

Opening Doors

The Center for Global Women's Health

Strategic Plan
2021-2024



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Introduction

The difference ten years can make is startling. When the Center for Global Women's Health (CGWH) was established a decade ago to address women's health through a nursing lens, the goal was to drive science to improve the lives of women in urban areas around the globe. That vision quickly expanded—because health inequality in urban areas is only half of the picture.

Since the establishment of the CGWH, the Center has not only supported and highlighted nurse-led research that focuses on women and girls, it has organized hands-on projects that directly impact women's health and well-being, from cervical cancer prevention to mental health to community sanitation and beyond. The Center has consistently provided research and community service opportunities for Penn Nursing students and faculty, as well as honored women's health champions throughout the world.

As the Center enters its next decade, it is time to do more—because we as nurses, nurse-scientists, and midwives know that our true power lies in building on our solid foundation and the innovation that is the hallmark of everything Penn Nursing does. The Center for Global Women's Health stands at the precipice of a new doorway.





Strategic Planning Process

The Center embarked on the strategic planning process beginning in Fall 2020. The Center Director researched the history of the Center, met with and surveyed internal and external stakeholders to identify Center strengths and opportunities for growth, and engaged in conversations with advisory board members around the Center's mission and goals.

The Director reviewed prior programming hosted by the Center, with an eye toward maintaining "signature" opportunities that are: 1) consistent with the proposed strategic priority areas; 2) have internal support from School and University experts; 3) serve our broad constituency; and 4) can be appropriately resourced through Center funds.

In addition to receiving feedback from Penn students, faculty, staff, and alumni, the work of this strategic plan was supported by the input and expertise of two undergraduate nursing students with an interest in women's health and gender studies. One student completed an environmental scan with attention to: 1) peer and aspirant centers focusing on women's health (domestic centers, primarily); 2) Philadelphia-based non-profit organizations working in the local and global women's health space; and; 3) actual and potential University partners working in women's health and gender studies. The other student, who was jointly enrolled in both the School of Nursing and the Wharton School, helped review and analyze data from the Center's strategic planning survey and draft early versions of the Strategic Plan.

The thoughtful contributions of many stakeholders and Center supporters are reflected in the Center's revised Mission, Vision, and Values statements, the articulation of five strategies to achieve our Mission, the identification of our three Strategic Priority Areas, and the development of our Action Items and Key Performance Indicators.

History of the Center for Global Women's Health

The Center for Global Women's Health was first launched in 2011 by then Dean Meleis. In 2014, the Center Directorship was named for Dean Meleis in honor of her retirement and the establishment of an endowment to support the Center's work. Dr. Holly Harner is the current Afaf I. Meleis Director of the Center. The inaugural Director of the Center was Dr. Marilyn Sommers (2011-2016) followed by Dr. Wendy Grube (2016-2020).



**Every now and then
one paints a picture
that seems to have
opened a door
and serves as a
stepping stone to
other things.**

-Pablo Picasso

Letter from the Dean



Dear Friends of the Center for Global Women's Health:

Penn Nursing has a well-deserved reputation for driving the future of health and healthcare. It is more than our School's ranking as the #1 nursing school in the world, as the top-ranked undergraduate program in the United States, and our top-ranked graduate programs. It is the revolutionary work that our faculty, students, and alumni engage in around the world—and their unstoppable drive to *do more*.

Whether we are clinicians working with patients at the bedside; scientists solving unsolvable challenges in the lab; or activists, policy makers, and leaders making high quality health and wellness care more accessible in our communities, the Penn Nursing community is committed to radical innovation, as you will read more about in the Center for Global Women's Health (CGWH) Strategic Plan, *Opening Doors*. This exciting plan builds on an incredible foundation of work at CGWH that, since its inception, has touched the lives of women and girls on a global scale—and now enters a new and transformative phase to envision a world where all women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics are safe, healthy, and valued, and share an equal opportunity to thrive in their homes, in their communities, and in their nations.

