

Society for the Study of Social Problems Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division Newsletter



Message from the Co-Chairs

As we approach the 2025 SSSP Annual Meeting in Chicago, we are filled with excitement about our Division's sponsored sessions! The topics span racial health disparities, reproductive autonomy, technology and surveillance, insurgent sociology, anticapitalist approaches to community and care, and more! We are also thrilled to introduce you to our Graduate Student Paper Award winner and Outstanding Scholarship Award winner. We are so grateful to the committee members for their service!

Looking forward to seeing you all in Chicago,

Virginia Kuulei Berndt & Raja Staggers-Hakim

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**Join us for our
Virtual Annual Business Meeting**

**Wednesday, July 16, 2025
2:00pm Eastern Time**

Link:

<https://miamioh.zoom.us/j/84341227174?pwd=pFSKpOW1ZJ8sWDQIX3ESn19ZB61Ffp.1>



Outgoing Co-Chair

Virginia Kuulei Berndt, PhD
Assistant Professor of Sociology
McDaniel College

It has been a pleasure serving as Co-Chair for SSSP's Health Division. Transcending the invaluable leadership experience, I have gained treasured memories that I will carry forward for the rest of my life.

At such a pivotal point in history where health, health policy, and health services are drastically changing and under attack, our Division's research, advocacy, and action could not be more important.

Under the leadership of Current Co-Chair, Dr. Raja Staggers-Hakim, and Incoming Co-Chair, Dr. Jennifer Roebuck Bulanda, I am confident that our multi-disciplinary Division filled with academics, activists, and advocates, will stand strong, collaborate, and make meaningful contributions to address health inequalities and disparities.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Chicago this August!



Incoming Co-Chair

Jennifer Roebuck Bulanda, PhD
Associate Professor of Sociology
Miami University

I am very pleased to be returning to the Co-Chair role after first serving during the 2021-2023 term. I have been a member of SSSP for over a decade, and I believe the mission of our Division could not be more important today. As we grapple with social problems related to health care accessibility, affordability, and equity, it's essential that we continue our research and advocacy efforts to address health disparities.

Our membership includes (but is not limited to!) policy makers, public health professionals, social workers, administrators, advocates, practitioners, caregivers, educators, students, and researchers.

To create effective change in health and health care, we need more opportunities for all of us to collaborate. Whether we work independently or in non-profit, governmental, grassroots, community-based, health care, or academic settings, SSSP provides an opportunity to apply our diverse knowledge and experiences to address health-related social problems. I look forward to working together with all of you to identify ways we can best make this happen, both at the annual meeting and throughout the year!

Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division Sponsored Sessions for SSSP 2025

Session 020:

Pursuing Racial Justice to Improve Health Inequalities in Historically Marginalized Groups I

- **Session Type:** Regular Paper Session
- **Organizer:** Raja Staggers-Hakim
- **Date and Time:** Friday, August 8 - 2:30-4:10pm
- **Location:** Kimball Room

Session 026:

Pursuing Racial Justice to Improve Health Inequalities in Historically Marginalized Groups II

- **Session Type:** Regular Paper Session
- **Organizer:** Raja Staggers-Hakim
- **Date and Time:** Friday, August 8 - 4:30-6:10pm
- **Location:** Kimball Room

Session 041:

Insurgent Sociology in Health Care

- **Session Type:** Regular Paper Session (Thematic)
- **Organizer:** William Cabin
- **Co-Sponsor:** Sociology, Social Work, & Social Welfare
- **Date and Time:** Saturday, August 9 - 10:30am-12:10pm
- **Location:** Price Room

Health, Health Policy, and Health Services Division Sponsored Sessions for SSSP 2025

Session 048: Reproductive Autonomy, Justice, and the Law

- **Session Type:** Papers in the Round
- **Organizer:** Virginia Kuulei Berndt
- **Co-Sponsor:** Law and Society
- **Date and Time:** Saturday, August 9 - 12:30pm-2:10pm
- **Location:** Grant Park Parlor

Session 071: Critical Reflections on Mutual Aid and Anticapitalist Approaches to Community and Care

- **Session Type:** Critical Dialogue
- **Organizers:** Andrew Schoeneman, Bob Spires, & Gabby Gomez
- **Co-Sponsors:** Community, Research, & Practice; Conflict, Social Action, & Change; Poverty, Class, & Inequality
- **Date and Time:** Sunday, August 10 - 10:30am-12:10pm
- **Location:** Wabash Room

