Academic Year 2025-26 Annual Report

University of Pittsburgh

HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH







A Note from the Chair of Health Policy and Management



Julie M. Donohue, PhD
Professor and Chair,
Health Policy and
Management

Greetings from the Department of Health Policy and Management!

We are thrilled to share news and accomplishments from our students, staff, faculty and alumni from 2025-26. In these pages, you will see messages from our graduate program directors, stories about our students' achievements, career updates from our alumni, and insights from our award-winning staff and faculty.

We are exceptionally proud of the impact that our students, staff, faculty and alumni have on health systems and on policymaking through education, scholarship and practice. We are excited to share all of the ways in which we are shaping the future of health policy and management during a time of rapid change.

We hope you enjoy seeing what we've been up to over the last year and hope to connect with you soon.



HPM welcomes fall 2025 cohort with networking events

The department welcomed its newest students in the fall 2025 cohort. Faculty and staff met everyone at the annual department welcome event. The HPM Alumni Association hosted a reception and networking event shortly after Labor Day. This year's cohort brings a wide range of backgrounds, goals and interests to our programs.



Health Policy and Management Annual Report

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Content was reviewed for style and consistency using Claude, an AI assistant, against the University of Pittsburgh Writing Style Manual and Associated Press style. All suggested edits were reviewed by staff before publication.

On the cover: *Top: A view of the University of Pittsburgh's main campus in Pittsburgh's Oakland neighborhood including the 42-story Cathedral of Learning and Downtown Pittsburgh in the distance. (Bottom Left) Samantha Nigida (MPH '26) at graduation. (Bottom Center) HPM sudents prepare for a tour of the UPMC Kamin Tower construction site. (Bottom Right) HPM Research Associate Professor Evan Cole (left) and Senior Data Analyst Jeremy Bilfield compare notes at a department retreat.*

In This Issue

5 | MHA Program

6 | MPH Program

7 | PhD Program

8 | From the BSPH Faculty

11 | Research Spotlight

13 | The How and Why of Tobacco Policy

14 | Understanding A Looming Care Crisis

17 | From Marathons to Medicine

21 | Celebrating Dr. Roberts

22 | Mayor Gaskins' Healthy Outlook

25 | Reflecting on Growth and Connections







About Health Policy and Management

Degree Programs

Master of Health Administration (MHA)

Joint Master of Health Administration (MHA) / Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Master of Public Health (MPH)

Joint Juris Doctor (JD) / Master of Public Health (MPH)

Doctorate in Health Services Research and Policy (PhD)

Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSPH)

HPM By the Numbers

22 Primary Faculty
13 Part-Time Faculty
3 Adjunct Faculty
28 Full-Time Staff
64 Courses Offered
140+ Peer-reviewed Articles
45 Active Grants / Contracts
$22M in Grant Revenues



(L to R) MHA students Jon Jiang, Neeharika Balaji and Natalya Temple discuss a project during class.

HPM master's programs ranked among best in the nation

The Master of Health Administration and the Master of Public Health in Health Policy and Management are among the best in the country, according to voters in U.S. News & World Report's annual rankings.

The MHA program is ranked No. 12 nationally, the same position as in 2025. The latest rankings also keep Pitt as Pennsylvania's highest-ranked healthcare administration program.

"This result shows that we are a destination for future leaders in healthcare administration," said **Kevin Broom**, Health Policy and Management vice chair for education and director of the MHA and MHA/MBA programs. "Our position as a top program is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our students and faculty in the program, and after graduation."

The MPH rose two spots to No. 16 in the country amid the relatively new ranking system that differentiates MPH programs by discipline.

"This shows the impact our students, faculty and staff have on their field while they are here and once they graduate and move on to postgraduate placements," said **Cindy Bryce**, associate dean for enrollment at Pitt Public Health, associate professor of health policy and management and codirector of the MPH and JD/MPH programs.

"At a time when public health faces challenges, our students rise to meet them with the help and support of our department," adds **Tina Hershey**, associate professor and codirector of the MPH and JD/MPH programs.

Pitt Public Health rose to No. 14 overall, with several other programs also ranking in the top 20.

A Note from the MHA Program Director



Kevin D. Broom, PhD
Professor and Vice Chair for Education,
Health Policy and Management
Director, MHA and MHA/MBA Programs

Hello to all our great alumni, industry partners and friends from back here on the Pitt campus! As is normal around this time of year, we reflect on another wonderful year for the Master of Health Administration program. We're always excited to share the great things happening within the Pitt MHA family.

Over the past year, we again helped our newest graduates launch their careers with a robust mix of notable organizations. Recent placement settings across the broader health industry include UPMC (multiple), Cedars-Sinai Health System, Vizient Inc., American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), The Dedham Group, UC San Diego School of Medicine, Mary Bridge Children's Hospital, MedStar Health, Health Outcomes Performance Company (HOPCo), Bristol Myers Squibb, HCA Healthcare, and Berkeley Research Group.

As in previous years, these placement settings range from large integrated delivery systems to consulting firms, pharmaceutical manufacturers, payers and even the national headquarters of a professional organization. We continue to appreciate seeing the graduates of our MHA and MHA/MBA programs exploring a wide mix of health industry career pathways. We also appreciate the graduates helping spread the Pitt brand across the country, with graduates landing jobs from coast to coast.

Our returning students finished the summer portion of their residencies, and they have settled back into classes. All students were in the Pittsburgh area this summer with UPMC and Allegheny Health Network, and all had extended residency experiences.

Our students continue to represent us well around the country. As in previous years, they participated in multiple case competitions, engaged with local and national professional organizations, and made another strong showing at the 2026 ACHE Congress in Houston. We had 16 MHA students attend Congress this past year, with most of them serving as program assistants. Several also volunteered with the Western Pennsylvania Chapter of ACHE. We hope many of you have the chance to meet our students in Nashville this spring for the next ACHE Congress.

We maintained the high national ranking for our MHA program, holding steady at No. 12 in the U.S. News & World Report rankings. We believe this ranking reflects our commitment to remaining among the most outstanding programs in the country. We're excited to remain a part of that group, which reflects very well on our great alumni, outstanding students, wonderful health industry stakeholders and nationally renowned faculty.

We're looking forward to another prosperous year for the Pitt MHA program. Please feel free to reach out if you'd like to engage with us. We're always looking for opportunities to draw on our practitioner community's wisdom, experience and expertise in all we do back here at Pitt.



About the MHA Program

#12
Ranked Program in the country by U.S. News & World Report

30
Students in 2025-26 MHA Cohort

50%
Non-PA residents (14 graduted from a PA institution)

Class of 2025 Placement Snapshot
Administrative Fellow - UPMC
Administrative Fellow - MedStar Health
Healthcare Business Analyst - HOPCo
Medicare Strategist - UPMC Health Plan
Leadership Development Program - Bristol Myers Squibb
Associate Consultant - Berkeley Research Group
Administrative Fellow - Vizient, Inc.
Executive Resident - HCA

A Note from the MPH Program Directors





Cindy L. Bryce, PhD
Associate Dean for Enrollment, Pitt Public Health
Associate Professor,
Health Policy and Management
Co-Director, MPH and JD/MPH Programs

Tina Batra Hershey, JD, MPH
Associate Professor,
Health Policy and Management
Co-Director, MPH and JD/MPH Programs

Hello to our HPM community and friends!

