

Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Weekly Newsletter

FEBRUARY 23-27, 2026



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

WELCOME



Dylan LeBlanc – joins PBM as a Clinical Research Coordinator I. His role will be to work with both the New England Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC) and the Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network (JCOIN). He will work closely with our partner organizations in JCOIN in coordinating project activities and will directly support ATTC training and technical assistance coordination.

Last spring, he graduated with his bachelor's degree in Psychological Science from Fitchburg State University. While there, he served as a student research assistant working to assess how to facilitate success and stronger feelings of inclusion among students. This experience cemented his passion for the research process and specifically how science can be translated into tangible change and impact. While many associate psychology strictly with mental health, he is excited to put his knowledge of the field into practice here. He also brings experience from his local community hospital, where he worked inpatient with acute medical and mental health care.

On a personal note, he is a proud French Canadian, and enjoys studying to improve his French in his free time. He is also a distance runner with his most recent accomplishment being completing his first half marathon last October.



Angela Lund is a public health graduate finishing her Master's degree in Public Health (Health Equity) at Boston University. She will work with both the HIIS and PBM divisions as a new Clinical Research Coordinator I. Her roles will include recruitment and clinical/qualitative data collection in the Self-Measured Blood Pressure (SMBP) study as well as the Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network (JCOIN) study.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, February 26, 3:00 – 4:00 PM, NERB 1-1100

A culminating lecture to celebrate the retirement of Bill M. Jesdale, PhD

Presenter: Bill Jesdale, PhD, Assistant Professor, Population and Quantitative Health Sciences

Title: Hallucinating the Future of Epidemiology in the World of AI: The Importance of Asking Good Questions

Vegan halal snacks provided. In lieu of retirement gifts, please consider a modest donation to The Cancer Network to support LGBTQ data collection and survivor support. Click [here](#) to join.



Wednesday, March 4, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Research Methods Meeting

Presenter: Christopher Schmid, PhD

Title: N-of-1 Trials for Personalized Healthcare

Abstract: Personalized (N-of-1) trials hold great promise for broadening the clinical knowledge production enterprise to engage individuals in trial design, creation and use of personal data, and decision making. N-of-1 trials use a multi-crossover design in which each individual receives two or more treatments multiple times in a randomized order. In contrast to traditional clinical trial designs, N-of-1 designs can measure individual treatment efficacy to create personalized knowledge. N-of-1 trials may be deployed in a variety of ways. Individuals may create unique, personal designs focused on treatments and outcomes of interest carried out in a manner best suited to them. Or, when practical, trials may be coordinated to have similar protocols facilitating the sharing and combining of information to learn about groups of individuals as well. Such designs may better inform individuals through borrowing of strength from the findings of exchangeable group members. Such group designs may be particularly valuable in clinical settings such as healthcare organizations that provide personalized care to groups of individuals. By combining individual trials in a meta-analysis, it is also possible to describe average treatment effects in populations and subgroups and measure treatment effect heterogeneity to create generalizable knowledge. I discuss the promise and challenges of N-of-1 trials, including the use of software to design and analyze trials, the use of mobile apps to facilitate participation, retain interest, collect data and provide interpreted results to participants, and some of the research barriers that need to be overcome, particularly the challenges of accommodating personalized protocols. These issues are illustrated by several of our recent projects each involving many N-of-1 trials.

Bio: Dr. Schmid is Professor and past Chair of Biostatistics at Brown University School of Public Health where he co-founded the Center for Evidence Synthesis in Health. Currently, he directs the Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Research Design (BERD) Core of the Rhode Island Center to Advance Translational Science. He is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association, founding Editor of the journal Research Synthesis Methods, long-time statistical editor of the American Journal of Kidney Diseases, former President of the Society for Research Synthesis Methodology, Chair of the Health Policy Statistics Section of ASA and member of the Drug Safety and Risk Management Committee for FDA. He has a long record of collaborative research and training activities in many different clinical and public health research areas, authoring more than 300 publications and contributing to many consensus statements and guidelines including the Institute of Medicine report that established national standards for systematic reviews. His methodological research

focuses on Bayesian models for meta-analysis and N-of-1 trials as well as assessment of predictive models using data from multiple sources. Click [here](#) to join.