Session 085: Technology, Surveillance and Access to Health Services

- **Session Type:** Regular Paper Session
- **Organizer:** Yuying Shen
- **Co-Sponsor:** Social Problems Theory
- **Date and Time:** Sunday, August 10 - 2:30-4:10pm
- **Location:** Indiana Room



Outstanding Scholarship Award Winner
Ariana Thompson-Lastad, PhD
University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)

Dr. Ariana Thompson-Lastad is the winner of SSSP's Division of Health, Health Policy, and Health Services' 2025 Outstanding Scholarship Award.

Dr. Thompson-Lastad possesses a long-standing dedication to and expertise in the topics of group medical visits and integrative health equity. Before becoming a researcher, Ariana served on the steering committee of "Hand in Hand," a national network for domestic worker organizing and labor rights, and worked as a bilingual health educator and care coordinator for a community health center in Berkeley, CA. Having witnessed contradictions and inequality in healthcare, Ariana pursued a PhD in medical sociology at UCSF. There, she won a Dissertation Award and joined the Osher Center as a postdoctoral fellow and then as an Assistant Professor.

One of her recently published articles, "Social Capital and Cultural Health Capital in Primary Care: The Case of Group Medical Visits," was co-authored with Jessica M. Harrison and Janet K. Shim and published in *Sociology of Health & Illness* (2024). Ariana's nominator applauds the article's use of Bourdieusian social theory and cultural health capital to "elucidate not only how care inequities are reproduced, but more importantly how they may be acted upon and ameliorated."

Dr. Thompson-Lastad continues to translate research into action through projects centering on community midwifery and birth equity, leading listening sessions with policymakers to advocate for expanded Medicaid insurance coverage, and serving on the leadership board of Integrative Medicine and the Underserved.

Congratulations

Gabby Gomez
will be starting a
Post-Doc
position at
Macalester
College
this Fall!



Graduate Student Paper Competition Award Winner
Gabby Gomez
Oklahoma State University

Gabby Gomez is the winner of SSSP's Division of Health, Health Policy, and Health Services' 2025 Outstanding Student Paper Competition Award. Gabby's winning paper, "The Proof is in the Pudding': A Qualitative Examination of the Weight-Inclusive Healthcare Practice from the Perspective of Weight-Inclusive Healthcare Practitioners" is based on her recently defended dissertation in Sociology at Oklahoma State University.

Recent scholarship and media reports indicate that healthcare practitioners have begun taking up weight-inclusive healthcare practice in response to concerns about the current weight-centric healthcare paradigm's ineffectiveness, harms, and contributions to health disparities. However, little is known about how practitioners enact or carry out weight-inclusive healthcare in practice, how they perceive their patients' and clients' responses to it, and how they perceive their delivery of weight-inclusive healthcare to impact their patients' or clients' health outcomes.

Gabby addresses these questions through an analysis of 85 interviews with healthcare practitioners who practice weight-inclusive healthcare. Among Gabby's many findings was that, in her participants' experience, delivering weight-inclusive healthcare enhances patient-provider relationships and in turn improves healthcare utilization, which has implications for patients' longer-term health outcomes. This insight into the benefits of weight-inclusive healthcare is timely and important as health scholars and health agencies continue to stress the need to identify nonstigmatizing modes of healthcare delivery that will increase healthcare utilization and enhance health outcomes at the population level.

Congratulations



MEMBER
ON THE
JOB MARKET!

On the Job Market

Adetola Ajayi, MA, MPH

University of West Georgia

Website: [[link](#)] | E-mail: ajayiadetola20@gmail.com

Adetola Ajayi is a public health and sociology professional with a strong commitment to advancing health equity through research, program management, and community engagement. She holds a Master of Public Health (MPH) and a Master's degree in Sociology and brings a multidisciplinary approach to addressing disparities in healthcare access and outcomes. Adetola has led and supported initiatives focused on improving healthcare access and outcomes through community-based research, stakeholder engagement, and program management, with a particular focus on underserved populations. She is passionate about using evidence-informed strategies to drive systemic change and ensure equitable health outcomes for all communities.



