



College of Health
LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

FIVE YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

Five years ago, the College of Health welcomed our first cohort of 62 students during the global pandemic. It was a time that required creativity, resolve and collaboration, but those early decisions have helped shape the College into what it is today. We've seen our enrollment grow to the current high of 269, graduated 112 students and formed impactful collaborations with dozens of partners.

While we celebrate our progress, the work ahead remains crucial. The gaps and challenges in health and healthcare revealed during the pandemic persist and have even deepened. Yet, we are also at a turning point. Advances in biomedical innovation, AI and cross-sector collaboration create a moment in which historical progress toward better health outcomes is possible. These developments could give enormous momentum to our mission to improve health outcomes for individuals, communities and populations globally—and in the Lehigh Valley.

As we face these real challenges and opportunities, we are committed to four key areas:

- 1. Focus on understanding the upstream causes of health and illness** to promote well-being, prevent disease and reduce the burden on our healthcare system.
- 2. Collaborate closely with communities** to address their highest priorities.
- 3. Strengthen partnerships** to improve regional health and create a model for other communities.
- 4. Invest in biostatistics, health data science and AI** to extract actionable insights from health data and develop innovative new technologies.

Thank you for your continued support. We hope you will continue to engage with us as we unlock our real potential.

Elizabeth A. Dolan

Elizabeth A. Dolan
Dean, College of Health

“It is exciting to see the growth of a talented faculty and their innovative projects, particularly in developing novel technologies, that will improve health in areas that are underserved.”

—**Vincent A. Forlenza, Jr. '75**
Chair, Lehigh University Board of Trustees;
Retired Executive Chairman, BD (Becton Dickinson)

“The vision of the College of Health aligns with my work as a women and girls' rights advocate. I look forward to graduates of COH contributing to the innovation ecosystem to address health conditions that disproportionately affect the lives of women, as well as the health implications of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The need for a new Optional Protocol to CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), the most important human rights treaty for women, to end all forms of VAWG remains a vital part of the work that I care most about in global health.”

—**Dr. Eleanor Nwadinobi**
Member, Dean's Advisory Council; President, Medical Women's International Association

“I wanted to help this great team leverage the vast network of Lehigh healthcare alumni, access the broad technical depth of Lehigh and provide a curriculum that is relevant to today's healthcare challenges. I really believe Lehigh COH graduates will have a significant impact on the healthcare system and drive future innovations in health technology.”

—**Jeffrey Burbank '86**
Chair, Dean's Advisory Council;
Retired Founder and CEO, NxStage Medical

“Our healthcare system is failing. Issues with the high cost, lack of equity, accessibility and increasing pressure from our aging population must be addressed. Lehigh's COH is preparing graduates to tackle these challenges with comprehensive offerings layered with experiential learning.”

—**Dr. Patricia Stephenson '78, P'08**
Member, Dean's Advisory Council;
Former Senior Medical Officer, Cigna Healthcare

SCAN TO LISTEN
Dean Beth Dolan discusses how Lehigh's College of Health is shaping the future of health on Accenture's *Mavericks in Healthcare: Chronicles of Innovation* podcast.



CELEBRATING INNOVATION, COLLABORATION AND IMPACT

Lehigh's College of Health (COH) has been transforming the future of health over the past five years through an innovative approach to health education. Our mission is to promote health equity by forging unconventional connections between diverse fields, prioritizing real-world impact in our research and educating students through experience. Through community partnership and innovation in applied technology, COH strives to advance health and well-being for all.

Under the leadership of **Dean Beth Dolan**, the College is expanding rapidly. Based in the Health, Science and Technology Building, the College now offers five undergraduate majors—two in collaboration with other colleges at Lehigh, the Master of Public Health (MPH) and a doctoral program in population health. Our first cohort of students graduated in 2024, and alumni have entered into impactful careers in the private sector, non-profit organizations, government institutions and more.



EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH HANDS-ON LEARNING AND RESEARCH

College of Health students explore society's most pressing health challenges alongside renowned faculty. Learning extends beyond the classroom, as experiential learning is embedded into the curriculum. Internships, study abroad and research opportunities further enhance learning by experience. Even as undergraduates, students are empowered to engage in high-impact research that advances public health and drives meaningful change.

Bethlehem native **Helen Keetley '25**, a population health major with a minor in applied mathematics, transferred to the COH to chase her interests in biostatistics and epidemiology. For her Honors Capstone, completed under the guidance of **John Hughes**, associate professor and chair, department of biostatistics and health data science, she created a tutorial on implementing Bayesian spatial filtering, a method to better account for data that has spatial clustering. Keetley is now pursuing a Master of Science in Biostatistics at Harvard University, funded by a full tuition grant.

