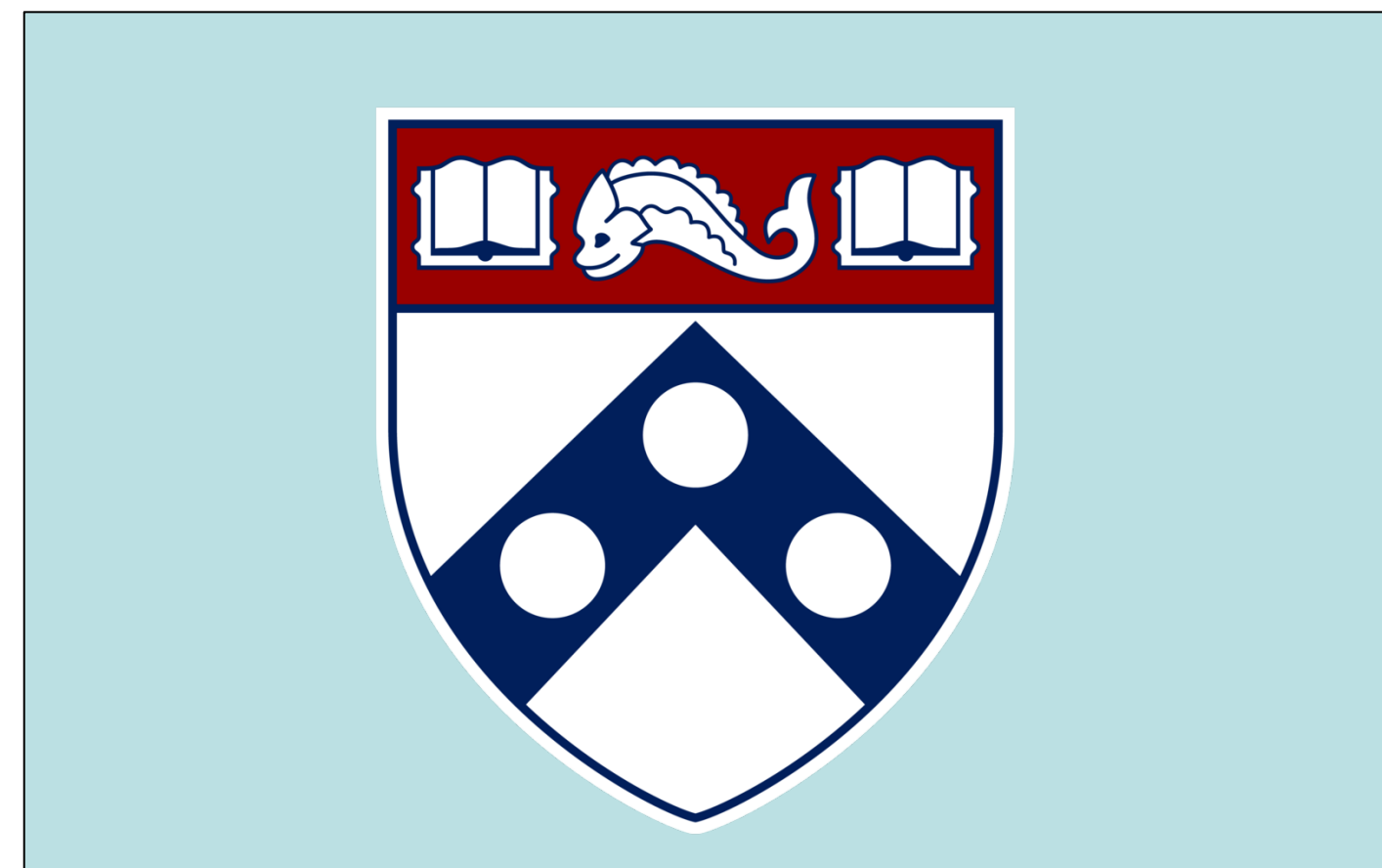


Bridging the Gaps



HIAS Pennsylvania, Health Case Management Internship

Student Interns:

Jessica Dauphinais – University of Pennsylvania, School of Dental Medicine
David Sowa – University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine

Academic Preceptors:

Hillary R. Bogner, MD, MSCE - University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine
Joan Gluch, PhD, RDH, PHDPH - School of Dental Medicine

