

# Bridging the Gaps

## 2024 Health Action Report

Combining health-related service for under-resourced populations with community-responsive training of future health and social service professionals

## Our Mission

**Bridging the Gaps (BTG)** links the provision of health-related service for under-resourced populations with the interprofessional training of health and social service professionals.

**As we head into our 35th program year, we are so grateful to our Bridging the Gaps stakeholders.**

In this time of divisiveness and conflict, we believe that our work towards building a cadre of health and social service professionals who are responsive, caring, and skilled in partnering with communities is as important as it's ever been.

Bridging the Gaps envisions a future in which healthcare professionals and communities unite in a powerful, transformative partnership—one that not only promotes holistic wellness but also advances opportunity and ensures high-quality, accessible healthcare for all.

We are proud and immensely appreciative of your support and engagement in these endeavors.

With much gratitude,  
**Lucy Wolf Tuton**  
for the BTG Network

## BTG Network

### PHILADELPHIA CONSORTIUM

**Hillary Bogner, MD, MSCE**  
University of Pennsylvania

**Nasheeka Conix**  
University of Pennsylvania

**Elissa Goldberg, MSS, LSW**  
Drexel University  
*BTG Program Director*

**Maria Hervada-Page, MSS**  
Thomas Jefferson University  
*BTG Program Director*

**Angela Kim, MD**  
Drexel University

**Ingrid Mapanao, MSW, MPH**  
Temple University  
*BTG Program Director*

**Ellen Martinak, MS**  
University of Pennsylvania  
*BTG Program Director*

**Bridget McCormick, MS**  
University of Pennsylvania  
*BTG Program Director*

**Holly Metzgar, DO, FACOG, NCMP**  
Drexel University

**Laura Mullin, MS**  
Drexel University

**Lucy Wolf Tuton, PhD**  
University of Pennsylvania  
*BTG Executive Director*

**George P. Valko, MD**  
Thomas Jefferson University

**Brian Work, MD, MPH**  
Temple University

**Jerome Wright, MSW, LSW**  
Temple University  
*BTG Program Director*

**Vincent J. Zarro, MD, PhD**  
Drexel University

### COOPER MEDICAL SCHOOL OF ROWAN UNIVERSITY

**Mara Gordon, MD**  
Cooper Medical School of Rowan University  
*BTG Program Director*

**Paige Person, MPH**  
Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

**Anthony L. Rostain, MD, MA**  
Cooper Medical School of Rowan University  
*BTG Program Director*

### LAKE ERIE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE (LECOM)

**Jennifer Cummings, DO**  
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine Seton Hill Campus  
*BTG Program Director*

**Mary Haus, MD**  
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine Seton Hill Campus  
*BTG Program Director*

**Leah Labranche, PhD**  
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine  
*BTG Program Director*

**Noelle R. Thielman, PhD**  
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine

### LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK

**Tricia Bernecker, PhD, RN**  
DeSales University  
*BTG Program Director*

**Abby S. Letcher, MD**  
Lehigh Valley Health Network

### UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

**Brandi Boak, MPH**  
University of Pittsburgh

**Thistle Elias, DrPH, MPA**  
University of Pittsburgh  
*BTG Program Director*



## BTG 2024-25 Advisory Board

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Gwen's Girls; Refocus ED

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*Teaching Professor*  
Health Management & Policy  
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*President and CEO*  
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**Ellen H. Funk**  
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*Emeritus Professor*  
Public Health, Nursing, & Medicine  
University of Pennsylvania

**Dolores Reiley Hillas**  
*Community Advocate*

**Ty Holmberg**  
*Co-Founder and Co-Director*  
Sankofa Community Farm at Bartram's Garden

**Willie D. Little, MSW**  
*Community Health Advocate*

**Estelle Richman**  
*Past Secretary of Public Welfare*  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

**Anthony Singleton**  
*President/Chief Executive Officer*  
Educators 4 Education

**Walter Tsou, MD, MPH**  
*President*  
Philadelphia County Medical Society  
*Past President*  
American Public Health Association

**Thomas Vernon, MD**  
*Former Vice President*  
Merck Vaccine Division  
*Former Executive Director*  
Colorado State Department of Health

**Frances Walker-Ponnie**  
*Community Organizer*

**Dwayne Wharton, MEd**  
*Co-Founder & Senior Advisor*  
*Principal*  
Just Community Strategies

## BTG Alumni Network (BTGAN)

The BTG Alumni Network (BTGAN) provides opportunities for collaboration and mentorship among former student participants. [Join Today!](#)

BTGAN is now a lifelong opportunity for collaboration, mentorship, and fellowship. This year has been productive and enriching. We collaborated in developing the alumni website and a BTGAN LinkedIn page and participated in mentoring sessions and a spring symposium on ways to expand and deepen the mission of BTG.

We completed several seminars and have been diligently working on the 35th year Symposium. Our network continues to grow!

Now more than ever, we need healthcare providers with a strong social justice orientation. Being that professional in a rapidly changing world is an infinite journey, and BTGAN provides alumni with incredibly valuable opportunities to learn and teach as we work to eradicate health inequity. We look forward to growing the network as we explore how alumni can benefit from the exceptional human capital that is BTG.

Warmly,  
The BTG Alumni Network (BTGAN)

### BTG Alumni Network Co-Chairs



**Hillary R. Bogner**  
MD, MSCE  
BTG CHIP 1993



**Marjorie Dejoie-Brewer**  
MD  
BTG CHIP 1993



**Jennifer Comerford**  
MJ, OTR/L  
BTG CHIP 1997



**Roopali Kulkarni**  
DMD, MPH  
BTG CHIP 2016

BTG Program Components

CHIP (All Locations)

BTG Community Health Internship Program

BTG CHIP is a summer internship that matches students with community agencies/organizations, taking into account community site needs, professional disciplines and student interests. Whenever possible, students work in interprofessional teams. Students also participate in didactic sessions where community members and health professionals help them gain the skills and knowledge to be effective providers for under-resourced populations.

