

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



USC Gehr Family Center for Health
Systems Science and Innovation
Keck Medicine of **USC**

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TO OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I step into the role as the new director of the Gehr Center, I am grateful for the opportunity to further our mission and broaden our impact. Taking the helm from Dr. Sonali Saluja, whose leadership and vision have profoundly shaped our course over the past several years, I am inspired and excited for the path ahead. Over the past year at the Gehr Center, our dedication towards achieving equity, ensuring quality, and influencing policy in healthcare has never been more pronounced. Through our educational programs, rigorous research, and community engagement, we have continued to make substantial strides towards a more equitable and just healthcare landscape.

Our aim to diminish healthcare disparities and foster health equity has seen significant advancement. Research grants and collaborations including NIH funded work to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disparities in use of primary and preventive care, a project to test bedside and home delivery of medications during care transitions for vulnerable populations, and work funded by the American Cancer Society to identify disparities in guideline concordant lung cancer treatment, paving the way for targeted interventions promoting equitable treatment. On the education side, Gehr faculty have led the development and teaching of a new Health Justice and Systems of Care curriculum that rolled out to second year Medical students in 2022 and is now part of the core foundation of medical education at the Keck School of Medicine, and we have continued our prestigious Gehr Summer Student Innovator Program, where we mentored 8 students in research projects exploring innovative approaches to improve patient care.

The steadfast support from the Gehr Family Foundation honoring the legacy of Mr. Norbert Gehr and built upon the vision set forth by Dr. David Goldstein continues to be our driving force. We are grateful for the shared vision and the relentless support from each member of the Gehr Center community, which empowers us to push the boundaries in achieving health equity, enhancing quality of care, and advocating for meaningful policy change.

Thank you for being an integral part of this impactful journey.

Warmest regards,



Cameron Kaplan, PhD
Gehr Center Director



NORBERT GEHR & DAVID GOLDSTEIN



Norbert Gehr arrived in New York City from Brazil in July 1960 as a teenager, with the dream of success and a few hundred dollars. He travelled to Southern California, where he took up residency and attended Santa Ana College and UCLA. In 1965, at age 24, Mr. Gehr pursued his dream by using the modest proceeds from the sale of his car to start a small distribution business, selling industrial supplies nationwide to contractors over the phone. Through his drive, determination, hard work and perseverance, Mr. Gehr grew his business. In 1975, Mr. Gehr established his own manufacturing facility, producing extension cords and other wire and cable products. Several years later, Mr. Gehr founded Gehr International and Gehr Development, which has become a diversified multinational holding company headquartered in Los Angeles, California. In 2016, through the Gehr Family Foundation that he established, Mr. Gehr made a generous donation to Keck School of Medicine to establish the Gehr Family Center for Health Systems Science & Innovation.

David Goldstein, MD moved from his home state of New York in 1975 to begin a nephrology fellowship at LAC+USC Medical Center. This was the start of a lifelong career at the University of Southern California (USC) that ultimately spanned five decades. During his historic career at USC, Dr. Goldstein served as the founding Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine; the Vice Chair for Clinical Affairs within the Department of Medicine; the Co-Director of the Pacific Center for Health Policy and Ethics; and most recently, as the Director of Primary Care for Keck Medicine of USC. Dr. Goldstein's impact on the Keck School of Medicine, the Department of Medicine, and the USC community at large was far-reaching, and was surpassed only by the influence he had on the countless trainees and junior faculty members who were fortunate enough to work with him during his tenure. Shortly before his retirement, and thanks to a generous donation from Mr. Norbert Gehr, Dr. Goldstein founded the Gehr Family Center for Health Systems Science and Innovation in 2016.



MISSION, VISION, & GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Vision

Our vision is to achieve high-quality, evidence-based and equitable care for all patients.



Mission

We support multidisciplinary efforts to improve health outcomes by accelerating the adoption of high-quality and equitable health care through research, education, and evidence-based advocacy:

- **Research:** We uncover gaps in the health system, then develop and test strategies to advance health care quality and equity. We synthesize evidence to inform best-practices and guidelines.
- **Education:** We educate health care stakeholders, including students, providers, policy makers, and mentor future leaders in health systems science. We engage a network of individuals who are interested in exchanging ideas about health equity and health care delivery.
- **Advocacy for Evidence-Based Change:** We promote the translation of science into health care delivery and policy reform by implementing and disseminating evidence-based strategies for advancing health equity and improving patient care.