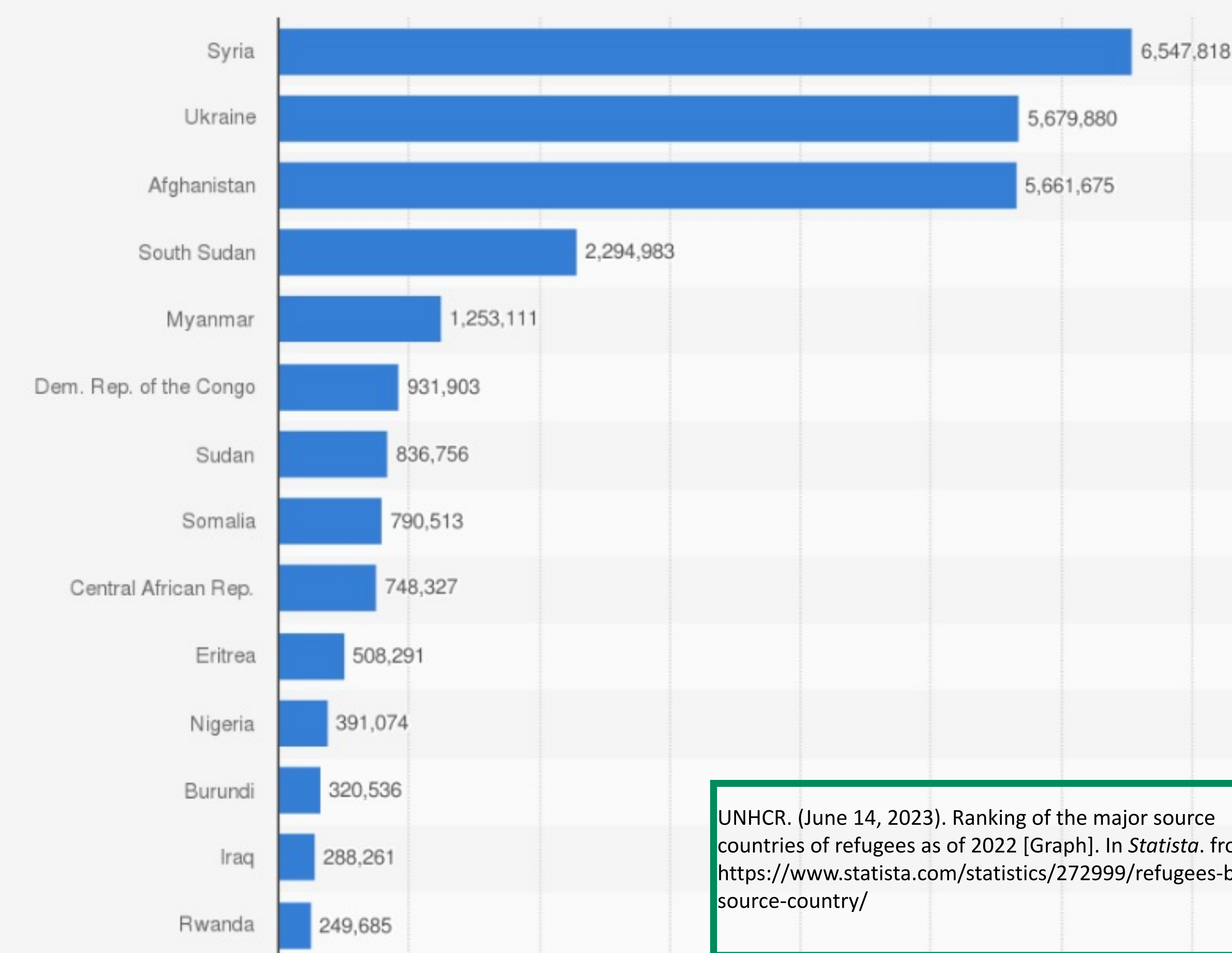
Community Preceptors:

Amy Eckendorf, LSW - Immigrant Health and Wellness program manager

COMMUNITY PARTNER

The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society of Pennsylvania (HIAS PA) is one of the largest refugee resettlement agencies in the Philadelphia area. It offers both legal aid and social services to eligible Office of Refugee Resettlement clients across metropolitan Philadelphia. The Immigrant Wellness Program at HIAS PA offers intensive case management services to eligible clients, connecting them to medical and dental appointments, provides medical accompaniments, links clients to new primary care physicians, and more.

Ranking of the major source countries of refugees as of 2022



UNHCR. (June 14, 2023). Ranking of the major source countries of refugees as of 2022 [Graph]. In Statista. from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272999/refugees-by-source-country/>

TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

As health case managers, interns:

- Served as advocates for a diverse patient population
- Alleviated some of the stress clients may have while interacting with and adapting to the local culture
- Communicated with social services and different health services such as dentists, doctors, physical therapists, ophthalmologists and more to coordinate appointments for clients and troubleshoot administrative challenges.
- Accompanied clients to appointments with the goal of helping them get comfortable using public transportation and navigating the city, cultivating the independence and agency required for them to make Philadelphia their new home

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES/JOYS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Interns assisted 30+ clients from 9 countries,
- Students gained familiarity with Medicaid plans and limitations

CHALLENGES:

- Relative short duration of internship meant being unable to entirely manage a whole case through from start to finish
- Limitations to Medicaid coverage prevented clients from receiving optimal treatment for some conditions

JOYS:

- Working with families meant several opportunities to interact and develop more longitudinal relationships
- Opportunity to collaborate with a multidisciplinary team (social work, medicine, dentistry) and learn about diverse approaches

REFLECTION

“My BTG CHIP experience at HIAS PA completely changed my future focus as to what I would like to do as a future provider. This summer I got to work with the immigrant population, and learned so much about how the transition to the US is and how our healthcare system constantly is failing them. The barriers my clients face are so real, and working in a community health center has always been a goal of mine. This experience confirmed working with a vulnerable population is where I belong. Language is only one barrier refugees and immigrants face, but it was the one that stuck with me the most.

“Guiding patients with HIAS PA opened a window into the challenges of navigating a complicated system that unfortunately does not always prioritize healthcare based on the gravity of a patient’s issues. Coming away from this experience, I have a greater awareness of all of the obstacles that patients face before even getting into the examination room for the patient-provider interaction. So much of what determines someone’s proper healthcare can hinge on their ability to coordinate childcare, find work, and cross language and cultural barriers. In that sense, working at HIAS PA has allowed me to not only appreciate the diversity of paths that bring people to the USA and Philadelphia, but also feel that I have made some small contribution to easing that path.”