In the fall, BTG program locations host their own symposia to engage community representatives, public health officials, agency personnel, grantmakers, and university faculty and staff in the work of the program and to provide students with the opportunity to present their summer projects. The Annual Philadelphia Symposium includes representation from all program locations.

BTG CHIP Programmatic Themes

Given the prevalence and impact of oral health, smoking, and cardiovascular disease on overall health, BTG offers students access to mentors and tools to support health education and activities at the community level. In 2024 [students created robust educational resources](#) on these topics.



BTG 2024 TO-DATE FACTS & FIGURES

CHIP TO-DATE

660 Community Sites Served

since inception

445 Philadelphia	76 Erie	13 Lehigh Valley	40 New Jersey
72 Pittsburgh	9 Reading	2 Seton Hill	3 Other Locations

6,417 Students Participated

since inception

5,106 Philadelphia	456 Erie	122 Lehigh Valley	215 New Jersey
490 Pittsburgh	17 Reading	2 Seton Hill	9 Other Locations

139,544 Days of Service Provided

from 2000-2024

104,807 Philadelphia	12,235 Erie	3,199 Lehigh Valley	5,606 New Jersey
12,980 Pittsburgh	411 Reading	64 Seton Hill	242 Other Locations

OTHER PROGRAMS TO-DATE

BTG Seminar Series

Fall 2003 – Spring 2025

2,960  
Students

Attended at least one seminar; some attended multiple seminars

BTG Community Health Rotation Program

Fall 2003 – Spring 2025

410  
Students

Completed the Community Health Rotation Program

BTG Community Health Scholars

Fall 2006 – Spring 2025

252  
Students

Graduated as Community Health Scholars

BTG Program Components (continued)

Other Programs (Philadelphia Only)

BTG Seminar Series

This series draws on the expertise of participating community partners and academic health centers. The sessions are designed to augment professional curricula in various content areas and to offer concrete strategies for addressing issues affecting under-resourced populations. For many of these seminars, BTG now offers continuing education credits for alumni, community and academic partners, and others.

BTG Community Health Rotation Program

This advanced community rotation experience offers students a collaborative interdisciplinary approach to health and healthcare delivery for under-resourced populations.

BTG Community Health Scholars Program

Students who complete the BTG CHIP, Seminar Series, and Community Health Rotation Program graduate as BTG Community Health Scholars.

Storytelling Project



The [Storytelling Project](#) provides students with an opportunity to learn about their community site from the perspective of a representative community member. Students are introduced to the topic of “narrative medicine” as the basis of the project and are encouraged to use the medium of their choice (audio, video, painting, drawing, writing, etc.) to represent what they learned. (See the [student project summaries](#).)

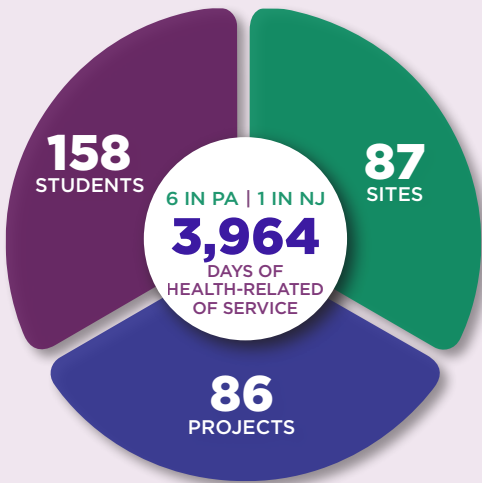
The 34th Annual Symposium



The BTG Symposium was back in person on September 20, 2024, at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. Students presented their professional posters, student coordinators introduced 2024 Storytelling Project highlights, and the BTG Alumni Network welcomed a new cohort. **Ai-Jen Poo**, an award-winning organizer and nationally recognized expert on the care economy, accepted the 2024 BTG award and delivered the keynote speech.

BTG 2024 FACTS & FIGURES

CHIP 2024



Professional Disciplines

- Creative arts in therapy
- Dental medicine
- Health and rehab sciences
- Law
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Pharmacy
- Physician’s assistant
- Podiatry
- Public health
- Social work
- Veterinary medicine

OTHER 2024

BTG Seminar Series

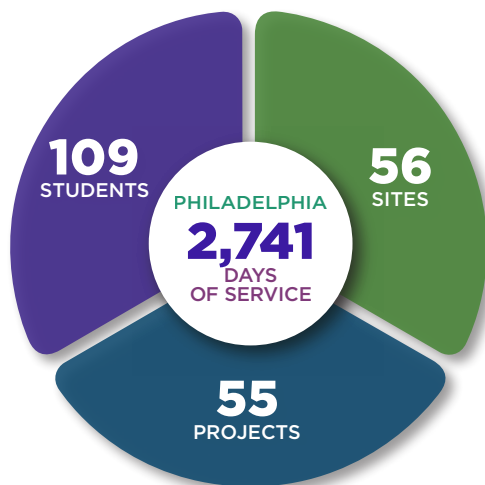
**117**  
Students  
Attended at least one seminar

BTG Community Health Rotation Program

**26**  
Students  
Participated in the Community Health Rotation Program

BTG Community Health Scholars

**17**  
Students  
Graduated as Community Health Scholars



## PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINES

- Creative arts in therapy
- Dental medicine
- Law
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Pharmacy
- Podiatry
- Public health
- Social work
- Veterinary medicine

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES\*

- Advocacy
- Assessing community resources
- Community outreach
- Community social activities
- Health-related client education
- Linking clients with health resources
- Oral health activities
- Planning/organizing or implementing health/recreational activities
- Research on health/social/environmental topics

## COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUES\*

- Access to healthcare
- Cardiovascular health
- Childcare
- Communication (language/literacy)
- Diet and nutrition
- Exercise
- Insurance/social services
- Mental health
- Oral health
- Poverty

\* Information reflects only those categories reported by 40% or more of the students participating at this program location.

