



March 2020 | Jewish Healthcare Foundation news, events, milestones, & more

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As the entire world feels the disruptive effects of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on our daily lives, we are especially grateful for the work of our friends and colleagues in the frontline health professions that are working around the clock to slow this pandemic.

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation continues to closely monitor the effect on our international, national, regional, and local communities, and we remain committed to improving individual and community health throughout this emergency.

I've been buoyed by the fierce and heroic commitment of our community partners that continue to provide care while simultaneously working to adapt their systems to ensure the availability of critical services. We've seen incredible innovation and empathy across our region, as everyone from manufacturers down to individuals have been transforming their work and lives to meet the needs of the moment.

Our dedicated staff here at JHF have transitioned our programs and initiatives into virtual platforms and will continue to adapt to meet the needs of our partners and community members. Our Board has designated an Emergency Fund for the COVID-19 pandemic, and we're coordinating with other local foundations, the Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh, and our trusted partners to ensure the most immediate needs are met. We remain here for you, and we will continue to leverage the power of our networks and resources to help us all as we combat this virus.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed some glaring weaknesses in our patient safety systems, we're invigorated more than ever to help reimagine and reconfigure health care here in the U.S.

This too will pass, and when this is all behind us, we must be able to feel sure we did everything in our power to relieve suffering and save lives.

We take comfort knowing we are one of many in this fight, and together we can defeat this virus and ensure that never again a pandemic like this will spread throughout our world.

Thank you for joining us in this work and for all you do to improve the health in your community and across the globe.

Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD
President and CEO

Jewish Healthcare Foundation Adapts During COVID-19 Pandemic

In these unprecedented times, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) remains steadfast to its mission and has been adapting all its primary initiatives to support healthcare workers and at-risk populations in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. JHF staff have rallied to quickly translate interactive in-person learning sessions and coalitions into virtual platforms. Within a week, the quarterly Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative went from a two



JHF staff work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

hundred in-person session in Harrisburg into an engaging [virtual conference](#). Other statewide learning collaboratives like the Patient Centered Medical Home Learning Network and the Center of Excellence Learning Network are also converting to virtual sessions, and they have begun to serve as key networks for collaboration on COVID-19 resources.

The first group of board meetings in 2020 at the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and its supporting organizations demonstrated the ways COVID-19 has quickly forced adaptations. The Health Careers Futures board meeting on March 11 was mostly an in-person meeting, with only a few calling in remotely. The following day the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative board met with half of the attendance calling in virtually. Two weeks later, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation board met on March 30 for its first-ever completely virtual board meeting. Nevertheless, the boards have continued their guidance and support of the Foundation's work throughout this crisis, and they have approved a new [COVID-19 Emergency Fund](#) to address immediate needs due to the pandemic.

With the critical threat on seniors, JHF has continued its advocacy for increased funding for skilled nursing facilities, including a [new grant](#) to create a short, fact-based, and action-oriented case for funding that can go to legislators. Many of the Foundation's aging initiatives have moved into virtual engagement, including [dramatically expanding the Virtual Senior Academy](#), and launching Dementia Friends virtual training across the Commonwealth.

The [SWERVE initiative](#) takes on new level of urgency in the face of this crisis. The third session that was planned for April 2nd in San Francisco was converted into a virtual session that allowed for additional participants to join and a new agenda focused on leveraging a National Patient Safety Authority to address emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Building on these efforts, [the upcoming Patient Safety Fellowship](#) will focus on examining leadership within a patient safety emergency.

The upcoming regional healthcare innovation summit, Liffoff PGH 2020, [has been postponed](#) until December 15th and 16th due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Liffoff PGH team has been busy highlighting the unique partnerships and innovations that have arisen during our region's urgent response to the coronavirus.

The Adolescent Behavioral Health Initiative is maintaining its regular advocacy calls with the [Youth Advocacy Network](#), and JHF staff are working closely with community partners involved with the 15217 neighborhood-based teen mental health initiative (recently renamed *UpStreet*) to provide virtual resources to teens during this time.