It's exciting to connect with you again and share some of the significant accomplishments of the past year.

The MPH program is ranked No. 16 for graduate programs in Health Policy and Management in the U.S. News & World Report rankings! While these rankings (for public health programs within specific disciplines) are still relatively new additions to the U.S. News catalog, we do not take our position for granted. As a department, HPM is determined to maintain and improve the program's ranking, as shown by our ongoing work with alumni, current students and other stakeholders to ensure our coursework and integrated learning experiences strengthen our graduates' skills and meet employers' needs. As our world evolves, so too does our curriculum—we've added data analytics and advocacy courses and retooled our professional development seminar to ensure that our students have the right skills as they begin their careers.

Our new student cohort is typical in size, but looks a little different in fall 2026, with more than half starting their MPH as undergraduates through the accelerated ("4+1") program. Both the school and the department saw increased interest from Pitt undergraduates in this pathway, as a way to earn the MPH in less time and for less money. At the same time, returning students have a busy year with their coursework, graduation milestones and job search.

At the national level, you may already know that the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) is revising the foundational competencies for the MPH degree, a change that affects all accredited MPH programs and institutions. CEPH has shared early versions of these changes and solicited feedback from schools and programs. Meanwhile, Pitt Public Health has wasted no time in forming a working group to incorporate these new and revised competencies into its core curriculum. This is a daunting (but exciting) challenge since the core curriculum is used in all 17 MPH programs here at the school! Cindy Bryce is part of the working group, and Tina Hershey is course director for the core class in health policy. These changes will be approved and implemented in fall 2027.

That's perfect timing because our application is open, and we are receiving applications from prospective students for fall 2027. It's wonderful to hear from motivated individuals who want to pursue a graduate degree in health policy and management, even with today's challenging environment and financial considerations. We are committed to doing our part by providing the coursework, training, skill development and real-world experiences to get them ready for their roles as public health professionals.

If you'd like to learn more or join us in this effort, feel free to email us! We'd enjoy hearing your ideas.



About the MPH Program

#16
Ranked Program in the country by U.S. News & World Report

33
Students in 2025-26 MPH Cohort

53%
Non-PA residents (14 graduted from a PA institution)

Class of 2025 Placement Snapshot
Emergency Manager - Kansas State University
Administrative Fellow - UPMC Insurance Services
Overdose Prevention Program Specialist - Allegheny Co. Health Dept.
Research Coordinator - Pitt Public Health
Research Assistant - Pregnancy Justice
Business Transformation Specialist - Huron Consulting Group
Research Associate - UPMC Hillman Cancer Center

A Note from the PhD Program Director



Coleman Drake, PhD
Associate Professor,
Health Policy and Management
Director, PhD and MS Programs

Dear HPM Friends and Colleagues,

The Health Services Research and Policy (HSRP) PhD Program had another outstanding year. We welcomed three talented incoming students, while our returning students kept building strong records in coursework and research. The program's mission is unchanged: training scholars equipped to shape health policy and advance public health through rigorous, innovative research. What our current students and alumni have accomplished reflects the breadth of policy and clinical domains where HSRP-affiliated researchers are informing decisions at the state and federal level, as well as within health systems and other organizations nationwide.

Our students routinely share independent research at local, national, and international conferences, a testament to the strength and relevance of their work. This past year, HSRP doctoral students presented at several prominent meetings and their work earned recognition both nationally and here at Pitt. Auti Johnson was selected as a Student Scholar cohort at Pitt Law's Center for Civil Rights and Racial Justice (CCRRJ), and Victoria Wyant received the Student Award for the highest scoring abstract at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Genetics Forum. This growing recognition speaks to the caliber and impact of our students' scholarship.

Students continue partnering closely with faculty on collaborative projects, both contributing to and leading peer-reviewed publications spanning policy, medicine, and related fields. This year, student co-authored work appeared in top journals, including JAMA Health Forum, JNCI: The Journal of the National Cancer Institute, The Journal of Urology, and Innovation in Aging.

Our alumni, meanwhile, continue to build on the foundation they established at Pitt, putting their training to work across academia, government, and industry to advance health policy and practice. Youngmin Kwon ('24), currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at Vanderbilt University, was awarded a K99/R00 award to study growth in Medicare Advantage and its implications for cancer care quality. Haley Director ('26) took a position as a Healthcare Medical Economics Analyst at Vheda Health and will also teach health policy part-time at Northeastern University.

We couldn't be prouder of what our students and alumni have accomplished this year. Their achievements are a testament to the strength of the HSRP program and its ongoing commitment to evidence-based health policy research. We look forward to following their continued success.

About the PhD Program

13
Students in 2025-26 PhD Cohort

61%
Non-PA residents





Select PhD Publications

Santos, Dubey, Simpson, Hong, Narayan, **Persaud**, ... & Chino (2025). Access to cancer care for undocumented immigrants in the USA. The Lancet Oncology.

Moale, Razskazovskiy, Rak, Richardson, Dhole, **Butler**, ... & White (2026). Clinicians' Perspectives on Strengthening Interprofessional Teamwork to Support Surrogate Decision-Makers of Critically Ill Patients in ICUs. Critical Care Explorations.

Bilden, Lamperski, Kumar, Savitz, & Roberts (2025, October). Constructing a Qualitatively Informed Agent-Based Simulation Model to Improve Access to Medication for OUD Patients and Stakeholder Preferences and Engagement. In MEDICAL DECISION MAKING.

Aviña, Kreider, & Degenholtz (2025). The Cost of Direct Care Workforce Instability: Economic and Health Impacts of High Turnover in Pennsylvania. Innovation in Aging.

Mentch, Kastner, & Degenholtz (2025). Evaluating the Impact of Managed Long-Term Services and Supports on HCBS Providers: Findings from a Seven Wave Survey. Innovation in Aging.

France, Smith, Hawk, Creasy, & Bryce (2025, October). Examining the Cost-effectiveness of a Client-centered Representative Payee Intervention for Antiretroviral Therapy Adherence: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial Health Services, Outcomes and Policy Research. In MEDICAL DECISION MAKING.

Madhavaram, Wu, Sharbaugh, **Zhang**, Sabik, Marchetti, ... & Jacobs (2025). Factors Associated With Readmission to Index vs. Non-Index Hospitals After Major Cancer Surgery. Cancer Medicine.

Carpenter, **Case,** Lustria, Marks, Yu, MacDonell, ... & Wang (2025). Feasibility of mHealth Strategies to Promote Use of Wrist-Worn Alcohol Biosensors Among Young Adults With HIV: Protocol for the Engage Microrandomized Trial. JMIR Research Protocols.

Drake, Sharbaugh, Nagy, Kim, Zang, **Case**, ... & Donohue (2026, June). Geographic Availability and Use of Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Among Medicaid Enrollees. In JAMA Health Forum.

About the BSPH Program

Pitt Public Health has a history of preparing generations of leaders to meet the needs of our communities. While the COVID-19 pandemic placed public health in the global spotlight, it also unearthed a growing need for strong, passionate students. The Bachelor of Science in Public Health is a four-year degree program that provides students with a foundation in the key disciplines of public health alongside active learning activities. Through its unique service-learning component, students will directly engage with populations and observe how coursework translates into real-world settings. Students who graduate with a BSPH have a broad range of professional opportunities. Many of our students go on to pursue graduate degrees in the health sciences such as medicine, occupational therapy, social work and health administration.



