

# PM Insider

## Message From the Program Director

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. We have experienced so many changes since March that it is hard to explain everything that has happened.

Since February, I have assisted our Surveillance and Epidemiology Emergency Response Group in the Medical Epidemiology Unit. At the time, we were planning for a potential COVID-19 outbreak in NYC. Beginning in mid-March, we saw reported COVID-19 cases in NYC surge, and tragedies and inequities unfold. We managed to quell the surge, serving as a model to other cities and states.

Our Public Health/Preventive Medicine residents have contributed greatly to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (Health Department) COVID-19 response. They coordinated best practices and recommendations for hospitals and outpatient facilities with the Healthcare Systems Support Branch; developed a library of resources on crisis standards of care for regional health systems; prepared scarce resource allocation guidelines using an ethical framework; helped our call centers create clinical algorithms and decision support tools; conducted quality assurance activities; and investigated at-home deaths and risk factors for mortality due to COVID-19 with our Medical Epidemiology Unit.

I admire our residents' dedication. This year has been trying, but it has been an honor to serve during this critical time in public health history.

Sincerely,

**Anita Geevarughese, MD, MPH**

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# Recent Graduates' Projects and Accomplishments



**Dr. Emma Ruderman** completed an MPH at the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Public Health and received the 2020 Epidemiology and Biostatistics Departmental Scholar Award. At the Health Department, Emma

worked with the Bureau of Maternal, Infant and Reproductive Health and their partners Trauma Transformed to develop a training on trauma-informed care and reducing implicit bias. The training was sent to 14 hospitals in the Maternal Health Quality Improvement Network to address racial disparities in maternal morbidity and mortality in NYC. Emma also completed projects on quality improvement in primary care, including NYC Health + Hospitals' (H+H) Office of Population Health's update of their Adult Medicine Preventive Care Guidelines and analysis of the relationship between A1c control metrics, clinic policies and workflows for diabetes; a pre-post analysis, supported by the Bureau of Equitable Health Systems (BEHS), of improving blood pressure measurement environments in primary care practices; and a BEHS assessment of permanent nursing home placement of older adults in NYC. At the Health Department, Emma participated in surveillance and outbreak investigations, such as a cluster of suicidal ideation at three NYC hospitals in 2018, the 2018-2019 measles outbreak and multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children. Emma is interested in public health practice, including program and policy development, implementation and evaluation, as well as creating new systems of primary care and care coordination.

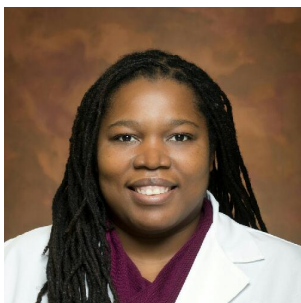
**Dr. Rebecca Florsheim** graduated Delta Omega from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, led a research project documenting patterns of toxin accumulation in the human body and received the



Outstanding Achievement Award from the Department of Environmental Health and Engineering. At the Health Department, Rebecca completed a project with the Office of Emergency Preparedness to assess hospitals' fidelity to planned evacuation protocols during a NYC coastal storm simulation. The project generated reports for 55 partner hospitals to better inform their future evacuation planning. Rebecca worked with the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Use, Prevention, Care and Treatment (BADUPCT) to determine how mobile buprenorphine treatment services in NYC can better serve clients with opioid use disorder who are experiencing homelessness. Rebecca surveyed mobile health service providers in NYC to find ways to optimize buprenorphine prescribing in mobile settings, completed geospatial mapping of mobile health services in NYC and summarized policy recommendations for BADUPCT leadership. Rebecca also worked with the Bureau of Environmental Surveillance and Policy (BESP) to describe the economic benefits of reduced air pollution to health care stakeholders in NYC; presented a poster showing this work at academic conferences; and helped create a survey to assess the secondary health benefits of Local Law 55, which requires multiple-dwelling property owners in NYC to investigate and remove asthma triggers from homes. Outcomes of the survey included improved general or mental health and asthma symptoms of the adults living in these homes. Rebecca's professional interests include the intersection of clinical and environmental health.

Well-deserved congratulations and best wishes to Emma and Rebecca!

# Graduating Resident Updates



**Dr. Scherly Leon** completed coursework for an MPH at CUNY in the Community Health track this term. Scherly is working on an analysis of the prevalence of food insecurity in NYC based on Community Health Survey data from 2017 and 2018. The goal of the project is to describe the demographic, socioeconomic and geographic characteristics of New Yorkers experiencing food insecurity. This analysis will show age-adjusted prevalence rates of food insecurity among New Yorkers, stratified by sex, age, race and ethnicity, household poverty and other variables (including some that are by neighborhood).