On the Job Market

Ridwan Islam Sifat, PhD Candidate
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Website: [\[link\]](#) | E-Mail: rsifat1@umbc.edu

Ridwan Islam Sifat is a Ph.D. candidate in Public Policy with a concentration on Health Policy at the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), where he also received his M.P.P. in Public Policy. His research examines public policy and management, focusing on social and health policy for marginalized populations, including gender and sexuality minorities and racial and ethnic groups. He analyzes local government services, structural factors driving marginalization, and the impact of policies in reducing social inequities. His dissertation explores the healthcare experiences of intersex individuals in the United States using Andersen's Behavioral Model of Health Services Use. The research aims to understand how systemic, contextual, and individual factors influence healthcare access and the quality of care for intersex individuals.

He is currently a Graduate Assistant at the UMBC School of Public Policy. Ridwan serves as a graduate senator representing the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) in the UMBC Graduate Student Association and is also an Orientation Advisor at the UMBC Office for Academic and Pre-Professional Advising. He previously worked as a general associate in Academic Engagement and Transition Programs. Additionally, he is an associate editor of the International Journal of Public Health Science and serves on the Editorial Board of SAGE Open. He has been recognized for his academic achievements with several honors, including the Phi Kappa Phi Dissertation Fellowship, the Adam Yarmolinsky Fellowship, the Renato DiPentima Fellowship, the Marilyn Demorest Love of Learning Award, and the UMBC CAHSS Dissertation Research Award (received twice). Before pursuing his doctoral studies, Ridwan was an adjunct lecturer at Northern University Bangladesh.



MEMBER
ON THE
JOB MARKET!

On the Job Market

Derek Richardson, PhD Candidate
Indiana University Bloomington
Website: [\[link\]](#) | E-Mail: richde@iu.edu

Derek Richardson is a sociology PhD candidate at Indiana University Bloomington with research and teaching interests in health and medicine, organizations, and development. His dissertation research is a comparative ethnography of three nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that provide healthcare services in Cambodia. Drawing upon nearly 1,000 hours of ethnographic observations and over 150 interviews, it asks, “How do transnational healthcare professionals, and the organizations in which they work, manage the application of medical expertise in new settings?” He expects to defend his dissertation in Spring 2026.

Much of Derek’s research focuses on the activities and interorganizational relationships of NGOs. He views NGOs as key sites where disparate actors – including professionals, volunteers, and donors – collectively create and deploy expert knowledge to solve local-level problems. He adopts qualitative methodologies to explore three broad issues pertaining to NGO-led healthcare delivery: (1) how professional expertise gets constructed in and transported between organizations; (2) how expert knowledge manifests in interactions amongst organizational inhabitants; and (3) the formal and informal organizational structures that enable agentic behavior for healthcare delivery.

Derek’s research has been published in *Sociology of Development* and supported by several prestigious fellowships, including a Fulbright US Student Program Fellowship, Center for Khmer Studies US Scholar Research Fellowship, and College of Arts & Sciences Dissertation Research Fellowship. He will be a Graduate Fellow at Indiana University Bloomington’s Irsay Institute this year and was previously a Visiting Fellow at the Cambodia Development Resource Institute in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Beyond research, Derek is also passionate about teaching. He has teaching and mentoring experience within and beyond Indiana University Bloomington, including teaching Introduction to Sociology as an instructor of record, serving on undergraduate students’ honors thesis committees, and mentoring students undertaking ethnographic research projects.

Member Updates

Publications

Bill Cabin

- **Cabin, Bill.** 2025. "Medicare Home Health Social Workers' Views on New OASIS Questions on Housing, Food, Utilities and Transportation." *Home Health Care Management & Practice*. (Online First) [\[Link\]](#)

Agnieszka Doll

- **Doll, Agnieszka.** 2025. "Fieldwork, Ethics, and the Importance of 'Wide Reflexivity': Feminist Socio-legal Research in Difficult Sites." *Feminist Legal Studies*. (Online First) [\[Link\]](#)
- **Doll, Agnieszka** and Braelyn Spruce. 2025. "Mending the religiosity gap? A critical investigation of the nexus of religion, psychiatry, and gender normalization in Poland." *Parrhèsia: Journal of Critical Research in Law and Psychiatry* 1: 50-68. [\[Link\]](#)

Chandra L. Ford

- **Ford, Chandra.** 2024. *Racism: Science & Tools for the Public Health Professional*. APHA Press. [\[Link\]](#)