BSPH students celebrate their capstone presentations.

From the HPM BSPH Faculty: Amanda Kreider



Amanda Kreider is an assistant professor of health policy and management who teaches Intro to the US Healthcare Systems, a core component of the HPM core classes offered by the BSPH program. Read about her experience teaching the undergraduate students:

One of the things I've enjoyed most about teaching in the BSPH program is how impressive our students are. Many of the undergraduates I teach already have work or volunteer experience in clinical and community health settings - including EMS, nursing homes, and emergency departments - and they bring firsthand knowledge from these experiences to class, which makes our discussions so much richer.

My course, Introduction to the US Healthcare System, builds on students' existing knowledge by teaching a broader, system-level overview of how care is organized, financed, and delivered. Because many of my students plan to go into careers in health care, I want them to understand not just the pain points and structural challenges they're likely to face, but also how to think through potential solutions. To supplement the reading and lectures with real-world perspectives, I bring in guest speakers - for example, this year, senior leaders from Pennsylvania Medicaid and UPMC. In addition to system-level content, I make sure students leave my class with a practical understanding of the basics, like how an insurance deductible works - several students noted in their course reflections that this stuck with them as a skill they could use themselves and share with others. It's incredible to watch students grow over the course of the semester, and it's especially rewarding to see how they bring everything they've learned together in their final policy briefs, where they identify a problem in the US healthcare system and argue for a specific solution.

From the HPM BSPH Faculty: Miranda Yaver



Miranda Yaver is an assistant professor of health policy and management who teaches several HPM core courses in the BSPH program, including: Fundamentals of Health Policy and Management; Administrative Burden and Inequality in U.S. Health Care; and Health Law and Politics. Read more about her experience teaching our undergraduate students:

It has been a real treat teaching the BSPH program's core Introduction to Health Policy and Management course, which spans wide-ranging health policy subjects including public and private health insurance, reproductive health, social and structural drivers of health, vaccine policy, and so much more.

As a political scientist-turned-health policy scholar, I approach the course from a highly interdisciplinary lens, anchored in health policy but also training my students to think about the law and politics underlying the policies that we examine, and the ways that politics has reshaped the practice of medicine. The class offers a balance of 30,000-foot discussions of things like ways that structural racism can shape health care access, as well as closer analysis of the impact of specific health policies like the Affordable Care Act.

One of the things to which I'm very committed is helping students to engage with ongoing health policy developments so that the course isn't abstract knowledge but actually can support tangible improvements in health. Toward that end, I bring into the class health policy-related current events that we then situate in the context of what we've learned in class.

The heart of my health policy class is a policy analysis in which small groups choose a health policy problem to tackle within a broad topic area (e.g., behavioral health), review existing policies in place, devise and analyze a few policy recommendations, and present their recommendations to the class. I'm consistently impressed with their creativity in tackling so many of the enduring challenges that American health care delivery faces — whether clarifying the scope of abortion rights amid medical complications, streamlining Medicaid enrollment for those exiting the carceral setting, or better supporting students in mental health crises. In addition to the HPM core, I more specialized electives on Administrative Burden & Inequality in U.S. Health Care as well as Health Law & Politics, both of which are writing-intensive. In administrative burden, we work to identify all the ways that patients or other enrollees can fall through the cracks of the system when trying to access health and other benefits. In Health Law and Politics, we examine the way that politics and courts have powerfully shaped health care delivery, engaging in landmark Supreme Court cases and their impact, such as the repercussions of the Court's interpretation of Congress's power to regulate health insurance.

Cumulatively, my students come away from my classes with a comprehensive understanding of the myriad ways that health policies and the practice of medicine are shaped by not just public health, but politics, economics, and law, and the health implications of choices about policy delivery.

HPM Research



HPM awarded $22M in direct costs for grants and contracts from federal, state and local funders

Federal Funding Sources

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), National Institute on Aging (NIA), National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), National Institute for Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS)

Foundation Funding Sources

American Cancer Society, Commonwealth Fund, Donaghue Foundation, Jewish Healthcare Foundation, The John A. Hartford Foundation

State and Local Funding Sources

Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Pennsylvania Department of Aging, Pennsylvania Department of Health

Medicaid Research Center named partner in Pennsylvania rural health initiative



Pennsylvania's rural population is among the largest in the United States, with nearly one in five residents living in a rural area. These communities face higher rates of chronic disease, maternal and infant health issues, mental and behavioral health challenges and age-related conditions needing specific solutions.

After H.R. 1 passed, the commonwealth introduced the Rural Health Transformation Plan (RHTP) to deliver direct support to residents and strengthen community anchors such as hospitals, clinics and schools.

A partner of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services since 2013, the Medicaid Research Center has been selected as an independent evaluator of the RHTP.

HPM students shine at Public Health Practice showcase



Haliyat Oshodi presents her award-winning research at the Public Health Practice Showcase.

In November, 15 Pitt Public Health students showcased their community work. Posters highlighted student work completed in collaboration with community partners.

MPH student **Haliyat Oshodi**'s poster focused on work she did with Pittsburgh-based Youth Enrichment Services (YES) as part of Pitt Public Health's Bridging the Gaps Community Health Internship. Working with YES, she helped create a trauma-informed plan that promotes mental health wellness through healing-centered care where staff respond to behavior with empathy, not punishment.

HPM PhD student **Victoria Wyant** presented research from her internship with The Equity in Maternal and Birth Outcomes and Reproductive Health through the Community Engagement Center of Excellence (EMBRACE), which looked at the impacts of equity and stability programs like guaranteed income and universal basic employment.

In her opening remarks, Pitt Public Health Dean Maureen Lichtveld spoke of the importance of "making sure our science works for communities. Otherwise, our science doesn't work."

Faculty and staff from the school judged the posters and awarded Oshodi's presentation first place.



HPM PhD candidate Victoria Wyant talks to a judge during the Public Health Practice Showcase.

Research Spotlight

HPM researchers awarded research grant to study insurance barriers to cancer treatment





More than 40% of people will develop cancer in their lives; 58% of those cases will be in people 65 and older, meaning Medicare will likely pay for the treatment.

HPM Vice Chair for Research and Professor **Lindsay Sabik** and Associate Professor **Coleman Drake** were awarded an R01 grant from the National Cancer Institute to study insurance-related barriers, primarily with Medicare Advantage plans, that prevent people from getting timely care.

Jarlenski awarded grant to study impacts of state policy on contraception access



The Affordable Care Act guaranteed that most private insurance plans and Medicaid expansion programs cover FDA-approved contraception methods, counseling and related services with no out-of-pocket costs.

Since then, numerous states have passed legislation to codify that guarantee. At least 23 states now require insurers to cover a 12-month supply of short-acting hormonal contraception with a single prescription fill, and 32 states have adopted laws that reinforce or broaden the ACA's contraceptive coverage provisions.

HPM Professor **Marian Jarlenski**, a national leader in maternal and child health research, received a grant from Arnold Ventures to examine how state policy affects access to contraception.

Donahoe leading innovative study on impact of methadone treatment on crime



More than 80,000 people died from overdoses in the United States in 2024, largely fueled by illicitly manufactured opioids like heroin and fentanyl. In addition to the death toll, opioid use drives substantial public safety harms. Expanding methadone maintenance treatment (MMT), a leading clinical intervention for opioid use disorder, has gained bipartisan support.