The HIV/AIDS team has no disruption to its service delivery, and JHF staff are checking in daily with partners and clients to ensure needs are being met on the ground. Many services the HIV/AIDS team supports have become virtual, and there has been an expansion of telehealth and curbside resources.

WHAMglobal is shifting its upcoming WIC Summit into a series of WIC Webinars in May and continuing to move forward with its Safer Childbirth Cities initiatives.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, JHF will continue to leverage its resources to support the health of the Pittsburgh region and the broader community across Pennsylvania and the nation.

Statewide Maternal Health Collaborative Continues Despite COVID-19

With the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic overwhelming many healthcare teams and limiting travel, the Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PA PQC) converted the in-person learning collaborative session to a virtual session on March 18. In this new virtual format, the PA PQC was able to successfully engage over 200 attendees with training for their maternal health programs.



The PA Department of Health and Human Services presented updates on the Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC) and changes to the Obstetric Needs Assessment Form (ONAF) and the Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) Notification Form. These forms can now be used to collect data for the PA PQC's NAS and OUD quality measures.

Dr. Mike Posencheg from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia presented quality improvement (QI) tactics, and Dr. Ann Borders for the Illinois PQC presented examples of QI projects in Illinois to improve care for maternal OUD and severe hypertension during pregnancy. In the afternoon, birth hospital and NICU teams from the PA PQC led a series of knowledge cafes on how they implemented key interventions to reduce maternal mortality and improve care for mothers and newborns affected by opioids.

The participants' average satisfaction rating was 4.14 out of 5, and 99% said it helped them identify strategies to work towards the goals of the PA PQC. These results are similar to the feedback from the in-person Learning Collaboratives. Within this new format, materials are also now easier to share. The agenda, materials, and a full recording of the learning session are [available here](#).

Patient Safety Bottoms Out in the Pandemic: Does this Convince a Nation that the U.S. is Unprepared to Protect the Safety of its Population?

As the U.S. views the grim details of a healthcare system unprepared for the overwhelming threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must also face a reality that we have, for too long, neglected to protect our patients. Alarmed by the horrifying estimates that 100-200,000 people may die of this novel virus, the public cannot ignore that more than this number of our citizens die each year from preventable medical errors.

It is possible that solutions to our current unpreparedness may also have a long-term effect on guaranteeing patient safety.



Some participants of the virtual West Coast SWERVE meeting on April 2.

Against this backdrop, the third *SWERVE* meeting took place on April 2, 2020. *SWERVE* is the [Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative's](#) (PRHI) latest effort to improve patient safety that began well before COVID-19 was in our dictionaries. However, in light of the many gaps that have been exposed in our healthcare system, the *SWERVE* initiative takes on a new dimension. More than ever bold solutions for healthcare safety are needed to ensure never again.

One solution to the pandemic's chaos and to the dispersed responsibility for patient safety in America is the establishment of a National Patient Safety Authority—one central body responsible for regulating safety education and preparedness; coordinating research, communications, and measurement; and holding all the appropriate players accountable.

This was the proposition that the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative and its partner, the Network for Excellence in Health Innovation (NEHI), put before 75 of our nation's foremost thought leaders in health during three separate conversations. We called the initiative "*SWERVE*" because we're suggesting that it's time for a major change in direction—time to challenge the assumption that what we have in place is acceptable.

Unable to meet face to face, the participants took a break from their harried lives to convene virtually—from Kaiser Permanente, Kaiser Family Foundation, the Pacific Business Group on

Health, RAND, Blue Shield of California Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, SCAN Foundation, California Healthcare Foundation, UC Berkeley School of Public Health, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, University of Utah health system, Stanford Medical School, the Hospital Quality Institute, Estes Park Institute, Comagine Health, and Washington Health Alliance. The objective was to construct a bipartisan recommendation for Presidential candidates in the upcoming election to add patient safety to their platforms. *SWERVE* conversations started in Boston and DC, and employed an intense, rapid-fire format that revealed many substantive suggestions.

