

# UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA *Almanac*

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## **Lisa Walke Leads AGE SMART Project Research with Support From a \$5 Million GWEP Grant**

Adults over 65 and their families in eastern Pennsylvania will have greater access to geriatric care thanks to a \$5 million Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) grant from the Federal Health Resources & Services Administration. The program, led by Lisa M. Walke, chief of the division of geriatric medicine at the Perelman School of Medicine, will train primary care providers in aging-related medicine, and educate older adults and their caregivers on topics relevant to health and aging.

The program, called Advancing Geriatrics Education with Strategic, Multidimensional, Age-Friendly Resources and Training (AGE SMART), aims to provide education that will improve care for the expanding population of



Lisa Walke

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## **Francesco Agostinelli: Janice and Julian Bers Assistant Professor in the Social Sciences in SAS**

Francesco Agostinelli, an assistant professor of economics in the School of Arts & Sciences, has been named the Janice and Julian Bers Assistant Professor in the Social Sciences. A leading scholar in labor economics and the economics of education, Dr. Agostinelli is an empirical microeconomist who conducts research on child development, education, family economics and applied econometrics. His recent work focuses on the determinants of children's skill formation, family choices and educational investments in children, the role of socioeconomic environments, and the development of new methods for identifying the mechanisms driving inequality in economic opportunities.

Dr. Agostinelli's service and affiliations include not only departmental roles such as a PhD admission committee member, an undergraduate research advisory committee member, an empirical-micro seminar organizer, and an empirical-micro lunch workshop organizer, but also as a



Francesco Agostinelli

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## **Penn Center for the Study of Epigenetics in Reproduction Receives \$5.95 Million NIH Grant Renewal for Research on Animal and Human Reproduction**

A multidisciplinary group of researchers from Penn's School of Veterinary Medicine and Perelman School of Medicine have received \$5.95 million in renewed funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study male and female reproduction in animals and humans.

The funding supports the Penn Center for the Study of Epigenetics in Reproduction (PCSER), which focuses on epigenetic mechanisms that govern male and female reproduction, contribute to male infertility, and impact on development of mouse and human concepti conceived through Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART). Funded by the NIH since 2011, the PCSER consists of Penn Vet's P. Jeremy Wang and PSOM's Marisa Bartolomei, Monica Mainigi, and Suneeta Senapati.

The renewed funding will support Dr. Wang's investigation of a testis-specific protein TEX15, discovered by his laboratory, which is required for male fertility. Dr. Wang's research

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## **Paula Fomby: Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Term Chair in the Social Sciences in SAS**

Paula Fomby, a professor of sociology in the School of Arts & Sciences, has been named the Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Term Professor in the Social Sciences. Dr. Fomby is a sociologist and family demographer whose research focuses on children's well-being and life chances and the way these are shaped by families and social institutions, with particular attention to economic and racialized inequalities. Her research has been supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the National Science Foundation.

Dr. Fomby has authored numerous scholarly articles and several book sections. In 2023, she won Article of the Year from the American Sociological Association's Section on Sociology of the Family for her co-authored article "Interlinking Structural Racism and Heteropatriarchy: Rethinking Family Structure's Effects on Child Outcomes in a Racialized, Unequal So-



Paula Fomby

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## **Penn Researchers Awarded \$18 Million NIH/NIA Grant to Study Causes of Cognitive Decline in Lewy Body Diseases**

Penn Medicine researchers will advance their understanding of the underlying causes of cognitive decline in individuals with Lewy body diseases, like Parkinson's, and identify biomarkers that predict which individuals are more likely to develop dementia with a \$18 million grant from the National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Aging. The goal of this wide-ranging program is to understand the factors that govern who develops dementia, and how quickly, in order to develop therapies that might slow the progression of disease.

Nearly one million Americans currently live with Parkinson's Disease (PD), and an estimated 1.4 million have PD or dementia with Lewy bodies. Both are caused by the buildup of an abnormal protein in the brain, called  $\alpha$ -synuclein ( $\alpha$ Syn). The buildup of  $\alpha$ Syn forms clumps called Lewy bodies, leading to issues with movement and cognition. While these diseases share a common underlying cause, individuals express symptoms differently. Some people experience cognitive decline, like impaired memory and judgement, at the outset of their diagnosis, others develop it a few years after, and some never do. Likewise, some individuals struggle with motor functions early, like walking or swallowing, while others develop these symptoms years after diagnosis. There are currently no FDA-approved treatments available that slow the progression of these diseases.

"Regardless of timing, these symptoms appear to share some underlying processes," said Alice Chen-Plotkin, the Parker Family Professor of Neurology, director of the Molecular Integration in Neurological Diagnosis (MIND) initiative, and overall director of this newly funded program. "We hope that the differences in individuals' diseases can illuminate the root cause of neurodegeneration and help us develop therapies that delay the onset of cognitive decline. Ideally,

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Alice Chen-Plotkin

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## Penn Provides Electronic Delivery Options for 2024 Tax Year W-2 Forms

The Payroll Office encourages University faculty, staff, postdocs, and student workers to elect electronic delivery only of their W-2 tax forms. Electronic delivery is secure. Turning off printing and mailing paper W-2 forms avoids delays or errors in receiving year-end tax documents.

[Log in and make the change in Workday](#) before December 31, 2024. Those who previously submitted consent for electronic access only do not need to take any action.

For assistance in turning off printing and mailing of the W-2, access the following:

- Watch a [short video](#) for a step-by-step demonstration, or
- Follow the simple steps in the [Self Service-Access to W-2, W-4, and State Reciprocal Forms](#) (pdf) tip sheet

The 2024 W-2 will be available electronically in early 2025. For those who still receive paper copies of the W-2, the Payroll Office arranges U.S. postal mailing of the paper copy of the year-end form to the home address indicated in Workday.

### Important Information for Tax Return Preparation

- W-2s since 2019 are available in Workday.
- W-2s in Workday will not display Box D Control Numbers.
- If you need control numbers to import to an electronic tax preparation service, please contact the [Penn Employee Solution Center](#).
- You can also view your W-2s through Penn's tax information management vendor, ADP W-2 Services. For detailed instructions, access the [Workday website](#).
- Use the ADP site to access your tax information for the current year and the prior two years.
- For copies of W-2 for tax years earlier than those available in Workday or ADP, contact the Penn Employee Solution Center.
- Do you have additional questions on withholding and year-end tax documents? See the resources on the [Division of Finance Tax](#) web page. University of Pennsylvania staff are not authorized to provide personal tax advice. Please consult with a qualified tax specialist or the IRS.

