

# The Center for Healthcare Equity in Kidney Disease (CHEK-D) Newsletter: Spring 2023



Welcome to the 2023 CHEK-D newsletter! Our 2022 was filled with exciting work and accomplishments. Please enjoy our latest newsletter with updates to our projects, mentees and core team. Please feel free to contact any of our team members for questions or ideas on new collaborations.

## About Our Center

The Center for Healthcare Equity in Kidney Disease (CHEK-D) is focused on developing and supporting scientists and clinicians in research to reduce and eliminate disparities in health processes and outcomes related to kidney disease. We partner with dedicated faculty, staff and community leaders on projects to increase healthcare equity in underserved, diverse populations. We align our vision with UNM HSC's mission for equity and quality improvement by expanding kidney disease clinical treatment options for vulnerable groups. We are also committed to strengthening the UNM HSC's internal research infrastructure through campus-wide collaboration, professional development, and mentoring a pipeline of minority trainees through undergraduate, graduate, medical education, and early career faculty. We provide community outreach to local middle and high schoolers to encourage pursuit of education and careers in mathematics and statistics.



## Meet Our New Team Member

### Miriam Vélez-Bermúdez, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow:



Dr. Miriam Vélez-Bermúdez completed her PhD in Health Psychology from University of Iowa in 2022 following completion of her MPH in Community and Behavioral Health (2020) and graduate certificate in biostatistics (2021). Her previous work focused on treatment decision-making in chronic kidney disease (CKD), which led her to investigating and addressing health inequities among underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities with CKD. She was recently awarded a T32 Fellowship in the Cardiovascular Research Training Program (CRTP) directed by Dr. Tom Resta.

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## Collaborate with CHEK-D

Associate Director: Nila Judd  
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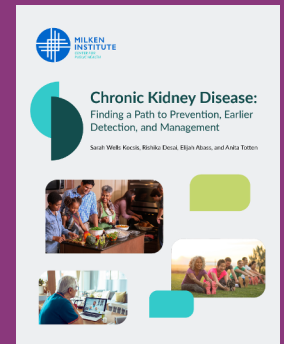


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# 2022 Event Highlights

- ▶ From 2021 through 2022, Dr. Myaskovsky, served on an expert panel for the Milken Institute Center for Public Health. That work led to a newly-released report entitled, **Chronic Kidney Disease: Finding a Path to Prevention, Earlier Detection, and Management.**
- ▶ On April 30, 2022, Dr. Myaskovsky delivered an invited presentation entitled “Native American Kidney Health Equity” during a panel focused on Achieving Health Equity in Kidney Care at KIDNEYcon 2022. KIDNEYcon is an educational meeting for nephrologists, fellows and residents with a focus on hands-on workshops and collaborative research. It serves as a platform for nephrologists and medicine trainees to interact with each other and experts from across the nation and learn about and discuss recent advancements in the diagnosis and treatment of kidney disease.



## Publications and Presentations Click on each box for a link to the paper



DeBlasio RN, Myaskovsky L, DiMartini AF, Croswell E, Posluszny DM, Puttarajappa C, Switzer GE, Shapiro R, DeVito Dabbs AJ, Tevar AD, Hariharan S, Dew MA. **The Combined Roles of Race/Ethnicity and Substance Use in Predicting Likelihood of Kidney Transplantation.** *Transplantation.* 2022 Apr 1;106(4):e219-e233. doi: 10.1097/TP.0000000000004054. PMID: 35135973; PMCID: PMC9169160

Rice CM, Singh PP, Judd NS, Jimenez EY Dr, Blair CK, Washburn A, Calvin C, Steiber A Dr, Zhu Y, Argyropoulos C, Unruh M, Dew MA, Myaskovsky L. **Protocol for the IMPACT Trial: Improving Healthcare Outcomes in American Transplant Recipients Using Culturally-Tailored Novel Technology.** *J Ren Nutr.* 2022 May;32(3):e1-e12. doi: 10.1053/j.jrn.2022.02.004. Epub 2022 Feb 25. PMID: 35227873; PMCID: PMC9058226



