



Action Research Center for Health Equity

Department of Medicine

Bending Health Toward Justice

A Note from Our Director

Dear friends,

In a rapidly changing world, we are reminded of all the work that is left to do. The work continues—and it matters each day more than ever.

Federal funding cuts threaten the communities we serve. Access to evidence-based care faces new restrictions. Health disparities widen while social determinants compound the challenges our patients face before they even reach us.

Our work—both our research and our clinical work—reminds us of the reality of health disparities and the urgency of action even when—especially when—that work is difficult. This moment tests our resolve. Our dedication proves we can meet it.



We are pushing forward because health extends far beyond our clinic walls—into housing, social structure, and community support systems that impact outcomes and access to quality healthcare that everyone deserves. We are leaning into our core principles of building a world where everyone has a chance of leading healthy lives.

Thank you for refusing to give up on the communities we serve. Thank you for believing that everyone deserves to thrive—and for making that belief actionable every day.

The work is hard. The work is critical.
We do it together.

With hope,



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

Margot Kushel, MD
Director, ARC for Health Equity

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Website

HEY GOOGLE, WHAT'S RUSSIAN FOR TAKE TWO PILLS AND CALL ME IN THE MORNING?

Five Questions on Machine Translation with Elaine Khoong, MD, MS

For over 25 million Americans who prefer a language other than English, language-related communication barriers in healthcare encounters are increasingly common. Can machine translation fill in when interpreters and translators are unavailable?

Dr. Elaine Khoong, ARC Associated faculty member and Associate Professor, shares her insight into the potential roles of AI to bridge language gaps between healthcare providers and patients.

Find the original research, [Evaluation of the accuracy and safety of machine translation of patient-specific discharge instructions: a comparative analysis](#), at BMJ Quality & Safety.



Read Dr. Khoong on Machine
Translation

Kong M, **Fernandez A**, Bains J, Milisavljevic A, Brooks KC, Shanmugam A, **Avilez L**, Li J,

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT: TOWARD SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

The work of ARC faculty and their programs challenge systemic disparities by reframing how we understand and address complex social problems affecting historically marginalized populations, often accounting for punitive, stigmatizing approaches to complex social problems by centering human dignity and addressing root causes rather than symptoms.



Amend's Relationship-Based Security

[Amend](#) transforms prison culture by proving that building relationships rather than barriers creates safer environments. German prisons operating on "human dignity" principles show that inmates in relationship-based units are 73% less likely to be disciplined for violence. As one officer noted: "It would be a huge potential for violence if you locked them up all the time." ([NY Times](#))



Reproductive Health: Evidence Over Fear



Food Justice: Challenging SNAP Restrictions

[Hilary Seligman, MD](#), questions whether restricting food assistance purchases reduces stigma without improving health. Her research reveals that targeting SNAP users specifically may "increase stigma for people who are trying to make ends meet" rather than addressing broader nutrition issues affecting all Americans. ([NY Times](#), [Marketplace](#))



Homelessness: Treating People, Not Symptoms

[Eleanor Bimla Schwarz, MD, MS](#), counters viral misinformation about birth control risks, ensuring women can make informed reproductive choices based on evidence rather than fear-based restrictions on their autonomy and healthcare access. ([Newsweek](#))

BHHI Director, [Margot Kushel, MD](#), addresses how tent sweeps increase violence against homeless women while missing root causes. BHHI research showing **82% of homeless Californians experience serious mental health conditions** informed California's CARE Courts—emphasizing treatment over criminalization. ([Daily Journal](#), [KQED](#), [SF Standard](#))

ARC OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS



PRISM Health Symposium

Promoting Research in Social Media and Health

10th Annual PRISM Health Symposium

Join PRISM Co-chairs [Dr. Urmimala Sarkar](#) and Dr. John Patrick-Allem at the 2025 PRISM Health Symposium!

This all-day event provides an invaluable opportunity to collaborate with other researchers and industry stakeholders. Learn about the newest research and advance the field together in a community of peers.

Pre-registration is required as spaces are limited and there will be no on-site registration. Register for early-bird pricing until **September 30th!**

Thursday, December 3, 2025

Mission Bay Conference Center, San Francisco, CA

Click here to view last year's [PRISM 2024 Highlights](#).

**Register here for PRISM
2025**

ARC PODCAST



ARC Research to Action

Be sure to catch up on published episodes of **Research to Action**! Director [Margot Kushel, MD](#), provides a brief introduction to the ARC mission. [Nynikka Palmer, DrPH, MPH](#), shares her journey to address prostate cancer and considers how community experiences and patients' voices are integral to improving research, planning, and interventions. [Hilary Seligman, MD, MAS](#), discusses food as medicine interventions and the long-term benefits of these interventions in preventing chronic diseases and improving overall health. Have a listen and stay tuned for future episodes!