However, federal law still tightly constrains MMT, limiting use to certified treatment programs.

Assistant Professor **Travis Donahoe** received a grant from Arnold Ventures to study how increased access and supply of MMT affects opioid-related health and crime outcomes. The study will provide first-of-its-kind data for state- and local-level decision-makers.

Yaver launches book with discussion of issues facing people experiencing insurance denials

Assistant Professor **Miranda Yaver**'s book had only been out a week when it hit the top spot for government books on Amazon's best-sellers list.

"Coverage Denied: How Health Insurers Drive Inequality in the United States" draws on survey research, administrative data and interviews to examine why health insurers deny coverage and how those decisions affect patients, often because of racial and economic inequities.

At the book's official launch at White Whale Bookstore in Pittsburgh's Bloomfield neighborhood, Yaver discussed the book's findings with health journalist Sarah Boden.



HPM students Catherine Cavanaugh (left) and Samantha Candalor (center) with HPM Assistant Professor Miranda Yaver at her book launch.

"I tell everyone, if you are denied coverage, appeal it," Yaver told a packed audience. "A lot of people don't appeal because they don't know how many people win when they do appeal."

Yaver's research found that the most common reason patients didn't appeal a denial was that they didn't know they could, reflecting the "learning cost" burden the book addresses. Other reasons for not appealing included the assumption that people rarely win, despite data showing a 50% reversal rate. Lower-income patients were 9% less likely to appeal, according to Yaver, who also found that Black and nonwhite Hispanic patients were less likely to win an appeal on a denial, as were people in worse physical health.

She added that some insurance companies' explanations of the appeals process are hard to comprehend. "I fed UnitedHealthcare's insurance appeal explainer into ChatGPT and asked what grade level it was written at; it said 13th. The average American is closer to an eighth-grade level. That means a lot of people are going to see a denial and take it as the final word."

Between 2016 and 2023, coverage denials rose from 9% to 12%, and compliance with prior authorization requirements increased. However, Yaver says the fractured nature of American health insurance makes it hard to get a comprehensive view of the issues that prevent people from accessing care, as problems vary across carriers and even within plans at the same insurer.

As the discussion wrapped up, Yaver says she hopes the book will not only inform people about their options but also spur some to contact lawmakers and urge them to act.



Health journalist Sarah Boden (left) and HPM Assistant Professor Miranda Yaver (right) discuss her book Coverage Denied at the launch at Pittsburgh's White Whale book shop.

Angus launches health-centered podcast on JAMA Network

HPM alumnus **Derek C. Angus** (MPH '92) has held many titles during his distinguished clinical and academic career, but never figured a podcast host would be one of them.

"I was asked to do it by JAMA's editor-in-chief, Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo," said Angus, who is senior editor at JAMA. "I decided that I should say 'Yes' for three reasons: I cared about the problem of how to make science more accessible to broader audiences. I was also about to step down as department chair and knew I'd have more time on my hands, and as part of my 'post-chair' life, I thought it would be good for my neuroplasticity to take on a task for which I really had no training."

With that, "Healthy Dialogue" was born.

According to Angus, each episode aims to host conversations with leading experts on important health and healthcare topics and make the content accessible and digestible for a broad audience.

PhD students receive awards from APHA



HPM PhD students Haley Director (left) and Victoria Wyant (right) present at the American Public Health Association conference.

Two HPM PhD students had their research recognized by the American Public Health Association (APHA) Genomics Forum at the organization's annual meeting in November 2025.

Victoria Wyant received the Student Award for the highest-scoring abstract. **Haley Director** received the Outstanding Research Award for her work in public health genetics research. Director received the Distinguished Service Award from the Genomics Forum for her research in 2024.

Marian Jarlenski answers COVID-19 vaccination questions

It's been nearly seven years since 2020, when COVID-19 shut down the world and changed how we live and operate in many ways. Even though the federal public health emergency ended in 2023, the virus still poses a risk of serious illness.

HPM's **Marian Jarlenski** and Pitt Public Health Dean Emeritus Donald Burke answered lingering questions about getting the COVID-19 vaccination.

Focusing on the "why" and "how" behind tobacco policy and prevention



Cigarette use may have peaked in popularity in the United States in the '60s, but tobacco products are still responsible for nearly 20% of preventable disease and deaths.

Assistant Professor **Natalie Smith** is researching the "how" and "why" behind tobacco policy and prevention.

Kenyon among winners at 2026 Dean's Day



Delaney Kenyon (center) answers questions about her research during Pitt Public Health Dean's Day

Dean's Day is Pitt Public Health's annual showcase where students present research posters to the multidisciplinary Pitt Public Health community.

This year, five HPM posters were picked for presentation: second-year MPH students **Delaney Kenyon** and **Alexa Pierce**; PhD students **Haley Director** and **Yuanbo Zhang**; and postdoctoral researcher **Jacob Whitman**.

Kenyon's poster, which focused on the effects of including bias education in emergency medical service certificate programs, received the Center for Public Health Practice Award for its contribution to policymaking and applications for improving practice.

Pierce's research focused on mobile health units that provide sexual and reproductive health services across the country to determine where they are, what services they offer and how state reproductive health policies affect their use and operations.

Director's poster focused on her dissertation research, examining genetic testing coverage and the policies that affect it across states.

Zhang's poster expanded on her telemedicine research, this year examining how virtual visits compare to in-office visits in terms of hospital-free days postsurgery.

Whitman's work expanded on his collaboration with HPM's Lindsay Sabik into a global budget model for rural hospitals to address shortfalls.

Faculty from all Pitt Public Health departments judged the posters.



Jacob Whitman talks to a Dean's Day judge about his research poster.

Understanding a looming care crisis: Amanda Kreider studies the economics of home care workers



The home care workforce is in a perpetual shortage, and Kreider's research finds that immigration enforcement shrinks the workforce and reduces older adults' access to long-term care. Because nearly one in three home care workers is an immigrant, meeting future care demand will likely require both expanded workforce investments and policies that support, rather than deter, immigrant workers.

Travis Donahoe's research featured in Health Affairs video and panel

The September 2025 issue of Health Affairs was a theme issue on the opioid crisis. Pitt Public Health contributed three articles to this edition, with HPM Assistant Professor **Travis Donahoe** as an author on two.

He also appeared in a video explaining the findings, which the journal published on its social media pages. He participated in a panel discussion of experts who discussed their findings, perspectives and policy proposals for addressing opioid misuse and addiction.

HPM in the News

In the past year, HPM experts have been quoted in dozens of stories coveraging a wide range of topics. Our experts were quoted by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, the Associated Press, Newsweek, NPR and have appeared on CBS Sunday Morning among many others. Below is a selection.

Research grant cancellations continue piling up at Pitt
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has canceled more than $130 million in committed future research funding, according to AcademyHealth. HPM Professor and Vice Chair for Research **Lindsay Sabik** had research on pain medication affected by the cuts and discusses the impact it will have on patient care.

Caregivers for the elderly could lose wage protections under Trump proposal
NPR
Caring for the elderly in America is costly. Now, the federal government is attempting to tackle that problem by rolling back wage protections for workers who care for seniors. HPM's **Amanda Kreider** told NPR that removing labor protections doesn't make sense.

