



# CENTER FOR CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

UMASS CCTS NEWSLETTER



## IN THE NEWS

### PROJECTS IN PROCESS (PIPSS) UPDATES

BOTH OF OUR RECENT PROJECTS IN PROCESS SEMINAR SERIES (PIPSS) SPEAKERS AYORKOR GABA AND KATARINA FERRUCCI ARE CONCENTRATING THEIR TIME AND RESOURCES ON MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS. DR. GABA IS A KL2 SCHOLAR FOCUSED ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE AMONG ADULTS IN DRUG TREATMENT COURTS, AND KATARINA FERRUCCI IS A TLI TRAINEE, RESEARCHING TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS, WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM EATING DISORDERS, A TOPIC THAT SHE BECAME INTERESTED IN STUDYING THROUGH HER MASTER'S THESIS. BOTH DR. GABA AND FERRUCCI ARE GATHERING DATA AND IDENTIFYING THEMES THAT WILL IMPROVE COMMUNITY AND POPULATION HEALTH AND MOVE TOWARD EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

DR. GABA IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY.

## WHAT'S NEW?

01

*News*

03

*Events*

06

*Funding*

07

*Education*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to “attain their full health potential” and no one is “disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances.” Dr. Gaba’s primary mentor is Dr. David Smelson, and her recent talk given as part of the PiPSS program was titled “Perceived Facilitators and Barriers to Equitable Implementation of Integrated Dual Diagnoses Treatment in Drug Courts: Preliminary Themes”.

Drug court, an alternative to incarceration, provides evidence-based behavioral health treatment to justice-involved individuals with substance use disorder or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder (COD). So, why are Black and Latinx Drug Court participants receiving an evidence-based COD intervention faring worse than their White counterparts? This is one question Dr. Gaba is examining to help improve upon the current program. In addition, her findings are inadvertently revealing interesting insights into the impacts the pandemic has on treatment intervention embedded within drug court.

Our second presenter, Katarina Ferrucci’s primary mentor is Dr. William Jesdale, and her PiPSS talk was titled “Eating Disorder Prevalence and Provider Perspectives on Barriers to Care for Transgender Individuals Seeking Treatment”. Ferrucci used a claims approach to identify transgender people who have records of both gender affirming medical care and one or more eating disorders to contribute to foundational knowledge of national eating disorder prevalence among those experiencing and receiving care for their gender dysphoria. Ferrucci utilized commercial claims data to identify nearly 10.5 thousand transgender youth and adults. The preliminary data shows that 2.43% of transgender patients with a history of receipt of gender affirming medical care have at least one eating disorder and 63% are younger than 24 years old.

Ferrucci is currently awaiting council review for a R36 dissertation grant from AHRQ and is thankful for her time as a TL1 scholar. “The TL1 has allowed me to access more skills and training that have without a doubt improved the quality and breadth of my dissertation work. In turn, having these skills and knowledge have boosted both my confidence and comfort performing independently and collaboratively as a researcher.”

A round of applause to Dr. Ayorkor Gaba and Katarina Ferrucci for their commitment to investigating research topics that aim to give underrepresented individuals a better quality of life.



“*The TL1 has allowed me to access more skills and training that have without a doubt improved the quality and breadth of my dissertation work. In turn, having these skills and knowledge have boosted both my confidence and comfort performing independently and collaboratively as a researcher.*”

**KATARINA FERRUCCI**  
TL1 SCHOLAR



# CCTS CORE SERVICES

## RESEARCH INFORMATICS CORE

### ABOUT US

We are a team of data engineers and scientists at the UMass Chan Medical School dedicated to leveraging informatics and clinical data to further clinical research. We are dedicated to providing you with the best clinical informatics services to meet your research or clinical trial needs.



### Are you interested in:

- Creating unique clinical datasets for your study?
- Recruiting patients in real-time?
- Developing new digital health technologies?
- Collecting real-world evidence?
- Outsource the management of your informatics needs?