### Annual Selection Period for Retirees and Long-Term Disability Recipients

The 2025 annual selection period for retirees and long-term disability recipients will run from Monday, October 21 to Friday, November 1, 2024. This annual event allows participants to review their current benefits and make changes for the upcoming calendar year. The selections you make will be effective as of January 1, 2025. If you do not make changes, your current elections will roll over to the next year.

You'll receive in the mail a 2025 annual selection guide that includes current enrollment information, costs, medical plan comparison charts, and more. Visit the [Annual Benefits Selection webpage](#) for complete details.

An annual selection information fair will be held October 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Golkin Room in Houston Hall on Penn's campus.

#### How to Enroll or Make Changes to Your Benefits

There are two ways to enroll or make changes to your benefits for the 2025 annual selection period. You can call the University of Pennsylvania Benefits Solution Center at Health Advocate at (866) 799-2329, or use the [Workday@Penn](#) enrollment system and complete the following steps online:

1. Use your PennKey and password to log in to Workday at [www.myworkday.com/upenn/login.html](http://www.myworkday.com/upenn/login.html).
2. From your home page, select the inbox icon in the upper right corner or click "Go to Inbox."
3. Select "Annual Selection" in your inbox.
4. Click "Let's Get Started." Select manage under each benefit offering, then click "Select" or "Waive" next to the corresponding benefit plan (your current coverage will be displayed for each benefits election).  
Click confirm and continue and save after each election.
5. When you have completed all your elections, click "Review and Sign and then Submit."

All elections or changes must be made by Friday, November 1, 2024 at 5 p.m. ET.

If you have questions about this year's annual selection period, please contact the University of Pennsylvania Benefits Solution Center at Health Advocate at (866) 799-2329, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., ET.

—Division of Human Resources

### Penn Museum Offers Dig Deep Classes

Cultivate your curiosity about ancient history, exciting excavations, and cultural heritage connected to the Penn Museum's unparalleled collection and research. Each Deep Dig course consists of four live virtual classes led by Penn faculty and scholars, as well as other experts in the field, and includes access to digital readings, online archival research, and videos. Recordings of the live class will be available if you miss a session. No archaeology or anthropolo-

gy background required; just bring your love for lifelong learning.

Upcoming courses include The Science and Art of Conserving Egypt's Ancient Wonders on Tuesdays from November 5 through November 26, and Extraordinary Epics on Thursdays from December 5 through January 16.

To learn more and to register, visit [www.penn.museum/events/the-deep-dig](http://www.penn.museum/events/the-deep-dig).

## From the Office of the Secretary

### University Council Meeting Agenda Wednesday, October 23, 2024

4-6 p.m.

#### Hall of Flags, Houston Hall

- A. Welcome.
- B. Approval of the minutes of September 11, 2024.
- C. Follow up comments or questions on Status Reports.
- D. Responses to New Business topics raised at the September 11, 2024 University Council meeting.
- E. State of the University Reports from the President and Provost.
- F. Announcement of Open Forum.
- G. New Business.
- H. Adjournment.

### Paula Fomby: Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Term Chair in the Social Sciences in SAS

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ciety." Currently, Dr. Fomby serves as the associate director of Penn's Population Studies Center, a member of the School of Arts & Sciences Teaching Award Committee, and diversity search advisor in the School of Arts & Sciences Social Sciences Division. She also served as a faculty judge for Penn Grad Talks.

The Kahn chairs were established through a bequest by Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn. Edmund Kahn was a 1925 Wharton graduate who had a highly successful career in the oil and natural gas industry. Louise Kahn, a graduate of Smith College, worked for *Newsweek* and owned an interior design firm. They supported many programs and projects at Penn, including Van Pelt Library, the Modern Languages College House, and other initiatives in scholarship and the humanities.

### Francesco Agostinelli: Janice and Julian Bers Assistant Professor in the Social Sciences in SAS

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faculty research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) in its Program on Children & Families, a research associate at Penn's Population Studies Center, a member of the Human Capital and Economic Opportunity Global Working Group (HCEO) at the University of Chicago, and a member of the Stone Center for Research on Wealth and Inequality and Mobility at the University of Chicago. This year, he received the economics department's Kravis Award for Undergraduate Teaching in recognition of his outstanding teaching.

The late Janice Bers graduated from Penn with an education degree in 1939. Her husband, the late Julian Bers, graduated from Wharton in 1931. He received Penn's Alumni Award of Merit in 1968, and served as a trustee of the University, while Janice Bers served as president of her class and on its 50<sup>th</sup> reunion gift committee.



## From the President, Provost and Senior Executive Vice President

### Serving as a Polling Place Worker on Election Day

We applaud the nationwide effort to encourage citizens to serve as polling place workers on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, 2024. Our region is especially active in Philadelphia County, where the recruitment and training of nearly 4,500 volunteers is in progress. Service as a polling place worker generally requires active voter registration, advance preparation and training, and a commitment to 15 hours of work on Election Day.

We offer administrative time off to regular staff members who serve as certified polling place workers on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, so that they may fulfill this important civic obligation without loss of pay. Serving as a nonpartisan, officially appointed polling place worker is a matter of public record. For this special initiative, staff members must use the *Request Time Off* process in Workday before Tuesday, October 30. The type of time off requested should be “*Poll Worker*.” Staff members who intend to participate in the program should obtain supervisory approval in advance and be prepared to verify their service to their supervisors.

Staff members who intend to serve in other nonpartisan volunteer positions, in paid or volunteer partisan positions, or as campaign workers, early-voting processors, mail-in ballot counters, polling place watchers, or Ward/Committee assignees should arrange for the use of Paid Time Off in the usual way.

As always, we encourage supervisors to extend flexibility to staff in order to allow time to vote on Election Day. In Pennsylvania, polling places open at 7 a.m. and lines close at 8 p.m.

—J. Larry Jameson, Interim President

—John L. Jackson, Jr., Provost

—Craig Carnaroli, Senior Executive Vice President

### PhilWP Receives Spencer Foundation Grant for a “Living Archive” of Hidden Histories of City’s Black Youth

The Philadelphia Writing Project (PhilWP) at Penn GSE is launching a new initiative to bring the often-overlooked stories of Black youth in Philadelphia to the forefront. Supported by a two-year research-practice partnership grant from the Spencer Foundation, PhilWP is partnering with Independence National Historical Park (INHP) and The Colored Girls Museum (TCGM) to create a “living archive” of these hidden histories.