There are already more US measles cases this year than in all of 2025
Associated Press
Measles cases are on the rise. HPM Professor Emeritus **Mark Roberts** told the Associated Press he worries innocent bystanders, people who can't get vaccinated because of age or medical reasons, will bear the brunt of outbreaks.

Health Coverage Expanding For Americans From November 1
Newsweek
The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) expanded access to catastrophic health coverage in November 2025. **Coleman Drake** talked about what it means for people who need coverage and what it means for providers.

State of denial: How insurance companies impact health care today
CBS Sunday Morning
Millions of Americans are struggling with medical care - either unable to pay high premiums, burdened with high deductibles, or denied coverage for necessary tests and treatment by health insurance companies. **Miranda Yaver** spoke with CBS's Erin Moriarty about how profit-driven insurers are eroding medical care.

Select Publications

The Department of Health Policy and Management prides itself on the research conducted by our faculty, staff and students. Their hard work is reflected in the number of publications credited to the department that have influenced decisions and policy at the local, state and federal levels of government in the past year. Below is a selection, more can be found here.

Sabik, Sharbaugh, Yabes, Lin, Pere, Vajravelu, ... & Jacobs (2025). Association of health care policy and trends in cancer screening during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cancer Epidemiology

Degenholtz, **Lampenfeld**, **Kastner**, **Yauch**, **Mentch**, Szymanski, ... & Albert (2026). Can age-friendly communities also be disability friendly: What do surveys of older adults and people with disabilities tell us?. Journal of Applied Gerontology

Yaver (2026). Coverage Denied: How Health Insurers Drive Inequality in the United States. Cambridge University Press.

Xue, Yin, Cole, LoCiganic, Gellad, **Donohue,** & Tang (2025). Development and evaluation of a machine learning model to predict acute care for opioid use disorder among Medicaid enrollees engaged in a community-based treatment program. Addiction

Rak, **Bourne**, Barnes, Ober, **Sun**, Chang, ... & **Sabik** (2025). Factors Influencing Rural Hospitals' Decisions To Join An Alternative Payment Model: A Mixed-Methods Study: Article examines factors influencing decisions of Pennsylvania rural hospitals to participate in an alternative payment model. Health Affairs

Hughes & **James** (2025). A policy update on home environmental hazard assessment and remediation in Medicare and Medicaid. Environmental Research Communications

Sundermann, **Kumar,** Griffith, Waggle, Rangachar Srinivasa, Raabe, ... & Harrison (2026). Real-time genomic surveillance for enhanced healthcare outbreak detection and control: clinical and economic impact. Clinical Infectious Diseases

Donahoe, Krawczyk, **Donohue**, **Nagy**, & Joudrey (2025). Restrictive State Opioid Treatment Program Regulations Constrain Local Access To Methadone Maintenance Treatment: Article examines the role of state restrictions on access to methadone maintenance treatment. Health Affairs

Smith, Cruz, Grummon, Ng, Hall, Frerichs, & Lich (2026). Sugar-sweetened beverage warning labels and taxes: simulated impacts when considering implementation. American journal of preventive medicine

Note: Bolded names indicate HPM faculty, staff, students or alumni

HPM Student News



Student Spotlights



Students come to HPM with diverse backgrounds and experiences that drive their decision to pursue a career in public health. Throughout the year, we asked them to share their motivations and plans for their next step in our Student Spotlight series, in their own words.

Samantha Nigida among those participating in Pittsburgh Summer Institute



The Pittsburgh Summer Institute is a longstanding partnership between the school and the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD). MPH student **Samantha Nigida** participated.

As she told HPM over the summer, Nigida worked with ACHD on policies for the county's response and preparedness for extreme heat and other weather, including what needed updating and what could be implemented in the future.

The practicum blends the structure of a traditional internship with hands-on workforce development. Students contribute to real-time public health projects and present their work at a final showcase.

Maria Pardo: Helping people where they are

Healthcare access and affordability are among the biggest barriers facing Americans today.

When the opportunity arose, MPH student **Maria Pardo** rose to meet it, bringing healthcare supplies and support to those who need them.

Walters: "Fellowship gives you a front seat with an organization making a global impact"



Courtesy: JHF

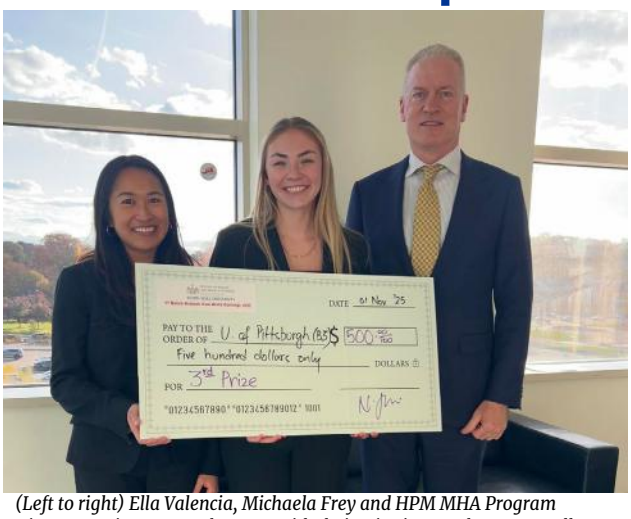
Members of the JHF Patient Safety Fellowship cohort

Patient safety matters to many healthcare professionals as much as curing medical ills.

In its annual Patient Safety Fellowship, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation asked, "What if safety was baked into the care model to prevent issues from happening in the first place?"

MPH student **Katie Walters** says the experience broadened her horizons and let her hear from colleagues across a wide range of disciplines.

HPM team takes third at Seton Hall case competition



(Left to right) Ella Valencia, Michaela Frey and HPM MHA Program Director Kevin Broom, PhD pose with their winnings at the Seton Hall Case Competition.

After a double podium finish in 2024, an HPM team returned to the podium at the Seton Hall case competition.

First-year MHA student **Michaela Frey** and first-year MHA/MBA student **Ella Valencia** returned from New Jersey with a third-place finish.

Johnson selected for Center for Civil Rights and Racial Justice Student Scholar cohort



HPM PhD student **Auti Johnson** was selected for the newest Student Scholar cohort by the University of Pittsburgh School of Law's Center for Civil Rights and Racial Justice (CCRRJ).

Supported by the Eberly Foundation and the Heinz Endowments, the CCRRJ advances constitutional, legislative and regulatory civil rights protections at the federal, state and local levels.

Johnson's research examines when the justice system, which refers more than one in four people into substance use treatment nationally, becomes the primary gatekeeper to that protected access.

"Some of the patterns we observe raise questions about how institutional treatment referral structures may shape access, with potential implications for health outcomes and who ultimately has a meaningful opportunity to engage in care," she said, adding that it's important to recognize that examining how these mechanisms operate is, at its core, a civil rights inquiry.

"I appreciate that CCRRJ recognizes the importance of this question and, alongside my HPM faculty mentors, is supporting this work in a way that allows me to understand the underlying dynamics better."

Being named a CCRRJ student scholar will allow Johnson to move into the next phase of her work, develop an extension suggested by the findings, and create space for multidisciplinary feedback to shape the study design directly.

"It means a great deal to have this work seen through a civil rights lens, because that is how I understand it," she said. "I am especially grateful to Pitt Law for creating another home for this kind of scholarship."