## Philadelphia Program Participants

### Philadelphia Small Group Leaders

Tariem Burroughs  
Patrick Dooley  
Elissa Goldberg  
Denise Johnson  
Jocelyn Jones Arnold

David Malloy  
Ingrid Mapanao  
Rayn Philips  
Anthony Singleton  
Crystal Wortham  
Jerome Wright



*[The Wednesday] sessions and their crash course in social justice were very worthwhile. They provided a deeper dive on topics that I was already somewhat familiar with and interested in. They've inspired me to be better at keeping up with local and national events and to not let the negativity of the news cycle dissuade me from being an informed citizen. They've also highlighted the importance of being a politically active citizen at all levels of government.*

**Abby Faust**  
Drexel University  
College of Medicine

*[This] internship ... was a life-altering experience that taught me invaluable lessons about resilience, community, and the power of empathy. The friendships I formed, the stories I heard, and the projects I contributed to have all become integral parts of who I am. As I continue on my path in healthcare, I will carry these experiences with me, constantly striving to make a positive impact on the lives of those I serve.*

**Christine Robert "Bhobbie" Pagotan**  
Drexel University  
College of Medicine

*I am happy to have been a part of BTG. It has given me so much knowledge and growth along with learning wisdom from the residents at [my site] ... I found a connection and understanding with the elderly community by getting ... to know their environment and people better. BTG has made me realize my purpose in my future career in serving people and the importance of listening to ... and better understanding patients as a person.*

**Stephanie Ilo**  
Temple University  
School of Pharmacy





## Philadelphia Program Participants (continued)

### DREXEL UNIVERSITY

#### Program Staff and Faculty

Elissa Goldberg, MSS, LSW  
Program Director  
Laura Mullin, MS

#### Academic Preceptors

James Buehler, MD  
Tariem Burroughs, PhD, MEd,  
MSODL  
Charlene Chen, MD  
Esther Chernak, MD, MPH, FACP  
Stacy Ellen, DO, FAAP  
Annette Gadegbeku, MD  
Jeremiah Goldstein, MD  
Angela Kim, MD, MS  
Renee Kottenhahn, MD, FAA  
Steven Peitzman, MD, FAACP  
Kristen Ryczak, MD  
Emily Spengler, MD  
Daniel R. Taylor, DO, FAAP, FACOP  
Kelley White, MD  
Monica Mallory Whitmore, DO

#### Community Preceptors

Shania Boone  
Agnes Brown  
Nikki Brown, MSW  
Jessica Chou  
Julie Conway, SLPD, CCC-SLP, ATP  
Jonathan Deutsch, PhD, CRC, CHE  
Andrea DiMola  
Tanya Doyle  
Nicola D'Souza, MPH, LSW  
Jonathan Edwards

Sandra Fontroy  
Theresa Giardina, MEd, OG  
Joni Helton  
Jeanene Johnson  
Renee Kottenhahn, MD  
Conny Lockwood  
Sarah Lumbo  
Lanisha Otuonye  
Eleah Parker, MPH  
Brionna Pendleton  
Sara Popkin, MSW, LSW  
Brendan Sculley, MSW  
Rachel Sherman, MPH  
Cheryl Smith  
Kathryn Stroup, MD  
Daniel Taylor, DO  
Renee Turchi, MD, MPH, FAAP  
Patricia Veltri  
Morgyn Yates



*My BTG summer has been a healing one. During my first year of podiatry school, I felt very disconnected from the reason I wanted to get into a helping profession in the first place — people. ... I've learned so much more about barriers people face in accessing care and resources in Philadelphia. I've learned to ask better questions to get people what they need in a compassionate and informed way. I've learned how to better work with an interprofessional team to meet a client where they are. I will absolutely take these skills with me into podiatric practice ...*

**Louisa Benatovich**  
Temple University  
School of Podiatric Medicine

*E4E wants to extend our thanks for allowing us to participate in the 2024 BTG program. Your commitment to supporting youth and fostering their growth is truly inspiring, and we are grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this impactful initiative.*

**Anthony Singleton**  
Educators 4 Education (E4E)

*The students have been fantastic advocates for health equality and health equity to our members and among their peers. [They] have gained a deeper understanding of what it means to work with a population that is vulnerable due to both societal facts and aging-related health issues.*

**Liberty Bruce**  
Center in the Park



## Philadelphia Program Participants (continued)

### TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

#### Program Staff and Faculty

Ingrid Mapanao, MSW, MPH  
*Program Director*  
Jerome Wright, MSW, LSW  
*Program Director*  
Brian Work, MD, MPH

#### Academic Preceptors

Ingrid Mapanao, MSW, MPH  
Brian Work, MD, MPH  
Jerome Wright, MSW, LSW

#### Community Preceptors

Zoie Bissic  
Latisha Brown, MSW  
Meg Finley  
Jacqueline Harvey, BSW  
Shirley Moy, MSW  
Jonathan Schmid, MSW  
Cleo Smalls, MBA  
Charmaine Sudler-Milligan

### THOMAS JEFFERSON UNIVERSITY

#### Program Staff and Faculty

Maria Hervada-Page, MSS  
*Program Director*  
George P. Valko, MD

#### Academic Preceptors

Maria Hervada-Page, MSS  
John Edwards, JD, MSS

#### Community Preceptors

Beverly Bradley  
Brad Cary  
Jie Ben Chen, NCC  
Kara Friesen, MA  
Jenna Gosnay, MSW, LSW  
Zakiyyah Harris  
Joy Woods Jones, LSW  
Traci Kennedy, MPA  
Rebecca Keuch, MSN, CRNP  
Shawna Murray  
Steve Niederriter, MBA  
La Shonna Polite, MEd  
Eric Rega  
Hilary Rosenstein, MD  
Nicole Sage, MS  
Dana Serafin, CRNP, FNP-BC  
Sandra Telep  
Maggie Webb, MPH

### UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

#### Program Staff and Faculty

Ellen Martinak, MS  
*Program Director*  
Bridget McCormick, MS  
*Program Director*  
Hillary Bogner, MD, MSCE  
Donald L. Boyer, MD, MEd  
Nasheeka Conix  
Dalmacio Dennis Flores, PhD, ACRN, FAAN  
Johanna K. P. Greeson, PhD, MSS, MLSP  
Abby Quinn Peterson, DMD, MPH  
Lucy Wolf Tuton, PhD  
Brittany Watson, VMD, PhD, MS, DACVPM

#### Academic Preceptors

Hillary Bogner, MD, MSCE  
Donald L. Boyer, MD, MEd  
Dalmacio Dennis Flores, PhD, ACRN, FAAN  
Johanna K. P. Greeson, PhD, MSS, MLSP  
Abby Quinn Peterson, DMD, MPH  
Brittany Watson, VMD, PhD, MS, DACVPM

#### Community Preceptors

Mark Atwood, MS  
Beverly Bradley, LCSW  
Brad Cary  
Darlene Childs  
Julie Conway, SLPD, CCC-SLP, ATP  
Melvin Draughn  
Teresa Giardina, MEd, OG  
Kenneth R. Ginsburg, MD, MEd, FAAP  
Tyler Holmberg, BA  
Frances Hoover, MBA  
Mercy Howard, BA  
Jeanene Johnson  
Dorothy Johnson-Speight, PhD, MHS, LPC  
Traci Kennedy, MPA  
Rebecca Keuch, MSN, CRNP  
Lauren Kobylarz, MPA  
Deborah Lowenstein, LCSW  
Sarah Lumbo, MHI  
Kyle Macklin  
David Maddox, Mdiv  
Ana Bonilla Martinez, BS  
Nya McGlone, MS  
Lynette Medley, MEd  
Yveline Merisier, BS  
Ed Miller  
Jiana Murdic, MS  
Steve Niederriter, MBA  
Orfelina Payne, MS  
Elizabeth Porter  
Shalese Reaves-Thomas  
Nicole Sage, MS  
Dana Serafin, CRNP, FNP-BC  
Shaketia Sills  
Anthony Singleton  
Sandra Telep  
Lorraine Thomas  
Dianne Uwayo, MPH  
Maggie Webb, MPH



*I realize how profoundly [BTG] has enriched my perspective on medicine and community service. It was more than just a summer program; it was a transformative journey that reaffirmed my purpose in medicine and deepened my connection to the community. Philadelphia, with its vibrant yet underserved neighborhoods, became my classroom, teaching me invaluable lessons in empathy, resilience, and cultural competence.*

#### Julia Durugo

Thomas Jefferson University  
Sidney Kimmel Medical College

*Collaborating with professionals from various disciplines has shown me the value of diverse perspectives in addressing complex health issues. Interprofessional teamwork fosters a more comprehensive and effective approach to healthcare, ultimately benefiting the communities served.*

#### Karima Drame

Thomas Jefferson University  
College of Population Health



## Philadelphia Community Partners

African Family Health Organization (AFAHO)  
American Heart Association  
Beyond Literacy (BeLit)  
Broad Street Love  
Center in the Park  
College of Physicians of Philadelphia  
Covenant House Pennsylvania  
Depaul USA, Philadelphia  
Drexel Food Lab  
Drexel Kindergarten Bridge Program  
Educators 4 Education (E4E)  
Einstein Immunodeficiency Center (IDC)  
Fam Frequency Productions  
Frankie's World  
Gaudenzia Philly House  
Get Fresh Daily  
Girls Inc.  
Greater Philadelphia Health Action  
Greener Partners  
Hall Mercer  
HIAS and Council Migration Services of Philadelphia  
HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy  
Human Good-Tioga Presbyterian Apartments  
Inglis House  
Legacy Youth Tennis and Education  
Lenfest Center for Community Workforce Partnerships  
Lutheran Settlement House  
Lutheran Settlement House, Jane Addams Place  
Mental Health Partnerships  
Mothers in Charge  
Nationalities Service Center (NSC)  
No More Secrets Mind Body Spirit Inc.  
Old Pine Community Center  
Philadelphia Department of Public Health Ambulatory Health Services  
Philadelphia Family Pride  
Philadelphia FIGHT  
Prevention Point Philadelphia  
Puentes de Salud  
Red Shield Family Residence, The Salvation Army Greater Philadelphia  
Sankofa Community Farm at Bartram's Garden  
Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse  
Social Needs Response Team (SNRT)  
Southwest Community Development Corporation  
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children  
Center for Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs  
Center for the Urban Child  
Summer Meals Program & CAP4Kids  
Students Run Philly Style  
Sunrise of Philadelphia Summer Camp  
To Our Children's Future with Health  
Unitarian Universalist House Outreach Program  
Visitation Homes  
William Way Community Center  
Wyss Wellness Center  
Youth Emergency Service (YES)



*BTG ... has been, by far, one of the most immersive community service experiences I've had. It's the first chance that I've had to fully focus my time on serving the community, where I don't have to focus on school or studying. ... I've been able to give it the attention that it deserves. ... Being around the amazing people of BTG and [my site] has been eye-opening that change in the world is possible, if there are people like them and us working for it.*

### Tami Wong

University of Pennsylvania  
School of Dental Medicine

*I didn't need BTG to help me commit myself to a lifetime full of advocacy. But I did need ... BTG to show me specific ways that I as a physician can work in the community. I can volunteer my expertise as a supervising physician at a student-run free clinic ... I can provide pro bono counseling and advocacy for patients living with chronic illness. I can work at a federally qualified health center or sit on the board of a health department. There are so many possibilities!*