The West Coast conversation was facilitated by Ken Segel, managing director of Value Capture, who led the two previous sessions. The group wrestled primarily with the question, *Should a National Patient Safety Authority (NPSA) be designed and with what functions to achieve a rapid and profound reduction in patient harm, and to guarantee future preparedness for catastrophic events?*

There was consensus that the U.S. does not have a central authority capable of addressing this current crisis, let alone patient safety more broadly. Gaining public trust and compliance in an atmosphere of conflicting and constantly changing information and guidelines from scientific experts, government leadership, and our federal agencies adds another challenge.

The group, led by Tricia Neuman, Executive Director of the Kaiser Family Foundation's Medicare Policy Program, also discussed how a Public Option might be constructed to guarantee excellence in patient safety and protection.

These insights will guide phase two of the *SWERVE* initiative. On March 30, JHF announced a \$150,000 grant to take the next steps. NEHI and PRHI will form two task forces to make strategic recommendations for building a wider coalition of consumer and purchaser organizations, shaping a strong argument with guidance from government relations experts, and delivering a coherent proposal to the Presidential candidates.

Virtual Senior Academy Urgently Expands Courses, Countering Isolation During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Virtual Senior Academy is countering increased isolation among at-risk populations by launching a slate of new courses. The COVID-19 pandemic presents an especially dangerous threat to adults 60 and older, who are more likely to develop a severe, if not deadly case of the virus. Allegheny County has more than 50,000 seniors over the age of 75 that live alone, and adherence to new social distancing regulations exacerbate already persistent challenges of isolation and loneliness, conditions which themselves increase the risk of adverse health effects and early mortality.



Attendees join a new Coffee Hour event on the Virtual Senior Academy.

In response, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) is ramping up its Virtual Senior Academy, founded in August 2017 as a free live-streaming platform for interactive courses. Seniors can connect in classes focused on health and wellness, technology, literature, arts and music, history, and current events. During the past three years, over 1,000 seniors have joined the growing online community, which has hosted more than five hundred classes to date.

The Academy is partnering with community organizations across the region and nation, including AARP PA, Age-Friendly Seattle and locally Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh, UPMC for Life, Aetna Insurance, and the University of Pittsburgh's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute among others to broadcast in-person programming to the comfort of seniors' homes. The Academy is also working with Pittsburgh City Council leadership to provide intergenerational programming to help working parents provide a meaningful online experience for their children at home. JHF is also working directly with the Pennsylvania Department of Aging to increase program access and reach during this unprecedented time.

"The Academy provides needed interactions with others while learning and laughing together," said Filomena Varvaro, a facilitator and participant on the Virtual Senior Academy. "With the stay-at-home order, it is all the more important and valuable to me."

Aside from expanded collaborations, the Academy is also beginning the significant transitioning to a new home at the Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Pittsburgh and working closely with the organization to adapt its current programming for seniors to the platform now in light of COVID-19. In an effort to reach more seniors in need, JHF will transfer management of the Virtual Senior Academy to the JCC, along with a new \$175,000 grant to integrate the JCC's robust in-person programming with the digital application this summer.

“The Virtual Senior Academy is a dynamic program that engages older adults, especially during these challenging times when social isolation can become a significant barrier to health and wellness,” said Alexis Mancuso, Assistant Executive Director at the JCC. “Once our community is able to return to normal socialization and activity, the Academy will continue to enhance the lives of older adults within our community through a robust series of programs and services.”

Interested participants are encouraged to sign up for a free account at www.virtualsenioracademy.org. Phone assistance for help using the website is available from the Academy’s Tech Buddy program. The tech buddies are trained in partnership with local computer literacy non-profit, Computer Reach, to help interested participants connect on the Virtual Senior Academy. Any community members or organizations looking to teach classes or volunteer for the Tech Buddy program should reach out to Kylea Covaleski at covaleski@jhf.org.