This initiative begins as Philadelphia prepares to celebrate America’s 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026. It also coincides with two key milestones: the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Black History Month and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of African American history becoming a graduation requirement in Philadelphia schools. The project aims to center African American stories and highlight the contributions of Black Philadelphians throughout history.

Bringing together university researchers, local educators, museum professionals, and students, the project aims to elevate the voices of African Americans who have shaped civic life in Philadelphia. Barrett Rosser, EdD, lead researcher for the project, expressed her excitement about the collaboration.

## Honors & Other Things



2024 Cohort of Leonard A. Lauder Community Care Nurse Practitioner Fellows.

### Penn Nursing: 2024 Lauder Fellows

Penn Nursing announces its third cohort of fellows of the Leonard A. Lauder Community Care Nurse Practitioner Program. The group is comprised of nursing professionals from across the country who have begun full-time studies towards becoming a primary care nurse practitioner. The fellows will use this unique opportunity to further their education and clinical experience to help solve the challenges they see in their chosen field.

“Leonard Lauder is a true champion for improving health in underserved areas by ensuring access to advanced primary care nurses,” said Penn Nursing dean Antonia M. Villaruel. “The latest cohort of the Leonard A. Lauder Community Care Nurse Practitioner Program Fellows are determined and committed to improving health equity in communities.”

The current cohort of Leonard A. Lauder Community Care Nurse Practitioner Fellows come from a variety of backgrounds and share a commitment to using this unique opportunity to further their education and clinical experience to help solve the challenges they see in their chosen field.

The 2024 cohort of Lauder Fellows are:

- Joudelyne Altidor
- Amber Mia Bang
- Tabitha “Tab” Boyle
- Isabel Buckingham
- Silvano DiMonte
- Alaina Hall
- Moona Hamad
- Lisa He-Wu
- Angie Mercedes Hernandez
- Daniel Huynh
- Rabina Joshi
- Augustine Kamara
- Haily Reicher
- Antonio Renteria
- Gabby Romero
- Jazmin Rush
- Alfredo Sanchez
- Maria Grazia Leon Sausa
- Clara Scott
- Brashay Woods

### Zahra Fakhraai: Fellow of the American Physical Society

Zahra Fakhraai, a professor of chemistry in the School of Arts & Sciences, has been elected as a 2024 fellow of the American Physical Society. The APS fellowship program recognizes members who have made exceptional contributions in physics research, important applications of physics, significant contributions to physics

education, or leadership in or service to APS. Each year, no more than one half of one percent of the society membership is recognized by their peers for election to Fellow of the American Physical Society.

Dr. Fakhraai specializes in physical chemistry, materials chemistry, nanoscale science and engineering.



Zahra Fakhraai

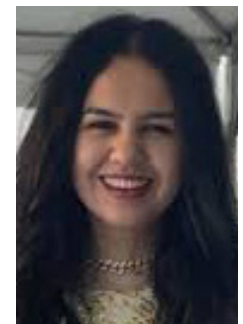
### Sally Nijim: ASH HONORS Award

Sally Nijim, the 2024 CDCN and Biomedical Leadership Fellow at the Perelman School of Medicine, has been selected by the American Society of Hematology (ASH) to receive the 2024 Hematology Opportunities for the Next Generation of Research Scientists (HONORS) Award as one of 33 residents and medical students nationally and as the representative from PSOM.

The ASH HONORS Award aims to support talented medical students and residents who are interested in hematology but have not yet entered a hematology-related training program. Recipients receive \$5,000 to conduct hematology research projects. Each HONORS participant will have an ASH research mentor who will assist and oversee the awardee’s work and progress.

This was the first time an ASH medical student HONORS award was used to conduct research in Castleman’s disease.

The American Society of Hematology (ASH) is the world’s largest professional society of hematologists dedicated to furthering the understanding, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disorders affecting the blood. Since 1958, the Society has led the development of hematology as a discipline by promoting research, patient care, education, training, and advocacy in hematology.



Sally Nijim

## Deaths

### Raymond Boston, New Bolton Center

Raymond Charles Boston, an emeritus professor of biostatistics and epidemiology at the New Bolton Center at Penn Vet, died on June 29. He was 80.

Dr. Boston was born in Melbourne, Australia. He did his undergraduate and graduate studies at Melbourne University, culminating in a PhD in mathematics. He began his academic career as a lecturer at Australian National University, La Trobe University, and Murdoch University.

In 1991, Dr. Boston joined Penn's faculty as a professor of clinical studies at the New Bolton Center at Penn Vet. Starting in 1996, he also held a secondary position as a professor of biostatistics in the department of biostatistics and epidemiology in the Perelman School of Medicine. He was an active member of the Penn Faculty Senate and served on its Executive Committee. Dr. Boston retired in 2013 and was granted emeritus status.

In addition to teaching, he worked as a research scientist at the National Institutes of Health. His research as a mathematician and biostatistician spanned veterinary, medical, and epidemiological topics. In the field of biomathematical modeling, he contributed significantly to the development of the Winsaam program, which has since been used by research scientists around the world.

He is survived by his wife, Claire; his children, Sean, Marc, and James Boston; his grandchildren, Aimee, Thomas, Ryan, Jillian, Alison, Jessica, and Lochlan Boston; his sister, Leoni Mather; and nieces, nephews, and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, the family expressed wishes that memorial contributions be made to the Mental Health Association of Delaware at [www.mhainde.org](http://www.mhainde.org).

### Frank Pinkus, Admissions

Frank Pinkus, WG'61, a former admissions officer in the Office of Admissions, died on July 27 from Parkinson's Disease. He was 84.

Mr. Pinkus was born in Pittsburgh to German immigrant parents who had fled Nazi Germany. Mr. Pinkus attended Baldwin Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, before transferring to the University of Pittsburgh, where he graduated cum laude. He was then accepted into Penn's Wharton School, graduating in 1961 with an MBA in marketing.

After a career in retail management across the country (including roles of increasing responsibility at department stores A&S, Kaufman's, Rike's, and Orbach's), Mr. Pinkus became an entrepreneur, founding several companies. These included N'est-ce Pas, which sold low-priced designer women's clothing; Pistache, another clothing firm; and Nissan Time, which distributed clock movements sourced from Taiwan. In 1995, Mr. Pinkus returned to Penn as an admissions officer in the Provost's Center, holding responsibility for the southwestern United States and heading the Southern Cal-

ifornia Regional Advisory Board. Though he retired in 2007, he maintained close relationships with many students he admitted and officiated weddings for Penn alumni.

