

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Spring is finally here! The longer days, the warmer weather, and the beautiful flowers are cause for celebration. We are excited to share updates from a very busy semester here at the Penn Nursing Center for Global Women's Health. Whether you are a long-time supporter of the Center or new to our community, we hope that you find our newsletter informative, inspiring, and a valuable resource. We hope that you are able to take some time for yourself to enjoy all the season has to offer.

Fondly,
Holly

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

January is recognized as Human Trafficking Prevention Month, dedicated to raising awareness and acting against the exploitation of individuals, including children, for the purposes of labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, coercion, or fraud. The 2023 theme for this month was "Partner to Prevent," emphasizing the importance of partnerships and collaborations in strengthening efforts to combat human trafficking. It is estimated that this industry generates \$150 billion annually. On January 24th, the Center hosted [Human Trafficking: What is the Outlook?](#) and invited four dynamic subject matter experts to discuss their role in anti-trafficking efforts.

The speakers were: Dr. Lillian Agbeyegbe, [Polaris](#), who discussed the anti-trafficking work of Polaris; Abbe Horswill, [Marriott International](#), which has a Human Trafficking Awareness training for all staff; Heather LaRocca, [The Salvation Army New Day to Stop Trafficking Program](#), who discussed services and Philadelphia specific information; and Natasha Wilson, Trafficking Survivor and Advocate, who discussed her life as a trafficked individual and her road to survivorship.

We urge everyone to get involved in this critical issue by reporting any suspected human trafficking to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888 or contacting federal law enforcement at 1-866-347-2423. Together, we can make a difference and prevent this heinous crime.

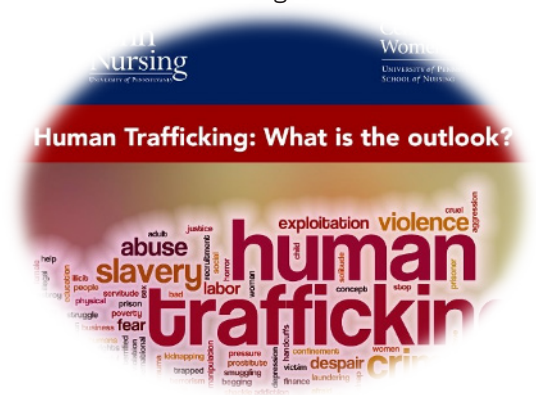
AFTERSHOCK PROCESSING

When Black mothers die, the effects are felt throughout the community, creating a ripple effect of grief and loss ~ Aftershock

Research has shown that Black women are at a significantly higher risk of dying during or immediately following childbirth compared with white women, even when experiencing the same symptoms. [Aftershock](#) is a poignant documentary that highlights the devastating impact of this issue, as two families grapple with the loss of their mothers during or following childbirth. It is a powerful story of Black fathers who are left to raise their babies, their activism, and the community that they have created to address the birth justice movement. Additionally, the film sheds light on the vital work of birth workers who are striving to do better in this field.

On February 13th, the Center hosted a dialogue that included the processing of *Aftershock* and a discussion about Black maternal mortality and morbidity. This discussion featured two esteemed birth workers, Hadja Diallo, MSN, CNM, and Shanna Williams, LCSW, MEd, CLC, PMH-C, who provided insightful perspectives on the disparity in survival rates for Black birthing mothers and strategies to reduce this incidence. The Center is committed to further programming on Black Maternal Morbidity and Mortality and encourages you to stay tuned for upcoming events.

It is crucial that we continue to address this alarming issue and work towards creating a more just and equitable healthcare system for all women, regardless of their race or ethnicity.



ADVISORY BOARD

We are excited to announce that Catherine Hawkes has joined the Center's Advisory Board. The Center continues to open doors and address health issues that impact women, both locally and globally. Visit our website for more information about Cathy and the work of the Center, www.nursing.upenn.edu/cgwh.



What interests you about the Center for Global Women's Health? *Two things come to mind. When I was a student at Penn, I lived for a semester at the International House where I was one of the few Americans on my floor. It was a gift to me to be in the company of so many amazing women from all over the world. Before coming to Penn I never had the opportunity to travel beyond the US. That was truly the beginning of my interest in Global Women's Health. My most recent opportunity serving on the Renfield Award committee involved reviewing applications from global organizations serving women. This was a powerful reminder of the amazing work that is being done and needs to be done in improving the lives of women and girls around the world.*

What makes the Center's mission and strategic priorities meaningful to you? *The strategic objective of engagement supporting the mission of the CGHW is particularly meaningful. I have witnessed the power of growing relationships and how that can take an organization beyond what they could do alone.*

What role do you hope to play in amplifying the Center's work? *I have had the good fortune to work with many talented people throughout my career in a variety of settings across the globe. It is my hope that I can bring those connections to the Center to make meaningful contributions to our mission and strategic priorities.*

Last book that I read *How Beautiful We Were by Imbolo Mbue.*

What do you like to do for fun? *Travel, photography, and take in as many live theater performances as I can which is not difficult in Philadelphia!*

PENN RENFIELD AWARD

The Center for Global Women's Health is pleased to announce the acceptance of nominations for the distinguished 2024 Penn Nursing Renfield Foundation Award. We are extending an invitation to all to submit nominations for individuals who are passionately engaged in exceptional national or global work that is transforming the health and wellbeing of women and girls. Do you know someone who fits this profile? Click [here](#) to visit the CGWH Renfield website for more information.