### OUR SERVICES

**Clinical Data Access:** Provide clinical data from UMass Memorial Health's electronic health system (Epic) for feasibility assessments, patient recruitments or retrospective studies.

**Data Engineering, Data Analytics, and Visualization:** Organize and integrate data collected from various sources. Provide statistical, experimental design, analytics, and project management support.

**Data Science:** Create solutions to complex clinical data-related problems using artificial intelligence methodologies such as natural language processing or machine learning.

**Preparation for Grant Proposal:** Develop data plan design, access to aggregate-limited data. Assist with budgeting, letters of support, security, and grant writing relating to informatics.

### CONTACT US

Regardless of your unique requirements, we are confident we can help you. So, please reach out to us now. We look forward to starting a conversation. We recommend you schedule an initial free consultation appointment with us to discuss your needs.

Email: [ResearchInformaticsCore@Umassmed.edu](mailto:ResearchInformaticsCore@Umassmed.edu)



# EVENTS



## **NURSES SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP: MIND-BODY CONNECTION: OPTIMISM & STROKE RECOVERY**

MARCH 4TH, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM | VIRTUAL

The Nurses Special Interest Group, part of the UMCCTS, is hosting this webinar series and encourages nurse scientists, clinicians and individuals from all UMCCTS campuses and disciplines to attend. This March 4th webinar, "Mind-Body Connection: Optimism & Stroke Recovery" will be presented by Dr. Yun-Ju Lai of UMass Lowell Solomont School of Nursing.



Zoom Link:

[https://umassmed.zoom.us/j/96410436229?](https://umassmed.zoom.us/j/96410436229?pwd=aWUvdXJKNWhNcDNzR0w2eEdsY2d4QT09)  
[pwd=aWUvdXJKNWhNcDNzR0w2eEdsY2d4QT09](https://umassmed.zoom.us/j/96410436229?pwd=aWUvdXJKNWhNcDNzR0w2eEdsY2d4QT09)

Password: 663776

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION CORE VIRTUAL WORKSHOP: WORKING WITH POLICYMAKERS**

MARCH 24TH, 11:00 AM- 1:00 PM | VIRTUAL

Presenters:

**Lisa M. Troy, PhD**

**Laurel Smith-Doerr, PhD**

from the

UMass Amherst Public Engagement Project

What do policymakers most want to know, and what are the best ways to approach and communicate with them? Policymakers include both elected officials who make laws and employees in public sector organizations who implement them. This workshop will explain all the reasons why policymakers want input from academic researchers and help you envision the roles you wish to play in relation to policy and advocacy. The workshop will also highlight differences in the culture and goals of policymakers and academics, so that you can learn the best ways to get your points across in the policy world.

**[Click here to register](#)**

*Please add the meeting to your calendar after registering.*

# EVENTS



## K CLUB

### Next Meeting

March 9th & 23rd ~ 4:00-5:00 PM ~ Virtual, Zoom

K Club supports junior faculty in the development of K-level “Mentored Research Scientist Career Development Award” applications. According to NIH, the award is intended to provide either progressive training or further experience in research related to biomedical, behavioral, or clinical sciences. The mentored approach provides the knowledge required for the K-Awardee to progress into an independent researcher over the award period.

K Club meets bi-weekly on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month from 4-5 pm via Zoom. Attendance at K Club meetings can be for information purposes and/or for review of your application. The group meets to outline the K-Award writing process and to review material being submitted by/to the group for input. To register to attend K Club, please email [Robyn.Leonard@umassmed.ed](mailto:Robyn.Leonard@umassmed.ed)



# EVENTS



## UMCCTS PROJECTS IN PROCESS SEMINAR SERIES (PIPSS)

FRIDAYS, JANUARY 7TH- MAY 6TH, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM



As part of the T, K, MSCI, and Millennium programs, the annual Projects in Process Seminar Series (PiPSS) will take place January through May 2022 on Friday mornings via Zoom. We look forward to hearing about our scholars/trainees progress on their research projects.

We encourage scholars, mentors and faculty to join us at as many PiPSS presentations as possible. This is a great opportunity for scholars to get to know others interested in or who hold research positions. In addition, presentations on CCTS core resources will also be included.

