



UCSF Action Research Center for Health Equity

Department of Medicine

Bending Health Toward Justice

A Note from Our Director

Dear friends,

In times that test our resolve, I'm grateful to our community of readers, supporters, and collaborators. Your engagement with our work fuels our mission at ARC.

Our faculty and staff are dedicated to conducting research that fulfills our mission to create action-oriented research that is rigorous, innovative, and focused on advancing health equity.

While the current climate has created uncertainty, we remain steadfast in our commitment. Our strength comes from both our diversity of thought and are shared values: evidence, independence, rigor, and inclusion. These values propel us to work together to advance health for people in all walks of life.



Our collective voice—formed through lived experience, research, teaching, and community partnership—remains essential.

To this end, I'm excited to announce our forthcoming podcast, **Research to Action**, which will highlight our faculty's work to reach and address determinants of health. Through these conversations we hope to inform policy and to inspire the next generation of health equity actors.

One-on-one with ARC's collective of researchers, clinicians, and policy experts, we'll explore how ARC investigators address health disparities in close collaboration with the communities we serve.

Thank you in advance for listening, and for working with us in pursuit of health for all!



In community,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margot".

Margot Kushel, MD
Director, ARC for Health Equity

Visit our
Website

ARC ACHIEVEMENTS

Nynikka Palmer Receives the 2025 Claire D. Brindis Award

ARC Core Faculty member, [Nynikka Palmer, DrPH, MPH](#), earned the 2025 Claire D. Brindis Award for Community Engagement & Service in Health Policy Research!

The Award for Community Engagement and Service in Health Policy Research is bestowed annually on a UCSF faculty member who embodies Dr. Brindis' commitment to giving voice, representation, and service to historically underserved communities; an advocacy and research in healthcare design which inform policymaking in ways that achieve tangible gains in health and well-being.



"Dr. Palmer is a brilliant and accomplished researcher and community advocate who has dedicated her life to improving the wellbeing of African-American men with prostate cancer," commended **one letter of nomination** for Dr. Palmer, "She has consistently engaged the stakeholder, focused on developing tools to improve communication and care, and gave voice to those long exposed to care disparities."

Dr. Palmer is an Associate Professor at UCSF in the Department of Medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine at ZSFG, with secondary appointments in the Departments of

Urology and Radiation Oncology. She leads the Prostate Cancer Task Force of the San Francisco Cancer Initiative, serves as Associate Director for the Center for Aging in Diverse Communities, is the Assistant Director for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility for Faculty within the UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is the Vice President of Research for the Academy of Communication in Healthcare.

The 2025 Claire D. Brindis Award for Community Engagement & Service in Health Policy Research will be presented at the 2025 UCSF Health Services Research Symposium on April 29, 2025. Register [here](#) to attend. Congratulations, Dr. Palmer!

Neeta Thakur Named Faculty Director of Clinical Research Operations



In March, ARC Core Faculty member **Neeta Thakur, MD**, assumed the role of faculty director of Clinical Research Operations for the Clinical Trials Operations Unit under UCSF's Clinical & Translational Science Institute (CTSI). In her new role, Dr. Thakur oversees Clinical Trials Operations (CTO) and serves as a key partner to assist the associate vice chancellor for clinical research, Office of Research leadership, and relevant campus administrative units in identifying and addressing priority areas to ensure efficient and effective research operations for studies with human participants, including clinical research and clinical trials.

Dr Thakur is a pulmonary and critical care physician and Medical Director of ZSFG's Chest Clinic, as well as an associate professor of medicine and pulmonary and critical care at UCSF. Congratulations, Dr. Thakur!

Jinoos Yazdany Named Executive Director of AI Monitoring in Clinical Care

In a **newly created position** within the UCSF Department of Medicine's Division of Clinical Informatics and Digital Transformation (DoC-IT), ARC Core Faculty Member **Jinoos Yazdany MD, MPH**, spearheads the development of the foundational components of the Impact Monitoring Platform for Clinical Care (IMPACC), a real-time AI monitoring platform designed to continuously evaluate the efficacy, safety, fairness, and overall value of AI tools deployed at UCSF Health. A central focus of her role will also be to expand access to data on AI implementations, ensuring that UCSF's research community can leverage these data to drive

innovative research.

“AI is no longer just hype—it's fundamentally transforming the way we deliver healthcare, Dr. Yazdany **told reporters**, “What excites me most is ensuring we strategically deploy AI tools and evaluate whether they improve patient outcomes and increase the joy of practicing medicine.”

Recognized for consistently fostering innovation and improving patient outcomes through a combination of visionary leadership and stewarding of large-scale collaborations, Dr. Yazdany also serve as ZSFG’s Chief of the Division of Rheumatology and is an Alice Betts Endowed Professor of Medicine at UCSF. Congratulations, Dr. Yazdany!



Anjana Sharma Named Learning Hub Faculty Lead for UCSF CODEX



ARC Associated Faculty Member **Anjana Sharma, MD, MAS**, has been named the inaugural Learning Hub faculty lead for the **UCSF CODEX (Coordinating Center for Diagnostic Excellence)**.

