Summer 2014 Project L/EARN Mentor Bios

Dr. Beth Angell (PhD, Wisconsin) is an Associate Professor at the Rutgers University School of Social Work. Her research focuses on treatment for people with severe and persistent mental illness, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Her past projects have focused on issues such as how interactions between these patients and their mental health providers affect the success of treatment, and most recently, her projects have been concerned especially with preventing reincarceration among patients with mental illness who have left jail or prison. She has two projects that would be especially suitable for a Project L/Earn internship that follow groups of patients with mental illness over time and contain information about a variety of important topics, such as psychiatric symptoms, homelessness, substance abuse, violence and victimization, satisfaction with care, and social networks, which could be adapted to the interests of the intern.

Dr. Susan Brownlee (PhD, Rutgers University) is a Senior Research Manager at the Center for State Health Policy where she manages research projects, coordinates survey design and data collection efforts at the Center, and conducts statistical analyses. A health psychologist, Dr. Brownlee’s research interests include health attitudes and disparities in access to care related to race-ethnicity, gender, age, immigration status, and being uninsured; and health reform and how it’s implementation in New Jersey. She also studies patient-provider issues such as patient satisfaction with care; the relationship of childhood obesity to diet, physical activity, and environmental factors such as nearby fast-food restaurants; issues related to the physician workforce; health information technology (HIT); and factors associated with training and retention of nurse faculty members to address the current nursing workforce shortage.

Dr. Deborah Carr (PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison) is Professor of Sociology and co-director of the National Institute of Mental Health postdoctoral training program at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research. Her research focuses on aging and the life course. She investigates the ways that family roles and relationships in later life, including widowhood and divorce, affect mental health. She also investigates the ways that older adults prepare for end-of-life medical decision making. She has also published on the ways that body weight affects psychological, interpersonal, and social experiences. She is an investigator or consultant on several major surveys, including the American Time Use Survey, General Social Survey, Midlife in the United States, and Wisconsin Longitudinal Study.

Dr. Karen D’Alonzo (PhD, Rutgers University) is a nurse researcher, nurse practitioner, and Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing, Rutgers University. Using a framework of community based participatory research (CBPR), her research focuses on the role of acculturation stress in promotion of physical activity and biobehavioral approaches to the prevention and management of obesity and diseases that cause obesity among diverse groups of women. Recent research projects have involved the use of lay community health workers/promotoras de salud in the delivery of health promotion interventions in the immigrant Latino community in New Brunswick. Dr. D’Alonzo is also interested in how socioeconomic and demographic factors and parents perceptions of their children's weight are associated with eating and exercise habits.

Dr. Mei-Chia Fong (MS; PhD, 2013, Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison) is a postdoctoral fellow in the Institute's National Institute of Mental Health postdoctoral training program. Dr. Fong is particularly interested in understanding the relationship between social factors and individual emotional well-being, self-esteem and identity, decision-making, and life outcomes. She is currently researching adolescent and young adult populations to learn more about their health status, subjective life experience, interpersonal relationships, and choices in dating, marriage, and formation of new families.
Dr. Emily Greenfield (PhD, University of Wisconsin) is an Associate Professor of Social Work. She received her graduate training in Human Development and Family Studies with a focus on adult development and social gerontology. Dr. Greenfield studies how social relationships influence adults’ psychological well-being and physical health—for better and for worse. She is particularly interested in how relationships outside of the family influence older adults’ ability to remain in their own homes and communities, as well as how policy and programs can strengthen these relationships. She currently is leading studies of innovative community initiatives that seek to transform local social relationships and physical environments to promote aging in place.

