



Summer 2021

A Message from the Interim Director



The traditional academic year of 2020 -2021 is complete as I write this newsletter. I have been privileged to be the interim director of this prestigious center and have the opportunity to promote global public health both inside and outside the Villanova community. As we all know, it has been a year of personal and professional challenges. Our public health and health care infrastructure has been tested beyond its breaking points, at times, and yet we have survived. Science has come to the forefront of thinking of the global citizen and has rescued us with multiple vaccines to decrease the impact of this pandemic. Prior to 2020 very few communities ranked public health as a top priority in comparison to housing, economic growth, and family life. A newfound respect has been garnered in the public eye for public health professionals, front line essential worker and research scientists.

As a center, we have continued our work of offering and promoting the global health minor with increasing success in enrollment. Thirty-four students have recently graduated with a global health minor in addition to their majors which include biochemistry, biology, communication, neuroscience, nursing, political science, psychology and sociology.

We have continued our commitment to improving knowledge and recognition of the many facets of global and public health through several webinars. Under the guidance of the Center's loyal Advisory Committee, we have outlined opportunities for streamlining our future endeavors and honoring our mission and vision. I am grateful to the members of our committee for their work and support of the Center in the last year. We will meet again in the Fall to address goals, direction and projects.

And finally, many thanks to Dr. Nancy Sharts-Hopko for serving as a formidable interim director for the Center. Under her leadership, several webinars were presented and well attended, grants were awarded with a goal of COVID-19 education and public health promotion, and we enjoyed further organization and growth of the minor. Best wishes to Nancy in her retirement.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer,

Catherine Curley, PhD, RN
Interim Director

Our Newest Coverdell Fellow



We welcomed a new class to the BSNExpress program in May and with that, a new fellow Christine Sithivong. We are already planning with Christine a meaningful project for her fellowship. Christine hails from Southern Utah University. She was accepted into the Peace Corps and was assigned to work and live for two years in a community in Malawi, in southeastern Africa, where she worked with the local people, providing education about HIV/AIDS, malaria and women's health.

Villanova was selected as a school offering Coverdell Fellowships through a highly selective process. Further information about the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program can be found through the Center [website](#).

Highlighting a Member of our Advisory Council



Mwayabo Jean Claude Kazadi, MD, MPH has been a member of the advisory board for the Center for Global and Public Health for the past five years, sharing his international public health experience. Dr. Catherine Curley had a fascinating conversation with Dr. Kazadi about his education, international roots and personal commitment to the epidemic of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Dr. Kazadi is a physician in public health and practices internationally. His area of focus has been the HIV/AIDS epidemic for many years. He is employed by the Catholic Relief Services and travels several times a year to primarily Zambia to assist its Ministry of Health in achieving HIV/AIDS epidemic control through health system support by improving treatment and prevention of the disease.

His work as a physician at Mission Hospitals began in 1998 and surrounded the rising incidence and death rates from HIV/AIDS. He opines that the health system was powerless in controlling the HIV pandemic, which at that time, was characterized with a high death rate in the country.

He notes that much has been done in the area of HIV/AIDS, but the work continues as we aim to end the HIV epidemic. To do this, he and his colleagues set out to meet the UNAIDS goals for 2030, which consist of ensuring that 95% of people living with HIV know their HIV status, 95% of people living with HIV are enrolled in treatment and 95% of HIV patients on treatment are virally suppressed.

Dr. Kazadi's work with Catholic Relief Services has recently focused on male access to HIV services. This innovative strategy called Community Health Posts (CHPs) was initiated as a way to improve male access to HIV services by setting up health community posts closer to where males in the communities tend to congregate such as places of work, markets and bus stations. Dr. Kazadi addressed the cultural stigma in Africa that men are perceived as powerless in the community when

sick. This is one of the reasons why men do not also seek medical help and only go to the hospital/clinic when it is too late. CHPs have offered confidential spaces for men, as they appear to be ordinary buildings from the outside and it is only when you enter that you notice it is a medical office. Men do not want to spend excess time at CHPs and want to be seen as quickly as possible.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Kazadi has continued to travel to Africa to continue this work. However, he has found that social media in Zambia regarding the pandemic has led to misinformation about the virus and vaccines and a halt to other public health promotion programs. This has created a new set of challenges for the at-risk populations he serves.

Dr. Kazadi describes his work at Catholic Relief Services as a venue to maintain human dignity by providing support to communities in need. He relates that it is painful to see communities suffer because of inadequate access to health care services. This has motivated him to further his efforts in Zambia to improve access and services not only for HIV but also for other health related conditions. He shares his enthusiasm of being a member of the advisory council as it has provided him with a voice at the table for discussing global and public health concerns with other academic and practice-based practitioners which leads to the opportunity for policy development and furthering the idea of health inclusiveness and equity.

Dr. Kazadi is currently preparing for his final defense for his PhD in Clinical Research from the National University of Nicaragua (Texila American University). The title of his dissertation is "The Impact of Community Health Posts on Men's Access to HIV Services in Lusaka, Zambia" and his chair is our very own Dr. Ruth McDermott-Levy.