As she continues her work, Johnson appreciates that it aligns with CCRRJ's values: community-engaged, shaped by lived experience, and accountable to the people it is ultimately about. "Their recognition of this work means that I gain another meaningful network that shares that commitment, along with the support to move into the next phase. It is exciting."

HPM students travel to Texas for ACHE Congress

Early March may not seem busy, but in Houston, HPM students arrived for the American College of Healthcare Executives' Annual Congress.

A national cheerleading championship, the World Baseball Classic and the world-famous Houston Rodeo set the stage for the biggest conference for current and future healthcare executives. Over four days, students attended sessions and networked with leaders and HPM alums from across the country. The department hosted alums and students for its annual reception at the conference.

See more from the trip.

From marathons to medicine: The multi-hyphenate journey of Sammy Cohan

By Ava Dzurenda



Courtesy: Sammy Cohan

MPH student Sammy Cohan crosses the finish line of the DICK'S Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon his cap and gown.

Crossing the finish line of the Pittsburgh Marathon on the Boulevard of the Allies, **Sammy Cohan** stretched his arms wide. In his Pitt cap and gown, he celebrated two major milestones at once: completing 26.2 miles and earning his bachelor's degree in neuroscience.

His ultimate goal? Medical school and a career in emergency medicine—a transition he believes works well.

Bridging theory to real-world results: Practicing public health in nontraditional settings

Known more for its other services, consulting firm WTW may not be the first place practitioners think of when applying theories learned in Pitt Public Health classrooms to improve people's lives.

But as second-year MPH student **Nishi Thawani** explains, public health impact often happens in spaces we do not traditionally label as public health.

HPM dual-degree students bring home awards from Katz Graduate School of Business



Credit: KGSB

Raven Byars accepts an award from Rebecca Badawy, Associate Dean for MBA and Specialty Masters at KGSB.

Chloe Schur and **Raven Byars** ended the year receiving awards and recognition for their work with the Katz Graduate School of Business.

Schur and Byars both took home awards from the school's annual awards banquet. Schur received the Dean's Outstanding Student Service Award. Byars received Katz's Marshall Alan Robinson Prize for Excellence. Poets & Quants also recognized her as one of the "Best and Brightest" MBAs in the country, celebrating students who lead inside and outside the classroom.

"What an amazing way to round out the past three years of my MHA and MBA degrees at the University of Pittsburgh," said Byars. "I am forever grateful for the opportunities I've been afforded during my time here, and I'm honored by this recognition. Thank you to everyone who has been part of the journey."

Myles Chung awarded American College of Healthcare Executives scholarship



Named for educator and hospital administrator Albert W. Dent, the first African American fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, and Foster G. McGaw, founder of the American Hospital Supply Corporation, the scholarship is awarded to just 15 graduate students studying health administration each year.

Congratulations Rachel and Haley

In April, PhD candidate **Rachel Butler** successfully defended her dissertation.

Her research focused on person- and family-centered outcomes at the intersection of aging, serious illness and caregiving, using nationally representative data from the National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS), the National Study of Caregiving (NSOC), and linked Medicare claims.

Over the summer, **Haley Director** joined Butler as the program's newest alumna.

Director's work focused on policies impacting prenatal genetics care. Though prenatal genetic testing is recommended during prenatal care, it is costly and often inaccessible to low-resourced and uninsured pregnant people.

HPM team competes at annual Cleveland Clinic Case Competition



Adam Greenwood, Ayo Okosun, Neeharika Balaji, Paul Rudie and Dr. Kevin Broom at the Cleveland Clinic Case Competition.

An HPM team faced off against dozens of teams from 35 universities nationwide, applying what they've learned to a real-world scenario at the annual Cleveland Clinic Case Competition.

In early February, the teams were tasked with developing strategic recommendations for leaders at one of the world's top healthcare systems.

After receiving the case, participants had a weekend to prepare initial proposals for review by Cleveland Clinic administrators and caregivers; the clinic invited 12 to its main campus for a formal presentation.

The team, made up of second-year MHA student **Neeharika Balaji**, first-year MHA students **Paul Rudie** and **Ayomide Okosun**, and observer **Adam Greenwood**, was selected.

This year's case tasked teams with developing proposals to enhance the patient experience and provider effectiveness through AI and digital health tools.

HPM Department News



Kevin Broom promoted to professor



Kevin Broom, HPM's vice chair for education and MHA and MHA/MBA program director, has been promoted to professor.

"This promotion serves as recognition of Broom's outstanding leadership in the field," said HPM Professor and Chair Julie Donohue. "Through scholarship, teaching and service, he has shaped health management and public health education not just here at Pitt but around the country."

As vice chair for education, Broom oversees the department's academic programs and serves as the point person for the MHA and MHA/MBA programs.

"Dr. Broom deeply cares about the students in the program, often going out of his way to make sure we have all the tools we need to succeed," said **Jamie Goldman**, a third-year MHA/MBA student. "His experience in the field has been so valuable because it helps prepare us for what to expect as residents and then after graduation."

A leader in healthcare administration, Broom has led HPM's MHA and MHA/MBA programs since 2017 and has seen the program rise in the U.S. News & World Report rankings with each subsequent release.

"He has high standards for the program, and he expects everyone to meet them," said **Natalya Temple (MHA '26)**. "In the end, it pays off because we all succeed; the high graduation rate and the jobs people take right after graduation and in that next step show how well we are prepared."

Recent alumni have taken positions with organizations including Bristol Myers Squibb, MedStar Health (Washington, D.C.), UnitedHealth Group (New York, New York), Johns Hopkins Hospital (Baltimore, Maryland) and UPMC, among others.

"It's not just what he brings to the classroom that helps us grow as professionals," said **Natasha Shah (MHA '24)**. "Dr. Broom has a network from his time in the field, academia and staying in touch with alumni that allows us as students to make a meaningful connection in many places. He is a huge piece of what makes HPM successful, and I know I owe him a lot."

Thomas Priselac named to American Academy of Arts and Sciences

HPM alum **Thomas Priselac (MPH '75)** has been named to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in recognition of his excellence in scientific, cultural and nonprofit leadership.

Priselac served as president and CEO of Cedars-Sinai for more than three decades and held the same role for Cedars-Sinai Health System from its creation in 2017 until 2024, when he retired and moved to emeritus status.

The Thomas M. Priselac Administrative Fellowship Program at Cedars-Sinai also honors his contributions to the system and health administration, and it is also a scholarship awarded to HPM students.

HPM staff among inaugural Pitt Public Health Staff Award winners



HPM Senior Data Analyst Emma Mairson, MPH (center) recieves her staff award from Pitt Public Health leadership.

Pitt Public Health and the Staff Committee presented the inaugural Staff Awards at their annual Staff Recognition Picnic in August 2025.

The awards honor exceptional effort and dedication through teamwork, leadership, innovation and contribution to the school, University and community.

Read more about the winners, including HPM's **Mike Friend** and **Emma Mairson.**

Yaver honored for research and community engagement

The American Political Science Association's Health Politics and Policy section has selected HPM's **Miranda Yaver** for two of its annual awards. Yaver is a corecipient of the Outstanding Public Engagement and Emerging Scholar Awards.

"It's a real honor to receive this recognition from the people who are in my scholarly home and have profoundly shaped my thinking about health politics, policy and law in more ways than I can count," said Yaver.

