

# Summer 2022 Curtis Center Newsletter



## Letter from our Director, Dr. Daphne C. Watkins



It's finally summer!

I don't know about you, but I feel like summer took *forever* to arrive this year. But it's finally here! I cannot wait to spend some quiet evenings in my backyard with a glass of lemonade, reflecting on how the first half of 2022 has proved to be a "sprint" toward some amazing opportunities at the Curtis Center. Our team continues to work, daily, to advance health equity for marginalized communities in Michigan and across the globe. Needless to say, I think the second half of 2022 will be a similar sprint.

But things look very different this year compared to how they were last year. For instance, this summer, we are raising our glasses to Associate Director, Dr. Jaclynn Hawkins, who is not only celebrating her one-year anniversary with the Curtis Center, but who was also recently promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at the University of Michigan School of Social Work! Congratulations to Dr. Hawkins for these major accomplishments. In other celebratory news, Dr. James L. Curtis, for whom the center was named, celebrated his 100th birthday in April. We are especially grateful for all that Dr. Curtis has done and continues to do to support our research, training, and outreach efforts at the Curtis Center.

So please join us as we toast to the success of our past, our noteworthy present, and our promising future.

Cheers!

Daphne C. Watkins, PhD (she/her/hers)  
University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor,  
Professor of Social Work,  
Director, Vivian A. and James L. Curtis Center for Health Equity Research and Training



Congratulations on the [Michigan Social Work Faculty Promotions!](#)

Curtis Center Associate Director **Dr. Jaclynn Hawkins** (second from left) was promoted to Associate Professor of Social Work with tenure.

Curtis Center Director **Dr. Daphne C. Watkins** (second from right) was named the [2022 School of Social Work Distinguished Faculty Award](#) recipient.

Curtis Center Program Managers **Kate Kloss** (left) and **Jamie Abelson** (right) joined the celebration for Michigan Social Work faculty promotions.

## Spotlight: Associate Director, Dr. Jaclynn Hawkins

Congratulations on your first year as  
Associate Director of the Curtis Center!



**Dr. Jaclynn Hawkins'** work seeks to identify structural and psychosocial factors contributing to health behaviors in African American men with type 2 diabetes. She then utilizes these findings to develop sustainable and effective self-management strategies to optimize African American men's interactions with health care services. Conceptually, she employs an interdisciplinary framework to consider the implications of this work for health policy and practice and focuses on community involvement and applicability of research findings to real-world situations.

[Click here to learn more about Dr. Hawkins](#)

## Meet our Featured Signature Program Faculty!



**Dr. Lenette Jones** is a behavioral nurse scientist interested in eliminating the health disparities affecting African American women with hypertension. Her program of research is focused on uncovering the mechanisms – biological, psychological, social, and physical – of self-management interventions. She explores the neuroprocesses associated with self-management behaviors, such as diet, exercise, and medication-taking, and she examines how health information behavior (seeking, sharing, and use) can be enhanced to support blood pressure self-management.

[Click here to read more about Dr. Jones.](#)



**Dr. Jamie Mitchell's** interdisciplinary research examines how patient-centered communication between older African American men, their families and physicians can be leveraged to improve men's cancer and chronic disease outcomes and patient experiences. She also develops, tests and adapts eHealth and psycho-educational interventions designed to support the communication efficacy and disease self-management of older Black men. Her work operates at the intersection of aging, social work, public health, cancer and chronic disease care, and health.

[Click here to read more about Dr. Mitchell.](#)

## Featured Curtis Center Signature Program

*The African American Chronic Care Equity through Self-management Program*



**Drs. Jaclynn Hawkins, Lenette Jones, and Jamie Mitchell** co-lead the *African American Chronic Care Equity through Self-management Program*, a Signature Program Initiative funded by the Curtis Center for Health Equity Research and Training. This project is a collaboration of three research initiatives that focus on effective interventions in diabetes and hypertension care for African Americans, as well as increasing equitable representation of African Americans in chronic care health research more broadly. Through this project, Drs. Hawkins, Jones, and Mitchell combined their expertise and prepared the manuscript listed below.

**Hawkins, J., Kieffer, E., Sinco, B., Piatt, G., Jones, L., Mitchell, J., Espitia, N., LeBron, A., Kloss, K., Kurnick, K., Palmisano, G., Spencer, M.** (Under Review). Using path analysis to assess gender differences in the impact of a community health worker-led diabetes intervention on diabetes self-management and HbA1c among Latinos with T2DM. *Journal of Diabetes and its Complications*.

**Dr. Jones** is currently developing a mobile app with a focus on hypertension self-management of African American women titled [WHISE](#) that will be pilot tested this summer.