With Penn Nursing's mission and values of integrity, social justice, innovation, inclusion, and impact as its backbone, CGWH is seizing opportunities to—yes—do more, but also to embrace problem solving through diversity of thought and experience . . . and to realize an audacious future that successfully addresses violence and victimization, maternal morbidity and mortality, and gender equity and inclusivity.

CGWH is opening doors—and we invite you to step through, see what's on the other side, and join us in the effort to make these goals a reality.

Antonia M. Villarruel, PhD, RN, FAAN

Professor and Margaret Bond Simon Dean of Nursing

Letter from the Director



Dear Center for Global Women's Health Champions and Supporters:

I am delighted to share the Center for Global Women's Health 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. I came to the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (SON) in 1996 as a student in the Women's Health Nurse Practitioner program. I stayed at Penn Nursing and completed the PhD Program in 2001 and then returned in 2009 to complete post-doctoral training in the Center for Health Equity Research (CHER). In addition to meeting lifelong friends and mentors who became friends at Penn, my husband and I fell in love in the SON as graduate students, we were married at the Inn at Penn in 2004, and then delivered preterm twins at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP) in 2006. As I sit here today in 2021 and put the final touches on the Center's Strategic Plan, I can only marvel at the professional and personal doors that being part of Penn Nursing opened for me and for my family. I have no doubt that the ripple effects of my Penn experience will be felt for many generations to come. It is with the image of "opening doors" that I approached the development of the Center's strategic plan. How can the Center unlock and open doors for others engaged in the work of global women's health?

When I was appointed the Afaf I. Meleis Director of the Center in September 2020, I began meeting with students, faculty, staff, and alumni to learn more about what they wanted and needed from the Center. What I learned was that supporters valued the Center's mission and the SON's rich history of leading in women's health. There was a great appreciation for the Center's endowment, which allows the Center to be both nimble in its approach and responsive to the needs of women and girls. The prestigious Penn Nursing Renfield Foundation Award for Global Women's Health, established in 2012 by the Beatrice Renfield Foundation, was described as "transformational" and as an important way to recognize and honor individuals and organizations that lead in the field of global women's health.

When asked about opportunities for expanding the reach of the Center, supporters shared that they wanted the Center to be an inclusive space where our world class educators, researchers, clinicians, students, alumni, and advocates could collaborate, share bold ideas, engage in discovery, and be of service for and with our local and global communities. Supporters wanted the Center to consider a more expansive view of "global women's health", to include women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death. They also wanted the Center to identify high impact priority areas that were narrow enough in scope to ground the work of the Center while also being broad enough to allow for individuals to position their work within these strategic priorities.

The Center's new, three-year strategic plan, *Opening Doors*, builds upon our strong, historical foundation, harnesses the power of Penn Nursing and our local and global community partners, and strategically centers our work around mission-driven, high-impact, and timely health and social concerns impacting women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics. I aim for the Center to be, as Ralph Waldo Emerson stated, an "opener of doors" for our generation and for generations to come. I hope that you, our supporters and champions, will see yourself in our overarching Mission, Vision, and Values and work with us to unlock and open doors for others.

Fondly,
Holly

Holly Harner, PhD, MBA, MPH, RN, WHCNP-BC, FAAN
The Afaf I. Meleis Director of the Center for Global Women's Health
Practice Professor of Women's Health

Letter from the Inaugural Senior Director



Dear Supporters of the Center for Global Women's Health:

Although I am not new to Penn Nursing, I am a newcomer to the Center for Global Women's Health (CGWH). I see nothing but possibilities in the work that CGWH can do to positively impact the lives of women, girls, and families both locally and globally. CGWH's Strategic Priority Areas in the three-year *Opening Doors* strategic plan target three areas that I have focused my entire professional career on: violence and victimization, maternal morbidity and mortality, and gender equity and inclusivity. These are three of the most pressing issues facing women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics—and there is an intersection among them that demands a new global lens. We know that new solutions will break barriers—and we know the CGWH can absolutely be the force that fuels the possibilities we envision.