Liftoff PGH 2020 Changes Course for December 15-16

When Liftoff PGH was just a whisper of an idea, we never imagined how reality would collide with its mission. At its core, Liftoff PGH is about inspiring unusual partnerships that challenge the very structure of the healthcare industry. Despite the distance between us, in two weeks the Pittsburgh community has connected with one another in unprecedented ways. Organizations are rebuilding their entire business model, while researchers, entrepreneurs, and policymakers are designing new paradigms of care from the ground up. As the community rushes to respond, there is a stunning obligation to change, and change now. Our team continues to line up a knockout cast of experts and contributors, but we have made the difficult decision to postpone Liftoff PGH 2020 until December 15th-16th.



With all the challenges ahead, we can think of no clearer visionary than [Liftoff PGH Keynote Speaker Shankar Vedantam](#) to make sense of this chaos. For the NPR enthusiasts among you, Vedantam hosts the extremely popular *Hidden Brain* podcast, in which he rethinks how we as humans, well, think. From dissecting hiring culture to creating good leaders, Vedantam asks listeners to reconfigure how they make decisions, and more importantly, how they can make better ones.

There is so much more we must learn, and so many pivotal innovations that are only just a whisper. As front-line workers risk their lives across the region, we want to honor their challenges, and equally, celebrate their ingenuity. We are forging ahead with the Ideathon

Pitch Competition, while providing more time for students to adjust to their new situations. Leading up to the new April 19th deadline, Liftoff PGH is partnering with the Carnegie Mellon Swartz Center for Entrepreneurship [to test some virtual idea sprints with students](#). Please stick with us as we capture the boldness and tenacity that has become the region's rallying cry, and [let us know](#) when you find an organization stepping up. It's just the beginning, but we are charging toward the future.

JHF Announces COVID-19 Emergency Fund, and \$645K to Support AIDS Initiative, Seniors, and Patient Safety

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) on March 30 approved an emergency fund for the COVID-19 pandemic, along with four grants to extend its efforts in HIV/AIDS programming, engagement with and support of older adults, and the SWERVE initiative to improve patient safety. Within the current crisis, each grant addresses timely health issues that have only become further exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Emergency Fund

The COVID-19 pandemic is the largest and most urgent public health crisis of our time. JHF is working closely with other local foundations, the Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh, and other existing partners to ensure that the most immediate needs are met during the crisis. JHF is focusing its funding efforts primarily through its longtime community partners in the Pittsburgh region in accordance with the greatest identified needs that save lives, support workers who save lives, demonstrate immediate impact and have short term implications, and do not replace government funding. This will be an evolving effort as the fight to save lives and end this virus continues over the days and months ahead.

Phase II of AIDS Free Pittsburgh

JHF approved a five-year, \$250,000 grant to support the second phase of the Allegheny County Initiative, AIDS Free Pittsburgh. Over the next five years, building on the success and partnerships of the last five years, AIDS Free Pittsburgh (AFP) aims to deepen opportunities for meaningful community engagement and forge new partnerships with additional healthcare and community groups. There are also opportunities to strategically align HIV elimination efforts with interconnected public health challenges such as the hepatitis C, opioid, and STI epidemics.

Despite momentous advances in HIV prevention and care service delivery, Allegheny County has continued to rank second highest for the annual number of new HIV cases and people living with HIV/AIDS in Pennsylvania. In addition to the human toll of HIV, the CDC estimates that Pennsylvanians living with HIV face a lifetime cost of \$478,000 (per person) to treat their HIV infection. If AFP reaches its goal of a 75% reduction in new HIV cases, this could result in an estimated medical cost savings of \$49.8 million by averting 104 new HIV infections.

Read more about JHF's HIV/AIDS efforts [here](#).

Reducing Senior Isolation Through Community Engagement

JHF approved a two-year, \$215,000 grant to support the expansion of two senior initiatives that address isolation and loneliness: the [Virtual Senior Academy](#) and *Fit with a Physician*. Social isolation among older persons has been a concern for policymakers for several decades. Isolation is associated with poor physical and mental health status, poor quality of life, and even with avoidable death. With an estimated 211,000 older adults living in Allegheny County, and 75,000 of them living alone, there are thousands of older adults at-risk for isolation in the area. The new impact of social distancing due to COVID-19 has only increased the imperative to address isolation.