At the Learning Hub, Dr. Sharman will provide the diagnostic excellence community with the latest information on emerging developments in the field, including research findings, educational advancements, practice innovations, and policy changes.

Associate Professor in the UCSF Department of Family and Community Medicine, Dr. Sharma was cited for her wealth of experience in patient safety, quality improvement, patient engagement, and health equity. She looks forward to

“providing clinicians, learners, patients, and policymakers with actionable, high-quality insights to drive improvements to patient outcomes.” Congratulations, Dr. Sharma!

ARC PODCAST ALERT!

Introducing the Research to Action Podcast



Research to Action

*Series introduction
with Dr. Margot Kushel*

UCSF Action Research Center
for Health Equity
Department of Medicine



New from ARC: the [Research to Action](#) podcast! Join our faculty as they talk about moving rigorous research into action, supporting institutional and community-based interventions and initiatives through investigation, and informing policy-makers and decision-makers about the structural and systemic issues that affect health.

[Listen to the Series Intro
Now](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

[Amend](#)'s decade of work to inspire change in U.S. prisons was the focus of a recent radio interview with former Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg. Praising the San Quentin Transformation Initiative chaired by Dr. [Brie Williams](#), Amend's founding director, Mayor Steinberg cited the initiative's success in reducing violence and improving health for correctional officers and prison residents. Read Dr. Williams' report on the San Quentin Transformation initiative [here](#). ([KALW](#))

New findings from [Ryan Assaf](#), [Morgan Philbin](#), and [Margot Kushel](#) challenged public perceptions associating homelessness with illicit drug use and highlighted the barriers faced by unsheltered people seeking

[Priya Shete](#) warned that the recent cuts to USAID could lead to a resurgence in tuberculosis and potentially cost millions of lives. Since USAID plays significant roles in getting diagnostic tools and treatments to patients, Shete said, "the loss of resources will end up costing millions of lives potentially." ([The Today Show](#))

ARC founder, [Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo](#) detailed [new findings](#) regarding the amount of exercise recommended to lower blood pressure in adults as they approach middle age. Speaking to [UCSF news](#) Dr. Bibbins-Domingo said, "Maintaining physical activity during young adulthood— at higher levels than previously recommended, may be particularly important." ([ScienceAlert](#), [RTTNews](#))

treatment. ([UCSF News](#), [LA Times](#), [Medical Xpress](#))

[Margot Kushel](#) emphasized that treating homelessness requires a robust set of services ([Vox](#)) including medical care and devices ([San Francisco Chronicle](#))-- a significant concern as the age of people experiencing homelessness rises, with many having fallen into it for the first time after the age of 50. ([Miami Herald](#))

The [Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative](#) released [Behavioral Health and Homelessness](#), a report examining the relationship between homelessness, substance use, and mental health. Analyzing data from BHHI's California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness, the new report provides critical insights for policymakers, program leaders, Continuum of Care leaders, and healthcare systems. ([SF Examiner](#))

FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENTS

ARC Welcomes New Mentored Faculty Members!

[Ryan Assaf, PhD, MPH](#) is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Health Equity and Society. His research focuses on the intersection of substance use, harm reduction, and health outcomes among people experiencing homelessness through the use of community-engaged practices and advanced epidemiologic methods, including causal inference. He earned his MPH and PhD in Epidemiology from the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health and recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative. With nearly a decade of experience in community-based organizations, Dr. Assaf is committed to translating research into policies and interventions that promote health equity and social justice.



Read Dr. Assaf's latest research, [Illicit Substance Use and Treatment Access Among Adults Experiencing Homelessness](#).



[Marissa Boeck MD, MPH, FACS](#), is an Assistant Professor of Surgery in the School of Medicine, where she serves as an acute care and trauma surgeon and surgical critical care intensivist at both Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and UCSF Parnassus. Dr. Boeck became faculty in 2020 after finishing her fellowship training at UCSF, at which time she also became an Associate Director of the Center for Health Equity in Surgery and Anesthesia (CHESA) and the surgery lead of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Emergency, Critical, and Operative (ECO) Care. Dr. Boeck's academic pursuits are driven by the realization where someone lives is inextricably linked to how or even if they

live, and dismantling this disparity through research and policy feeds her passion to partner with communities to optimize injury prevention and outcomes, and surgical and trauma care

and system development, with a focus on underserved populations. Current projects include addressing injury survivor post-discharge social needs and measuring long-term patient reported outcomes, improving access to surgical care for people experiencing homelessness, designing trauma informed care interventions for the acute care surgery context, exploring firearm injury risk factors in California communities, and assessing the impact of pre-hospital care on trauma outcomes in Kenya.