Guiding Principles:

- Our interventions are evidence-based and aim to improve the health of all populations, particularly marginalized individuals and communities.
- Our research furthers our understanding of policies that impact health and health systems.
- Our projects are informed by the needs of patients and communities in Los Angeles and beyond.
- Our innovations are designed to be applicable to real-world settings.
- Gehr faculty, affiliates, and students collaborate to address complex problems facing our health care delivery system.

OUR TEAM



Cameron Kaplan, PhD
Gehr Center Director



Michael Cousineau, DrPH
Senior Advisor



Barbara Turner, MD
Senior Advisor



Sonali Saluja, PhD
Faculty



Todd Schneberk, MD
Faculty



Albert Farias, MD
Faculty



Alissa Maier, MPH
Project Manager



Laura Solano
Research Coordinator



Danica Tolentino, MS
Gehr Center Director

RESEARCH

The Gehr Center published **over 45 articles** in 2022 with health equity topics ranging from access to care to vaccine hesitancy. Here are a sample of our publications.

Gehr Student Innovator *
Gehr Affiliate ^

Community-Based Health Care Navigation's Impact on Access to Primary Care for Low-Income Latinos

Sonali Saluja, Michael Hochman^, Rachel Dokko*, Janina Lord Morrison, Celia Valdez, Steven Baldwin, Megha D Tandel, Michael Cousineau

Despite the Affordable Care Act's insurance expansion, low-income Latinos are less likely to have a primary care provider compared with other racial/ethnic and income groups. We examined if community-based health care navigation could improve access to primary care in this population. We surveyed adult clients of a community-based navigation program serving this population and found that community-based navigation has the potential to reduce barriers and improve access to primary care. We concluded that in addition to expanding insurance coverage, policymakers should consider investing in health care navigation to reduce disparities in primary care.



Relationship between mask wearing, testing, & vaccine willingness among LA County adults during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic

Chun Nok Lam, **Cameron Kaplan, Sonali Saluja**

Mask wearing mitigates the spread of COVID-19; however, many individuals have not adopted the protective behavior. We examined mask wearing behavior during the height of the pandemic in Los Angeles County, and its association with COVID-19 testing and willingness to get vaccinated. The survey found that 75.3% reported always wearing a face mask when leaving home. Factors that were associated with always wearing a mask included being a female, Asian or African American, non-Republican, having higher education, having poor or fair health, having a regular doctor, knowing someone hospitalized for COVID-19, and being willing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.



RESEARCH

Lung Cancer Mortality Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Patient Experiences with Care: a SEER-CAHPS Study



Albert J. Farias, Emily Chan*, Stephanie Navarro*, Elizabeth A. David^, Megan Eguchi, Myles Cockburn

We examined the SEER-CAHPS database to determine whether there are racial/ethnic disparities in patient experiences with care among lung cancer survivors and whether they are associated with mortality. We found that there are racial/ethnic disparities among Black, Hispanic, and Asian lung cancer patient experiences with care that may impact patient experiences with care and mortality.

Do breast cancer survivors with a recent history of clinical depression report worse experiences with care? A retrospective cohort study using SEER-CAHPS data

Mariana Arevalo, Trevor A. Pickering, Sally W. Vernon, Kayo Fujimoto, Melissa F. Peskin, Albert J. Farias

We examined whether breast cancer survivors' experiences with care differed by a recent history of clinical depression, and whether associations differed by race/ethnicity. Using the SEER-CAHPS dataset, we analyzed records of breast cancer survivors who completed a survey at least 12 months after their cancer diagnosis and then assessed clinical depression 12 months prior to survey completion using Medicare claims. We found that breast cancer survivors with depression reported poorer patient experiences with care. However, further research is needed to understand complexities of ratings of experiences with care among survivors of diverse backgrounds.



RESEARCH

Quality Indicators for High-Need Patients: a Systematic Review

Todd Schneberk, Maria Bolshakova, **Kylie Sloan***, Evelyn Chang, Julia Stal, Jennifer Dinalo, Elvira Jimenez, Aneesa Motala, Susanne Hempel

Healthcare systems are increasingly implementing programs for high-need patients, who often have multiple chronic conditions and complex social situations. We sought to conduct a systematic review to identify potential quality indicators for high-need patients. We identified and evaluated existing quality indicators for a complex, heterogeneous patient group. Although some quality indicators were not disease-specific, we found very few that accounted for social determinants of health and behavioral factors. We concluded that more research is needed to develop quality indicators that address patient risk factors.