Penn Nursing has engaged in tremendous work, developing local and global community partners, and integrating innovation into every aspect of what the School does; CGWH will follow this same path. CGWH is fully aligned with the spirit of Penn Nursing's inventive outlook and the School's challenge to fearlessly lead and succeed—and we are prepared to give teeth to the ideas outlined in our *Opening Doors* roadmap. This is an incredible opportunity to disrupt the status quo in ways that may have seemed only theoretical or perhaps even impossible before now. I returned to Penn Nursing because of the path it has embarked on and its continued forward progress.

The world is wide, and the problems faced are vast, but so is our network—so are our ideas, resources, and plans. Penn Nursing has instilled in us a drive to champion real change in high impact areas and given us the tools to make it happen. The Center for Global Women's Health is poised to aggressively pursue the strategies you will read about within the pages of *Opening Doors*, leveraging Penn Nursing's local and global strengths, and expanding our reach, to improve education for both healthcare providers and nursing students; promote research and practice; and increase our role as a local, national, and global leader in the health of women, girls, and people of diverse genders/sex characteristics.

Closed doors stand no chance against Penn Nursing, the Center for Global Women's Health, and you—our friends, and supporters. I look forward to making a global difference. Thank you for sharing our vision.

Monique Howard, EdD, MPH
Senior Director of Women's Health Initiatives

Center Mission

To promote the health and empowerment of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death through five interconnected strategies: education, research, practice, service, and engagement.



Center Vision

A world where all women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics are safe, healthy, valued, and share an equal opportunity to thrive in their homes, in their communities, and in their nations.



Center Values



Advocacy

Advocate for research, policies, practices, and programs that address critical social determinants that impact the health and well-being of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

Empowerment

Create conditions that empower women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics in their homes, in their communities, and in their nations.

Innovation

Foster innovative, responsive, and strengths-based solutions to promote the health of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

Inclusion

Champion actions that are inclusive of the diversity of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, ability status, education, country of origin, gender-identity, or sexual orientation.

Center Priorities

Violence and Victimization

Addressing the social determinants that perpetuate violence against women of all ages and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics.



Maternal Morbidity & Mortality

Developing and implementing innovative approaches to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality in birthing people globally.



Gender Equity & Inclusivity

Leading and expanding Penn Nursing's response to gender equity and inclusivity for all people.



Strategies to Achieve Mission

Education

Promoting and delivering evidence-based, high-quality, and timely educational opportunities and trainings that build local, national, and international capacity to address the health and well-being of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

Research

Championing and supporting the development and implementation of rigorous, interdisciplinary research and scholarship that addresses issues impacting the health and well-being of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

Practice

Leading efforts to strengthen and grow a diverse population of healthcare providers that serve women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

Service

Leveraging the strength of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing and our colleagues and champions, both local and global, as drivers of change in service to women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

Engagement

Expanding the Center's reach and impact through the bidirectional development of partnerships and relationships that support and enhance the work of the Center and our partners and our collective efforts to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities across the globe.



Education

The Center will promote and deliver evidence-based, high-quality, and timely educational opportunities and trainings that build local, national, and international capacity to address the health and well-being of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

By championing education as a central pathway to improve and enhance the lives of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics, the Center will provide and develop educational programming, scholarship, resources for and with our students, our faculty, our community members, and our healthcare providers and other professionals and organizations working in this important space.

“The thing that stuck with me is how both journalists and nurses act as “translators” for their audience. Nurses bridge the gap between the hierarchy of providers and the patients by explaining medical jargon which can help patients to feel they are in control of their care and to make the right decision for them, and journalists provide information to the public they would not have been able to access to allow them to make just decisions. Both need to be concerned with what information they deliver and how they do it.”

Student response to *Pandemics – from HIV/AIDS to COVID-19: Why Media Reports Matter*—March 2021 Global Bites event featuring Kalpana Jain/Pulitzer Center presented in partnership with the Office of Global Health Affairs, the Center for the Advanced Study of India (CASI), and South Asia Center.