Penn Nursing
RENFIELD FOUNDATION AWARD
for
GLOBAL WOMEN'S HEALTH

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

It's On Us Funding

For the second year in a row, the Center has been awarded funding from the Governor's It's On Us program: a statewide campaign that invites everyone to play a role in ending sexual assault. We are excited about the opportunity to engage with high school students. Click [here](#) to read the announcement.



The Center is thrilled about continuing our partnership with The Netter Center for Community Partnerships and working alongside its staff to train high school students from West Philadelphia High School to facilitate a sexual violence bystander intervention to its peers. By June 2024, high school students from Sayre and West Philadelphia will be trained to actively reduce the incidence of sexual violence in their schools and communities. The skills that will be learned through the participation can be used to quell the incidence of other community violences. Paulette Bronson, Director of UACS Sports, Fitness & Health of The Netter Center is also excited about the expanded partnership as according to her, "This program will teach high school students in West Philadelphia the necessary skills to identify problematic behavior, develop empathy for victims, and practice safe and effective methods of intervention. This will lead to a commitment to take action and build confidence in high school youth as active bystanders and enable youth with the skills to disrupt violence in their communities. Additionally, the 'train the trainer model' will support the leadership and character development of high school peers, while improving access to accurate information and appropriate resources. This work builds upon successful longstanding university-school partnerships as well as opportunities for youth to engage in youth-led and youth-assisted initiatives that improve learning through problem solving, and building on their own assets, community assets, and university assets. This program is operating in partnership with the Netter Center's University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS) program. UACS emphasizes an approach to teaching and learning where students learn through action-oriented, problem-solving. UACS are sites of democratic participation and engagement and also help youth play leadership roles in their school and community." Stay tuned for more updates regarding this wonderful program.

CENTER GRANTS AWARDED 2023



Dalmacio Dennis Flores
PhD, ACRN, FAAN

The G.I.S.T. (Gender-Inclusive Sexuality Talks) Program: An Intervention Adaptation for HIV Prevention of Transgender and Gender Expansive Adolescents

Transgender and gender expansive (TGE) youth who do not receive health messages that affirm their gender and sexual identities will often avoid seeking healthcare once they are adults. Through an emergent HIV prevention intervention to be called The G.I.S.T. (Gender Inclusive Sexuality Talks) Program, TGE youth can learn from caregivers about factual HIV prevention and sexual health information that is tailored and personalized to their unique needs based on their gender identities and sexuality. By longitudinally engaging TGE youth at home through inclusive sexual health discussions, we hypothesize that the G.I.S.T. intervention can relay essential information and life skills that will help TGE youth mitigate their HIV and sexual health risks as they come of age.

TRANSGENDER TRAINING INSTITUTE – PHASE II

Through a generous gift from Patrina Sexton Topper and Maura Topper, the Center hosted the successful *Transgender 101 for Faculty and Staff* in March. Conducted by the [Transgender Training Institute \(TTI\)](#), over 130 people from across the University participated in this event and learned about ways in which we can better support a more inclusive learning environment for Penn students. This event was co-sponsored by Penn's LGBT Center, the Penn Nursing Eidos LGBTQ+ Health Initiative, the Penn Center for Public Health, the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, Penn Nurses for Sexual and Reproductive Health (NSRH), Penn Nursing Minorities in Nursing Organization (MNO), and the Women's Health/Gender Related Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Midwifery Programs.

UNDERSTANDING A NEW CULTURE OF BIRTH: MY EXPERIENCE VOLUNTEERING IN MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH NURSING IN RURAL KENYA

By Julia McQueen (Traditional BSN Student, May 2023)