Dr. Daniel Gundersen (PhD, Rutgers University/UMDNJ - School of Public Health), is a health behavior surveillance researcher and an Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Community Health at the Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He studies the distribution of smoking cessation behaviors in diverse populations, with a particular focus on the receipt of smoking cessation treatment during health care visits. Currently, his focus is on understanding the patterns of receipt of smoking cessation treatment among young adults and Latinos. He is interested in identifying and describing disparities among these diverse and, to date, understudied populations in the smoking cessation surveillance research literature. The sources of comparison are typically demographic characteristics, including age, education, and sex, as well as markers of acculturation such as language preference or proficiency and immigrant generation.

Dr. Shawna Hudson (PhD, Rutgers University), is a medical sociologist and an Associate Professor and Associate Director of Research Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. She studies organizational factors in primary care settings that facilitate increased use of evidence based care practices and interventions to enhance preventive health care seeking behaviors of patients. Currently, she is focused on cancer screening and cancer survivorship. Her research funded by the National Cancer Institute explores new and long-term adult cancer survivors' extended follow-up care seeking patterns. She is interested in survivors' motivation and decision making in regards to seeking cancer follow-up care and she explores their preferences for care delivery from cancer and cancer-related specialists versus primary care physicians.

Dr. Howard Leventhal (PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) is a Board of Governors Professor of Health Psychology at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research. He is the Director of the Network for the Study of Health Beliefs and Behavior, a group of faculty and students from psychology, sociology, medicine, nursing, and public health who conduct theoretically grounded research in clinical settings. Dr. Leventhal’s research builds upon the Common-Sense Model of Self-Regulation and focuses on how patients process information involved in self-management of chronic illnesses, including heart disease, diabetes, and asthma. His current project examine how cognitive-affective factors affect communication among patients, practitioners and families; how effective sharing of illness models between patients and practitioners affects communication, treatment adherence, health outcomes; how age differences in projecting future events relates to end of life planning (e.g., completion of a living will); symptoms of distress (PTSD and depression) post stroke and denial of PTSD; and depressive symptoms and their consequences post partum.
**Kristen Lloyd** (MPH-Epidemiology, UMDNJ) is a Senior Research Analyst at the Center for State Health Policy. She works extensively with population-based surveys fielded by the Census Bureau and the Center to answer public policy questions of local and national interest. A major theme in her work is disparities in insurance coverage, health status, and access among New Jersey’s diverse immigrant population. Her focus on evaluating access and quality of care for vulnerable populations will be expanded in the upcoming years through several projects investigating delivery system reforms for New Jersey’s low-income Medicaid population. Rounding out her research agenda are studies on disparities in dental care utilization, insurance coverage dynamics under health reform, and the environmental determinants of childhood obesity among urban youth, such as proximity to healthy and unhealthy food outlets and perception of neighborhood safety on levels of physical activity.

**Dr. Dawne Mouzon** (MPH, UMDNJ; M.A. and PhD, Rutgers University) is a sociologist and Assistant Professor at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy and the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. Her research focuses on the "race paradox in mental health," or the unexpected finding that Black Americans exhibit better mental health outcomes than Whites despite lower socioeconomic standing and greater exposure to discrimination. Specifically, she explores whether the quantity and quality of four different social relationships (families, friends, fictive kin, and church members) explains this paradox. In another strand of research, Dr. Mouzon examines both race and social class differences in the mental health benefits of marriage and the social-structural causes (and mental health implications) of the Black marriage decline. She also studies race and social class differences in mental health stigma, men's mental health, and the impact of goal-striving stress on the mental health of upwardly mobile African Americans and Black Caribbeans.

**Dr. Kristen W. Springer** (PhD, University of Wisconsin; M.P.H., Emory University) is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University. Her research focused on understanding gender and family dynamics affect adult health, and how these patterns differ depending on other individual characteristics (e.g., education, occupation, marital status, body size). She is currently analyzing data from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) to explore how husbands' and wives' earnings across 30 years of marriage affect health outcomes. Prior research has shown that husbands' health is harmed when he earns less than his wife. However, we know very little about how different patterns of wife breadwinning across the life course relate to husbands' or wives' physical health, mental health, or health behaviors.