Mr. Pinkus is survived by his wife, Sylvia Ward; his children, Gary (Mary), Mark (Lya) and Lynn (Evan Lewis); his grandchildren, Dani (Henry), Amy, Charlie, Ellie, Nicole, Sam, Sutton, Olivia, and Griffin; and his brother, Ralph.

### Michael Topp, Chemistry

Michael Richard Topp, an emeritus professor of chemistry in the School of Arts & Sciences, died on June 18. He was 79.

Born in Bolton, England, Dr. Topp studied chemistry at Sheffield University, where he graduated at the top of his class. He went on to earn his PhD in chemistry from the Royal Society of Great Britain in London in 1968. Following his doctoral studies, Dr. Topp moved to the United States to complete his postdoctoral research at Bell Labs in New Jersey before returning to the U.K. in 1971 to teach at Oxford University.

In 1973, Dr. Topp joined Penn's faculty as an assistant professor of chemistry. In 1979, he became an associate professor, and in 1990, a full professor. Alongside his work in the chemistry department, he held an assistant professorship in the College of General Studies, now known as the College of Liberal and Professional Studies (LPS). During his time at Penn, Dr. Topp also served as a member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and as chair of the Senate's Committee on Academic and Related Affairs. In 1998, he was inducted into Penn's Twenty-Five Year Club.

Dr. Topp's research primarily focused on physical chemistry, with specific interests in conformational relaxation in isolated molecular clusters, hydrogen-bonded molecular dimers, and ultrafast electronic relaxation of hydrogen-bonded molecules, studied through femtosecond pump-probe spectroscopy. Much of his research was conducted at Penn. In 1987, he received a University Research Foundation (URF) award for his project "High-Resolution Spectroscopy of Metalloporphyrins, Polyenes, and Novel Organometallic Compounds." Two years later, he was awarded a biomedical research grant for his study on the "Laser Photolysis of Coenzyme B12 and Model Compounds." In 1992, he earned another URF award for his project "Photochemistry in Molecular Clusters." Dr. Topp retired from Penn in 2017 and was awarded emeritus status.

Dr. Topp is survived by his wife, Elaine; his children, Roger, Colin, and Stephanie; and his grandchildren, Kaelin and William.

#### To Report A Death

*Almanac* appreciates being informed of the deaths of current and former faculty and staff members, students and other members of the University community. Call (215) 898-5274 or email [almanac@upenn.edu](mailto:almanac@upenn.edu).

## Penn Researchers Awarded \$18 Million NIH/NIA Grant to Study Causes of Cognitive Decline in Lewy Body Diseases

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instead of Parkinson's being a disease that eventually may disrupt all aspects of an individual's life, we could slow its progression so much that it would just be a minor inconvenience."

The grant supports four different projects across the Perelman School of Medicine and emphasizes collaboration across disciplines. Edward Lee, co-director of Penn's Institute on Aging and leader of the Penn Medicine Brain Bank, and Sharon Xiangwen Xie, a professor of biostatistics, will ensure that tissue, DNA samples, and data are centralized and shared with all collaborators.

David Irwin, an associate professor of neurology, will lead one project investigating how  $\alpha$ Syn buildup interacts with  $\beta$ -amyloid plaques (amyloid) and tau neurofibrillary tangles (tau), which drive other neurodegenerative diseases, most notably Alzheimer's. His goal is to understand how the interplay between these elements impact loss of cognition.

Virginia Man-Yee Lee, the John H. Ware 3rd Endowed Professor in Alzheimer's Research in the department of pathology and laboratory medicine, will research how the misfolding and clumping of  $\alpha$ Syn affects how it spreads throughout the brain. She hypothesizes that how the  $\alpha$ Syn folds and clumps impacts the rate at which it spreads in an individual's brain.

Dr. Lee first discovered the role of  $\alpha$ Syn, as well as amyloid and tau in neurodegenerative diseases, alongside her late partner, John Q. Trojanowski, a professor of geriatric medicine and gerontology in the department of pathology and laboratory medicine.

Dr. Chen-Plotkin will oversee one of two projects examining how different genetic factors in individuals impact the spread of  $\alpha$ Syn. Dr. Chen-Plotkin's project draws upon previous research that identified a genetic marker for PD. She will use tissue from the Brain Bank, which was collected from thousands of individuals with neurodegenerative diseases to search for additional genetic markers that correlate with the development of different Lewy body diseases and then model these genetic changes in neurons.

For the second project, Kelvin C. Luk, an associate professor of pathology and laboratory medicine, will model these genetic variations in mice, and determine if gene-editing techniques can regulate the spread of  $\alpha$ Syn, and potentially slow the progression of these neurodegenerative diseases.

The team will validate their findings by identifying patients within the clinic who have a specific biomarker and tracking their progress over time in a clinical cohort led by Daniel Weintraub, a professor of psychiatry. That is, if the researchers believe a genetic marker is tied to early loss of motor function, but late onset cognitive decline, they would identify patients with that marker through genetic testing, and follow their disease over time to see if it they do in fact experience the symptoms they hypothesized.

"While these projects have specific focuses, the multi-project nature of the program allows us to collaborate to learn how these different systems work together to cause individual expressions of disease," said Dr. Chen-Plotkin. "We hope that the constant feedback from the collaborators will accelerate our research and help us translate our findings into real therapies that improve the lives of individuals and their families."



## Lisa Welke Leads AGE SMART Project Research with Support From a \$5 Million GWEP Grant

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older adults. By 2030, 20 percent of the United States population will be age 65 or older. The state of Pennsylvania is already pacing ahead of the national average, with over 19 percent of the population over 65 as of 2020. Nationwide, there are currently 52.4 million older adults, but only about 7,100 geriatricians who focus on older adult care.

“We’re planning for a massive population shift and proactively training primary care providers to incorporate geriatric medicine into their practice organically, to make sure the needs of that population are met,” said Dr. Walke. “We also hope that by directly educating individuals and their caregivers, we can arm them with the information they need to prepare for how normal aging might impact their health, as well as warning signs for disease to discuss with their providers.”

Many older adults have a primary care physician they know and trust, but as they age, a provider trained in geriatric medicine may be a better fit to coordinate care for complicated conditions, like cognitive decline or osteoporosis.

“Geriatricians take a ‘whole body’ approach. A geriatrician will discuss what is important to individuals and their lifestyle,” said Dr. Walke. “We can have a diagnosis and a plan, but if it doesn’t fit with how a patient wants to live, it’s not going to be successful.”

The AGE SMART program has three arms: provider training, trainee education, and community education. The training arm will educate existing providers across healthcare specialties, from primary care providers to pharmacists to social workers on common conditions and complications that arise as individuals age, as well as provide guidance on appropriate care.