**Zoom Link:** <https://umassmed.zoom.us/j/99081667635?pwd=RE9MUGIOTG9uNzloRWxJYTJOazdwUT09>

**Password:** 396027

Presenters	Title	Presentation Date
Jacqueline Furbacher	Unraveling Social Determinants of Health in the ER: A Focus on Food Insecurity	March 4th
Eileen McNicholas	Towards a better understanding of the perinatal depression care gap: exploring care access and barriers in women with and without prior psychiatric history	March 4th
Adam Cellurale	TBA	March 11th
Dawn Truong	Trends in Mortality of Adults with Melanoma in the United States SEER Population	March 18th
Jamie Faro	<u>ActivityLink:</u> Clinic-to-Community Physical Activity Referrals for Cardiovascular Disease Risk Reduction in Cancer Survivors	March 18th
Kara Smith	Speech Markers of Cognitive Impairment in Parkinson's Disease	March 25th
Sohye Kim	TBA	March 25th
Maira Castaneda Avila	The bi-directional association of multiple chronic conditions and colorectal cancer on the treatment and adverse outcomes among older Hispanic adults.	March 25th



## FUNDING

### M2D2: CAPCAT- \$100,000 GRANT AWARD FOR POINT-OF-CARE TECH

APPLY BY MARCH 14TH

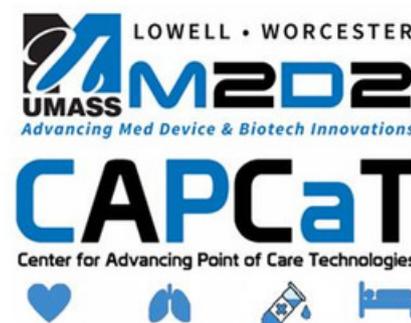
The Center for Advancing Point of Care Technologies (CAPCaT), based at UMass Lowell, is offering up to four grant awards of up to \$100,000 each over 12 months.

This \$100,000 grant program is focused on developing, adapting, or validating point of care technologies that can be rapidly applied to heart, lung, blood, or sleep disorders, with additional interest in projects that incorporate complementary and integrative health approaches.

Your expression of interest is due to CAPCaT no later than 4:59pm EST on Monday, March 14.

SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY for up to \$100,000 to help advance your innovation!

[MORE INFORMATION](#)



### PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (PPP RFA)

LOI DUE MARCH 25TH

A major goal of the UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science (UMCCTS) is to accelerate the translation of basic discoveries into practical, cost effective solutions that improve human health. Building upon our strong reputation as a world-class research institution, producing noteworthy advances in clinical and basic research, the UMCCTS provides the infrastructure necessary to support outstanding clinical and translational investigators and their work.

Individual project awards (up to \$50,000 for 1 year) will be made on a competitive basis to enable investigators to accelerate the translation of innovative discoveries into:

- New understanding and/or diagnosis of a disease process
- New devices, therapeutics, and vaccines for the treatment and/or prevention of disease
- New standards of care in the practice of community medicine
- New approaches to community-based research demonstrating true bi-directionality between community and academia
- New methodologies to leverage institutional strengths and new initiatives
- The pursuit of high-risk, high reward studies

[More Information](#)



# FUNDING

## **RFA-OD-22-005: RADX-UP - SOCIAL, ETHICAL, AND BEHAVIORAL IMPLICATIONS (SEBI) RESEARCH ON DISPARITIES IN COVID-19 TESTING AMONG UNDERSERVED AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

CLOSING DATES FOR APPLICATIONS: MAY 2, 2022

The goals of this RADx-UP FOA are to conduct social, ethical, and behavioral implications (SEBI) research to understand and reduce barriers to COVID-19 testing, as well as COVID-19 disparities that arise from barriers to testing among underserved and vulnerable populations. (U01 Clinical Trial Optional) [MORE INFORMATION](#)

## **RFA-OD-22-006: RADX-UP COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH ON RAPID SARS-COV-2 TESTING AMONG UNDERSERVED AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