HPM welcomes familiar face as new faculty member



Our department grew again as we welcomed **Anna Lewis** back as a research assistant professor.

Lewis is a familiar face in HPM, having completed her PhD in Health Services Research and Policy here. She will continue working with the Medicaid Research Center on critical illness survivorship and patient-centered recovery.

Roberts celebrates decades-long career with family, friends and colleagues



Mark Roberts gives one last lecture before calling it a career.

After more than four decades in the classroom, lab and doctor's office, HPM Distinguished Professor **Mark Roberts** retired from teaching, but not before delivering one last lecture.

Christine McClure named Distinguished Alumni by Point Park University



HPM Senior Research Scientist **Christine McClure** was honored by her alma mater, Point Park University, as a recipient of a 2025 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Point Park says recipients exemplify the university's mission, vision and values. Since graduation, they have contributed positively to their communities, both personally and professionally, and are people Point Park would be proud to recognize.

McClure is a two-time Point Park graduate, earning her Bachelor of Science in Health Services and an MBA.

Point Park honored award winners during homecoming weekend in September 2025.

Allegheny County Health Director joins HPM on adjunct appointment



Allegheny County Health Director **Iulia Vann** was appointed adjunct professor of health policy and management.

Earlier in 2025, Vann and Pitt Public Health Dean **Maureen Lichtveld** unveiled a partnership between the school and the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) that aligns Pitt Public Health's academic strengths with ACHD's frontline community services, allowing both institutions to share resources across teaching, practice and service.

Vann said she is excited for the opportunities the connection presents.

HPM alum is among the Pittsburgh Power 100



Courtesy: Allegheny Health Network

Allegheny Health Network (AHN) CEO **Mark Sevco (SPH '91G; KGSB '91G)** was among the 20 Pitt leaders and alumni the Pittsburgh Business Times named to the Pittsburgh Power 100 list.

According to the Business Times, the list is not a ranking, but a compilation of individuals selected by the editorial board, whose leadership, influence and connections help shape Pittsburgh's economic and civic landscape.

Awardees are recognized for their strength, leadership and drive to succeed, and regional leaders often turn to them when navigating major challenges and emerging opportunities.

Sevco joined AHN as CEO in 2025 after serving as chief operating officer of Sutter Health, one of Northern California's largest healthcare systems, with 24 hospitals, 4,000 beds, eight medical foundations, home and hospice care services, ambulatory surgery centers, and other diversified businesses.

Before Sutter, Sevco spent nearly 30 years with UPMC, rising to president of UPMC hospitals.

Doing data with heart

By Clare Collins

HPM Senior Data Analyst **Emma Mairson** didn't set out to work in reproductive health. But one summer afternoon, then a sophomore biology major, she picked up a book from a library display and began to see how her passions could come together.

Read more about her work and journey there.

AI ethics, regulation and use at the center of discussion at 2025 Dawn Gideon and Kevin Altomari Symposium



Moderator Marty Raniowski (far left) asks a question of the paneltists during the 2025 Dawn Gideon and Kevin Altomari Symposium.

It's nearly impossible to live life without interacting with artificial intelligence (AI). As with any novel technology, it has supporters and detractors as its use expands, especially as it gains popularity in fields like healthcare, where accuracy and privacy are top priorities.

The 2025 Dawn Gideon and Kevin Altomari Symposium brought together AI experts to discuss responsible AI use, the risks healthcare systems face when implementing new technology, and policymakers' efforts to regulate it as it evolves.

April Taylor recognized in Maryland's Top 100



HPM Executive-in-Residence **April Taylor (MHA '04)** has been recognized as one of Maryland's Top 100 Women by The Daily Record. Taylor is the chief operating officer of Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Since 1996, The Top 100 has recognized more than 1,600 high-achieving Maryland women who make an impact through their leadership, community service and mentoring; past honorees and business leaders across the state select winners.

"Her superpower is her ability to listen and relate to the frontline, then translate words into action. She is steadfast in her commitment to advancing our legacy of excellence, to mentoring the next generation of healthcare leaders, and consistently advances initiatives that raise the standard of care at hospitals and health systems nationwide," said Johns Hopkins Hospital President Redonda Miller.

Touring the UPMC Presbyterian Kamin Tower



UPMC project managers give HPM students a tour of the new 636-bed Kamin Tower at UPMC Presbyterian Hospital.

With its glowing UPMC Presbyterian sign high atop the 17-story wave-shaped building, the biggest construction project in Oakland is hard to miss as crews continue work on UPMC Presbyterian's new 636-bed tower.

HPM toured the site in 2024 while crews were still pouring cement, welding girders and installing wiring. In October 2025, we returned to see the progress.

Project managers say the Daniel G. and Carol L. Kamin Tower is on pace to open in late 2026, with a massive operation to move patients into their new rooms set for January 2027.



Mayor Alyia Gaskins' healthy outlook

By Amber Curtaccio



Long before the meetings, community events and the shifting demands of city leadership begin, **Mayor Alyia Gaskins (MPH '11)** starts her day with the same awareness that has guided her since childhood: Health shapes every moment.

For Gaskins, now the first Black woman to serve as mayor of Alexandria, Virginia, health has never been confined to the doctor's office. It is rooted in where we live, what we eat, the stress we carry and the systems that shape our daily lives.

HPM runs away with Dean's PDoG challenge



Donations during Pitt Day of Giving help fund student travel to conferences and other professional development.

Pitt Day of Giving (PDoG) is the University's biggest fundraiser of the year. It's a 24-hour event that calls on alumni, students, faculty, staff, friends and family to donate to an area of Pitt that matters most to them.

Each year, Pitt Public Health Dean Maureen Lichtveld issues a challenge to the seven departments and the Bachelor of Science in Public Health program, offering a $1,000 bonus prize. This year, the department with the largest percentage increase in donors will win.

After the dust settled, HPM led all departments with 57 donors, a stunning 356% increase from 2025, more than double the next-closest department's increase.

"This is truly incredible," said HPM Professor and Chair **Julie Donohue**. "These gifts to the HPM general fund will be used to support student travel to conferences and case competitions, and professional development for staff and faculty."

As a school, Pitt Public Health fared well in the University-wide challenges, ending the day in second place in both the "Raise the Bar" challenge, which measured the percentage increase above 2025 donor totals and the "Level Up" challenge, which measured the units that met and surpassed a predetermined donor goal. Podium finishes in both events entitle the school to a split of additional prize money.

In Memoriam: Patricia Maryland, DrPH



One of eight children, the 1982 Pitt alumna said watching her mother struggle with Type 2 diabetes inspired her to get into healthcare.

She was also a longtime member of the School of Public Health's Board of Visitors.

She started her career as a strategic planner at UPMC Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh and worked in leadership roles at several hospital systems in the midwest being named CEO of Ascension Healthcare in 2017.

Donahoe named Distinguished Young Alumnus by alma mater



Assistant Professor Travis Donahoe (center-right) accepts his award at the Marshall University Alumni Association's award banquet.

Assistant Professor **Travis Donahoe** was honored by his undergraduate alma mater in spring 2026.

Marshall University named him its 2026 Distinguished Young Alumnus. "These awards recognize the significant contributions of our alumni to their alma mater, their profession and their community. We are proud to honor these outstanding individuals with special recognition during this yearly event," the university wrote in its statement announcing this year's honorees.