\$175,000 will go to the Jewish Community Center of Pittsburgh (JCC) for the two-year transition of the Virtual Senior Academy over to the JCC. JCC leadership is enthusiastic about how the Academy can fit into their menu of offerings to JCC seniors within the Jewish Community and throughout the county and the region. The JCC has a proven track record of scaling pilot programs to larger models with positive outcomes, outputs, and success in the wider community. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Academy has [seen a dramatic rise in participation and demand](#) over the last couple weeks, and JHF continues to manage the resource as the JCC gradually increases its role.

\$40,000 will go to Venture Outdoors to expand the *Fit with a Physician* series over the next two years and beyond. Venture Outdoors currently has plans for 15 *Fit with a Physician* walks in Pittsburgh parks, and, in the short term, Venture Outdoors is looking to adapt the program onto the Virtual Senior Academy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Making the Case for Shortfalls in Funds for Skilled Nursing Facilities

JHF approved a \$30,000 grant to make the case for the current shortfalls in Medicaid reimbursements for skilled nursing facilities. JHF will hire a neutral and trusted third party to develop a short, fact-based, and action-oriented case for funding that will be widely distributed with legislators throughout Pennsylvania. The case for funding will document the positive impacts of having high quality and viable nonprofit skilled nursing facilities, as well as the economic impact and resulting risk to Pennsylvanians if these facilities should close. The case for funding aims to be ready for use within six months, assuring that action can be taken in time to inform the next state budget cycle.

A State of Emergency in Patient Safety

JHF approved a one-year, \$150,000 grant to support the second phase of the [SWERVE: A State of Emergency in Patient Safety initiative](#). Recognizing that the 2020 Presidential election offers a unique opportunity to galvanize action and get the issue of medical errors on candidates' platforms, JHF worked with its longtime partner, the Network for Excellence in Health Innovation (NEHI), to launch three national SWERVE conversations, with additional funding from The John H. Hartford Foundation. The SWERVE conversations have focused on

two strategies: developing a National Patient Safety Authority (NPSA), and defining a Public Option with provisions to promote patient safety.

This initiative began before the nation’s astonishing lack of preparedness for COVID-19 was apparent. The pandemic has only served to highlight the need for a strong national central authority to guarantee the health and safety of our population.

During this second phase of the *SWERVE* initiative, JHF will work with NEHI to create a white paper about the NPSA and Public Option, form a task force with the best thought leaders from the *SWERVE* meetings, organize a national summit to ignite a coalition, and mobilize the coalition to get the presidential candidates to endorse *SWERVE*’s platform.

Youth from 26 School Districts Advocate for Teen Mental Health

“Do you have friends with whom you feel safe talking about mental health? Is there one adult at your school who you feel comfortable going to for support?” asked Bridget Hughes, a student at Winchester Thurston High School. Bridget and several other student leaders opened the Youth Mental Health Advocacy Workshop on March 3rd with some important questions. While almost all 144 students attending stood to respond that they did have a friend or adult at their school to talk about mental health, fewer than ten stood-up in response to a question asking whether their school had enough resources. Bridget then reminded the students that by attending this workshop they are all now activists who can make a difference in advocating for mental health resources.



The packed youth mental health advocacy workshop at the Disability and Mental Health Summit on March 3, 2020.

The youth mental health advocacy workshop, organized by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) as a special offering at the Disability and Mental Health Summit hosted by Representative Dan Miller at the Pittsburgh Convention Center, aimed to gather youth perspectives on the issue of teen mental health and provide an opportunity to voice these concerns to state legislators. Students also learned mindfulness techniques for managing stress and anxiety through the facilitation of “Mindfulness Moments” by Dr. Will Davies from Allegheny Health Network’s CHILL Project currently being implemented at Baldwin High School.