Swift SL, Leyva Y, Wang S, Chang CH, Dew MA, Shapiro R, Unruh M, Kendall K, Croswell E, Peipert JD, Myaskovsky L. **Are cultural or psychosocial factors associated with patient-reported outcomes at the conclusion of kidney transplant evaluation?** *Clin Transplant.* 2022 Nov;36(11):e14796. doi: 10.1111/ctr.14796. Epub 2022 Aug 31. PMID: 35988025; PMCID: PMC9772103

Loor JM, Judd NS, Rice CM, Perea DD, Croswell E, Singh PP, Unruh M, Zhu Y, Sehgal AR, Goff SL, Bryce CL, Myaskovsky L. **Protocol for the AKT-MP trial: Access to Kidney Transplantation in Minority Populations.** *Contemp Clin Trials Commun.* 2022 Oct 4;30:101015. doi: 10.1016/j.conctc.2022.101015. PMID: 36246997; PMCID: PMC9562954



Dr. Myaskovsky partnered with colleagues, Drs. Lilia Cervantes from the University of Colorado, John Steiner from Kaiser Institute for Health Research, and Bruce Robinson from the Arbor Research Collaborative for Health, on a perspective piece for the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (JASN)*. The perspective discusses how community health workers—lay non-medical individuals who are trusted and share the lived experience and characteristics of the community they serve—can help reduce kidney health disparities for racial and ethnic minorities and people who experience poverty.

Cervantes L, Robinson BM, Steiner JF, Myaskovsky L. **Culturally Concordant Community-Health Workers: Building Sustainable Community-Based Interventions that Eliminate Kidney Health Disparities.** *J Am Soc Nephrol.* 2022 Jul;33(7):1252-1254. doi: 10.1681/ASN.2022030319. Epub 2022 Apr 26. PMID: 35474023; PMCID: PMC9257810

# Ongoing CHEK-D Projects

The following is a list of projects on which our team members are currently engaged:

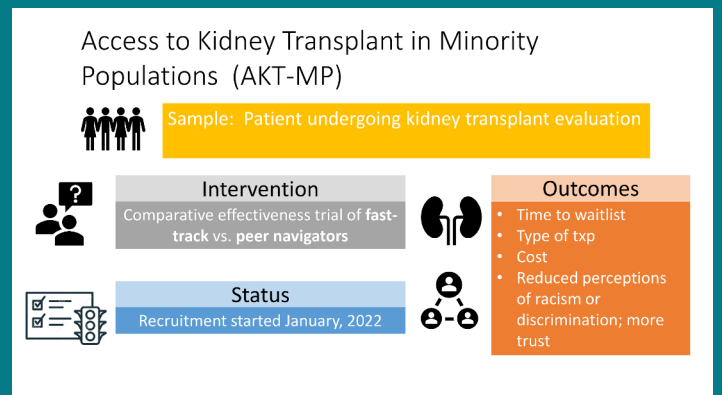
▶ **Improving Healthcare Outcomes in American Indian and Hispanic Transplant Recipients Using Culturally-Tailored Novel Technology (IMPACT) – funded by Dialysis Clinic, Inc.:**

Testing the feasibility and acceptability of a culturally-appropriate, multi-behavior lifestyle intervention for kidney transplant recipients. Status: Data collection is complete and analyses are underway.



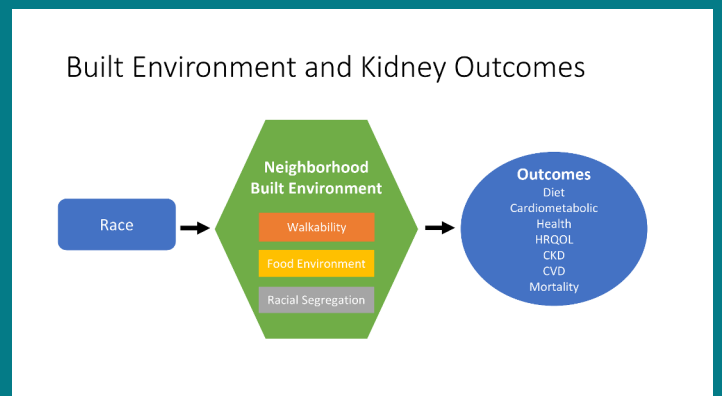
▶ **Access to Kidney Transplantation in Minority Populations (AKT-MP) – funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities:**

Compare the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of two approaches to help patients overcome barriers to completing transplant evaluation and receiving a kidney transplant: a streamlined evaluation process versus a peer-assisted evaluation program. Status: We hit the one-year anniversary of study recruitment! Currently, we have more than 100 patients randomized to the two study arms.