Tiffany D. Joseph

- **Joseph, Tiffany D.** 2025. *Not All In: Race, Immigration and Healthcare Exclusion in the Age of Obamacare*. John Hopkins University Press. [\[Link\]](#) [40% discount with code HNAI25]
- **Joseph, Tiffany D.** 2025. "The Documentation Status Continuum and the Impact of Categories on Healthcare Stratification." *Social Sciences* 14(1): 41. [\[Link\]](#)

Barbara Katz Rothman

- Review: H-Diplo Roundtable Review 16-45 on The Biomedical Empire by Barbara Katz Rothman. [\[Link\]](#)

Zachary Kline

- **Kline, Zachary.** 2024. "The Effects of State-Managed Marketplaces on Out-of-Pocket Health Care Costs: Before and After the Affordable Care Act.." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 89: 100881. [\[Link\]](#)

Member Updates

Publications

Deborah Lefkowitz

- **Lefkowitz, Deborah.** 2025. "'Doing' eligibility through income thresholds: Organisational practices in US financial assistance programmes for women with breast cancer." *Critical Social Policy*. (Online First) [[Link](#)]

Ridwan Islam Sifat

- **Sifat, Ridwan Islam.** 2025. "AI and Public Policy: Navigating the Possibilities and Unknowns." *Politics & Policy* 53(1): e70019. [[Link](#)]

Jason A. Smith

- **Smith, Jason A.,** Amber C. Kalb, Jermaine Toney, Kyle K. Moore, Ismael Cit-Martinez, and Roberta Spatler-Roth. 2025. "There's No Place Like a Home Department: Experiences of URM Faculty Climbing the Academic Ladder in the Sociology and Economics Professions." *Sociological Focus* 58(2): 225-239. [[Link](#)]

Manning Zhang

- **Zhang, Manning** Clemens Noelke, Dolores Acevedo-Garcia, and Robert W. Ressler. 2025. "Death by Neighborhood: Disparities in Violent Deaths by Neighborhood Opportunity with the Child Opportunity Index 3.0, Preliminary Results. *AJPM Focus* 100357. [[Link](#)]

Grants

Ridwan Islam Sifat

- Renato DiPentima Fellowship for Advancement in Public Policy (University of Maryland, Baltimore County School of Public Policy)
- The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi Dissertation Fellowship (\$10,000)
- College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) Dissertation Research Award (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) (\$6,000)

Member Updates

Media Appearances

Chandra L. Ford

- Consulted and interviewed in the PBS NOVA documentary, Critical Condition: Health in Black America (Stanley Nelson) [\[Link\]](#)

Tiffany D. Joseph

- Tiffany D. Joseph. 2025. "How Race and Immigration Status Limit Healthcare Access." Commonwealth Beacon Codcast, May 12. [\[Link\]](#).
- Tiffany D. Joseph. 2025. "Not All In: Race, Immigration, and Healthcare Exclusion in the Age of Obamacare." New Books Network Podcast, April 2. [\[Link\]](#).
- Tiffany D. Joseph. 2025. "Healthcare in Hostile Times." Episode 7, Badly Governed Podcast, March 12. [\[Link\]](#)
- Tiffany D. Joseph. 2025. "Why GOP Attempts to Sanitize History will Fail." Common Dreams, May 4. [\[Link\]](#)
- Tiffany D. Joseph. 2025. "The Republican Plan to Dismantle the Affordable Care Act." The Hill, March 24. [\[Link\]](#)
- Jasmine Laws. 2025. "Trump Administration Takes Action on Illegal Immigrants Getting Medicaid." Newsweek, May 28. [\[Link\]](#)
- Brazilian Times. 2025. "Boston Professor Publishes Book on Healthcare Barriers for Brazilians" (in Portuguese). April 14. [\[Link\]](#).

Awards

Ridwan Islam Sifat

- Marilyn Demorest Love of Learning Award (2025) (Phi Kappa Phi - University of Maryland, Baltimore County)
- Inaugural Asian Culture Award (2025) (Changemaker Category) (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)
- Public Administration Theory Network (PAT-Net) Fellow (2025) [\[Link\]](#)

Job Announcements

Zachary Kline

- Zachary Kline began working as an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Statistics at the College of New Jersey in Fall 2024.