Global Health Minor

Congratulations to the Class of 2021 and the 34 students who graduated with a Global Health Minor (GHM)! Here are a few highlights:

Of the 34 who graduated with the minor, 12 were nursing majors, 11 studied biochemistry and other science majors, 4 were psychology or psychology majors, 2 majored in political science and 3 received degrees in communication. Post-graduation plans of these students include medical school; graduate school for public health and psychology; nursing careers in critical care, pediatrics and general medical areas; and research positions.

Much success to all of our graduates!

Minor students and alumni, we welcome your news! Please send it to Global Health Coordinator [Sandi Schultz](#).



Amenawon Ayemere, who completed her major in Comprehensive Science, will be pursuing her MHS in Biochemistry and Molecular biology at Johns Hopkins University. She says her experience with the minor was extremely insightful and has prepared her for working with a broad array of populations as she plans to attend medical school in the future.



Erin Bogacki majored in Neuroscience and completed minors in biology, psychology and global health. She plans to attend the Royal Veterinary College in London to pursue a master's in research. With her global health minor, she says she now hopes to integrate the connection of global health and the human condition.



Abigail Gehsmann completed the Comprehensive Science program and plans to attend the University of Delaware for a doctorate in physical therapy. She strongly recommends the global health minor as the courses are applicable to a wide variety of disciplines, particularly in health care.



Colleen Miller earned her BSN and plans to move to North Carolina and launch her clinical practice at Duke University as a critical care nurse. Her experience with the minor prompted her to understand the correlation of health to culture, politics and geography. She feels this will enable her to fully address multiple factors influencing her patients' health.



Matthew Planchon completed his degree in biology and will join Massachusetts General Hospital as a clinical research coordinator in the HIV/AIDS clinical trials program. He describes the global health minor as an opportunity to explore multiple issues with an interdisciplinary faculty and students.

Webinars Address Critical Public Health Issues and Innovations

The Center has sponsored multiple webinars with various content experts:

- Patricia K. Bradley, PhD, RN, FAAN, Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Inclusive Excellence at the Fitzpatrick College of Nursing presented "Identifying and Addressing Structural Racism in Healthcare Impacting Population Health." Her webinar addressed how to identify how structural racism creates barriers to health equity and how to discuss the process of dismantling structures of racism.
- Sherry Burrell, PhD, RN, CNE, Assistant Professor and Jennifer Yost, PhD, RN, FAAN, Associate Professor at the Fitzpatrick College of Nursing (FCN) presented their recent work entitled "Innovative Approaches for Virtual Global Health Immersion Experiences When

Travel is Not Possible." The webinar highlighted the continuation of the health promotion work conducted by the FCN in a virtual module.

- Margaret Hattori-Uchima, PhD, RN, FAAN, Villanova Nursing alumna and Dean of the School of Health at the University of Guam discussed her work with students and the homeless population in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her talk featured the current struggles of securing hospital beds and vaccines on the island of Guam.
- Guy M. Weissinger II, MPhil, PhD, RN, Assistant Professor at the Fitzpatrick College of Nursing addressed mental health as a public health issue. His topic spanned mental health resources and public health prevention strategies.

Our webinar series will take a hiatus in June and July. Join us for our upcoming webinar series:

- August 18th – Caitlin Yeager, PhD, RNC-NIC, Ursuline College will discuss the role of nurses in surveillance of new and emerging infectious diseases.
- September 15th – Lindsey Mossor, Anti-Human Trafficking Staff Attorney with Nationalities Service Center will discuss human trafficking.
- October 20th – Mwayabo Jean Claude Kazadi, MD, MPH, Senior Technical Advisor for HIV Care and Treatment, Catholic Relief Services will discuss working in Africa with HIV/AIDS.

To review slides and recording of previous webinars or to register for any upcoming ones, please visit the [Public Health on the Go website](#) or contact [Sandi Schultz](#) – to be added to our contact list.

Selected Center Accomplishments

Publications

McDermott-Levy, R. & Leffers, J. (2021). Environmental health and safety. In Rector, C., Millar, D. & Stanley, M.J. (Eds) Community & Public Health Nursing: Promoting the Public's Health, 10th ed. Philadelphia, PA Wolters Kluwer - Revised chapter from 9th edition.

McDermott-Levy, R. & Moore, C. Discharging planning in the era of climate change. *Journal of Radiology Nursing*. (2021). Invited author.

Pariseault, CA, **Sharts-Hopko, NC**, & Blunt, E. (2020). Nurse practitioners' experiences of polypharmacy in community-dwelling older adults. *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners*. DOI 10.1097/JXX.0000000000000484

Tiitta, I., **McDermott-Levy, R.**, Turunen, H., Jaakkola, J., & Kuosmanen, L. (2020). Finnish nurses' perceptions of the health impacts of climate change and their preparation to address those impacts. *Nursing Forum*. DOI: 10.1111/nuf.12540

Awards

Ruth McDermott-Levy: 2020 Nursing Outlook, Excellence in Nursing Practice Award for article titled, "Ethical Principles and Guidelines of Global Health Nursing Practice."

Ruth McDermott-Levy: 2020 Charlotte Brody Award sponsored by Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and Health Care Without Harm – for the nurse who exemplifies environmental nursing leadership.

Ruth McDermott-Levy: 2020 Sigma Thea Tau International, Alpha Nu Chapter 2020 Excellence in

Nursing Leadership Award

If there is anything you would like to see in an upcoming newsletter, please contact:

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