



AMETHIST@PENN

ACHIEVING MATERNAL EQUITY
AND TRANSFORMING HEALTH
THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION
SCIENCE AND TRAINING

February 2025 News & Updates

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Meet our Newest Team Members!



Cecelia Tannous-Taylor
IMPROVE-CIP Project Manager



Aasta Mehta, M.D., MPP
AMETHIST Policy Core Lead

Cecelia Tannous-Taylor (she/her) is thrilled to join the AMETHIST team as a Project Manager. Cecelia joins us from PEACE Family Planning Research at Penn, where she worked as a clinical research coordinator, leading a range of clinical trials and investigator-initiated studies on contraception, abortion, miscarriage, and early pregnancy care. Prior to her role at PEACE, she worked in addiction research at both Penn and UNC Chapel Hill. She is passionate about advancing equitable pregnancy and reproductive health outcomes, and eager to learn from the incredible AMETHIST team.

Welcome, Cecelia!

Dr. Aasta Mehta is the Director of the Division of Maternal, Child, and Family Health (MCFH) at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, where she leads efforts to improve maternal and infant health through direct services, data-driven policy, and strategic partnerships. She oversees programs

such as the Community Doula Support Program, Philly Joy Bank, Philly Families CAN, and Birth Justice Philly, while advancing policies to reduce health disparities and improve outcomes for families across Philadelphia.

At the state and national levels, Dr. Mehta serves as Co-Chair of both the Pennsylvania Maternal Mortality Review Committee and Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative Advisory Group, and Co-Lead for the Policy, Dissemination, and Communication Core of AMETHIST@Penn, an NIH-funded initiative focused on reducing maternal mortality and addressing racial disparities.

In addition to her public health leadership, she is a practicing OB/GYN hospitalist at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia and an Affiliate Faculty member at Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health, where she developed and teaches a course on maternal health problem-solving.

Dr. Mehta has been with PDPH since 2012, previously serving as the Medical Officer of Reproductive Health. She completed her Obstetrics and Gynecology residency at Drexel University College of Medicine/Hahnemann University Hospital and holds a Master of Science in Public Policy from Drexel University, specializing in Health Policy.

Welcome, Dr. Mehta!



Upcoming Virtual Seminar: *Manuscript Writing for Biomedical & Implementation Science Journals*

Looking for support in writing a manuscript?

Join us **February 7th** at 1 PM!

LauraEllen Ashcraft, PhD, MSW of the AMETHIST

Design Core will be leading a training seminar on manuscript writing for biomedical journals. From learning about what content is needed for different types of journals to tips on submitting implementation science project manuscripts, this seminar will serve as a comprehensive session to help ensure your next manuscript is successful.

[Click Here to RSVP](#)

March Virtual Seminar: *Disseminating Maternal Health Research Findings on Social Media*

Friday, March 7th | 1:00 pm EST

This seminar explores how social media can be leveraged to improve maternal health outcomes and

address disparities. Using communication theory, it systematically examines which types of messages perform well on social media, offering insights into crafting engaging, evidence-based content for the Centers of Excellence. Participants will gain tools to disseminate their findings in a social media context to amplify maternal health messages and drive behavior change. Our presenter for this session will be **Emily Pfender, a postdoctoral researcher at AMETHIST** who has a background in health communication, specializing in how social media impacts women's health.



[Register Here](#)

February Office Hours for IMPROVE Trainees

Wednesday, February 19th

Are you a trainee involved with one of the IMPROVE Centers of Excellence? If you are looking for assistance with IDP creation and feedback, career development award guidance, or advice on the design and conduct of a small-scale implementation project, feel free to sign up for office hours with our AMETHIST Training Core Co-Leads or Co-Investigators.

Trainees may include post-docs, undergraduate or medical students, junior faculty, or anyone in a structured training program.

Sign up here for a 20-minute session:

[Monthly Training Core Office Hours — Signup Sheet](#)



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Policy Day

POSTPARTUM CARE: VITAL
OPPORTUNITIES TO
PROMOTE MATERNAL
HEALTH

SAVE THE DATE

MAY 13, 2025 FROM 12PM TO 5PM (EST) VIRTUAL EVENT

The AMETHIST Policy Core is happy to announce its upcoming Policy Day on “Postpartum Care: Vital Opportunities to Promote Maternal Health.” The event will take place virtually on **May 13th from 12-5 pm EST**. The goal of this

event is to facilitate open discussions about postpartum care policies and research, encouraging collaboration and outlining actionable strategies to advance postpartum care. During the event, attendees will have the opportunity to engage with and learn from other IMPROVE investigators as well as legislators, maternal health advocates, practitioners, and journalists.

Registration for this event will open in the coming weeks.

View our [calendar](#) of monthly events!

Resource Documents for Maternal Health Implementation Science Research

Our postdoctoral trainees have developed two resource documents to support the work of maternal health researchers within and beyond the AMETHIST network. Learn more at the links below:

- [*Measuring Acceptability in a Maternal Health Equity Context*](#)
 - [*Incorporating Equity Frameworks into Maternal Health Implementation Research*](#)
-



Check out a recent op-ed from an AMETHIST@Penn postdoctoral trainee!

Alexis (Lex) Zollo, PhD, recently published an op-ed in The Philadelphia Citizen, entitled *The Abortion Divide Isn't as Deep as We Think*.

Read it [here](#)!

Want to learn more about the power of storytelling?

The Penn Listening Lab collects and amplifies stories from patients, caregivers, staff, and providers within the Penn Medicine community. On their website, you can listen to the stories they've collected over the years, learn about how they collect these stories, and access resources such as reflection questions and a pocket guide on how to both thoughtfully listen to and share stories.

Click [here](#) for additional information.

PISCE Spring 2025 Writing Retreat

March 24th-28th | Every day from 9a-12p EST

The Penn Implementation Science Center will host its Spring 2025 Writing Retreat for **early career implementation science researchers** this March.

The multi-day event will be led by Dr. LauraEllen Ashcraft, PhD.

During the retreat, attendees will 1) write goals for each day, 2) have the camera on for additional accountability, 3) take 5-minute breaks at the top of each hour, 4) share progress & wins at the end, and 5) utilize a shared spreadsheet for daily goals and progress tracking.

Click [here](#) for more information including registration details.

Share your Maternal Health Implementation Science Opportunities with Us!

Would you like to share current job postings or training events related to maternal health implementation science with us? Please email these opportunities to AMETHIST@pennteam.upenn.edu to promote in our monthly newsletters!

Check out our library of resources
or request a consult!

[IMPROVE Collaboration Portal](#)

Connect with us!



University of Pennsylvania | 3641 Locust Walk | Philadelphia, PA 19104 US

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