

The latest news and info from
the Department of Health Policy
at Vanderbilt.

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The Ph.D. in Health Policy is here!



After much anticipation, the Department officially began a new chapter of growth this fall when it launched the PhD program in Health Policy and began recruiting prospective students for its Fall 2020 cohort.

Applications can be submitted
through January 15, 2020.

Learn more about the program and share
details by visiting the website.

Department News



Sayeh Nikpay named among 34 "Power Players" in health care

In November, **Sayeh Nikpay, PhD**, assistant professor of health policy, was named a "Power Player" in health care by Business Insider. The recognition came as her research into the 340B drug program generates headlines nationwide. Nikpay was included among 34 other industry professionals, including CEOs, policy makers, other researchers and lobbyists.



APHA honors Dr. William Schaffner with distinguished career award

William Schaffner, MD, professor of health policy, preventive medicine and infectious disease, was recognized by the American Public Health Association with a Distinguished Career Award for his years of dedicated service to infectious disease surveillance,

research and public health education. The award recognizes outstanding contributions to the profession and 20 or more years of professional practice.

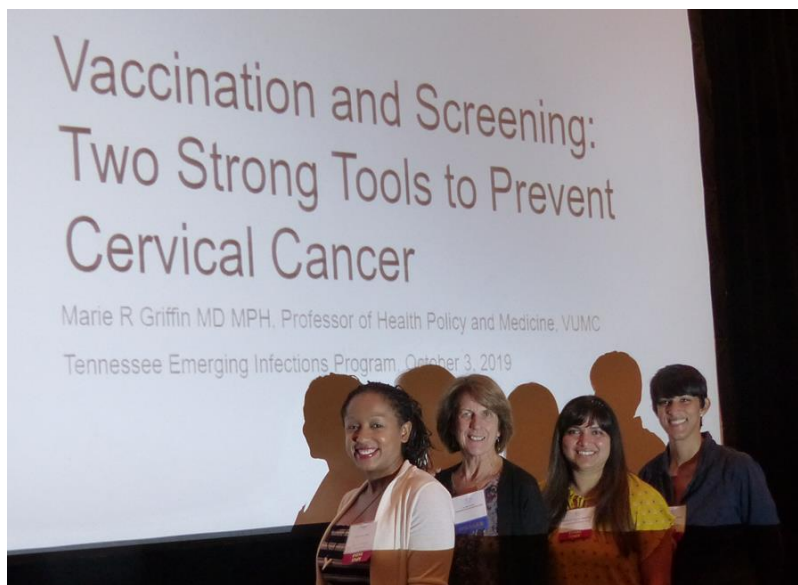


Research Into Policy & Practice Lecture Series

The fall 2019 Research Into Policy & Practice Lecture Series explored one of the biggest health policy topics today: Medicare For All, with a large audience in person and online through a live video stream of the event, which captured viewers from across the country.

The semiannual lecture and discussion was hosted by Melinda Buntin, PhD, Mike Curb Professor of Health Policy and Chair of the Department. Moderated by Dan Gorenstein (above, second from left), executive producer of the new health policy podcast "Tradeoffs," the panelists included Chip Kahn, President and CEO of the Federation of American Hospitals (above, third from left), and Carol Paris, MD, a retired psychiatrist and past president of Physicians for a National Health Program (above, right).

Read more about the event, see photos and watch the recorded live stream by [visiting the Department website](#).



Emerging Infections Program celebrates 20 years

In September, the Tennessee Emerging Infections Program celebrated its 20th anniversary with a special Research Presentation Day that included current research and posters, and a look back at two decades of important infectious disease surveillance and research developments.



Melinda Buntin, PhD, named deputy editor of new JAMA publication

Melinda Buntin, Ph.D., Mike Curb professor of health policy and chair of the Department, in December was named the deputy editor for a new online channel published by the Journal of the American Medical

Association, or JAMA. The new channel, *JAMA Health Forum*, will focus on “health policy and health strategy issues affecting medicine and health care,” according to a news release from JAMA. [Read more about the new journal here.](#)

Research Highlights

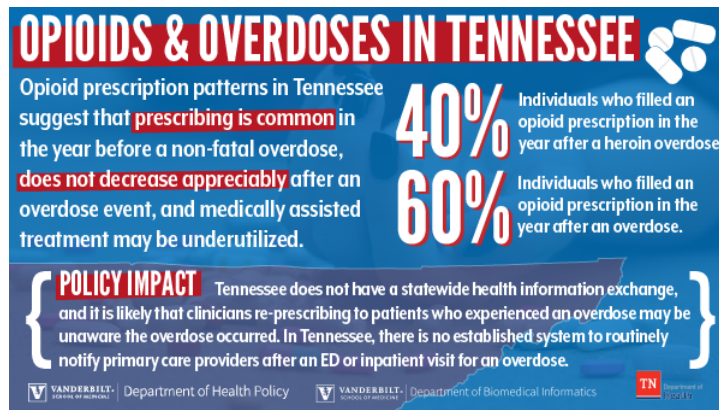
Tennessee's opening bid for a Medicaid
block grant



Buntin MB. [Tennessee's Opening Bid for a Medicaid Block Grant](#). The New England Journal of Medicine. 2019 Oct 9.