As a graduate research assistant with **Rochelle Frounfelker**, MPH student **Katie Blomkvist G'25** worked on qualitative research projects in WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and mental health, as well as substance use among youth and young adults in the Harrisburg Bhutanese immigrant community. She served as the COH's first graduate United Nations Youth Representative for Caring & Living As Neighbours, an Australian NGO. In recognition of her achievements, Blomkvist received the COH's Outstanding MPH Student Award. She landed a job with Sanofi, a global biopharmaceutical company.

Luis Cáceres '24, G'26 received his undergraduate degree at Lehigh, and first encountered the COH as a junior when he studied abroad in the Dominican Republic. The program focuses on the social determinants of health in a global context. As he pursues his MPH degree, he appreciates how the COH allows him to advocate for the right to essential healthcare for all. After graduation, Cáceres plans to work in public health, with the goal of increasing quality and access to care for Spanish-speaking patients. He plans to undertake a doctoral degree as a clinician or public health specialist.

Key Milestones

2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023	2023–2024	2024–2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate programs launch First cohort of undergraduate students enroll Ellen and Vincent Forlenza '75 Endowed Chair in Health Innovation and Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate programs launch First undergraduate students graduate, COH alumni network born 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vinod Nambodiri named Ellen and Vincent Forlenza '75 Endowed Chair Michael Gusmano named inaugural Iacocca Chair Community-Driven Assistive Technology (C-DAT) earns Research Center status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beth Dolan named Dean Douglas Fellows program established to support underrepresented 4+1 MPH students First class of graduate students graduates 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health, Science and Technology (HST) Building opens Linda M. and D. Brooks Zug '67 Community Health Student Internship Fund 			

“The COH has amplified my view of what it means to improve community health outcomes and the many dimensions of healthcare.”

—**Luis Cáceres '24, G'26**

FACULTY, PARTNERS AND STUDENTS MAKING

Real-World Impact through Research

At the College of Health, faculty research makes an immediate impact on human health. The COH's combination of radical interdisciplinary research, partnership with community organizations, alumni support and student co-researchers makes this possible.

In 2023, gifts supporting pilot funding for research allowed **Thomas McAndrew**, associate professor, department of biostatistics and health data science, and **Rochelle Frounfelker**, assistant professor, department of population health, to start a new project in infectious disease modeling and forecasting, forming the basis for a major award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) within two years. Conversations with COH faculty have inspired alumni such as **Dr. Stephen T. C. Wong G'89, G'91**, **Carrie Callahan '96** and **Jim Wassil G'95, G'05** to help seed this and other early-stage research.

McAndrew, a computational scientist, is developing an innovative tool that looks at how accurately individuals make flu predictions over time and weighing those predictions accordingly in his forecasting. As a social epidemiologist, Frounfelker is leading a project to understand the decision making processes of key stakeholders, ensuring that the technology is informed by real-world needs. This work, which was supported by **Kareem Hargrove '25** and **Katie Blomkvist G'25**, will contribute to population well-being by improving evidence-based public health decision making for infectious diseases.

Gabrielle String, assistant professor with joint appointments in the COH's department of population health and the P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science's department of civil and environmental engineering, leads impactful research on water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in low resource settings. Under her guidance, MPH student **Josephine Osroagbo '24, G'25** conducted a systematic review of peer-reviewed papers and global guidelines for safe water storage and presented her work in multiple conferences. String also mentored MPH student **Tracy Zhang, G'25** in safe water storage research through a partnership with Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology and the Africa MANZI Center. They developed a study to evaluate container cleaning practices at community health clubs in Zambia and are finalizing a manuscript.

Michael Gusmano has played a pivotal role in helping to establish the COH and is a prolific researcher in health policy. He serves as professor of population health, Iacocca Chair, associate dean for academic programs in the College of Health, director of the Center for Ethics and co-director of the health, medicine & society program. Since 2021, he has published 34 peer-reviewed articles and completed two book manuscripts. He leads an NIH R01-funded project on xenotransplantation ethics, exploring the use of genetically modified pig kidneys for human transplantation. Multiple COH students have contributed to the project. Gusmano is also concluding a project with Bayada Home Health, exploring whether medically complex children have better health outcomes with intensive home health services versus hospitalization. **E.J. Rovella**, who joined the inaugural cohort of COH PhD students, is first author of the final report.



“Lehigh is an incredibly supportive place to do research.”

-Michael Gusmano, professor of population health

“I wait and see what issues are bubbling up and what people want to work on, and where I can help attach synergy and resources.”