## News and Events

The **seventh annual NYC Epidemiology Forum** was held on February 28 at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. The conference allows area epidemiologists, junior researchers and trainees to share their work, network and collaborate. This year's conference included topics on aging and health equity, infections and environmental exposures, and flash science presentations. Rebecca presented a poster titled "Reduction in Criteria Air Pollutant-Associated Health Care Costs as Incentive for Healthcare Sector Advocacy for Climate Policy."

The Residency Program held its first virtual **Epidemiology Grand Rounds** session on June 22. Graduating residents Emma and Rebecca presented their respective work on "Blood Pressure Measurement Environments in Primary Care Clinics: A Pre-Post Analysis of a Quality Improvement Intervention" and "Assessing Mobile Buprenorphine Treatment Capacity in New York City." Many thanks to Rebecca and Emma for their outstanding presentations and flexibility in this new online environment!

The Residency Program also held its first virtual **Residency Advisory Committee and Graduation** on June 25. In this meeting, we honored our graduating residents by giving words of advice and well wishes.

# Second-Year Resident Updates



**Dr. Abi Pinheiro** completed courses at the Epidemiology and Population Health Summer Institute at Columbia University, as well as a health informatics and decision support elective with the COVID-19 Clinical Operations Support Center at the

Health Department. Abi conducted a systematic literature review and synthesis of U.S. and international screening guidelines on sugary drink consumption and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease for the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention to help inform Health Department policy development. Abi assisted the BEHS with a novel, citywide pilot program called Medicaid Together to secure integrated pest management services as a standard Medicaid benefit. Abi helped recruit pediatric department and emergency room partners, and developed workflows for the identification, testing and referral of eligible children at nine hospitals. Abi also continues to work with the World Trade Center Health Registry to investigate a connection between exposure to the 9/11 disaster and menopause among Registry participants. Abi is preparing data for the Center for Health Equity and Community Wellness' Office of Brooklyn Neighborhood Health to identify risk factors for poor birth outcomes among Healthy Start Brooklyn clients.



**Dr. Irfan Azam** continued MPH coursework at CUNY this year. At the Health Department, Irfan completed an elective on the basics of health informatics and coding systems, and developed a teaching seminar on project management. As a track resident

in cancer prevention and control for the American Cancer Society (ACS), Irfan created a colorectal cancer (CRC) screening survey to evaluate New Yorkers' opinions on screening options and potential barriers to screening. Irfan partnered

with the ACS local New York chapter to discuss quality improvement activities related to CRC screening. Irfan participated in the Health Department's COVID-19 response by helping set up a call center for people returning to NYC, and creating clinical algorithms and workflows. Irfan recently helped the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) follow up with shelters in person and over the phone to address possible transmission risks of COVID-19 among staff and clients. The group created recommendations for shelters and performed an analysis to assess COVID-19 outcomes by shelter type and client characteristics.

**Dr. Valerie Vassor** completed courses in the Epidemiology and Biostatistics track at CUNY this year. At the Health Department, Valerie completed a health informatics elective and created a newsletter on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) to help health care providers collect and document SOGI data in electronic medical records. The goal is to use this data to assess health care needs in the LGBTQIA+ community and inform recommendations for competent and compassionate care. Valerie continues to update the DHS' Preventive Services Manual for shelter providers, which describes common health concerns among shelter residents. During the Health Department's COVID-19 response, Valerie helped the Healthcare Systems Support Branch develop a library of resources on crisis standards of care for health care systems and providers. Abi also assisted in drafting resource allocation guidelines based on ethical and equitable principles for health care systems to use during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Valerie is helping develop a population-based COVID-19 serological survey for NYC residents.





# Meet Our New Resident



**Dr. Theodros (Teddy) Seyoum** completed an MD at Howard University College of Medicine and trained in a general surgery residency program at Howard University Hospital. Teddy received an MPH in Global Health from New York University and worked in Liberia to develop a rural school health program with the Ministry of Education. Teddy also worked in frontline primary and urgent care during the COVID-19 public health emergency in New Jersey. Teddy is interested in communicable disease epidemiology, especially epidemic and pandemic preparedness. Teddy hopes to work closely with the Health Department's Emergency Preparedness program and as part of their COVID-19 response.

## Join Our Team!

We are currently recruiting for our Fellow in Public Health Practice position. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. If you have questions, please contact [healthrp@health.nyc.gov](mailto:healthrp@health.nyc.gov).

For more information, visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search for **residency**.

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