### Dr. Curtis Celebrated his 100th Birthday!

Last month, **Dr. Watkins** (left), **Dr. Hawkins** (center-right), and **Jamie Abelson** (right) joined the celebration at the University of Michigan Museum of Art to honor Dr. Curtis' (center-left) generous donations.

In case you missed it, we created [this birthday card in his honor](#).



### Welcome to our new Staff and Students!



**Hannah Burgess, Curtis Center  
Research Associate and Data Analyst**

Hannah Burgess graduated from Oakland University in 2019 with a Bachelor's degree in Biomedical Sciences and recently graduated from Boston University with a Master's of Public Health. During her studies, Hannah specialized in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, as well as Global Health Program Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation.



**Kiyoshi Shelton, Curtis Center  
Community Engagement Manager**

Kiyoshi Shelton earned his B.A. in Communications with a minor in African American Studies from Eastern Michigan University. For the past 10 years, Kiyoshi has worked in various leadership roles as a teacher, coach, and mentor for youth and musicians.



**Keion Harris, Curtis Center  
Research Assistant**

Keion Harris is a senior at the University of Michigan. Next year he will be graduating with a BA in Psychology and plans to pursue his PhD in a mental/public health related field. Keion aspires to have a career in academia and research tackling many issues such as health disparities, inequalities and social determinants of health in underserved communities.



**Katie Kurnick, Curtis Center  
Research Assistant**

Katie Kurnick (she/her) is a 16-month MSW student in the global social work pathway. Katie is originally from Ohio and has experience working in nonprofits and schools. Katie's areas of interest include working with local and global populations, specifically focusing on child welfare, education and health needs. In her free time, Katie enjoys reading, baking, and hiking.



**Srijani Sengupta, Curtis  
Center Research Assistant**

Srijani Sengupta is a senior majoring in Biology, Health, and Society and minoring in Computer Science. She hopes to be an internal medicine physician while also conducting public health research focused on chronic disease in minority and immigrant communities. Srijani is also the president of CURIS, a public health advocacy program.

## Announcements and Congratulations!

**Dr. Jade Burns** was awarded the 2022 Society for Adolescent and Health Medicine (SAHM) Inaugural Racial Justice and Health Equity Award.

**Drs. Fernanda Cross** and **Jaclynn Hawkins** are recipients of the [U-M Advance Program SUCCEED](#). The grants help faculty in the arts, humanities and social sciences meet career needs and enhance the climate for and the success of a diverse faculty.

Drs. **Jamie Mitchell** and Matt Smith's new research on virtual reality job interview training helping formerly incarcerated adults navigate job applications and land employment is featured in the [Grand Challenges for Social Work April 2022 newsletter](#).

Curtis Center Signature Program Faculty Co-Lead **Dr. Anao Zhang** won the [University of Michigan's Award for IPE Innovation & Excellence](#) as part of the Collaborative Evolution of Team-Based Decision Making (TBDM) team, on the U-M Health Professionals Education Day on April 5, 2022. **Dr. Zhang** and **Nina Jackson Levin's** Curtis Center Signature Program Initiative (SPI), [Adolescent and Young Adult \(AYA\) Oncology program](#) continues to have a robust progression. Their program's Patient Experience Survey has received responses from over 300 participants. Also, the AYA Oncology SPI has hosted three symposia on AYA Oncology with a network of national collaborators and the final symposium will be in the Fall of 2022. In addition, **Ms. Levin** had two articles published in *Annals of LGBTQ Public and Population Health* this month: [one here](#) and [this one with Dr. Zhang](#).

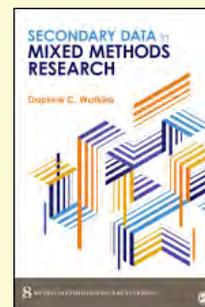
**Nina Jackson Levin**, Curtis Center Signature Program Initiative co-lead, received the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation Student Award to support her dissertation titled *Virtual Ethnographic Study of Adolescent and Young Adult Oncofertility Programming at Michigan Medicine: Implications for Sexual and Gender Minorities*.

The Curtis Center External Advisory Board met with Curtis Center leadership in May. Our board members were impressed with how much we accomplished last year and provided great suggestions for the next steps in our work!

### New Book!

We eagerly await the release of **Dr. Watkins's** newest book, titled *Secondary Data in Mixed Methods Research*, this summer.

[Click here to read more](#) about this book.





## What are you doing today to advance health equity?

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### Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that The University of Michigan, named for Michigami, the world's largest freshwater system and located in the Huron River watershed, was formed and has grown through connections with the land stewarded by Niswi Ishkodewan Anishinaabeg: The Three Fires People who are the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi along with their neighbors the Seneca, Delaware, Shawnee and Wyandot nations.

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### Connect with us!

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