Listen
Now!

FEATURED PUBLICATIONS

Chiu DT, Fein F, Thompson-Lastad A..., **Chao MT**. "It's a Really Big Privilege to be Able to Take Care of Ourselves": A Mixed Methods Study of Integrating Mindfulness for Mental Health into a Job Training Program for Low-Income Emerging Adults. Glob Adv Integr Med Health. 2025 Jun 5;14:27536130251347913. [PubMed Citation](#).

Choudhury AS, Cembali AG, **Tuot DS...**, **Lyles CR**. Intensive Remote Onboarding to Improve Digital Health Access Among Safety-Net Patients During a Pandemic: An Implementation Study. Telemed J E Health. 2025 Jul;31(7):919-923. [PubMed Citation](#).

Decker H, Evans J, Squire DG, Colom S, Perez K, Raven M, Plevin R, Decker H, Evans J, Squire DG, Colom S, Perez K, Raven M, Plevin R, Kanzaria HK, Stey A. Timeliness of injury care and housing status. Injury. 2025 Jun 17:112531. doi:

10.1016/j.injury.2025.112531. [PubMed Citation](#).

Hawes MR, Assaf RD, Birkmeyer JA, Philbin MM, Vijayaraghavan M, Kushel M. Tobacco Use Patterns and Missed Opportunities for Cessation Treatment Among People Experiencing Homelessness. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2025 Jun 25. doi: 10.1007/s11606-025-09654-9. [PubMed Citation](#).

Khoong EC, Casillas A, Gutierrez G, Lyles CR, ...Rodriguez JA. Centering Health Equity in an Increasingly Digital Environment. *Perspect Biol Med*. 2025;68(2):351-369. doi: 10.1353/pbm.2025.a962029. [PubMed Citation](#).

Shete PB, Santos N, Spindler H..., Aragón T (2025) Building an agile state-wide research infrastructure to address COVID-19 and emerging threats: insights from an equity-centered public health and academic collaboration in California. *Front Public Health*. 2025 Jul 8;13:1549326. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2025.1549326. [PubMed Citation](#).

Begna H, Chiang AY, Schwarz EB. Development and validation of the Access to Contraceptive Care and Early Abortion Support Services (ACCESS) measure. *Contraception*. 2025 Aug 6:111050. doi: 10.1016/j.contraception.2025.111050. [PubMed Citation](#).

Decker H, Graham L, Titan A, Kanzaria H, Hawn M, Wick E, Tsai J, Kushel M. Is Gaining Housing Associated With Higher Rates of Cancer Screening Among US Veterans Experiencing Homelessness? *Ann Fam Med*. 2025 Jul 28;23(4):330-336. doi: 10.1370/afm.240520. [PubMed Citation](#).

Handley MA, Abascal Miguel L, Thompson LM, Velloza J. Bridging community-engaged research and implementation science methods to advance public health practice. *Bundesgesundheitsblatt Gesundheitsforschung Gesundheitsschutz*. 2025 Jul;68(7):797-808. English. doi: 10.1007/s00103-025-04079-5. [PubMed Citation](#).

Hargrave-Bouagnon AS, Begna H, Lipinsky DeGette R, Wistar E, Schwarz EB. Sex Differences in Management of Hypertension in US Ambulatory Practice. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2025 Jul 2. doi: 10.1007/s11606-025-09676-3. [PubMed Citation](#).

Sauceda J, Korolkova A, Rodriguez Garcia L, ...Dubé K. Resolving Challenges in HIV Cure-Related Research: Protocol for a Modified Delphi Consensus-Building Process. *JMIR Res Protoc*. 2025 Aug 6;14:e67123. doi: 10.2196/67123. [PubMed Citation](#).

Wesson P, Vittinghoff E, Thomas MD, ...Mangurian C. Identifying the vulnerable among the vulnerable: applying quantitative intersectionality methods to assess potential inequities in the HIV continuum of care for people living with schizophrenia in the United States. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol*. 2025 Aug 4. doi: 10.1007/s00127-025-02972-7. [PubMed Citation](#).

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

Connect with ARC

Join us as we dive into the collective work of ARC's core faculty, dedicated to raising the accessibility and quality of care for people everywhere.

As professionals committed to health equity, we meet people where they are. Join the ARC network on your preferred platforms.

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