Twenty-six school districts from Allegheny, Beaver, and Fayette County were represented at the event. The JHF adolescent behavioral health team, Deborah Murdoch and Carol Frazer, engaged 18 youth and six organizational partners in the design and implementation of the workshop. Partners included the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Stand Together Program, the Beaver County Youth Ambassadors Program, Allegheny Health Network's CHILL Project, A+ Schools TeenBloc, and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh Second Floor.



Youth-led breakout groups discussed youth concerns related to mental health.

Students that have been engaged in JHF's youth advocacy efforts over the past year selected five advocacy priorities for the focus of small group discussions: creating safe and inclusive school communities; promoting suicide prevention and awareness; treating all health as equal (mental health matters); addressing disparities in mental health; and educating parents and students on mental health. Each group, facilitated by a student leader, gathered youth perspectives on the issue and questions around pending legislation to present to a panel of state legislators including: State Senator Pam Lovino, State Senator Lindsay Williams, Representative Sara Innamorato, Representative Anita Kulik, Representative Natalie Mihalek, and Representative Dan Miller. Students also had the opportunity to hear from PA Department of Human Services Secretary, Theresa Miller, and David Buono, of the PA Insurance Department about the Governor's *Reach Out PA: Your Mental Health Matters* campaign.



Youth presented their concerns to a panel of Pennsylvania legislators.

Representatives from each student group presented their concerns and questions to the legislative panel. Students urged legislators to support training to help their trusted teachers respond to their mental health needs and to improve access to and quality of care for inpatient and outpatient mental health services. They asked what policy makers are doing to reduce the drastic differences they've observed in the number of trained mental health counselors and social workers available to students in each school district. The participants emphasized their interest in partnering with legislators to promote change

and the shared the importance of including youth, as experts, in decision making. After the panel, several schools and legislators connected to express their interest in continuing the discussion with a visit to their school and district offices.

As JHF presented opportunities to continue to promote the youth voice around the issue of teen mental health and connect with the PA Youth Advocacy, Jalen Achilles, a senior at Urban Pathways and member of A+ Schools Teen Bloc, shared her experience as part of the network: “Being involved with the Jewish Healthcare Foundation’s Youth Advocacy Network has given me opportunities that I never would have had to share my perspective on teen mental health, including going to Harrisburg for Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day and participating in events like these. I just want to thank them and encourage you all to get involved.”

Doulas and Health Plans Gather to Discuss Shared Interests

On March 5, doula and health plan representatives gathered in the QIT Center to discuss their shared interest of providing comprehensive and cost-effective care for moms and families. The purpose of the meeting was for the groups to gain an understanding of one another’s priority areas and identify future opportunities for collaboration. Research shows that doula improve maternal and child health outcomes and are able to provide important hands-on care for moms and families. Because of these improved outcomes with minimal interventions, there is growing interest from health plans to integrate doula into care teams.



Doula and local health plan representatives meet in the QIT Center on March 5.

This meeting was a part of WHAMglobal’s Safer Childbirth City Initiative and the first of its kind in Pittsburgh. Health Plan representation included UPMC For You, Highmark Health, Gateway Health, United Healthcare, and Aetna Better Health. Several doula groups and health centers were represented, including: Healthy Start Inc., The Midwife Center, Squirrel Hill Health Center, AHN’s Center for Inclusion Health, Pittsburgh Doula Network, Kangaroo Birthing & Maternity Concierge, and the Allegheny County Health Department.

The group quickly identify shared interests and initial next steps including researching how other states and models, such as New York and San Francisco, have integrated doula into their health plans. The group will collectively brainstorm how to finance doula services and will work together to develop a plan for establishing value around social determinants of health. WHAMglobal looks forward to continuing to coordinate this group and work towards ensuring the availability of doula for all moms and families that would benefit from their services.

JHF Staff Member Makes Masks As ‘Thank You’ to Healthcare Workers

Catherine Mutunga never imagined she'd be using her sewing skills to help healthcare workers, but these desperate times have been cause for innovative measures. Mutunga has been sewing as a hobby for the last twenty years and has never made anything closely related to health care, but when her friend called her at the beginning of March asking for her help, she quickly jumped in. After researching online to find the best instructional video, Mutunga began sewing protective masks in her home workshop.



