspended soil, and dust from winds and storms.

Funding needs to continue and be increased. In the U.S., past TB resurgences have been linked to declines in TB control programs and rising global cases. The WHO has warned that recent cuts to USAID funding could contribute to a worldwide TB surge. The disease disproportionately affects marginalized, low-income populations, where TB stigma further impedes access to early diagnosis and treatment.

### Medicaid Matters: Understanding Its Impact and Challenges

Medicaid plays a crucial role in the U.S. healthcare system, providing coverage to millions of individuals, including children, older adults, and people living with disabilities. Efforts to strengthen Medicaid have contributed to [historic reductions in racial and ethnic disparities](#) in healthcare and increased access to preventive care, helping more people receive critical services such as [cancer screenings](#).

However, Medicaid's future remains uncertain as [proposed funding cuts](#) could significantly impact those who rely on it, especially in states like New Jersey. We sat down with [Gwyneth M. Eliasson](#), an assistant professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health, in recognition of [Medicaid Awareness Month](#) to break down what Medicaid is, who it serves, and what's at stake. [Learn More](#)



*Gwyneth Eliasson, JD, MPH, is a social justice attorney and an assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior, Society, and Policy at the Rutgers School of Public Health.*

#### What services does Medicaid cover?

Medicaid covers both preventive and primary care, such as doctor's visits, as well as long-term care (LTC), including nursing homes. Medicaid also covers home- and community-based services (HCBS), such as skilled nursing visits, physical therapy sessions, and home health aide hours. Medicaid is the primary payer for LTC, covering more than 60% of its costs. Medicare – the other public health insurance program created in 1965 – does not cover LTC. Medicaid coverage helps people stay healthy in their homes, thus reducing emergency room visits and hospital stays.

#### What is happening with Medicaid? And how could potential changes affect New Jersey?

Currently, Congress is considering a funding cut of \$880 billion, mainly from the Medicaid program. Possible methods include putting a cap on the amount of federal funding.

Since the federal government pays for at least 50% of the costs of New Jersey's Medicaid program, a multibillion-dollar funding cut would lead to a significant number of people losing their coverage. In addition, such a cut could have a ripple effect on the Garden State's healthcare and hospital systems, particularly the size of their workforce.

#### Where can I find out more about Medicaid? And how can I keep up with developments?

- Commonwealth Fund video: ["What Is Medicaid?"](#)
- Kaiser Family Foundation: ["Medicaid 101"](#)
- Kaiser Family Foundation: ["Medicaid in New Jersey" State Fact Sheet](#)
- To stay informed: [The National Health Law Program \(NHeLP\) "Medicaid Defense"](#)
- Justice in Aging Factsheet: ["NJ FamilyCare is a Lifeline for Older Adults and People with Disabilities"](#)
  - Upcoming Webinar on **April 23**: ["Protecting Medicaid in New Jersey: What's at Stake for People with Disabilities and Older Adults and What You Can Do to Defend Medicaid"](#)



## Two-Thirds of U.S. Adolescent Minors Are Impacted by State Abortion Restrictions

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"As a result of Dobbs, two-thirds of girls ages 13 to 17 now live in states that ban or severely restrict their abortion access," said [Laura Lindberg](#), a professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health and author of the study. "Minors are often targeted by restrictive policies and less able to use routes to abortion care common for adults – traveling to another state or using telehealth – leaving them disproportionately impacted. Without access to abortion, these girls have lost the ability to control their lives and their futures."

## Most Americans Don't Know About Medical Aid in Dying Options

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"Survey respondents' lack of awareness was particularly surprising in states where MAID is legal, which lets us know that those with access to MAID may not be aware of their end of life health care options," said [Elissa Kozlov](#), an assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior, Society and Policy at the Rutgers School of Public Health. "For example, MAID is legal in New Jersey, but only 11% of survey respondents from the Garden State were able to correctly identify that MAID is legal in their state."

## Defensive Firearm Use Is Far Less Common Than Exposure to Gun Violence

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"Adults with firearm access are far more likely to be exposed to gun violence than they are to defend themselves with their firearms," said [Michael Anestis](#), executive director of the [New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center](#) at Rutgers and lead author of the study. "It's not that defensive gun use never happens, but the notion that firearm owners are routinely saving their own lives or those of their loved ones by using a firearm in self-defense simply is not backed up by the data. When we consider policies, we need to more heavily weigh the harms that frequently occur, not the instances of defense that rarely happen."

## Common Treatment for Binge Eating Disorder Shows Mixed Results

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"The repositioning of [lisdexamfetamine] from an ADHD medication to a treatment for binge eating disorder highlights a critical gap in the treatment landscape, as no drug has been specifically developed and FDA-approved for binge eating disorder, despite the disorder's widespread prevalence both in the U.S. and globally," said [Abanoub Armanious](#), a master of science student at Rutgers School of Public Health and lead author of the study. "The need for targeted treatment options for binge eating disorder remains a significant, unmet challenge in mental health care."