CLOSING DATES FOR APPLICATIONS: MAY 2, 2022

This FOA aims to implement and rigorously evaluate SARS-CoV-2 rapid testing strategies in communities experiencing COVID-19 health disparities. Two-year Rapid Testing Research Projects will evaluate (1) rapid testing interventions to prevent and control COVID-19 transmission among underserved and vulnerable populations and (2) partnership-driven research to implement and evaluate rapid testing and reduce COVID-19 disparities. (U01 Clinical Trial Optional) [MORE INFORMATION](#)

## **PAR-22-089: DEVELOPMENT OF BIOMARKERS OR BIOMARKER SIGNATURES FOR NEUROLOGICAL AND NEUROMUSCULAR DISORDERS** | CLOSING DATES FOR APPLICATIONS: MAY 7, 2025

This FOA promotes the discovery and/or early evaluation of strong candidate biomarkers and biomarker signatures that can be used as tools to facilitate the clinical development of neurotherapeutics and their use in clinical practice. The goal of this initiative is to deliver candidate biomarkers or biomarker signatures that are ready for definitive analytical and clinical validation studies. (R61/R33 Clinical Trial Optional)

[MORE INFORMATION](#)





# FUNDING

## PAR-22-101: CLINICAL TRIAL READINESS FOR RARE DISEASES, DISORDERS, AND SYNDROMES

CLOSING DATES FOR APPLICATIONS:

MAY 17, 2022 WITH ONGOING CYCLES THROUGH OCTOBER 17, 2024

These FOAs support clinical projects addressing critical needs for clinical trial readiness in rare diseases. The initiative seeks applications that enable efficient and effective movement of candidate therapeutics or diagnostics towards clinical trials, develop and test rigorous biomarkers and clinical outcome assessment measures, and/or define the presentation and course of a rare disease. (R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed) [MORE INFO](#)

## PAR-22-100: CLINICAL TRIAL READINESS FOR RARE DISEASES, DISORDERS, AND SYNDROMES

CLOSING DATES FOR APPLICATIONS:

MAY 17, 2022 WITH ONGOING CYCLES THROUGH OCTOBER 17, 2024

These FOAs support clinical projects addressing critical needs for clinical trial readiness in rare diseases. The initiative seeks applications that enable efficient and effective movement of candidate therapeutics or diagnostics towards clinical trials, develop and test rigorous biomarkers and clinical outcome assessment measures, and/or define the presentation and course of a rare disease. (R03 Clinical Trial Not Allowed) [MORE INFO](#)

### CITE & SUBMIT



*Please cite the NIH CTSA award any time you use The UMMS Center for Clinical and Translational Science resources, services and facilities or received funding through the Center. "The project described is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, National Institutes of Health, through Grant UL1 TR001453, (or TL1 TR001454, or KL2 TR001455, as appropriate). The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH."*

# EDUCATION



## TRANSDISCIPLINARY TRAINING IN CARDIOVASCULAR RESEARCH T32 TRAINING PROGRAM

In collaboration with the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, the Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences (PQHS) has established a NHLBI-funded T32 program with the aim of producing a new generation of investigators who have the enthusiasm, knowledge, and skills to make meaningful contributions to cardiovascular research across the translational spectrum. Directed by Catarina Kiefe, MD, PhD (PQHS) and Kevin Donahue, MD (Cardiovascular Medicine), the program is truly transdisciplinary, with investigators working together to expand knowledge beyond discipline-based concepts, theories, and methods.

UMass Chan Medical School offers an outstanding environment for this training, with exceptional depth and breadth of well-funded cardiovascular research, experienced and involved mentors, and extensive resources for training in the full spectrum of cardiovascular research from laboratory- to population-based.

### Program Activities

The program offers 4 pre-doctoral fellowship slots, 4 post-doctoral fellowship slots, and 8 short-term summer training slots for medical students per grant year.