Association of nonpharmacologic chronic pain management with function in a low-income population: Evidence from a survey of a sample of Latinos from five states



Allie Schmiesing*, Yuanyuan Liang, **Barbara J Turner**

Our study examined current trends in students pursuing a dual doctor of medicine (MD)-master of public health (MPH) degree (MD-MPH) in the United States. An extensive literature review was conducted of existing MD-MPH databases to determine characteristics of a student cohort. Targeted telephone interviews were conducted with 20 admissions personnel and faculty at schools offering MD-MPH degrees with the highest number of matriculants and graduates. Available MD-MPH databases are limited, and no literature describes this cohort. A 434% increase was found in the number of students pursuing an MD-MPH degree from 2010 to 2018.

EDUCATION

Gehr Family Student Innovators Fellowship Program

Now in its 7th year, this summer program, run by **Todd Schneberk** and **Alissa Maier**, trains students to create data driven research aimed at improving healthcare and advancing health equity. As part of the 6-week program, each student develops a health systems science project under the mentorship of a Gehr faculty member. The program didactic sessions feature leaders from health systems, community organizations, and Gehr faculty discussing topics such as leadership, quality, equity, advocacy, and research. In 2022, 11 students, including medical, graduate, and doctoral students, were selected for our program. The program incorporated both hybrid and in-person sessions. The students also gained unique exposure to community-based organizations serving marginalized populations, including the STAR Clinic, ReFresh Spot, MLK Jr Community Hospital, and the Venice Family Clinic. To date, our students have produced **35** peer-reviewed papers with their faculty mentors.



ReFresh Spot



Venice Family Clinic



MLK Jr Community Hospital

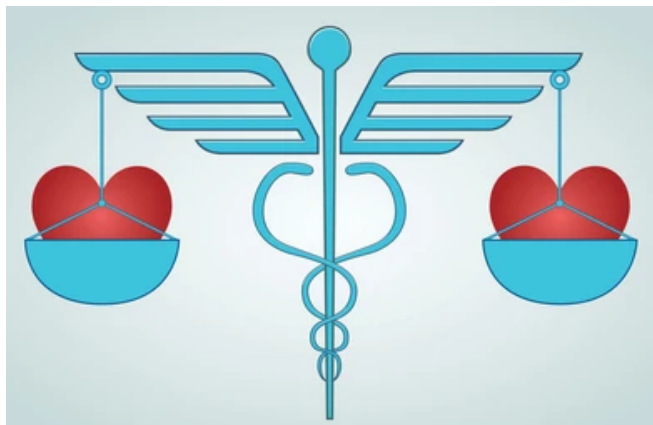
"The Gehr summer program really allowed me to gain a much larger exposure to not only experts in the field of health utilization and health services research, but also other students...it also connected me to a lot of resources that existed within my own institution that I wasn't aware of." Cynthia Ramirez, Medicine (2021)



"Getting to experience and connect with healthcare leaders across Los Angeles and getting a variety of angles on the healthcare industry really allowed me to understand what I want to pursue." Rit Shukla, Public Policy (2021)

EDUCATION

Health Justice and Systems of Care Curriculum



The new Health Justice and Systems of Care curriculum, led by **Sonali Saluja** and Gehr affiliate **Ronan Hallowell**, explores how structural levers, social forces, and health systems impact health and health equity. It encourages future physicians to advocate not only for their patients, but also for communities and populations, ultimately leading to the transformation of the health system itself. The longitudinal curriculum includes didactics led by subject matter experts and small group activities with multidisciplinary faculty.

GEHR FAMILY SPEAKER SERIES

Each year the Gehr Center hosts preeminent speakers with expertise in community health, public health, health systems, and health care delivery. This year, our speaker series highlighted XX

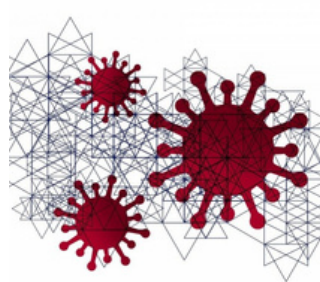


**Jose Figueroa,
MD, MPH**

Searching for Equity in
US Health Care Policy



Elaine Khoong, MD, MS
Leveraging Digital Health Tools
to Reduce Disparities in
Cardiometabolic Outcomes



**Learning from the
Pandemic to Improve
Healthcare Series**

Hosted with the USC
Viterbi School of
Engineering



**Eliseo J. Pérez-
Stable, MD**

The David A. Goldstein
Memorial Lecture: How
Science Promotes Health
Equity by Decreasing
Disparities

ADVOCACY FOR EVIDENCE-BASED CHANGE

The Keck Human Rights Clinic

Todd Schneberk is the Co-Director of the Keck Human Rights Clinic (KHRC) which was the first of its kind on the West Coast. It is a student-run clinic dedicated to providing pro-bono forensic medical and psychological evaluations to survivors of human rights abuse seeking asylum in the US. KHRC launched a pilot program to provide pro-bono medical record review for cases in which an individual's health has been affected by justice-involved human rights violations.