The training will also incorporate more geriatric medicine into medical education at all levels for students, residents, and fellows, so that they can better care for older adults as they enter the workforce.

The community education arm of the program will capitalize on Penn Medicine’s existing relationships with organizations across eastern Pennsylvania, from Lancaster to Scranton to Philadelphia. AGE SMART will feature events partnering with the Philadelphia Free Library and advanced care facilities to deliver programming on topics like cognitive assessments, guardianship, avoiding financial exploitation, and promoting vaccinations for common conditions.

“Penn Medicine has excellent providers and resources for older adults, and by leveraging our strong relationships throughout Pennsylvania, we can share this expertise with more people and build a more knowledgeable population that can age better,” Dr. Walke said.

## Penn Center for the Study of Epigenetics in Reproduction Receives \$5.95 Million NIH Grant Renewal for Research on Animal and Human Reproduction

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program focuses on the cellular, molecular, genetic and epigenetic controls of meiosis, the process of cell division that is unique to germ-line cells and generates genetic diversity. He seeks to identify abnormal meiosis that are responsible for spontaneous pregnancy loss or human congenital conditions.

## Penn Institute for RNA Innovation: Call for Applications for Pilot Grant Program for Fall 2024

The Penn Institute for RNA Innovation at the University of Pennsylvania, CHOP, and Wistar seeks to support RNA-related basic, translational and clinical research. Towards that goal, the Institute is requesting applications for its Pilot Grants Program for fall 2024. Pilot funding will provide initial support to establish proof of concept or extend findings to enable extramural funding and publications in the future. Priority areas, deadlines, and application guidelines are provided below.

The fall 2024 Pilot Grant Program research priority area will be to support cross-disciplinary research that will lead to extramurally funded research in either basic or translational science in the arena of RNA biology. Use of the institute’s shared resource cores is encouraged and includes the [mRNA Core](#), [LNP Core](#), [Targeting Core](#), [High-throughput Screening Core](#), and [Structural Biology Core](#).

We encourage applicants to consult with our core directors or any members of the institute’s [Leadership Group](#) early in the preparation of their application. Allocation of core effort to assist in grant preparation will be available on a first-come first-served basis. Brief descriptions of the cores and additional resources being offered through select leadership labs can be found below.

### Scientific areas for applications to address:

**RNA Basic Science:** RNA processing, RNA binding proteins, noncoding RNAs, and nucleoside-modifications are encouraged along with the development of tools to further the use of RNA technology in the treatment of disease.

**Translational Science:** RNA-based science relevant to prevention, diagnostics, and therapeutics for human diseases. Projects and teams that bridge laboratory-based research to pre-clinical studies or models and/or that extend clinical observations to the laboratory (addressing mechanisms, identifying therapeutic targets, and developing novel interventions) are strongly encouraged to apply.

We hope you will consider this opportunity to creatively apply RNA-based approaches to new and exciting questions in your research.

### Program Timeline

Application Due: October 25, 2024

Decisions/Results Communicated to Applicant: December 2024

Funding of successful applicants begins no later than: January 1, 2025

### Eligibility

Principal investigators (PIs) for awards must have a faculty appointment at the University of Pennsylvania, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, or the Wistar Institute and hold the rank of assistant, associate or full professor, research professor, or instructor. Postdoctoral trainees are also encouraged to apply, provided that a faculty sponsor includes a letter of support for the trainee in the application.

Proposals may not describe the same specific research that is funded by other sources during the grant period.

### Budget and Duration

Individual applicants may request budgets up to \$50,000 in direct costs and may propose projects lasting up to 12 months. Opportunities for renewing applications for a second year of

funding will be considered based on productivity during the first year. Applicants are encouraged to budget at least \$10,000 of funds for institute core and/or institute collaboration expenses. An additional \$5,000 can be requested for core expenses with proper justification. The total equipment budget must not exceed \$10,000.

For additional submission details please click [here](#).

## One Step Ahead

### Security & Privacy Made Simple

Another tip in a series provided by the  
Offices of Information Security, Information  
Systems & Computing and Audit,  
Compliance & Privacy

### Responding to a Suspected Computer Compromise

In recent One Step Ahead tips, we reminded you of steps to prevent incidents like phishing. But what if you suspect you fell for a phishing email, an unauthorized individual accessed your sensitive data, or your computer froze, slowed down, or could not access files and systems? To respond to a suspected computer and data compromise:

1. Disconnect your computer from the network by unplugging the ethernet cable or turning off Wi-Fi to forestall an attack and to prevent unauthorized access to your computing device.
2. Do not log off your computing device to avoid losing information and identifying whether malicious activities have occurred.
3. Do not run anti-virus and anti-malware software until your device has been examined by your computing support staff; maintain information on possible malicious activities.
4. Contact your computing support staff to run diagnostics to determine the source of the attack. Contact your ISP to report a possible attack on their network.
5. Make a list of sensitive data stored or handled by your computing devices to ensure you did not lose information or unauthorized access occurred.
6. Preserve backups stored externally and prevent overwriting or “rolling off.”
7. Contact the Penn Office of Information Security (OIS) at (215) 898-2172 or [security@isc.upenn.edu](mailto:security@isc.upenn.edu).

For additional information, please visit: <https://www.isc.upenn.edu/security/procedure/compromise#Steps-to-Take>.

For additional tips, see the One Step Ahead link on the Information Security website: <https://www.isc.upenn.edu/security/news-alerts#One-Step-Ahead>.

## Division of Public Safety University of Pennsylvania Police Department Crime Report

About the Crime Report: Below are the crimes against persons and/or crimes against property from the campus report for **September 30-October 6, 2024**. The crime reports are available at: <https://almanac.upenn.edu/sections/crimes>. Prior weeks' reports are also online. —Eds.

This summary is prepared by the Division of Public Safety (DPS) and contains all criminal incidents reported and made known to the Penn Police, including those reported to the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) that occurred within our patrol zone, for the dates of **September**

**30-October 6, 2024**. The Penn Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30<sup>th</sup> Street to 43<sup>rd</sup> Street in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police.

In this effort to provide you with a thorough and accurate report on public safety concerns, we hope that your increased awareness will lessen the opportunity for crime. For any concerns or suggestions regarding this report, please call DPS at (215) 898-7297. You can view the daily crime log on the [DPS website](#).

