

Institute for Public Health Summer Research Program

Alumni Symposium

July 8, 2022

Keynote Speaker

Patricia Cavazos, PhD

IPH Summer Research Program Mentor



Dr. Patricia Cavazos is a Professor and Vice Chair for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Department of Psychiatry at Washington University (WashU) School of Medicine. She is a licensed clinical psychologist with expertise in the implementation of effective treatments for substance use disorder in clinical and community settings. Her research portfolio addresses health disparities and the use of technology to improve mental health and substance use assessment and treatment. She is the Co-Director of several training programs at WashU, including the Mentored Training Program in Clinical Investigation, the Training Leaders to Accelerate Global Mental Health Disparities in Research program, the NIDA-funded K12, and the NCATS-funded KL2 at the Institute for Clinical and Translational Sciences. She is a Steering Committee Member of the Latinx | Latin American Race & Ethnicity Research Unit within the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity & Equity. She is also an Equity Champion and a WashU DEI Liaison, and engages regularly with other DEI leaders to design and implement best practices for diversity and inclusion.

Alayna Sibert Patrick, MS, BS

2017 IPH Summer Research Program Scholar – Mentored by [Eric Mumford, PhD, MArch](#)



Alayna Sibert Patrick earned her Master's degree in Nutrition and Dietetics from Saint Louis University and her Bachelor's degree in Food Science & Technology from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University. She is an Adjunct Professor at Saint Louis University's College for Public Health and Social Justice and is pursuing a PhD in Public Health Studies. Her research interests are community-based and focus on food history, nature and health, and minority health issues. Alayna is a member of numerous professional organizations and has served as a Food Inspector for the United States Department of Agriculture, an Environmental Health Officer for the City of St. Louis Department of Health and the Operations Manager for the North City Food

Hub. Alayna also completed the Community Research Fellow Training program (CRFT) through WashU School of Medicine and the Siteman Cancer Center and currently serves as a member of CRFT's Patient Research Advisory Board.

Carolina Plaza, BS

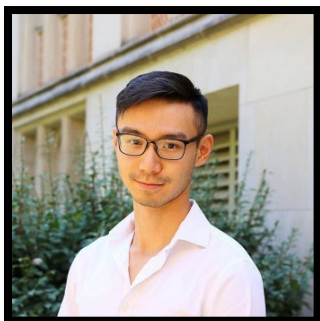
2021 IPH Summer Research Program Scholar – Mentored by [Matt Kuhlmann, MD, MSCI](#)



Carolina Plaza graduated from California State University, Northridge (CSUN) in May 2022 with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Public Health. She had previously immigrated to Culver City, California from Sonora, Mexico. During her undergrad at CSUN, she was President of the Health Education Student Organization, a BUILD PODER Scholar, and an intern at the MADRES Center at the University of Southern California. Her research interests are rooted in women's health, women's basic needs, and sexual reproductive health. This fall, Carolina will attend WashU to begin working towards a Master in Public Health with a Global Health concentration. She desires to create public health interventions that will influence policy makers in the U.S. and globally and would one day aspire to work in foreign nations to assist in providing resources and interventions that help to create equity.

Jeffrey Lee, BA, MPH, MEng

2015 IPH Summer Research Program Scholar – Mentored by [Robert Orchard, PhD](#) and [Herbert Virgin, MD, PhD](#)



Jeffrey Lee is a molecular biology PhD candidate at Princeton University. He completed his BA, MPH, and MEng at Washington University in St. Louis. His doctoral thesis covers the capture and characterization of novel bacterial peptides in the context of human-microbe and microbe-microbe interactions. As a science policy fellow with the School of Public and International Affairs, he examines how policies and programs can be strengthened for antimicrobial research and development. Jeffrey hopes to help shape science and biosecurity policy to prepare for a broad range of possible health threats.



Mahija Ginjupalli, BA, BS

2021 Amelia Brown Johnson Memorial Scholar – Mentored by [Angel Velarde, MD, MSCE](#) and [Lauren Henke, MD](#)

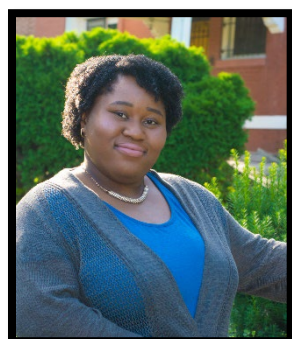
Mahija Ginjupalli was born in India and moved to the United States at the age of five. She is a 2022 graduate of the University of Texas at Austin where she studied Neuroscience and Anthropology. For her summer project, she worked on a study exploring the prevalence and social determinants of cervical cancer among underserved and uninsured patients in Guatemala. Her interest in public health stems from an ongoing initiative to develop and distribute health education videos for the Rohingya refugees of Bangladesh. She has recently applied to medical schools, and would welcome being a resource for any questions about public health and medical school applications!



Maria Ruiz, BA, BS

2014 IPH Summer Research Program Scholar – Mentored by [Warren Lewis, PhD](#) and [Amanda Lewis, PhD](#)

Maria Ruiz completed her undergraduate studies at WashU by achieving a Bachelor of Arts & Sciences in Anthropology. She is currently attending medical school at the University of Chicago, Pritzker School of Medicine. Maria's experiences living cross-culturally have driven her to become a physician whose highest priority is to provide excellent, dignifying patient care and to become a leader in health equity. Maria was recently selected as a Sommer Scholar and will spend the next year completing her Master's in Public Health degree at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in efforts to strengthen her research and advocacy skills.



Nneka Molokwu, MPH, BS

2014 IPH Summer Research Program Scholar – Mentored by [Mark Manary, MD](#)

Nneka Molokwu is a medical student at Emory University School of Medicine. Nneka graduated with her Bachelor's Degree in Biology in 2013 from Wartburg College, and with a Master in Public Health in 2015 from Washington University in St. Louis. After graduation, she joined the Global Health Center Washington University's Institute for Public Health and worked with the Gun Violence Initiative. Nneka is also passionate about social entrepreneurship and served on the board of the African Chamber of Commerce St. Louis from 2017-2019. She was also a co-owner of a local small business in STL that hand-produced body butters. She is scheduled to graduate from Emory in 2023, and will be applying to match into the OBGYN specialty this year.



Thy Gia Vuong, RN, BSN

2016 IPH Summer Research Program Scholar – Mentored by [Shanti Parikh, PhD](#)

Thy Gia Vuong is a bilingual registered nurse and MBA candidate at Boston University who currently works in Clinical Research for the Comprehensive Transplant Center at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Her background entails Quality Assurance, Clinical Management, and Global Health, and she holds a great deal of interest in leveraging innovation, process improvement, and team development to boost efficiency, quality, and reduce health disparity. The goal of her summer project was to unravel gender disparity with HIV care engagement in Uganda using mixed quantitative and qualitative methods.



Vineet Raman, BA, BS

2017 IPH Summer Research Program Scholar – Mentored by [Amy McQueen, PhD](#)

Vineet Raman graduated with degrees in Biology, Spanish, and Latin American & Caribbean Studies from the University of Georgia in May 2019. He is currently a medical student at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Vineet has researched language services regulations, low-income healthcare access, and cultural competency, authored a paper on bilingual mental health services and worked with an interdisciplinary team to establish a system of community health workers for Athens' Latinx community. He was also a 2019-2020 Fulbright researcher in India at the Institute of Public Health, Bangalore where his focus was health equity among India's tribal populations. He has also worked over the past year in COVID-response with his local health department.