Kwon awarded K99/R00 from NCI and Postdoctoral Fellow of the Year



HPM PhD alum Youngmin Kwon (left) poses with his award from Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

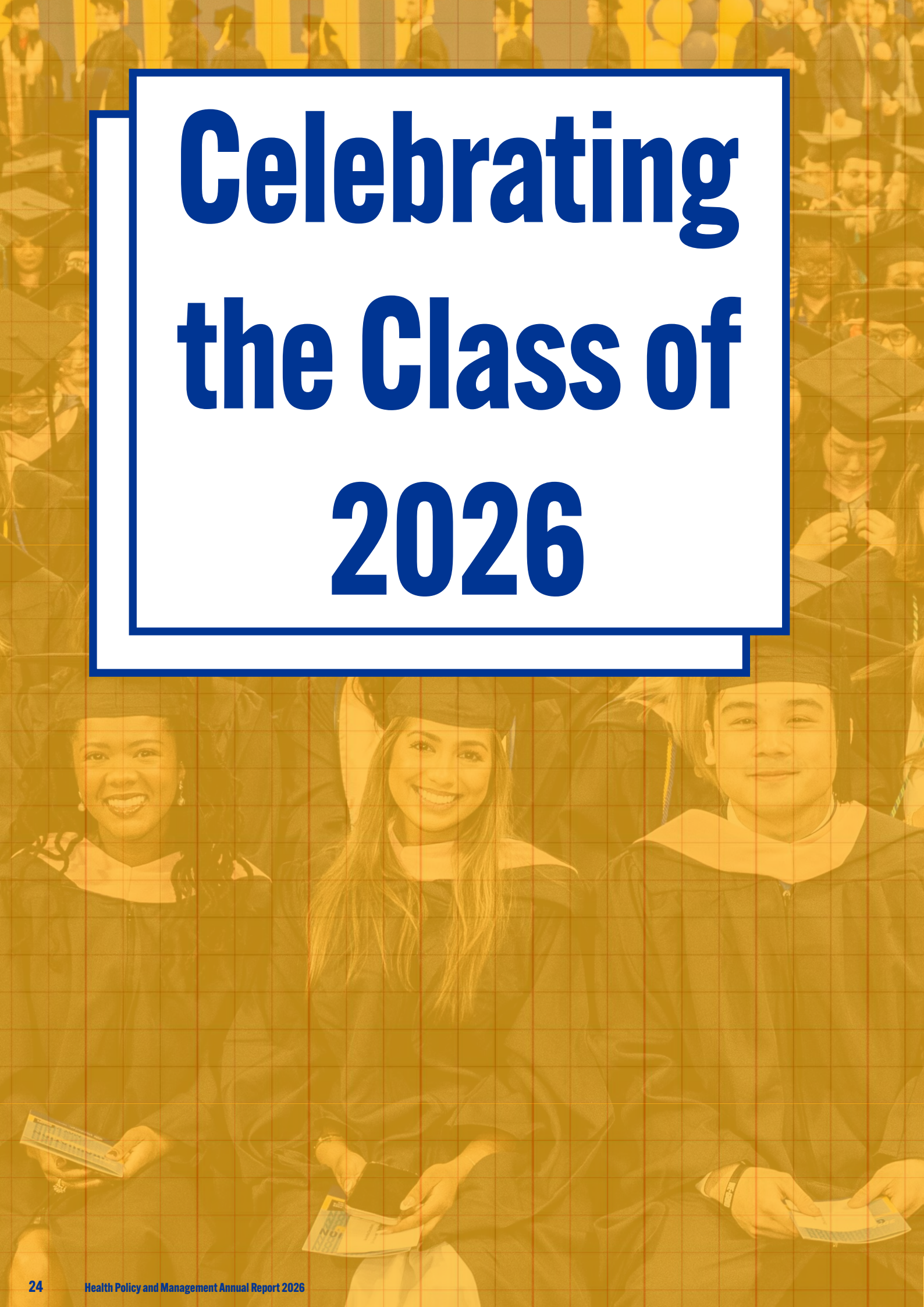
HPM alum **Youngmin Kwon (PhD '24)** has been awarded a K99/R00 grant from the National Cancer Institute.

Kwon's research will examine how Medicare Advantage enrollment affects the delivery of cancer care.

He was also recognized as the Postdoctoral Fellow of the Year by Ingram Cancer Center at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

"I am grateful to my mentors, as well as the AHRQ T32 leadership," said Kwon in a post announcing the grant and award. "I owe all my successes to their kind and generous support. I look forward to continuing my fellowship journey under their guidance!"

Celebrating the Class of 2026



HPM students recognized for scholarship, service during graduation ceremony



In addition to their diplomas, several HPM students received awards during commencement.

MHA graduate **Natalya Temple** received the Outstanding Student Award for her academic work in HPM.

Swetha Ramkumar (MPH '26) received the Dean's Service Award for her leadership and service to the school.

Several students were inducted into Delta Omega, the national honorary society for graduate studies in public health that recognizes merit and encourages continued excellence and devotion to public health work.

2026 Delta Omega Inductees: **Catherine Cavanaugh (MPH '26)**, **Delaney Kenyon (MPH '26)**, **Samantha Candalor (MPH '26)**, **Haliyat Oshodi (MPH '26)**, **Kendall Ruffner (MHA '26)**, **Michelle Breit (MHA '26)**.

MPH graduate **Alexa Pierce** received the Delta Omega Essay Award for her capstone essay.

Several students were also inducted into Upsilon Phi Delta, the national honor society that recognizes academic excellence in healthcare management and policy.

2026 Upsilon Phi Delta Inductees: **Catherine Cavanaugh (MPH '26)**, **Delaney Kenyon (MPH '26)**, **Haliyat Oshodi (MPH '26)**, **Natalya Temple (MHA '26)**, **Michelle Breit (MHA '26)**.

Graduates reflect on growth and connections made as they look toward their futures

In the grand scheme of life and career, two or three years can pass in the blink of an eye, especially for graduate students in Health Policy and Management, where master's students hit the ground running toward whatever comes next each year.

Before gathering one last time to handle one more request for a picture "for the newsletter and socials," some of our graduating students took a break from studying for finals or writing one last paper to reflect on their time with HPM and share some memories.

A picture's worth a thousand words



It's not "goodbye," but "until we see you again."

Along with friends, loved ones and well-wishers, HPM celebrated the Class of 2026 at commencement in May.

Check out the day as captured by the department and Pitt Public Health.

Celebrating the Class of 2026



HPMA celebrates the Class of 2026 at Bigham Tavern in Pittsburgh.



HPM faculty and staff gathered to celebrate our graduating students.

Finals week isn't always about tests and projects, and while they aren't finding out where they'll work next year in front of a national audience, HPM students, faculty and staff took time to celebrate our graduates.

Against the backdrop of the NFL draft, HPMA, the department's student association, hosted its annual Send-Off to celebrate two or three years of hard work, share some last laughs as a group and hand out superlatives like "Most Likely to Wear Business Casual Everywhere" (**Samantha Candalor** and **Michelle Breit**) and "Best at Corporate Lingo" (**Catherine Cavanaugh** and **Jon Jiang**), among others. It wasn't the only party, though; the department also hosted its celebration during finals week, giving everyone one more chance to celebrate before graduation.

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Health Policy and Management
School of Public Health



HPM faculty and staff at the department's strategic planning retreat in July 2026.

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