### Penn Police Patrol Zone

*Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30<sup>th</sup> Street to 43<sup>rd</sup> Street*

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location	Description
<i>Aggravated Assault</i>	10/04/24	11:04 PM	3702 Spruce St	Verbal dispute occurred on the sidewalk between known parties, which escalated into an assault
	10/06/24	2:28 PM	3400 Spruce St	Domestic assault
	10/06/24	4:39 PM	4000 Pine St	Multiple Penn Police officers assaulted during a disturbance/Arrest
<i>Assault</i>	09/30/24	8:14 PM	3400 Spruce St	Domestic incident
	10/01/24	11:49 AM	3400 Civic Center Blvd	Domestic incident
<i>Auto Theft</i>	09/30/24	1:38 PM	3900 Walnut St	Two juvenile offenders took a scooter from a bike rack/Arrest
	10/02/24	2:28 PM	100 S 43rd St	Parked vehicle taken from highway
<i>Bike Theft</i>	10/01/24	2:35 PM	3601 Locust Walk	Secured bike taken from bike rack
	10/02/24	4:31 PM	3100 Ludlow St	Theft of secured bike from rack
<i>Burglary</i>	10/05/24	7:00 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Burglary of company-owned items from office and garage area
<i>Retail Theft</i>	09/30/24	7:24 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Retail theft of alcohol
	10/03/24	7:34 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Retail theft of alcohol
	10/04/24	6:07 PM	3601 Walnut St	Retail theft of a blanket and hoodie
<i>Robbery</i>	10/02/24	1:30 AM	3675 Market St	Robbery of cell phone by known offenders/Arrests
	10/06/24	10:16 PM	200 S 36th St	Offender snatched complainant's headphones from her head and fled the area
<i>Robbery Retail</i>	10/05/24	6:06 PM	129 S 30th St	Retail robbery of consumable goods
<i>Theft from Building</i>	09/30/24	10:26 AM	305 S 41st St	Package taken/Arrest
	09/30/24	12:48 PM	3609 Chestnut St	Theft of a purse from a common area
	09/30/24	2:02 PM	51 N 39th St	Currency taken from wallet left inside patient's room
	10/03/24	12:34 PM	3400 Civic Center Blvd	Currency taken from secured locker
<i>Theft Other</i>	09/30/24	12:29 PM	4200 Sansom St	Offender took a cart and used it to steal packages/Arrest
	10/03/24	3:07 PM	4028 Market St	Package taken

### Philadelphia Police 18th District

*Schuylkill River to 49<sup>th</sup> Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue*

Below are the crimes against persons from the 18th District: 8 incidents were reported for **September 30-October 6, 2024** by the 18th District, covering the Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location
<i>Aggravated Assault</i>	10/06/24	3:11 PM	S. 34th and Spruce St
<i>Assault</i>	09/30/24	8:18 PM	3400 blk Spruce St
	10/01/24	12:40 PM	3400 blk Civic Center Blvd
	10/04/24	11:04 PM	3702 Spruce St
	10/06/24	2:13 PM	4800 blk Spruce St
	10/06/24	4:47 PM	4000 blk Pine St
	10/06/24	4:51 PM	4000 blk Pine St
<i>Robbery</i>	10/04/24	8:25 PM	24 S 45th St

The Division of Public Safety offers resources and support to the Penn community. DPS has developed a few helpful risk reduction strategies outlined below. Know that it is *never* the fault of the person impacted (victim/survivor) by crime.

- See something concerning? Connect with Penn Public Safety 24/7 at (215) 573-3333.
- Worried about a friend's or colleague's mental or physical health? Get 24/7 connection to appropriate resources at (215) 898-HELP (4357).
- Seeking support after experiencing a crime? Call Special Services (support and advocacy resources) at (215) 898-4481 or email an advocate at [specialservices@publicsafety.upenn.edu](mailto:specialservices@publicsafety.upenn.edu).
- Use the [Walking Escort](#) and [Riding](#) services available to you free of charge.

- Take a moment to update your cell phone information for the [UPennAlert Emergency Notification System](#).
- Download the [Penn Guardian App](#), which can help police better find your location when you call in an emergency.
- Access free [self-empowerment and defense courses](#) through Penn DPS.
- Stay alert and reduce distractions. (Using cell phones, ear buds, etc. may limit your awareness.)
- Orient yourself to your surroundings. (Identify your location, nearby exits, etc.)
- Keep your valuables out of sight and only carry necessary documents.



# Update

October AT PENN

## CONFERENCES

**16** *Transforming Your Research Agenda with Implementation Science*; a symposium for established researchers, as well as early- and mid-career researchers, who are interested in adding an implementation science lens to their research; 8 a.m.-3 p.m.; BRB; tickets: \$65-\$100; register: <https://https://upenn.irisregistration.com/Form/PISCE> (Penn Implementation Science Center).

## EXHIBITS

**19** *2024 Master of Fine Arts Open Studios*; open studios with the interdisciplinary graduate fine arts department in partnership; mingle with current students and see their work; noon-6 p.m.; Franklin Annex, Fisher Fine Arts Library (Fine Arts).

*The Art of Protection: Exploring Beauty and Resilience in Black Design*; a day-long program in celebration of ICA's current installation, *Entryways: Nonstikelelo Mututi*; 2-6 p.m.; Institute of Contemporary Art; register: <https://tinyurl.com/ica-event-oct-19> (ICA).

## FILMS

**15** *Fairytale*; part of Francophone, Italian, and German studies department's monthly movie night; 6 p.m.; room 543, Williams Hall (FIGS, Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies).

**17** *Taking Root*; includes conversation with Emily Tran, VietLEAD; 10:15 a.m.; room 473, McNeil Building (Asian American Studies).

## FITNESS & LEARNING

**15** *You Do-not Have to Be in STEM*; join humanities & social science RPAs to discuss opportunities and enjoy donuts; 5:30 p.m.; room 113, Van Pelt Library (Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships).

**17** *Navigating the Life at Penn as an Asian American Student - A Story From an Alumnus: Belonging, Connecting, Challenges and Fulfillment*; Alaric Qin, Confluent; noon; Class of 1949 Auditorium, Houston Hall; info: [gracewu@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:gracewu@sas.upenn.edu) (Center for East Asian Studies).

## Graduate School of Education

Online webinars. Info: <https://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/events-calendar?date=2024-10>.

**15** *Returning Peace Corps Volunteer*; 6:30 p.m.

**17** *Penn Chief Learning Officer Virtual Information Session*; noon.

*Penn Employee Information Session*; 12:30 p.m.

**18** *Friday Virtual Chat*; noon.

**22** *Global Higher Education Management (Online) Virtual Information Session*; noon.

*Teacher Education & Learning Sciences Doctoral Programs Virtual Information Session*; noon.