### Ivie Osagiede

University of Pennsylvania  
Perelman School of Medicine

*I see my experience with BTG as an opportunity to feel, instead of simply know, about different individuals' experiences in Philadelphia. ... The more perspectives I heard, the more I realized the importance of patience and curiosity. I end my summer feeling empowered to learn more about the communities and cultures that surround me and to continue taking on complicated conversations.*

### Sally Kane

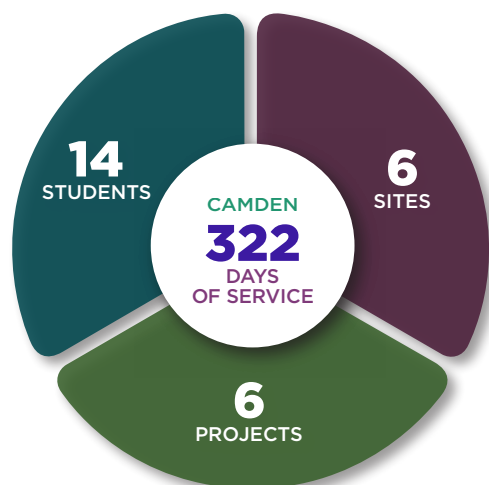
University of Pennsylvania  
School of Veterinary Medicine

*[My site] helped prepare me for what is ahead. It made me ... a better physician [and] a better, more aware person. Those at [my site] will never stop in their efforts to achieve a better world for all people, and neither will I. The skills and lessons I gained over my rotation ... will inform the way I care for my patients for the rest of my career, and I am so grateful to have had the experience to work with such passionate, brave, and dedicated physicians.*

### Jessica Zbranek

Drexel University  
College of Medicine  
BTG Community Health Scholar





## PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE

- Medicine



## STUDENT ACTIVITIES\*

- Advocacy
- Assessing community resources
- Community outreach
- Community social activities
- Health-related client education
- Linking clients with health resources
- Planning/organizing or implementing health/recreational activities
- Social service intervention

## COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUES\*

- Access to healthcare
- Childcare
- Diet and nutrition
- Environmental health
- Exercise
- Homelessness/housing
- Insurance/social services
- Mental health
- Personal hygiene
- Poverty
- Substance use
- Transportation
- Women's health

\* Information reflects only those categories reported by 40% or more of the students participating at this program location.

## Program Staff and Faculty

Mara Gordon MD  
Program Director  
Anthony Rostain MD, MA  
Program Director  
Paige Person, MPH

## Academic Preceptors

Mara Gordon, MD  
Anthony Rostain, MD, MA

## Community Preceptors

Andrew Adams  
Denise Bouyer  
Chelisa Junior, MPH  
Megan Lepore, AVP  
Kevin Moran  
Sierra Parks, MA, LAC  
Veronica Ramos-Cruz, AVP  
Jenise Rolle, MA  
Jennifer Sherlock-Loeb, MSN, RNC-OB  
Jeneen Skinner, LPN  
Misty Sparks  
Mouy Eng K. Van Galen, LSSGB  
Jameka Walker

## Community Partners

Camden Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

Camden Coalition  
Catholic Partnerships Schools  
Center for Family Services  
Joseph's House of Camden  
The Cooperative, Southern New Jersey  
Perinatal Cooperative



*My biggest takeaway from this summer is the value of continuous learning and adapting. There are so many brilliant individuals with creative solutions to problems. Throughout my career, I plan to continue growing as both an individual and a resource for the community.*

**Ayla Boyd**

Cooper Medical School  
of Rowan University

*The students brought a relevance and relatability in working with our youth participants. They were able to share their experience of medical school and post-secondary pathways.*

**Megan Lepore**

Center for Family Services



*My experience [has] ... made a profound impact on me as a medical student and has certainly influenced the way I plan to pursue my future career as a physician. I now recognize the clear shortcomings of the healthcare system [especially] in meeting the needs of patients with complex medical and social needs. ... Care often ends immediately upon their departure from inpatient or clinic settings, leaving them disconnected from the medical system and from resources that are crucial to their ability to improve their health and manage chronic conditions. My experience ... further highlighted the deep-rooted inequities that plague [the Camden] community both medically and socially.*

**Kate Moore**

Cooper Medical School  
of Rowan University



## PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE

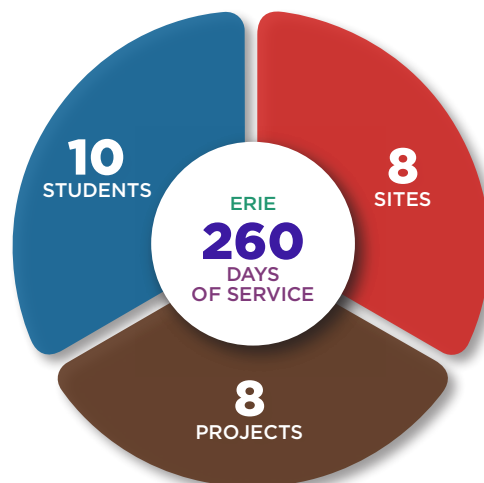
- Medicine



## STUDENT ACTIVITIES\*

- Advocacy
- Assessing community resources
- Client interviews
- Community outreach
- Community social activities
- Evaluation of existing programs
- Health-related client education
- Literacy activities
- Oral health activities
- Planning/organizing or implementing health/recreational activities
- Research on health/social/environmental topics

\* Information reflects only those categories reported by 40% or more of the students participating at this program location.



## COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUES\*

- Cardiovascular health
- Communication (language/literacy)
- Diabetes (and other)
- Diet and nutrition
- Exercise
- Mental health
- Oral health
- Personal hygiene
- Physical disability

## Program Staff and Faculty

Leah Labranche, PhD  
Program Director  
Noelle R. Thielman, PhD

## Academic Preceptors

Colleen Cole-Jeffrey, PhD  
Elizabeth Ferrer, PhD  
Christopher Keller, PhD, CPH  
Randy Kulesza, PhD  
Leah Labranche, PhD  
Jack Lee, PhD  
Noelle Thielman, PhD  
Robert Waters, PhD

## Community Preceptors

Anna Brozowski  
Alexandria Bujnowski, BS  
Tiffany Frey  
Marie Heberlein, TRS, PCHA  
Danielle Lesik, MA, LPC, MT-BC  
Hanna Perrin, RN, IP-BC  
Jay Rozelle  
James Sockhausen, NHA  
Mary Styn  
Rachel Thorpe

## Community Partners

Barber National Institute  
Brevillier Village  
LECOM Health Nursing and Rehabilitation Center  
LECOM Senior Living Center  
Mercy Center for Women  
Millcreek Community Hospital  
Behavioral Health  
Parkside Regency at South Shore  
Voices for Independence



Each year, we have consistently had at least one program ... with BTG interns that has been sustained here at the Regency as well as expanded upon and modified to meet the needs of the current census in our building. The BTG interns have helped expand the vision and mission.

**Marie E. Heberlein**

Parkside Regency at South Shore



These moments of shared happiness I experienced through BTG highlighted the significance of holistic care that goes beyond medical needs. My time ... was a blend of education, empathy, and enjoyment. It reinforced my commitment to improving the lives of the elderly and solidified my belief in the power of community and creativity in healthcare settings.

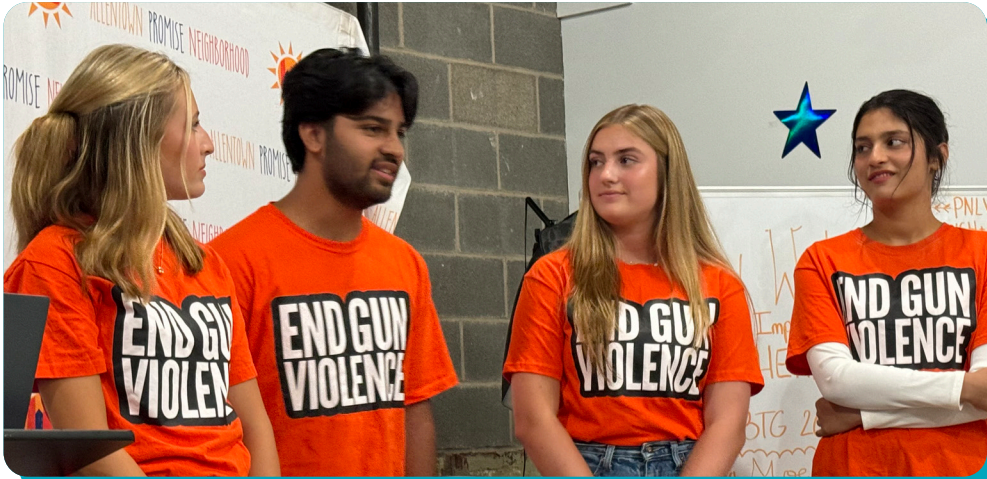
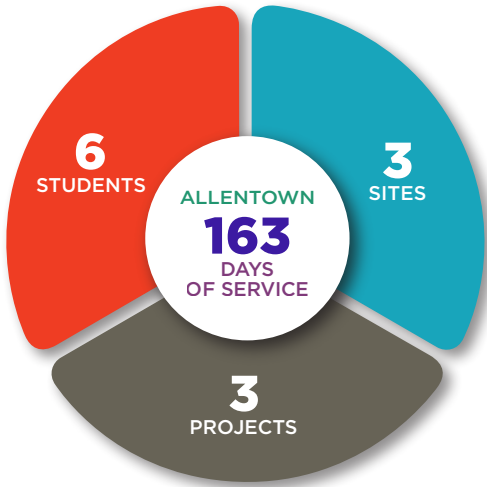
**Rabab Alamaury**

Lake Erie College  
of Osteopathic Medicine

My BTG experience has profoundly influenced my career perspective by providing invaluable insights into community health, reinforcing my commitment to osteopathic principles, and broadening my skill set in health education, cultural competency, and interpersonal skills. ... This experience inspired me to pursue a community-oriented practice focused on underserved populations ...

**Faysal Abu-Samhan**

Lake Erie College  
of Osteopathic Medicine



PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINES

- Nursing
- Physician’s assistant

STUDENT ACTIVITIES\*

- Advocacy
- Assessing community resources
- Client interviews
- Community outreach
- Community social activities
- Health-related client education
- Literacy activities
- Oral health activities
- Planning/organizing or implementing health/recreational activities

COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUES\*

- Cardiovascular health
- Childcare
- Communication (language/literacy)
- Diet and nutrition
- Exercise
- Oral health
- Violence

\* Information reflects only those categories reported by 40% or more of the students participating at this program location.

Participating Institution  
DeSales University

**Program Staff and Faculty**  
Tricia Bernecker, PhD, RN  
Program Director  
Abby Letcher, MD

**Academic Preceptors**  
Tricia Bernecker, PhD, RN

**Community Preceptors**  
Tina Amato, MS, LDN, RD  
Hasshan Batts, DHSc, MSW  
Abby S. Letcher, MD  
Naomi Melendez  
Andrea Wilson, DHSc, MEd

**Community Partners**  
Alliance Hall of Allentown  
Casa Guadalupe Center  
Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley (PNLV)



*My time with BTG has been incredibly rewarding. ... I've learned a lot about community dynamics and the importance of addressing social determinants of health. The program has been a great mix of hands-on experience and learning, and it's made me even more committed to helping bridge gaps and support positive change in communities. I'm grateful for all the experiences and insights, and I'm excited to take what I've learned and apply it in the future.*