Melinda Buntin, PhD, Mike Curb professor of health policy and Chair of the Department, analyzed Tennessee's opening bid to reform TennCare into a block grant program in an October edition of the [New England Journal of Medicine](#). The state is negotiating a proposal to change its Medicaid program to a block grant, in which the state would get a larger, fixed amount in exchange for greater flexibility in how it manages the program. [Read more about the analysis.](#)

Trends in opioid prescriptions and overdoses
in Tennessee



Krishnaswami S, Mukhopadhyay S, McPheeters M, Nechuta SJ. Prescribing patterns before and after a non-fatal drug overdose using Tennessee's controlled substance monitoring database linked to hospital discharge data. *Preventive Medicine*. 2019 Nov 6;130(130).

Melissa McPheeters, PhD, MPH, Research Professor, found in a partner study with researchers at the Tennessee Department of Health that prescription of opioids is common prior to a non-fatal overdose, and medically assisted treatment (MAT) might be underutilized in populations who have experienced an overdose event. [Read more about this new research.](#)

How to improve EHR and real-time prescription drug info

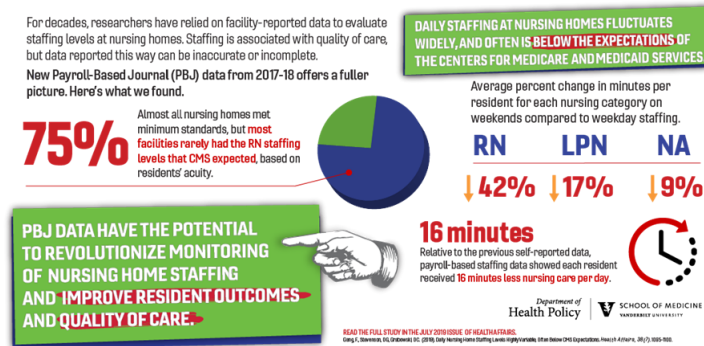


Everson J, Frisse ME, Dusetzina SB. Real-Time Benefit Tools for Drug Prices. *JAMA*. Published online October 25, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2019.16434>

Professors **Jordan Everson, PhD, and Stacie Dusetzina, PhD**, offered ideas that would improve the use of electronic health records in sharing

prescription drug price information with patients in an October viewpoint published in JAMA. [See what questions they recommend for CMS.](#)

Nursing home staffing shows wide fluctuations



Geng F, David G. Stevenson D. **Daily Nursing Home Staffing Levels Highly Variable, Often Below CMS Expectations** *Health Affairs*. 2019 Jul 1;38(38). 1095-1100.

David Stevenson, PhD, Professor and Vice Chair of Education, found in a study [published by Health Affairs in July](#) that nursing home staffing fluctuates widely during the week, and is often below federal guidelines. The study was among the first to use new payroll-based journal data.

Spotlight

Muktar Aliyu, MD, MPH, DrPH
promoted to professor

Dr. Muktar Aliyu was promoted to full Professor in November. Congratulations Dr. Aliyu!



Andrew Wiese, PhD, MPH, honored with diabetes research award

Andrew Wiese, PhD, was awarded the Daryl K. Granner Scholar in Diabetes award in November as the most outstanding PhD research fellow for the year. Dr. Wiese helped lead the first study to identify, validate, and characterize a population of patients with Type 2 Diabetes in PCORnet, the National Patient-Centered Clinical Research Network, which helped demonstrate that PCORnet is a powerful ongoing resource for the investigation of the long-term effectiveness and safety of anti-diabetic medications in patients with Type 2 diabetes.



New Faces To The Department



Zorah Taplin, Associate Program Manager

Zorah Taplin joined the Department in December as an associate program manager, providing faculty support in our 2525 West End offices. She earned her degree in health science with a concentration in public health from Tennessee State University. Prior to graduation, Zorah interned with the Department by supporting the MPH program and with Middle-West TN Clean Fuels.



Dr. Velma Murry, Professor

Velma McBride Murry, PhD, holds the Lois Autrey Betts Chair, Education and Human Development, and was appointed University Professor in the department in August, making her the second woman and first person of color to hold two primary appointments in two departments at Vanderbilt. Just 8 others have the title of university professor at Vanderbilt. Murry received her bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee and her master's and Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She joined the Vanderbilt faculty in 2008.