*Education, Culture and Society, MSEI Virtual Information Session*; 12:30 p.m.

## Morris Arboretum & Gardens

Unless noted, in-person events at Morris Arboretum & Gardens. Info and to register: <https://experience.morrisarboretum.org/Info.aspx?EventID=35#bts>.

**18** *Gourds in Culture*; 11 a.m.; learn how this plant family supported cultures throughout history, and make your own gourd instrument or drinking cup.

## Penn Libraries

Various locations. Info and to register: <https://www.library.upenn.edu/events>.

**22** *Manage Your Research Identity with ORCID*; 2 p.m.; online webinar and Research Data and Digital Scholarship Exchange, Van Pelt Library.

**23** *FAIR Data in ScholarlyCommons*; 2 p.m.; online webinar and Research Data and Digital Scholarship Exchange, Van Pelt Library.

**24** *Publishing Reimagined*; noon; room 113, Van Pelt Library.

*Preparing for Sharing: The Future of Research Under the Nelson Memo*; 2 p.m.; online webinar and Research Data and Digital Scholarship Exchange, Van Pelt Library.

## MUSIC

**16** *A Musical Journey by Alkyone: Dream Whispers*; in her U.S. debut, Alkyone presents a musical program with her original compositions and innovative arrangements of Greek traditional and popular songs; 7 p.m.; Class of 1978 Orrery Pavilion, Van Pelt Library; RSVP: <https://libcal.library.upenn.edu/event/13183476> (Penn Libraries).

## ON STAGE

**16** *Mask and Wig Presents "Legally Bond"*; a group of students have infiltrated the Penn Museum to steal a top-secret document from the underground safe in the fall show by renowned Penn's historic musical comedy troupe; 7:30 p.m.; Iron Gate Theater; tickets: \$15-30; register: <http://maskandwig.com/tickets> (Student Performing Arts Council). *Also October 17, 6 and 8:30 p.m.; October 18, 6 and 8:30 p.m.; October 19, 6 and 8:30 p.m.*

**17** *Bloomers Comedy: 12 Angry Bloomers*; Penn's premier sketch comedy troupe presents their fall sketch show; 8 p.m.; Harold Prince Theatre, Annenberg Center; 8 p.m.; tickets: \$10-40; register: <https://www.ticketleap.events/events/bloomers> (Student Performing Arts Council). *Also October 18, 6 and 8 p.m.; October 19, 6 and 9 p.m.*

## READINGS & SIGNINGS

**22** *About Face: Stonewall, Revolt, and New Queer Art*; Jonathan Katz, history of art; 5:30 p.m.; 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, Penn Bookstore (Penn Bookstore).

## TALKS

**15** *Learning-NUM: Utility Maximization in Stochastic Queueing Networks*; Eytan Modiano, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; 11 a.m.; room 225, Towne Building (Electrical & Systems Engineering).

*Optimal Oblivious Reconfigurable Networks*; Hakim Weatherspoon, Cornell Institute for Digital Agriculture; 3:30 p.m.; Wu & Chen Auditorium, Levine Hall (Computer & Information Science).

**16** *Safe Offline RL for Constrained Markov Decision Process: Theory and Practice*; Arnob Ghosh, New Jersey Institute of Technology; 11 a.m.; room 114, Skirkanich Hall (Electrical & Systems Engineering).

*Approaches to Investigating Environmental Health Disparities and Multimorbidity in COPD*; Sarath Raju, Johns Hopkins University; noon; room 213, Stemmler Hall (Penn-CHOP Lung Biology Institute).

*Leveraging the Unique (Photo)Reactivity of Aromatic Cations for Chemical Biology*; Michael Taylor, University of Arizona; noon; Carolyn Hoff Lynch Lecture Hall, 1973 Chemistry Building (Chemistry).

*Not-So-Famous Plants: Garden Culture, Botanical Knowledge and Regional Painting Traditions in Ming China*; Katie Ryor, Carleton College; noon; room 623, Williams Hall (East Asian Languages & Civilizations).

**17** *Shaping a Soft Future*; Michael D. Dickey, North Carolina State University; 10:30 a.m.; Wu & Chen Auditorium, Levine Hall (Materials Science & Engineering).

*Can the Subaltern Sweat?* Bharat Jayram Venkat, University of California, Los Angeles; noon; room 230, PCPSE (Center for Global Health, Center for the Advanced Study of India).

*Translation as Queer Kinship: H.D.'s Ion*; India Halstead, English; *Feminist Readings in Ancient Greek Esther*; Jeremy Steinberg, religious studies; noon; room 345, Fisher-Bennett Hall (Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies).

*From Vision to Dynamics*; Bob Collins & Yanxi Liu, Penn State University; 2 p.m.; room 307, Levine Hall, and Zoom webinar; join: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/92746167236> (GRASP Lab).

*DNA Microscopy in Two and Three Dimensions*; Joshua Weinstein, University of Chicago; 3:30 p.m.; room 216, Moore Building (Bioengineering).

*Reimagining Vergil's Aeneid*; Maria Dahan Headley, novelist and translator; 4:45 p.m.; room 402, Cohen Hall (Classical Studies).

This is an update to the [October AT PENN calendar](#). To submit events for future AT PENN calendars and weekly updates, email the salient details to [almanac@upenn.edu](mailto:almanac@upenn.edu).

## Almanac

3910 Chestnut Street, 2nd floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111  
Phone: (215) 898-5274 or 5275  
Email: [almanac@upenn.edu](mailto:almanac@upenn.edu)  
URL: [www.upenn.edu/almanac](http://www.upenn.edu/almanac)

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## Political Polarization Between Americans Stays Consistent Before and After Elections

During election season, when campaign ads dominate TV, political billboards dot highways, and canvassers knock on doors, it feels like political tensions are at their highest and will surely drop once elections are over.

A new study from the Annenberg School for Communication researchers Neil Fasching and Yphtach Lelkes found that is not the case anymore. Political polarization remains consistently high before, during, and after elections, even during contentious times.

“Scholars have widely accepted that as elections draw near and campaigning reaches a fever pitch, affective polarization increases, only to recede in the days and weeks following the election,” said Dr. Lelkes, an associate professor of communication. “But in the current moment, even a contentious election season doesn’t ramp political animosity up or down.”

Using a data set of 66,000 interviews with Americans, Dr. Lelkes, Mr. Fasching, and colleagues gauged the level of partisan animosity between Democrats and Republicans in the days before and after the 2022 midterms. They found that support for democratic norm violations, such as reducing the number of polling stations in areas dominated by the other party; support for political violence, like hurting a protester from the other party; and affective polarization, an overall measure of how negatively or positively Democrats and Republicans feel toward the other party, hardly changed from the pre-election period to the post-election period.