I had the surreal opportunity to spend the month of May 2022 in Limuru, Kenya, as a hospital and clinic support volunteer with African Impact. African Impact is an organization that offers a wide variety of volunteer experiences throughout Africa that have long-lasting impact for both the communities served and the volunteers. My volunteer work supported the healthcare system in Limuru, where the community struggles with inadequate infrastructure, overcrowding, and limited medical resources. The support I offered included nursing of laboring patients and their newborns in under-resourced hospitals, providing infant vaccinations at child-welfare clinics, and performing a variety of service activities at nursing homes. Every Friday, I joined a local community health unit in walking home-to-home in the village of Ngarrariga to provide food, take health measurements, and offer health advice to families with ill members and limited access to healthcare. The most transformative part of volunteering with African Impact was providing nursing care and support to laboring patients in the maternity ward of Limuru Nursing Home. My time in the maternity ward completely opened my eyes to the challenges and harsh realities of providing nursing care in under-resourced areas, and to an entirely different culture of birth. To reach the labor ward, pregnant patients walked up multiple flights of stairs. Upon admission at the nurses' station, they joined a room full of other laboring patients until it was time to deliver in the tiny delivery room. Most patients were left alone and received no pain medications, comfort, or support throughout labor due to limited staff and resources. As a volunteer, I was able to fill in some gaps in resources by providing doula and nursing care to patients as they endured the pain of natural labor and delivery. Having received my nursing education in America, I was initially horrified by the Kenyan nursing practices I observed and the apparent lack of care for the laboring patients. However, as the weeks went on, I realized the innovation and resourcefulness skills of the Kenyan nurses. Working alongside them, I learned their way but also did my best to show them ways to provide more loving and empathetic care. Providing care and education to these vulnerable laboring patients and their newborns was incredibly rewarding. I truly will never forget them and the place where I first fell in love with caring for them. This experience has impacted the direction of my nursing career immensely, as it has ignited my passion for ensuring patients receive the loving care they deserve, tailored to their needs and desires, during the remarkable period of pregnancy and childbirth. I plan to work as a labor and delivery and postpartum nurse upon graduation, with hopes to continue serving laboring patients in under-resourced nations around the globe throughout my career. Dr. Monique Howard, of the Center for Global Women's Health, graciously acted as the faculty advisor for my Independent Study in Kenya, allowing me to use this experience to complete my Global Health minor. Asante sana to Dr. Howard for her support, African Impact for this opportunity, and to the Lord for the passion He has instilled in me to serve laboring patients as a nurse both in America and globally.



THE CENTER'S BIRTH DOULA TRAINING PROGRAM

For the second year in a row, the Center, in collaboration with the [Penn Center for Community Health Workers \(CHW\)](#), sponsored CAPPa birth doula trainings for local CHWs seeking to expand their knowledge and ability to support women and birthing people here in Philadelphia. Jovan Bennett, the Director of the Center for Community Health Workers, shared that this training, "creates additional opportunities for this amazing health workforce to be able to support the communities that they come from and serve and help improve their health and well-being....This training helps CHWs to learn and build upon their skillsets of advocacy and coaching and so they can provide tailored support to patients." Our CAPPa birth doula trainer, [Karen Peterson](#), described how valuable it is to have CHWs participate in this training. She noted that the presence of CHWs in the training "adds another layer to the importance of understanding how health in community impacts the lives of those most vulnerable. They know the community and culture they serve and this aspect of their work goes a long way to developing culturally competent birth workers and to giving people the best possible care. Having community health workers as labor doulas is important particularly in terms of impacting and reducing maternal and infant mortality." The Center plans to offer future trainings in the upcoming year.

WORK STUDY OR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Are you interested in women's health? Are you looking for a work study or volunteer opportunity? The Center is program planning for the upcoming school year and is always looking for support from students. Contact Monique Howard, EdD, MPH, Senior Director of Women's Health Initiatives at: mshoward@upenn.edu if you are interested in supporting the work of the Center.

WHAT WE ARE READING?

Njoku, A., Evans, M., Nimo-Sefah, L., Bailey, J. (2023). *Listen to the Whispers before They Become Screams: Addressing Black Maternal Morbidity and Mortality in the United States*. *Healthcare* 11(3), 438; <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11030438>.

Abstract: Black women in the United States (U.S.) disproportionately experience adverse pregnancy outcomes, including maternal mortality, compared to women of other racial and ethnic groups. Historical legacies of institutionalized racism and bias in medicine compound this problem. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color may further worsen existing racial disparities in maternal morbidity and mortality. This paper discusses structural and social determinants of racial disparities with a focus on the Black maternal mortality crisis in the United States. We explore how structural racism contributes to a greater risk of adverse obstetric outcomes among Black women in the U.S. We also propose public health, healthcare systems, and community-engaged approaches to decrease racial disparities in maternal morbidity and mortality.



Annahid Dashtgard podcast - Soundwaves of Belonging “On Ancestry: Calling in the Calling Out Culture” Podcast Guest – Loretta J. Ross <https://annahiddashtgard.com/e3-on-ancestry-calling-in-the-calling-out-culture/>

Introduction: The incomparable Loretta J. Ross is an activist, public intellectual, scholar, and author of the upcoming book *Calling In the Calling Out Culture*. She is also one of the founders of the Reproductive Justice movement in the USA, Associate Professor at Smith College, and recipient of the 2022 MacArthur Foundation “genius” award. As the third director of the first rape crisis center in the country in the 1970s, she helped launch the movement to end violence against women that has evolved into today's #MeToo.

Tune into this episode for the MOST fascinating conversation about the fuzzy line between trauma and activism, between calling someone out versus dehumanizing them, and the ways in which we sacrifice potential justice allies in our need to be right. Loretta shares her early foray in activism, how she went from working with rape survivors to rape perpetrators, and ultimately how belonging can only be found in community—the ones we come from or the ones we make.

GIVING

If you would like to support the work of the Center, please consider making a gift to the Center's Fund by clicking [here](#). To make a recurring gift on your credit card, call the School of Nursing at 215-898-4841.