**Moin Gureshi**  
DeSales University  
School of Nursing



*Working at [my site], I recognized the value of having an interdisciplinary team. ... Some of the staff have other jobs and hobbies outside their work at the camp. These staff try to use [all] connections they have to better serve the students. Working in an interdisciplinary team is important because each member contributes something different, and all ... come together to create a better workplace.*

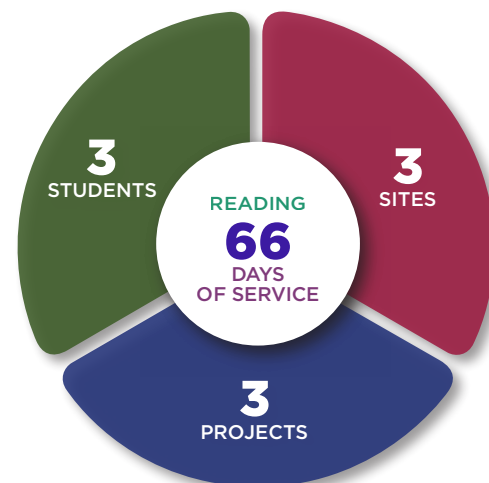
**Emma Scotto**  
DeSales University  
College of Healthcare Professions  
Physician Assistant Program



*The BTG interns ... were wonderful. They stepped up whenever needed. They canvassed the community, helped at our Food & Wellness Center, community engaged at our Reggae Festival, presented at our Lunch and Learn, provided positive vibes, made community check-up calls, and much more. They were very helpful and much appreciated.*

**Naomi Melendez**  
Promise Neighborhoods





## PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE

- Medicine



## STUDENT ACTIVITIES\*

- Advocacy
- Assessing community resources
- Community outreach
- Health-related client education
- Linking clients with health resources
- Literacy activities
- Medical interpretation
- Planning/organizing or implementing health/recreational activities
- Research on health/social/environmental topics

## COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUES\*

- Access to healthcare
- Budgeting/personal finances
- Cardiovascular health
- Communication (language/literacy)
- Computer literacy
- Cultural health beliefs and practices
- Diabetes
- Diet and nutrition
- Environmental health
- Exercise
- Homelessness/housing
- Immigrant issues
- Insurance/social services
- Mental health
- Obesity
- Oral health
- Personal hygiene
- Physical disability
- Poverty
- Race/ethnicity
- Substance use

\* Information reflects only those categories reported by 40% or more of the students participating at this program location.

## Participating Institution

Drexel University College  
of Medicine at Tower Health

## Program Staff and Faculty

Holly Metzgar, DO, FACOG, NCMP  
Program Director

## Academic Preceptor

Holly Metzgar, DO, FACOG, NCMP

## Community Preceptors

Alexis Fick  
April McNally  
Alyssa Messner  
Michael Reppert  
Rus Romanov  
Jeannie Rubero  
Michael Toledo  
Robert Turchi  
Jess Umbenhauer

## Community Partners

Centro Hispano Daniel Torres  
Helping Harvest Fresh Food Bank  
Hope Rescue Mission



*I saw how patience and targeted support can significantly enhance an individual and a community's well-being. This experience has deepened my commitment to addressing both medical and social needs in my future practice, highlighting the importance of providing for underserved [people] in their native language."*

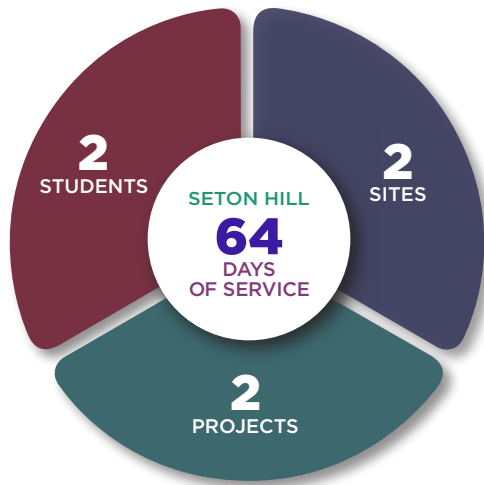
**Joshua A. Salas**  
Drexel University  
College of Medicine at Tower Health



*"... As an intern, I received plenty of guidance, direction, and education on the history of Berks and Schuylkill Counties, [their] current sociopolitical issues, and how the resulting healthcare disparities and food insecurities developed. ... Whether it is to heal the historical racial divide [or] intergenerational trauma, or to fix the issues of social determinants of health, connecting these communities is what is required to empower them. This requires advocacy for patients beyond just the cities. ... I will miss my time with the members of [my site] very much."*

**Brian Nguyen, MS**  
Drexel University  
College of Medicine at Tower Health





## PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE

- Medicine



## STUDENT ACTIVITIES\*

- Advocacy
- Assessing community resources
- Client interviews
- Community outreach
- Community social activities
- Development or administration of surveys
- Evaluation of existing programs
- Health-related client education
- Job/career counseling
- Linking clients with health resources
- Research on health/social/environmental topics
- Social service intervention
- Teaching living skills

## COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUES\*

- Access to healthcare
- Budgeting/personal finances
- Childcare
- Communication (language/literacy)
- Computer literacy
- Environmental health
- Exercise
- HIV/AIDS
- Homelessness/housing
- Insurance/social services
- Mental health
- Personal hygiene
- Physical disability
- Poverty
- Race/ethnicity
- Prenatal care
- STDs
- Substance use
- Transportation
- Violence
- Women's health

\* Information reflects only those categories reported by 40% or more of the students participating at this program location.