The study also found that voters with more exposure to campaigns tend to be more polarized, but the difference in polarization remained constant. The researchers from the Polarization Research Lab, a joint center between Annenberg, Dartmouth College, and Stanford University, added that the difference in polarization was “baked in,” perhaps as a result of exposure to multiple campaigns over decades.

“Despite focusing on a different election and using a smaller scale for affective polarization, there was consistency in the result,” said Dr. Lelkes. “The level of partisan animus remained fairly stable even during contentious times.”

There was no difference in partisan effect when looking at the Senate and gubernatorial races.

“Partisan animosity appears to be deeply embedded in American society, rather than being a short-term response to electoral campaigns,” said Mr. Fasching, a doctoral candidate at the Annenberg School. “However, all hope is not lost. Our results suggest that efforts by future political candidates to stoke hatred and division during campaigns are likely to prove ineffective, particularly when such efforts promote violence or the erosion of democratic norms.”

*Adapted from an Annenberg School for Communication [press release](#), September 25, 2024.*

## Link Between Nurse’s Work Environment Quality and COVID-19 Mortality Disparities

A new Penn Nursing Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research (CHOPR) study—published in *INQUIRY*—has found a strong association between the quality of the nurse work environment and COVID-19 mortality rates among socially vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries. The study examined data from 238 acute care hospitals across New York and Illinois.

The researchers found that patients from socially vulnerable communities, including those facing higher levels of poverty, housing insecurity, and limited transportation, were more likely to die from COVID-19 if they were hospitalized in hospitals with poor nurse work environments. Conversely, patients from these communities were less likely to die from COVID-19 if they were hospitalized in hospitals with high-quality nurse work environments.

“Our findings suggest that the quality of the nurse work environment is a critical factor in determining outcomes for socially vulnerable patients with COVID-19,” said lead author J. Margo Brooks Carthon, the Tyson Family Endowed Term Chair for Gerontological Research, a professor of nursing in the department of family and community health, and the associate director of CHOPR. “By investing in nursing resources and improving the nurse work environment, hospitals can help to reduce health disparities and save lives.”

The study analyzed data from Medicare claims, American Hospital Association Annual Survey data, and the CDC Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). The researchers found that patients in the highest quartile of social vulnerability were more likely to die from COVID-19 than those in the lowest quartile. However, this disparity was narrowed when patients from the most socially vulnerable communities were cared for in hospitals with high-quality nurse work environments.

“Our findings suggest that hundreds of COVID-19-related deaths among the most socially vulnerable patients may have been avoided if all hospitals had a high-quality nurse work environment,” said Dr. Brooks Carthon. “Strengthening the quality of nurse work environments may help to reduce health disparities and should be considered in public health emergency planning, specifically in hospitals serving socially vulnerable communities.”

The study highlights the importance of investing in nursing resources and improving the nurse work environment to ensure equitable access to high-quality care for all patients, especially those from socially vulnerable communities.

*Adapted from a Penn Nursing [news release](#), October 7, 2024.*

## Testing a Novel, Community-Driven Response to Heat Islands in Philadelphia

July marked the 14<sup>th</sup> month in a row of record high global temperatures, and as the month ended, the National Weather Service said Philadelphia was on track for its third warmest summer since 1874. While 94° days are hardly pleasant for suburbanites, heat can be worse for residents in pockets of Center City, South Philadelphia, and North Philadelphia.

“In parts of Philadelphia called heat islands—on a hot day especially during heat waves—temperatures can exceed non-urban areas or Philadelphia suburbs by an average of 8 or 12°,” said associate professor of nursing Sara Jacoby, whose research lies at the intersection of health disparities and the sociostructural conditions of urban environments. She says heat islands can exist because of fewer trees and more concrete, and exposure to hotter temperatures and heat waves can pose health risks for people, especially those living with cardiovascular disease, asthma, and other chronic illnesses.

In Hunting Park, a North Philadelphia neighborhood, temperatures can be as much as 20° hotter than in other parts of the city. Operating out of the Lenfest Center, the nonprofit North10 serves the Hunting Park-East Tioga area by offering youth programs, workforce training, affordable housing, a community market, and more. Nikki Bagby, chief external affairs officer of North10, said people of all ages who come for services wait in the heat to catch a bus, and the bus stop has no overhang.

Researchers from Penn’s Weitzman School of Design, School of Nursing, and School of Engineering and Applied Science developed a novel prototype to address this issue: a solar-powered wooden bus shelter that provides shade and radiant cooling.

This is thanks to a grant from the Penn Community Collaboratory for Co-Creation (Penn4C), a joint initiative from Penn Nursing and Penn Engineering “based on the recognition that technological solutions should be designed with active engagement of marginalized communities.”

Dorit Aviv, an assistant professor of architecture and director of the Thermal Architecture Lab in the Weitzman School, led the research, design, and construction of the prototype with a team of students, while Dr. Jacoby provided messaging on the health impacts of heat and surveyed community members. The prototype is called Tenopy—a canopy created in collaboration with North10—and community members tested it out one day in August.

“We are aiming to provide an experience of being outside in the heat and then walking in here, sitting, and feeling relief while still being in an open-air structure,” Dr. Aviv said. “This can have important implications for how we think about urban cooling shelters for the future, especially given the need for open-air structures in light of what we’ve seen during the COVID pandemic. We also learned a lot from the community collaboration, and we hope that if the pilot is successful, we can work together toward long-lasting solutions.”

The prototype was designed as a temporary shelter, while installing a permanent structure involves material and structural enhancements and getting necessary permits for installation, Dr. Aviv said. She wants to see this experiment turned into a more permanent solution.

The cooling shelter came together this summer at Pennovation Works, Penn’s 23-acre site that contains labs, production spaces, and offices on the Schuylkill River. Beyond the garage doors into Dr. Aviv’s high-ceilinged fabrication workshop, she and students designed and built the 15-by-10-by-7-foot structure using basic two-by-four and two-by-two beams.

In addition to getting some shade, people using the shelter can sit on a bench with a conductive cooling surface or stand next to radiant cooling panels. Similarly to how radiant floors emit heat by circulating hot water through embedded pipes, pipes containing a refrigerant within the wall panels in the shelter provide radiant cooling. This is all powered by six small solar panels atop the structure that are connected to a heat pump and controls in the back, making the structure energy autonomous and renewable.

*Adapted from a [Penn Today article](#) by Erica Moser, September 9, 2024.*