-Kate Jackson, assistant professor of community and global health



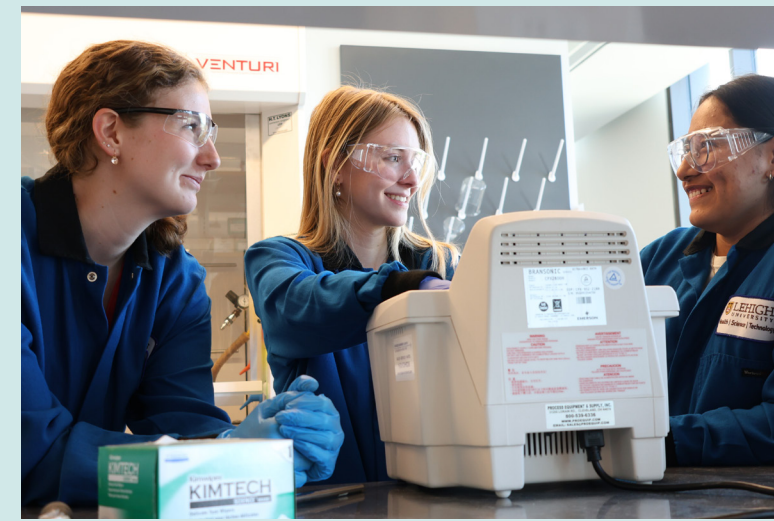
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND GOOD SHEPHERD

ANNOUNCE FIRST JOINT HIRE



In Spring 2025, the College of Health and Good Shepherd Rehabilitation proudly announced their first joint hire, a milestone within a broader partnership committed to advancing disability health equity. **Shirin Madarshahian** has received the first joint faculty appointment, the first-of-its-kind hire for both institutions. She also serves as assistant professor, department of biostatistics and health data science. Her appointment reflects a shared commitment to integrating academic research, clinical insight and technological innovation to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

“Growth of research and enhancing partnerships with regional and national organizations are important priorities of Lehigh's 'Inspiring the Future Makers' strategy,” said **Nathan Urban**, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, Lehigh University. “Creation of this joint position serves both of these goals. Hiring faculty with interests like Shirin's will also strengthen our new center focused on development and dissemination of assistive technologies. Partnerships like this one with Good Shepherd will be critical as Lehigh seeks to play a larger role in health data, technology and policy.”



In August 2024, Lehigh University and Good Shepherd signed a Memorandum of Understanding, laying out a 10-year vision to include interdisciplinary research collaborations and a jointly funded seed program to support new research. Spearheaded by the COH, the partnership is a bold collaboration that is redefining how academic and clinical institutions work together to improve the lived experience of people with disabilities.

Madarshahian, a motor control researcher and data scientist, focuses on promoting neuromodulation and developing data-centric analytical tools to support evidence-based decision-making in clinical settings. She develops data-driven methods to personalize non-invasive stimulation strategies for individuals with neurological disorders.

Lehigh students will be empowered to gain real-world training in rehabilitation and healthcare through internships and other applied learning opportunities at Good Shepherd. Discussions are also underway to create a joint lab space.



The College of Health would like to thank our Lehigh colleagues, Dean's Advisory Council members, parents, donors, community partners, alumni, faculty and staff for their vision, dedication and ongoing support. We're thankful for their contributions to the College's successes and significant growth over the past five years. We deeply appreciate our first cohorts of students, who continue to partner with us in building the college.

As we envision the next five years, we invite you to join us in advancing our mission to end preventable disease and suffering, and support groundbreaking studies that leverage technology and community-based approaches to address pressing health challenges by visiting health.lehigh.edu/giving.



LOOKING AHEAD

TO CONTINUED EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH, PARTNERSHIPS AND REAL-WORLD TRAINING

Over the next five years, the College of Health will continue to lead in health education and innovation. Thanks to the generosity of **Vincent A. Forlenza, Jr. '75**, chair of the Lehigh University board of trustees, and his wife Ellen, we are proud to offer new scholarships for COH students in 2027. The Forlenzas have created the lead scholarships and an experiential learning fund for the College of Health Scholars Program. This cohort-based scholarship program will support students who are passionate about improving the health of individuals and communities.

In response to the ever-changing needs of the market and community, we will continue to grow our academic programs. We will launch new programs in health data science, and are planning an integrated undergraduate program in health and engineering with the P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science. Further, we will continue to recruit faculty who are exceptional scholars and dedicated educators and build on core strengths in environmental health, Latin American health and the health of underserved populations and communities.

We will grow and deepen our valuable partnerships in the Lehigh Valley and beyond that provide students with a comprehensive view of health and that enable impactful research collaboration. Opportunities such as the co-op with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia are transformative for our students. Importantly, we will continue to work with partners to solve some of the region's most pressing health problems together.



SCAN FOR MORE

Explore extended stories and learn more about the College of Health.

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