Catherine Mutunga sews masks in her home workshop.

During the past few weeks, Mutunga has been able to sew over 60 masks. The first few went to her friend who made the initial request, but since then she has begun to sew for the Jewish Association on Aging, which like many healthcare facilities, has put out a call for protective equipment. She donated 55 masks on March 28 and plans to continue sewing. Although these masks are not up to the N95 standard that is recommended for protection from COVID-19, as stockpiles of medical masks dwindle, they still provide a level of protection for workers.

“Getting to sew these face masks is an appreciation for the sacrifice our healthcare workers are making to save lives,” stated Catherine Mutunga, administrative assistant at the Jewish Healthcare Foundation. “My way of saying ‘thank you’ to them was to use the very gift I have to let them know they are not alone in this battle, and that we all care about them and their safety.”

Representative Bradford Visits JHF

State Representative Matthew Bradford, the PA House Democratic Appropriations Committee Chair from Montgomery County, visited the Jewish Healthcare Foundation on March 6 at the QIT Center. During the meeting, Karen Feinstein discussed JHF’s history, initiatives, and priorities with Rep. Bradford, including youth mental health and WIC.



JHF Welcomes Two New Staff Members



Kyle Terrill will be rejoining the Jewish Healthcare Foundation as a full-time program assistant on the Aging Team. Terrill previously was an intern at JHF helping on the GRAN and Community Health Worker projects. He earned his bachelor's degree in biology at Geneva College in 2016 and will graduate with a master's degree in social work from the University of Pittsburgh in April 2020. Terrill is an Edith Baker Integrated Healthcare Fellow at the University of Pittsburgh and completed his second-year internship at UPMC St. Margaret Hospital. He also completed a social work internship with the Foundation of HOPE Aftercare Program and with the Jewish Healthcare Foundation in summer 2019. Terrill's other work experience includes working as a research specialist for UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital in the fields of neuroscience and mental health research.



Alyce Palko joins the Jewish Healthcare Foundation as a communications associate beginning on May 1. She is finishing her undergraduate degree in public and professional writing from the University of Pittsburgh, including a minor in creative writing and a certificate in community health assessment. Palko has had a variety of health communications roles including working as the publisher for the Pitt Pulse Magazine, an internship at Pitt Med Magazine, and working as a writer at Pitt+Me. She's also held a range of leadership roles throughout her education and even helped develop a health literacy course while at Pitt.

Celebrating the Life of Paul S. Caplan, MD

The Pittsburgh medical and Jewish communities lost a pillar of generosity, wisdom, and care when Paul S. Caplan, MD passed away on March 7, 2020. Dr. Caplan was an esteemed physician who dedicated his life to providing the best care to his patients. Over his 107 years of life, he delighted his friends, family, patients, and peers with his consistent good humor and kindness. Dr. Caplan was the beloved uncle of Debra Caplan, JHF trustee and chair of the WHAMglobal board. He will be missed in our community, but his spirit and gifts live on and continue to provide guidance for all of us.



Paul Caplan with his niece Debra Caplan.

Patient Safety Fellowship Applications Now Open

The 2020 Patient Safety Fellowship will focus on the current COVID-19 pandemic and the unique questions it raises for our patient safety system. Fellows will learn about leadership in a patient safety emergency, examine the patient safety and infectious disease ecosystems in the U.S., and apply their learning to their own unique context. Applications are open until May 6, 2020. [Apply here](#).

Healthcare Workforce COVID-19 Resources

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation, Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative, Health Careers Futures, and WHAMglobal extend our deepest gratitude to all the healthcare staff on the frontlines. The follow resources hopefully will prove useful:

[Caring for our caregivers during COVID-19](#)

A crowd-sourced list of initiatives to support the healthcare workforce at a variety of institutions across the country.

[Self-care Resources](#)

[Physician Support Line](#)

Free confidential peer support telehealth line by volunteer psychiatrists for U.S. physician colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic. No appointment needed. 8am-12am EST. 7 days a week.

[Quick guide to telehealth](#)