## Program Staff and Faculty

Jennifer Cummings, DO  
BTG Program Director

## Academic Preceptors

Jennifer Cummings, DO  
Mary Haus, MD

## Community Preceptors

Tracy Scott  
Sue Soroko

## Community Partners

Welcome Home Shelter  
Westmoreland Drug and Alcohol  
Case Management



*This experience has deepened my understanding of how intricately woven outside factors are in shaping a person's health and well-being ... the challenges and triumphs of those I worked with have left an indelible mark on my heart. One of the most profound lessons I learned is that success is ... unique to each individual. Celebrating these personal victories has shifted my perspective on what it means to succeed. ... The compassion, strength, and resilience I witnessed will continue to inspire me as I strive to provide empathetic and comprehensive care to my future patients.*

### Katie Raymer

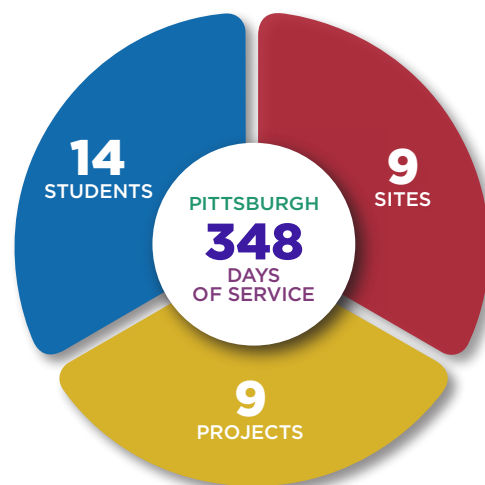
Lake Erie College  
of Osteopathic Medicine  
LECOM at Seton Hill



*This was a very enlightening and torturous internship for me. I learned so much about the systems behind human services and am grateful for it. To be aware of the faults and benefits, I now feel equipped to make an impact not only on the people who need help but also to effectively create change in the ways we administer them.*

### Paul Kim

Lake Erie College  
of Osteopathic Medicine  
LECOM at Seton Hill



## PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINES

- Health and rehab sciences
- Medicine
- Pharmacy
- Public health

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Assessing community resources
- Community outreach
- Community social activities
- Development or administration of surveys
- Evaluation of existing programs
- Health-related client education
- Planning/organizing or implementing health/recreational activities
- Research on health/social/environmental topics

## COMMUNITY HEALTH ISSUES\*

- Access to healthcare
- Budgeting/personal finances
- Cardiovascular health
- Childcare
- Communication (language/literacy)
- Cultural health beliefs and practices
- Diet and nutrition
- Environmental health
- Exercise
- Mental health
- Poverty
- Race/ethnicity

\* Information reflects only those categories reported by 40% or more of the students participating at this program location.

## Program Staff and Faculty

Thistle Elias, DrPH, MPA  
*Program Director*  
 Brandi Boak, MPH

## Academic Preceptors

Betty Braxter, PhD, CNM, RN, FAAN  
 Thuy D. Bui, MD  
 Thistle Elias, DrPH  
 Amar Kohli, MD  
 John Maier, PhD, MD  
 Cynthia Salter, PhD, MPH  
 Martha Terry, PhD  
 Jamie Zelazny, PhD, MPH, RN

## Community Preceptors

Maureen Anderson, EdD  
 Alissa Cohen, DO, MS  
 Sarah Crawshaw, MEd  
 Thistle Elias, DrPH  
 Deborah Gallagher  
 Kuwame Kinsel  
 Tre Mckeithen  
 Heather Sedlacko, MSPPM  
 Yui Sugiura, DO  
 Brandon Ziats

## Community Partners

9th Street Clinic/Latterman Family Health Center  
 Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation Center of Life  
 Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center (COTRAIC)  
 Gwen's Girls  
 Shadyside Family Health Center  
 UPMC Presbyterian/Montefiore  
 Vintage Center for Active Adults  
 Youth Opportunities Development



*I have seen more of Pittsburgh in the past two months than I have in the two years I've lived here. The best part of this experience was getting to see the city through the eyes of people who grew up here and have seen its multiple transformations over the past several decades.*

### Katie Cecconi

University of Pittsburgh  
 School of Public Health

*After spending the summer in the clinic, I learned a lot about disparities in health outcomes within our society. I had the privilege of speaking with many patients about their home life, occupation, family, and financial challenges. ... I hope to take the lessons I learned to become a more empathetic and caring physician, better equipped to understand my patients.*

### Aaron Chacko

University of Pittsburgh  
 School of Medicine, PCAT



## BTG 2024 Institutional Support

The Bridging the Gaps Program would not be possible without support from our participating institutions. We specifically want to acknowledge:

### Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

Center for Humanism

### DeSales University

Division of Nursing  
Physician Assistant Program  
Treasurer's Office

### Drexel University

College of Medicine  
Dean's Office  
Department of Educational Affairs  
Department of Medicine  
College of Nursing and Health Professions  
Dornsife School of Public Health  
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children  
Thomas R. Kline School of Law

### Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine

### Lehigh Valley Health Network

### Moravian University

The Helen S. Breidegam School of Nursing and Public Health

### Temple University

Lewis Katz School of Medicine  
Office of Student Support

Office of Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion  
College of Public Health  
School of Social Work  
Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences

### Thomas Jefferson University

Sydney Kimmel Medical College  
Dean's Office  
Department of Community and Family Medicine  
Jefferson College of Nursing  
Jefferson College of Rehabilitation Sciences  
Department of Occupational Therapy  
Jefferson School of Population Health

### University of Pennsylvania

Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics  
Perelman School of Medicine  
School of Dental Medicine  
School of Nursing  
School of Social Policy & Practice  
School of Veterinary Medicine

### University of Pittsburgh

School of Dental Medicine  
School of Medicine  
School of Pharmacy  
School of Public Health  
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

## BTG 2024 Program Support

BTG regional programs are made possible through generous support from:

### Lehigh Valley

Federal Work-Study Program

### New Jersey

Federal Work-Study Program

### Philadelphia

Federal Work-Study Program  
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Dee Hillas  
Willie Little  
Pennsylvania Department of Health  
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### Pittsburgh

Anonymous  
Anonymous SPH faculty  
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Martha A. Terry, MA, PhD

### Reading

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United Way of Berks County



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