In addition to an intensive mentored research experience, trainees will participate in didactics, seminars, journal clubs, and scientific and grant writing workshops to develop the essential skills needed to be successful investigators. Post-doctoral T32 trainees may have a maximum of 20% effort dedicated to clinical responsibilities while funded through the T32.

### For Eligibility Information and to Apply

Contact the Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences at 508-856-8999 or email to [rebecca.gigliello@umassmed.edu](mailto:rebecca.gigliello@umassmed.edu).

Applications will be reviewed and appointments will be made on a rolling basis. Send completed applications on or before June 1, 2022 by 5:00 pm EST to:  
[Rebecca.Gigliello@umassmed.edu](mailto:Rebecca.Gigliello@umassmed.edu)



**UMass Chan**  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

# EDUCATION



## TL1 & KL2 REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

### MENTORED CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The University of Massachusetts Center for Clinical and Translational Science (UMCCTS) aims to develop and support the next generation of leaders in clinical and translational research. The TL1 program provides pre- and post- doctoral trainees with an overview of clinical and translational research, and the K program offers scholars who have already completed an MD or PhD program with training, mentorship and research opportunities needed to launch a career as an independent investigator. The scholars and trainees also benefit from the training programs, equipment, databases, mentors, administrative support, and pilot funding opportunities available here at UMass.

For More Information [click here](#).

## POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

### FOCUSING ON HEALTH EQUITY IN CANCER PREVENTION AND CONTROL

PRACCTIS, an NCI-funded T32 program at UMMS is now accepting applications for postdoctoral scholars to start in August 2022. We train independent researchers to address critical prevention and control care delivery issues across the cancer continuum, including primary prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment and survivorship, with emphasis on promoting change in individuals, providers and systems. We are seeking a postdoctoral trainee to further our emphasis on addressing health equity in cancer prevention and control. Our faculty mentors are leaders in health equity and low resource settings, health behavior change, implementation science, health informatics, systems change and health policy, health communications, population health sciences, and prevention and intervention research. Applicants must plan to pursue an independent research career focused on cancer prevention and control, have earned a doctoral degree (PhD, ScD, MD, DO, etc.), and be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

[For more information](#) and [Website](#) or contact Barbara Estabrook, [Barbara.estabrook@umassmed.edu](mailto:Barbara.estabrook@umassmed.edu)

# EDUCATION



## **ECIRTIFICATION HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTIONS TRAINING PROGRAM: NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH UMCCTS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION CORE**

The UMMS IRB will now accept completion of the CIRTification program as an alternative to the CITI Program for community members who collaborate on UMMS research projects. CIRTification is a web-based human research protections training program tailored for community research partners. CIRTification Online was designed as an alternative to the CITI training program with community research partners in mind and focuses on the unique roles and responsibilities that community partners hold in health research projects. This program is specifically and only for community members that do not have an eIRB account who will work on UMMS studies. This training program takes about three hours to complete and includes audio, text and interactive activities around research involvement. Community partners will receive a certificate of completion for this training. This program has received positive feedback from local users. CIRTification was developed and is administered by the University of Illinois Chicago Center for Clinical and Translational Science. The program is available to UMMS through the UMCCTS Community Engagement and Collaboration Core (CECC) in collaboration with the IRB. Details for researchers and learners are [available here](#).





# CENTER FOR CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

UMASS CCTS NEWSLETTER



## **SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORY!**

*Have you had your research published that cites the UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science? Has your patent been filed on technology developed using Center funding or resources? Did your pilot project receive external grant funding? Share it with us at [ccts@umassmed.edu](mailto:ccts@umassmed.edu). Sharing your success demonstrates the importance and effect of the Center for Clinical and Translational Science at UMass.*

## **NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS**

To be included in the CCTS Monthly Newsletter, please send announcements, including a link, to [ccts@umassmed.edu](mailto:ccts@umassmed.edu). The newsletter is published the first week of each month.



**KATHERINE LUZURIAGA, MD**  
PI AND DIRECTOR, UMCCTS



**TERENCE R. FLOTTE, MD**  
CO-DIRECTOR, UMCCTS