DynaMedex

Barbara Turner acts as the ACP Deputy Editor for Clinical Decision Resources through a contract with the American College of Physicians (ACP). Dr. Turner's expertise is instrumental in curating the content of DynaMedex, an evidence-based clinical reference tool for healthcare professionals. This vital resource supports our initiative for evidence-based changes, ensuring that clinicians have access to the latest and most accurate medical information. This underscores our dedication to enhancing patient care by equipping practitioners with knowledge that is both authoritative and actionable.



Street Medicine Landscape Analysis

The Gehr Center's **Michael Cousineau**, **Alissa Maier** and **Sonali Saluja** along with Gehr affiliate **Alexis Coulouridges Kogan** are working with experienced street medicine leaders, Brett Feldman and Corinne Feldman, on a California Health Care Foundation funded landscape analysis of the current state of street-based medicine across CA. The results will help to inform policymakers, health systems and street medicine providers and highlight ways in which we can improve health care for persons experiencing homelessness.



GRANTS

The Gehr Center was involved with 20 grants and contracts in 2022 from entities such as the National Institutes of Health, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Centers for Disease Control, California Health Care Foundation and others. Below are a few key projects that our team worked on in 2022.

COVID-19 Mitigation Efforts and Disparities in Access to Routine Preventive Care and Chronic Disease Management



Gehr Center Director, **Cameron Kaplan**, received a 4-year grant funded by the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities to study the impact of the pandemic on racial/ethnic and income-based disparities in access to primary and preventive care and the subsequent effect on short to medium term health outcomes.

Multilevel Influences that contribute to Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Receipt of Guideline Concordant Treatment for Early-Stage Non-Small Cell Lung Carcinoma

Gehr faculty member, **Albert Farias**, was funded by the American Cancer Society to examine determinants of health care equity in guideline concordant treatment for early-stage non-small cell lung carcinoma. This project will help to identify the drivers of structural racism within the healthcare system effecting minority cancer patients so that policy makers and healthcare leaders can address the inequities.



Hospital-Based Programs to Address Interpersonal Violence in Los Angeles County: Hybrid 2 Study to Evaluate Implementation and Effectiveness



Gehr faculty member, **Todd Schneberk**, received funding through a USC CTSI DHS Healthcare Delivery Science Safety Net Innovation Award to study the implementation and effectiveness outcomes for the LA County DHS systems' Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program (HBVIP). In partnership with local violence intervention organizations, the project will identify and initiate strategies to address barriers to successful HBVIPs..

GEHR AFFILIATES

Our affiliates program supports a broad network of researchers, health systems leaders, and providers across departments and institutions to advance health services research, implementation science and health equity. We currently have affiliates from various departments, schools and organizations, including, USC Keck School of Medicine, The Schaeffer Center, LA General Medical Center, CHLA, Kaiser, and Healthcare in Action.



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Brian Mittman, PhD

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Hendel Health Research
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Blue Cross Blue
Shield Association



Danica Liberman, MD, MPH

Children's Hospital of Los Angeles
Keck School of Medicine



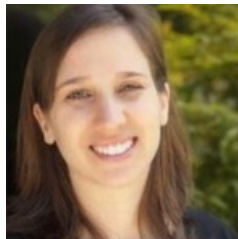
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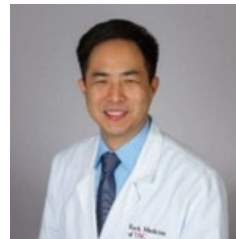
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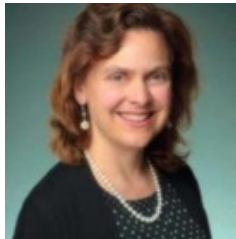
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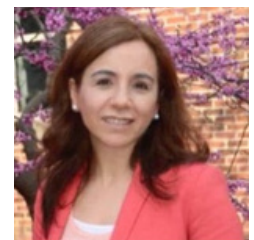
Michael Hochman, MD, MPH

Healthcare in Action



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BY THE NUMBERS



48

PEER REVIEWED
PUBLICATIONS

7

SUMMER STUDENT
PUBLICATIONS

SCHOLARLY
WORKS

MENTORSHIP &
COLLABORATION

44

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26

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47

LECTURES

6

GRANT REVIEW
COMMITTEES

EXPERTISE

RESEARCH
GRANTS



FACULTY
INVOLVED WITH

20

RESEARCH GRANTS

CONNECT WITH US



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