John Ujwok, MPH, Health Policy Analyst II

John Ujwok, MPH, joined the EIP team at the Village at Vanderbilt as a health policy analyst in August. He relocated back to Nashville after a year working at the Shelby County Health Department in West Tennessee. He holds an MPH from the University of Alabama Birmingham and two bachelor's degrees in cell and microbiology from Tennessee Tech and political science and government from the University of Tennessee.



Audrey Cheng, Health Policy Analyst I

Audrey Cheng, began working as an analyst at 2525 West End in June. She supports Jordan Everson, Laura Henkhaus and David Stevenson in their research. She earned a degree in finance and public health from Santa Clara University in Cupertino, California, and interned at Kaiser Permanente.



Jean Bruce, Application Developer

Jean Bruce, an Air Force veteran, earned his degree in Management Information Systems at the University of South Florida. He joined the Department in August as an application developer and supports Carlos Grijalva in his research, and he is currently working on the MEPREP and Sentinel projects.



Melinda White, Senior Administrative Assistant

Melinda White, joined the Department in July. She provides administrative support to faculty and staff located at the Village at Vanderbilt. She also provides support to the people and projects within the Emerging Infections Program.

Recent Research

- Jazowski SA, Dusetzina SB. **Recommendations for Lowering Prescription Drug Spending in Public Programs.** Annals of internal medicine. 2019 Nov 12.
- Everson J, Adler-Milstein J. **Sharing information electronically with other hospitals is associated with increased sharing of patients.** Health services research. 2019 Nov 12.
- Krishnaswami S, Mukhopadhyay S, McPheeters M, Nechuta SJ. **Prescribing patterns before and after a non-fatal drug overdose using Tennessee's controlled substance monitoring database linked to hospital discharge data.** Preventive medicine. 2019 Nov 6;130(130).
- Haddad DN, Resnick MJ, Nikpay SS. **Does Vertical Integration Improve Access to Surgical Care for Medicaid Beneficiaries?** Journal of the American College of Surgeons. 2019 Oct 28.
- Everson J, Frisse ME, Dusetzina SB. **Real-Time Benefit Tools for Drug Prices.** JAMA. 2019 Oct 25.
- Buntin MB. **Tennessee's Opening Bid for a Medicaid Block Grant.** The New England journal of medicine. 2019 Oct 9.

- Senft N, Butler E, Everson J. **Growing Disparities in Patient-Provider Messaging: Trend Analysis Before and After Supportive Policy.** Journal of medical Internet research. 2019 Oct 7;21(21).
- Iliyasu Z, Galadanci HS, Abdurrahim A, Jibo A, Salihu HM, Aliyu MH. **Correlates of Obstetric Risk Perception and Recognition of Danger Signs in Kano, Northern Nigeria.** Annals of global health. 2019 Oct 3;85(85). 121 p
- Conti RM, Nikpay SS, Buntin MB. **Revenues and Profits From Medicare Patients in Hospitals Participating in the 340B Drug Discount Program, 2013-2016.** JAMA network open. 2019 Oct 2;2(2). e1914141.
- Nechuta S, Mukhopadhyay S, Krishnaswami S, Golladay M, McPheeters M. **Record linkage approaches using prescription drug monitoring program and mortality data for public health analyses and epidemiologic studies.** Epidemiology (Cambridge, Mass.). 2019 Oct 1.
- Olson A, Viverette N, Campbell H, McKethan A, Buntin M. **Value-based Payment Reform in a Managed Care Environment: Innovator States' Experiences with Episodes of Care.** North Carolina Medical Journal. 2019 Sep;80(80). 297-299.
- Geng F, David G. Stevenson D. **Daily Nursing Home Staffing Levels Highly Variable, Often Below CMS Expectations** Health Affairs. 2019 Jul 1;38(38). 1095-1100.
- Dusetzina S. Nguyen J. **Sending The Wrong Price Signal: Why Do Some Brand-Name Drugs Cost Medicare Beneficiaries Less Than Generics?** Health affairs (Project Hope). 2019 Jul;38(38). 1188-1194.

[See All Publications](#)

Available Positions

The following positions are open to application.

[Health Policy Analyst III - 1905185](#)

Upcoming Events

Jan. 15: Deadline for applications to begin Ph.D.
program in Fall 2020.

Jan. 31: Public Health Practicum Colloquium

COMING SOON: Spring 2019 Research Into Policy
and Practice Lecture Series

April 6-10: National Public Health Week

May 8: Graduation Reception



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Nashville, TN

Website: <https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/health-policy/>
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