2010 Project L/EARN Faculty Mentors

Dr. Beth Angell (Ph.D., Wisconsin) is a social worker, mental health services researcher and Associate Professor at the School of Social Work at Rutgers University. Her research focuses on people who have serious and long-term mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, particularly those who are poor and depend on the public mental health system, who often become homeless or incarcerated and can be difficult to engage in treatment. Dr. Angell uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods in her work, and has several data sets from completed studies that center on issues such as employer attitudes toward hiring people with mental illness, experiences of people with mental illness who were recently released from state prison, and attitudes and experiences of mental health practitioners who work with clients who have serious mental illnesses in community settings.

Dr. Karen D’Alonzo (Ph.D., Rutgers University) is a nurse researcher and nurse practitioner. She is an Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing, Rutgers University. Her research focuses on promotion of physical activity in women across the lifespan, with a particular emphasis on minority women and the role of acculturation in the adoption of health promotion behaviors. Dr. D’Alonzo’s most recent project is an NIH-funded study to develop a physical activity intervention for Latina immigrants in New Brunswick. A unique feature of this community based participation research (CBPR) study is that the physical activity classes are taught by promotoras, Hispanic women from the community who have been trained as community health workers.

Dr. Derek DeLia (Ph.D., Cornell University) is a Health Economist and Associate Research Professor at the Rutgers Center for State Health Policy. His research focuses on the economics of hospitals and health centers; emergency medical care; healthcare access among the poor, uninsured, and minorities; and health insurance coverage. Dr. DeLia has advised the state of New Jersey on reforming payment formulas for community health centers and served on a commission to promote financial stability in the NJ hospital sector. In July 2009, he led the organization of a national conference on ambulance services and their role in the broader world of healthcare research and reform. Dr. DeLia also teaches Health Economics and Econometrics in the Rutgers Economics Department.

Dr. Antoinette Y. Farmer (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh) is Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the School of Social Work. Her current research focuses on examining the effects of religion/spirituality and parenting practices on adolescent high risk behaviors, such as delinquency, sexual activity, and substance use. She is also interested in looking at what factors (i.e., parenting stress, maternal mental health) affect parenting practices. Currently, she is undertaking research looking at the effects of parenting stress on parenting behavior, mothers and fathers’ parenting practices on adolescent high risk behaviors, and parenting stress and depression on fathers’ disciplinary strategies.

Dr. Dorothy Gaboda (Ph.D., Rutgers) is trained as a social worker and is Associate Director for Data Analysis at the Center for State Health Policy. She works on projects related to health insurance coverage and health care for poor children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. She is also interested in how health data is gathered and used by state and local governments, particularly in the areas of racial and ethnic identification. She works on several projects, including access to care and insurance coverage of poor children and their parents in New Jersey families, individual responses to chronic health conditions, and barriers to receiving health care for people who are vulnerable because of poverty, race/ethnicity, age or illness.
Dr. Shawna Hudson (Ph.D., Rutgers University), a medical sociologist, is an Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at the UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and the Director of Community Research for The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ). Dr. Hudson is a member of the population science program at CINJ. She is a mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) researcher. Her qualitative research studies have focused on exploring cancer disparities in treatment and screening settings. Her quantitative research examines determinants of preventive cancer screening in primary care settings and organizational factors in primary care practices that facilitate increased use of evidence based guidelines. She is currently conducting a study funded by the National Cancer Institute that explores new and long-term cancer survivors’ follow-up cancer care seeking patterns and their decision making regarding use of oncologists versus primary care physicians.

Dr. Howard Leventhal (Ph.D., University of North Carolina) is Board of Governors Professor of Health Psychology and the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research. His current research focuses upon health self-management processes with chronic illnesses such as hypertension, asthma, diabetes. Issues including treatment adherence, perceptions of illness and treatment, how these affect how patients self-assess their health and how their perceptions of illness and treatment affect how they manage their illnesses. Dr. Leventhal is the Director for the Center for the Study of Health Beliefs and Behavior, funded by the National Institute of Aging. The primary goal of the Center is to develop models describing the processes by which patients, practitioners, and family members come to understand one another’s perception of disease and treatment, and how these understandings affect communication, treatment adherence, health outcomes and end of life planning.

Dr. Judith A. Lucas (Ed.D, Rutgers University) is an advance practice nurse and Assistant Research Professor at Rutgers University in the Division on Aging and the Mental Health CERTs at the Institute. Her research concern quality of care and life quality improvement in long-term care settings. Her current research is on the effects of treatment for mental illness among frail elders including nutrition status, behavioral symptoms and functional outcomes. She is directing a multi-state study that aims to understand patterns and guideline consistency of antipsychotic drug use in the nursing home setting. She is particularly interested in understanding disparities in drug use, drug and non-drug treatments for behavioral symptoms, association with physical restraint and staffing practices, and state policies that affect facility patterns of drug use, with a special focus on the most vulnerable elderly in long term care.

Dr. Danielle E. McCarthy (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison) is an Assistant Professor of Psychology. She is a clinical and health psychologist who directs the Rutgers Smoking Cessation Laboratory. Her research focuses on three topics: 1) the cognitive and emotional processes that contribute to high rates of cessation failure and relapse among smokers trying to quit, 2) ways to improve smoking cessation treatments, and 3) ways to connect more smokers with treatment. She conducts both basic, laboratory research and clinical field research with smokers. She also collaborates with colleagues in primary care settings to increase treatment utilization among smokers.

Dr. Lenna Nepomnyaschy (PhD, Columbia University) is an Assistant Professor at the Rutgers University School of Social Work. Her research interests are broadly focused on how poverty and inequality impact all areas of child and family health and well-being. One line of research focuses on how social policies (particularly those related to fathers) can improve the well-being of children in single-parent families. This work examines how father involvement, child support, and other social welfare policies impact children’s economic security, behavioral problems, cognitive abilities, and health. A second line of research investigates disparities in child health outcomes by race/ethnicity, geography, and socioeconomic status. This work attempts to understand and identify the individual and structural mechanisms that contribute to disparities in low birth weight, preterm birth, asthma, obesity, and injuries.
**Dr. Kathleen Pottick** (Ph.D., Michigan) is a social psychologist and social worker. She is a Professor at the Rutgers University School of Social Work. Her current work focuses on adolescents with mental health problems. Her co-authored book, *The Parents' Perspective: Delinquency, Aggression, and Mental Health* (1995), is an analysis of disadvantaged inner-city adolescents receiving outpatient mental health services in Newark, New Jersey. She is directing several research studies that aim to understand the patterns of mental health services to children and adolescents, and youths with conduct disorders in the United States. She is particularly interested in understanding disparities in how mental health services are delivered to our nation's youth. Dr. Pottick has a special focus on the most vulnerable youths--poor, minority, and most seriously ill.

**Dr. Sarah Rosenfield** (Ph.D., Texas) is a sociologist and associate professor who trained in both psychiatric epidemiology and psychosocial epidemiology. Her work focuses on gender and racial/ethnic differences in internalizing mental health problems like depression and externalizing problems like antisocial behavior. She also studies the effects of stigma on individuals with mental illness. Dr. Rosenfield has mentored several Project L/EARN interns, utilizing a variety of primary data sets involving the severely mentally ill and adolescents with depression.

**Dr. Charlotte Thomas-Hawkins** (BSN, Thomas Jefferson University; MSN, PhD, University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing) is an associate professor in the College of Nursing at Rutgers University. Her research interests include physical activity in individuals with chronic kidney disease; illness representations in individuals with chronic kidney disease, and the relationship between dialysis work environment and patient outcomes.