## Why the FDA Should Move Fast to Regulate Nicotine Pouches

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In a [commentary](#) published in JAMA...Authors [Cristine Delnevo](#), director of the institute, and [Mary Hrywna](#), associate professor, argue the U.S. Food and Drug Administration should act swiftly now to exercise its regulatory authority – both by granting marketing orders for nicotine pouch products that meet its standards and penalizing those who violate the law – to prevent the newest segment of the market from mutating as uncontrollably as e-cigarettes did.

## Rutgers Researchers Revive Decades-Old Pregnancy Cohort With Modern Scientific Potential

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Rutgers Health researchers [Zorimar Rivera-Núñez](#) and [Emily Barrett](#) had never heard of the Camden, N.J., cohort until several years ago, when many of the studies they read cited it as a source of fascinating data. "This started at the end of the '90s, and the population age reflects the realities of the time," said [Stephanie Shiao](#), first author of the new [paper](#) and assistant professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health. "Teen pregnancy has declined over time. So, recruitment of that population today will be challenging."

\*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. \*



**'People will die based on these decisions': Trump administration cuts funding for dozens of HIV studies**

[Read CNN](#)

"HIV remains a significant public health challenge throughout the nation, particularly for sexual and gender minority individuals and people of color," **Perry N. Halkitis**, dean and Hunterdon Professor of Public Health & Health Equity at Rutgers School of Public Health wrote. "As a public health dean, HIV researcher for over two decades, and proud gay man, I am deeply concerned about the impacts these grant eliminations will have on our ability to end AIDS."

**Insights on the impact of the presidential election on sexual and reproductive health**

[Read Out In Jersey](#)

**Leslie Kantor**, chair and professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health, shared her insights on how sexual and reproductive health, abortion access, and women's health may be affected by the 2025 presidential election. Formerly the vice president of education at Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Kantor discussed the potential ramifications for marginalized communities, particularly in light of policy changes under a new administration.

**Is your air freshener bad for your health?**

[Read Yahoo!](#)

Air fresheners have several features that make them potentially problematic for indoor air quality, which is why some doctors are wary of using them. "There are health concerns with using air fresheners," **Howard Kippen**, a professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and Justice at the Rutgers School of Public Health, tells Yahoo Life.

**These chemicals may lurk in your personal care products**

[Listen to NPR](#)

"Increasingly, evidence from both the toxicological studies - so those are the ones in animal models - and then also studies in humans shows that [parabens] interfere with hormone levels in our bodies," said **Emily Barrett**, George G. Rhoads Endowed Legacy Professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health. "Our hormone levels are very tightly regulated, and so they can be disrupted pretty easily by external things like parabens coming into our system."

Public Health Reports

**Page Not Found**

**White House removes advisory defining gun violence as a public health issue**

[Read The Guardian](#)

"When people read gun violence is a public health problem, they read guns are a public health problem," said **Daniel Semenza**, a firearm violence researcher with Rutgers University. "This idea actually removes the politics from the issue and is an engine to get us on the same page. [The removal] feels like an unnecessary and mean-spirited way to politicize something that people have actively been trying to bring people together on."

Prosperity

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**Increasing pointers to climate change indirectly impacting tuberculosis rise**

[Read Mongabay](#)

A hitherto underestimated and, therefore, understudied, aspect of global warming is its indirect impact on tuberculosis incidence and the potential of a double whammy to some of the poorest sections of society, say scientists. **Stephan Schwander** and colleagues at the department of urban-global public health at the Rutgers School of Public Health, Newark in the U.S., are conducting a meta analysis and systematic review on air pollution and tuberculosis.

\*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.\*





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## Call for Submissions: Contribute to *The Scarletter*!

**Do you have a story to tell, research to share, or an achievement to celebrate?**

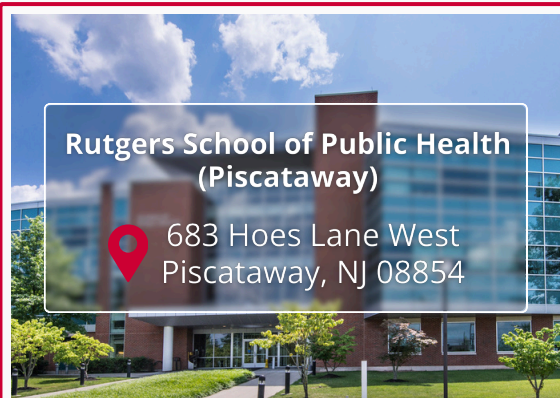
We invite all members of the Rutgers School of Public Health community to contribute to the next edition of *The Scarletter*. Whether you're a faculty or staff member, student, or alumni, we welcome submissions that showcase your experiences, insights, and expertise in public health.

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 5, 2025** for consideration. We look forward to featuring your contributions in our upcoming edition!

**SUBMIT HERE**

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Rutgers School of Public Health  
(Piscataway)

683 Hoes Lane West  
Piscataway, NJ 08854



Rutgers School of Public Health  
(Newark)

One Riverfront Plaza  
Newark, NJ 07102

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