



VCU

School of Public Health



June, 2025

News & Updates



Sunny Jung Kim, PhD, MS, MA promoted to Associate Professor with tenure

Dr. Kim came to VCU and the Department in 2018, and is also an Associate Member at Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center. She specializes in e-health communication, working to understand health phenomena and disseminate effective interventions and messaging to hard-to-reach, at-risk populations. Join us in celebrating this important milestone in her career!



Joining us this summer: Kristina Tatum, PsyD!

Dr. Kristina Tatum will be joining us as of July 1 as an Instructor. She comes to us having just completed a postdoctoral fellowship in cancer health equity jointly funded by Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center and Children's Hospital of Richmond. She is currently PI on a CRHS Pilot Grant investigating quality of life outcomes in AYA cancer survivors. Welcome, Dr. Tatum!

Awards & Honors



Dra. Dina García receives Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award

Dra. García was recognized for her mentorship of undergraduate students at the VCU State of the Research Address on April 15th.

Dr. Maghboeba Mosavel was promoted to Vice Provost for Community Engagement.

Dr. Maria Thomson received the inaugural Faculty Departmental Service Award for Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Dr. Katherine Tossas was appointed Associate Co-Director of Global Oncology at Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center.

SOPH Commencement

On May 9th we celebrated the School of Public Health annual commencement, welcoming Richmond Mayor Danny Avula, MD as the keynote speaker.

Four SBS graduates walked the stage: Nixon Araúz, PhD, MA, Jackie Knight Wilt, PhD, MPH, Stacie Lefeavers, PhD, MPH, RN, and Julie Russo, PhD, MPH. Several SBS faculty also celebrated graduating MPH advisees.

Some special awards were also given: Sharyn Dougherty, PhD, MPH was awarded the SBS Departmental Teacher of the Year Award, and Vanessa

Sheppard, PhD received a special award in recognition of her service as Interim Founding Dean of the School of Public Health.



Drs. García and Carlyle hood Dr. Nixon Araúz



Drs. Thomson and Carlyle hood Dr. Jackie Knight Wilt



Dr. Carlyle hoods Dr. Stacie Lefeavers



Dr. Carlyle hoods Dr. Julie Russo



Left to right: Drs. Ramezani, Russo, Lefeavers, and Knight Wilt



Drs. Danny Avula and Vanessa Sheppard

Dr. Vanessa Sheppard



Dra. García and Maria Fatima Ali



Dr. Kim and Emily Edwards



Dr. Lucas and Faizan Talib



Dr. Carlyle and Mandy Odom



Dr. Carlyle and Vivian Khuu



Dr. Thomson and Rajah Daughtry

Student Spotlight

Outstanding Student of the
Year



Sadia Shah, MPH, MBBS was selected for this year's Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences Outstanding Student Award! She also successfully passed her oral PhD candidacy examination. Congratulations, Sadia!



Tolulope Kolawole had a first author article published in the South African Journal of Psychiatry:

Kolawole TO, Ogunyemi A.O, Lucas A.R. Prevalence of substance use and knowledge of its effects among secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria. S Afr J Psychiatr. 2025;31:2370.
doi:[10.4102/sajpsychiatry.v31i0.2370](https://doi.org/10.4102/sajpsychiatry.v31i0.2370)



Recent graduate Dr. Julie Russo received the VCU Graduate School Distinguished Dissertation Award. Congratulations, Julie!

Summer Presentations

PhD student Avijit Saha presented a poster entitled "Connecting the dots on Malaria Awareness, Attitudes, and Practices Among Slash & Burn Cultivators in Rangamati, Bangladesh" at VCU's Graduate Research Symposium.

Dra. Dina García traveled to Spain to present "Structural vulnerability and refugee oral health in Central Virginia" at the General Session & Exhibition of the International Association of Dental Research.

Dr. Katherine Tossas presented a Community Health Assessment Overview at the Virginia Public Health Summit on Cancer in Richmond.

Recent Publications

Dr. Richard Brown:

Brown, R.; Wages, N.A.; Liu, L.; Sutton, A.L.; Poklepovic, A.S. Understanding the Role of Patient-Reported Outcomes for Decision-Making in Early-Phase Dose-

Dr. Autumn Lanoye:

Loughan, A.R., Braun, S.E., Lanoye, A., Davies, A., Kleva, C., Fox, A., & Zarrella, G. (2025). FearLess in Neuro-Oncology: Phase I trial targeting fear of cancer recurrence in patients with primary malignant glioma and their caregivers. Neuro-Oncology Practice, epub ahead of print. DOI: [10.1093/nop/npaf038](https://doi.org/10.1093/nop/npaf038).

Dr. Vanessa Sheppard:

Ashing K, Barrett N, Rhoads KF, et al. Remedying Black cancer disparities with clinical research prioritization. Cancer. 2025;e35785. [doi:10.1002/cncr.35785](https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.35785)

Radwan RM, Schuster ALR, Hertz DL, Lustberg MB, Vachhani HR, Hickey Zacholski E, Sheppard VB, Bridges JFP, Salgado TM. Tolerance for chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy among women with metastatic breast cancer: a discrete-choice experiment. Breast Cancer Res Treat. 2025 Jul;212(1):149-159. [doi: 10.1007/s10549-025-07715-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10549-025-07715-5). Epub 2025 May 13. PMID: 40358649; PMCID: PMC12086117.

Radwan, R.M., Bridges, J.F.P., Hertz, D.L. *et al.* Factors influencing the decision to discontinue treatment due to chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy among patients with metastatic breast cancer: a best–worst scaling. *Support Care Cancer* 33, 467 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00520-025-09508-4>

Sutton AL, Zhao J, He J, Tossas KY, Bottinor W, Sheppard VB. Examining factors associated with experiencing cardiac arrhythmias in Black and White breast cancer survivors who received anthracyclines or trastuzumab. Breast Cancer Res Treat. 2025 Jun;211(2):537-544. [doi: 10.1007/s10549-025-07671-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10549-025-07671-0). Epub 2025 Mar 27. PMID: 40146434; PMCID: PMC12006251.

Drs. Katherine Tossas and Maria Thomson:

Owens BD, Boyle J, Adkins D, Adkins S, Boucher H, Burch J, Thomson MD, Tossas KY. Associations Between Landfill Proximity and Water Quality Analytes from Private Domestic Wells in Rural Virginia. *Environments*. 2025; 12(4):103. <https://doi.org/10.3390/environments12040103>

Tossas KY, Owens BD, Hong S, Quillin J, Adkins S, Thomson M, Winn RA. The GINA Gap - Implications for Access to Personalized Medicine among Native Americans. N Engl J Med. 2025 May 29;392(20):1982-1984. [doi: 10.1056/NEJMp2415951](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMp2415951). Epub 2025 May 24. PMID: 40421729.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, July 19th 9:30am-2:00pm

VA-ACCERT Center Closing the Gap Coping with Cancer Summit
EVMS Waitzer Hall, Norfolk, VA
Register [here](#)

Monday, August 11th

SOPH Orientation

Thursday, August 14th

SBS Orientation

Submit your news and updates for the newsletter!

[Click here](#)



Social and Behavioral Sciences

804-628-3443

sophsbs@vcu.edu

sbs.vcu.edu

Connect with us



School of Public Health | 830 E Main St | Richmond, VA 23219 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!