Research

The Center will champion and support the development and implementation of rigorous, interdisciplinary research and scholarship that addresses issues impacting the health and well-being of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

By promoting research and scholarship as mechanisms to develop innovative, replicable, and sustainable advances, the Center will transform lives around the world.

"I think the most mind-opening thing I learned from this presentation was what trauma truly is and what it entails in medicine. I've studied medical anthropology and taken nursing ethical classes, and we always talk about how important it is to consider culture when treating our patients. However, this really taught me that we need to understand that our patients may have suffered trauma and it may impact how we treat them. Trauma is not simply something bad happening, but it's how a particular event affected someone. As a result, we cannot just ask "what happened to you?" But instead, "how has this impacted you?" A holistic acknowledgement of unexpected patient backgrounds is critical and needs to be utilized in patient care."

Student response to *Supporting Survivors of Trauma: A Nursing Approach to Trauma Informed Care*—April 2021
Presented in partnership with the Office of Academic Affairs, Nurses for Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Penn Violence Prevention.



Practice

The Center will lead efforts to strengthen and grow a diverse population of healthcare providers that serve women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

Through supporting the development of a highly qualified, interdisciplinary, and diverse healthcare workforce that works collaboratively and in a strengths-based and trauma-informed manner, the health and well-being of individuals and communities will be optimized.

“Systemic racism and bias are still so prevalent in a field that is known for its hospitality and is associated with some of the most trusted professions (nurses, doctors, etc.) ... One of the core issues is the fear and mistrust of clinical institutions, where people of color were used as guinea pigs in experiments and studies. As a result, it makes sense why there is lingering trauma in this community, and why there are still ongoing effects of racism and bias in the medical field. There is a large difference between equity and equality. Equality is not always the answer, and sometimes equity needs to be prioritized.”

Student response to *Reducing Maternal Mortality: Harnessing Multilevel Approaches to Reducing Maternal Death*—April 2021
Presented in partnership with the Nurse Midwifery and the Women’s Health/Gender Related Nurse Practitioner programs.



Service

The Center will leverage the strength of Penn Nursing and our colleagues and champions, both local and global, as drivers of change in service to women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death.

To best serve its target population, the Center will harness and build upon the strength and reach of Penn Nursing and our combined partners and colleagues.

"I really liked the first speaker's presentation about cultural humility as a "way of being" vs. cultural competence, which can be hard to attain, and learning about the distinction between the two. The self-reflection portion of the presentation was really thought provoking as well. Asking myself "what am I bringing to the room?" is such a powerful way of thinking about your role as a nurse and is definitely very important to consider as you care for new parents, who bring a lot of anxiety, excitement, and fear into the energy and space of the room."

Student response to *Birthing Experiences Across Cultures*—
March 2021
Presented in partnership with Minorities in Nursing
Organization, Student Nurses at Penn, and Nurses for Sexual
and Reproductive Health.



Engagement

The Center will expand its reach and impact through the bidirectional development of relationships that support and enhance its work as well as its partners, and our collective efforts to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities across the globe.

To raise our external profile and be recognized as a national leader addressing the health of women, girls, and people of diverse genders and/or sex characteristics from birth through death, the Center requires a strategic, multifaceted approach: reintroduce the Center to local, national, and international audiences; deepen and promote existing partnerships; and expand the Center's marketing and communication outreach.

"The presenter's bravery in the work she does was particularly inspiring. The excerpt she read from her book really opened me up to what is happening around the world. In that moment, I felt so ignorant, because it is rare in my busy schedule that I reflect on how lucky I am to be living in the US. While there is improvement in women's health that needs to be made everywhere in the world, it is important that we focus our interests more globally as students and healthcare professionals."

Student response to Soad Hussein Hassan Global Scholar Lecture featuring Christina Lamb—April 2021
Presented in partnership with the Office of Global Health Affairs, Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing, Ortnor Center on Violence & Abuse, Penn in Latin America and the Caribbean (PLAC), Perelman School of Medicine Center for Global Health, Penn Women's Center, Penn Violence Prevention, The Center for Research in Feminist, Queer, and Transgender Studies, The Penn Libraries, and the Penn LGBT Center.



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