Friday, March 6, 3:00 PM, AS9.2072 or Zoom

PhD Dissertation Defense

Presenter: Emmanuella Asantewaa Asiedu

Mentor: [Jennifer Tjia, MD, MSCE](#), **Co-Mentor:** [Sarah Forrester, MS, PhD](#)

Title: Adverse Health Outcomes in Adults with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: A Multi-Methods Examination of the roles of Neighborhood-Build Environment and Healthcare Setting Experiences

Click [here](#) to join, password 386731

KUDOS



[Daniel Amante, PhD, MPH](#) - Assistant Professor, was featured in UMass Chan News on January 29, 2026. "Science for Living: How digital health tools strengthen care when patients are the core focus" [Article](#)



[Adrian Zai, MD, PhD, MPH](#) - Associate Professor and Director of the Research Informatics Core was featured in the Worcester Business Journal on January 26, 2026. "Making sure AI works: UMass Chan's new AI Assurance Lab tests developing healthcare tech, so it functions properly in the real world" [Article](#). If you don't have full access, please email me.

Jessica Wijesundara, MPH, CHES®, Research Program Manager II, has been named an Adjunct Professor at Assumption University, where she will teach in the MBA program (Healthcare Management concentration) beginning this year. Jessica has been accepted to the Doctor of Education (EdD) in Educational Leadership program at Merrimack College and will begin her doctoral studies this fall, with a concentration in Organizational Development.

CHANGES IN RESEARCH DATA STORAGE SERVICES

Memo from:

William Barnett, Chief Research Computing Officer

Kate Fitzgerald, Vice Provost for Basic Science Research

Please find below a description of some changes to research data storage. There are three changes to research data storage coming to UMass Chan:

1. The R-Drive will be decommissioned during FY27. Investigators and trainees should plan to move your data to another platform, such as the new RFS storage (see below), by the end of FY26 (June). This is an opportunity to review the data on your R-Drive, delete or archive data no longer needed, and transfer the remaining data to the RFS or other storage system. For help planning this move, please contact the researchcomputingoffice@umassmed.edu.
2. A new research file system (RFS) will be operational in March 2026. This spinning disk (value-tier) system is mountable by your workstations and instrument computers and is designed for actively used research data. The RFS offers reliable quota-based storage at \$48/TB/year in 1 Terabyte increments, billed monthly. As a value-tier service, RFS provides standard performance suitable for typical research workflows, but is not intended for high-performance computing or applications requiring rapid access to large datasets or databases. It is approved for Internal research data and is not publicly accessible. You can find out more about it here: [UMass Chan Research File Store](#).
3. Through a partnership with UMass Amherst, UMass Chan Investigators will have access to the NSF-funded Open Storage Network (OSN). OSN nodes provide inexpensive object storage that is ideal for data sharing, either public or private, and is accessible via application programming interfaces (APIs). They are not mountable by workstations on campus. Your OSN 'buckets' can link to Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) as permanent shares to meet NIH DMSP requirements. The cost of this storage is not yet finalized but you can find out more about it here: [Open Storage Network](#).

As more information becomes available, we will post it on the [Research Storage Intranet Page](#). If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to researchcomputingoffice@umassmed.edu.



HOLIDAY

— SCHEDULE —

-  Patriots' Day – Monday, April 20th
-  Memorial Day – Monday, May 25th
-  Juneteenth National Independence Day – Friday, June 19th
-  Independence Day – Friday, July 3rd (observed)
-  Labor Day – Monday, September 7th
-  Indigenous Peoples' Day – Monday, October 12th
-  Veterans Day – Wednesday, November 11th
-  Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 26th
-  Day After Thanksgiving – Friday, November 27th
-  Christmas Eve – Thursday, December 24th
-  Christmas Day – Friday, December 25th

PQHS Weekly will be sent to all members of PQHS on Monday mornings. The intent is to provide a snapshot of what is going on that week in PQHS and to share our faculty and staff activities with the department. We depend on you to provide the items we need to share. Please send suggestions of events, faculty invited seminars & talks, honors, student thesis presentations, and news – new babies born! – to Judi (judi.saber@umassmed.edu) & Sarah (sarah.yeboah@umassmed.edu) by Friday each week.