Anita Hargrave-Bouagnon MD, MAS, is an Assistant Professor at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and internal medicine physician who is committed to patient-oriented and policy-relevant research aimed at improving health outcomes for people who have experienced trauma through identifying and addressing gaps in care using implementation science strategies. She is currently a BIRCWH K12 scholar evaluating the impact of traumatic experiences on leading causes of mortality and morbidity for women including cardiovascular disease, cancer, and suicide. This foundational research will be used to create, test, and implement trauma-informed interventions that promote participation in evidence-based practices and improve health outcomes. Her work aims to leverage research as a tool to reduce health disparities, address gaps in patient care, and advance effective trauma-informed interventions.

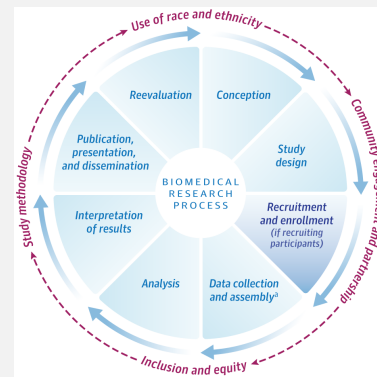


Read Dr. Hargrave-Bouagnon's latest research, **[The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Homelessness and Returns to Housing: A Qualitative Analysis From the California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness](#)**.

Expert Perspectives: Thought Leadership from ARC Faculty

Recent publications by ARC Core Faculty Members **Dr. Fernandez**, **Dr. Powe**, **Dr. Seligman**, and **Dr. Williams** amplify their expert voices through powerful analysis, commentary, and interpretation, advancing the Center's mission to reshape health systems toward impartiality and accessible care for all communities.

Their leadership exemplifies ARC's unwavering commitment to evidence-based research to transform policies and improve health outcomes across populations—precisely the collaborative spirit and shared values central to ARC's work.



The Intersection of Climate Justice and Criminal Justice: Extreme Heat and Health Inequities in Carceral Facilities.

Haber LA, Cloud DH, Boudin C, **Williams BA**. JAMA. 2025 Jan 22.

Race and Ethnicity in Biomedical Research: Changing Course and Improving Accountability.

Powe NR, Yearby R, Wilson MR. JAMA. 2025 Feb 10.



Care for Patients With a History of Immigration.

Wheeler M, Gutierrez JR, **Fernandez A**. JAMA. 2025 Jan 22.



Food Insecurity, Health, and Health Care in the US.

Ostrer IR, **Seligman HK**. JAMA. 2025 Mar 11.

FEATURED PUBLICATIONS

Kong M, Rios-Fetchko F, Olmos-Rodriguez M... **Fernandez A**. Challenges to Video Visits for Patients With Non-English Language Preference: A Qualitative Study. JAMA Netw Open. 2025 Feb 3;8(2):e2457477. **PubMed Citation.**

Kim JE, Sagara L, DeDent AM, **Tuot DS**. Facilitators of and barriers to Medicaid investment in electronic consultation services. Am J Manag Care. 2025 Mar;31(3):128-135. **PubMed Citation.**

Nouri S, Pantilat SZ, Ritchie CS, **Lyles CR... Sudore RL**. Quality of Virtual vs. In-Person Outpatient Palliative Care: Disparities by Language and Race. J Pain Symptom Manage. 2025 Apr;69(4):385-392.e1. **PubMed Citation.**

Bahl S, Ritter V, Thompson-Lastad A... **Chao MT**. Evaluating Feasibility and Acceptability of a Telehealth Integrative Pain Management Program Among Primary Care Safety-Net Patients. Glob Adv Integr Med Health. 2025 Feb 26;14:27536130251321460. **PubMed Citation.**

Suen LW, Chiang AY, Jones BLH... **Knight KR... Coffin PO**. Outpatient Low-Dose Initiation of Buprenorphine for People Using Fentanyl. JAMA Netw Open. 2025 Jan 2;8(1):e2456253. **PubMed Citation.**

Brinkley-Rubinstein L, Berk J, **Williams BA**. Carceral Health Care. N Engl J Med. 2025 Feb 27;392(9):892-901. **PubMed Citation.**

Kwan AT, Vargo J, Kurtz C... **Shete PB**. The integration of health equity into policy to

reduce disparities: Lessons from California during the COVID-19 pandemic. PLoS One. 2025 Mar 6;20(3):e0316517. [PubMed Citation](#).

Sauceda JA, Campbell CK, Ndukwe SO... Saberi P. Medical mistrust of health systems as a moderator of resilience and self-reported HIV care engagement in Black and Latinx young adults living with HIV. Cultur Divers Ethnic Minor Psychol. 2025 Jan;31(1):118-123. [PubMed Citation](#).

Kui K, Hailozian C, Thai M... **Vijayaraghavan M**. Tobacco cessation, mental health, and substance use in a community pharmacist-linked cessation program for people experiencing homelessness. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2025 Feb 1;267:112527. [PubMed Citation](#).

Palar K, Sheira LA, Frongillo EA... Weiser SD. Food Is Medicine for Human Immunodeficiency Virus: Improved Health and Hospitalizations in the Changing Health Through Food Support (CHEFS-HIV) Pragmatic Randomized Trial. J Infect Dis. 2025 Mar 17;231(3):573-582. [PubMed Citation](#).

[See all recent ARC-authored publications](#)

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