▶ **Neighborhood Built Environment and Racial Disparities in Chronic Kidney Disease – funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases:**

This study will use geocoding to evaluate the role of the built environment, including neighborhood healthy food access, neighborhood walkability, and neighborhood racial segregation on kidney disease. Status: We completed data coding and have begun data analyses.



## Projects newly-funded by Dialysis Clinic, Inc. in 2022:

### Endo ECHO Secondary Analysis for Kidney ECHO Proposal

We are conducting a secondary data analysis to test the impact of the Endocrinology ECHO intervention on key cardiorenal risk factors: HbA1c, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, lipids (i.e., total cholesterol, LDL, HDL, triglycerides), urine microalbumin, and serum creatinine. We completed data cleaning, organizing and preliminary analyses and submitted a competitive abstract to the annual conference of the American Diabetes Association. The manuscript is currently in progress, and our target journal is Diabetes Care.

### Comparing Kidney Transplantation Outcomes in Undocumented Immigrants and US Citizens

This study will compare outcomes and costs of kidney transplantation between undocumented immigrants and U.S. citizens. We will collect data on patient and graft survival, time to transplant from time placed on waitlist, and time from kidney failure diagnosis to referral for transplant. Also, we will compare costs of kidney transplantation in undocumented immigrants and U.S. citizens recipients and an analysis of the cost of transplantation vs. providing ongoing maintenance dialysis in undocumented immigrants.

# Collaborator Updates

In addition to the research projects run out of CHEK-D focused on kidney disease, we take great pride in mentoring and collaborating with junior faculty on their health equity projects focused on other vulnerable clinical populations. In this section, we spotlight these outstanding faculty and their cutting-edge research.

## Naomi George, MD, MPH: Assistant Professor, Department of Emergency Medicine



Dr. Naomi George was awarded the inaugural UNM Emergency Medicine Clinical Scholars Award, granting her 50% protected research time to develop a future mentored career development award, and initiate her path as an independent clinician researcher focused on the intersection of palliative care and health equity in the ICU, emphasizing community engaged research and implementation science. Her career development award will be titled, “Developing a Social Needs Screening Tool to Improve Patient and Family Outcomes in Intensive Care,” and she is currently a finalist for the UNM CTSC KL2 Scholars Program. Dr. Myaskovsky serves as her primary mentor.

## Margaret Greenwood-Ericksen, MD, MSC: Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences



Dr. Margaret Greenwood-Ericksen submitted a K08 application entitled, “Improving Rural Mental Health Equity Through Medicaid Policy Evaluation” to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The objective of Dr. Greenwood-Ericksen’s career development award is to develop a detailed, state-based study measuring the effectiveness of New Mexico Medicaid’s Alternative Payment Model (APM) as an intervention in rural and under-represented minority communities and scaling these findings nationally through a Technical Expert Panel who will identify key measures for inclusion in Medicaid policy analysis. This work will lay the foundation for multistate comparisons to prospectively test the impact of Medicaid policy interventions on rural mental health outcomes. Dr. Greenwood-Ericksen received an outstanding score on her proposal, and is awaiting her Notice of Award from AHRQ to begin this work in April, 2023. Dr. Myaskovsky will serve as her primary mentor.



## Jamie Krashin, MD, MSCR: Assistant Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Dr. Jamie Krashin received a KL2 award in July, 2022 from the UNM Clinical and Translational Science Center (CTSC). Dr. Myaskovsky serves as her primary mentor. The KL2 is a five-year Mentored Career Development Award funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Science. The KL2 combines didactic training, mentoring, exposure to multidisciplinary research, and ongoing evaluation to prepare young investigators for careers in translational research. The award prepares junior faculty to achieve research independence. Dr. Krashin’s project entitled, “Addressing Disparities in Early Pregnancy Loss” is off to a great start, and she has already submitted several papers and pilot proposals.

In October, 2022, Drs. Myaskovsky and Krashin also collaborated on an administrative supplement submission to the National Institute of General Medicine Research entitled, “Rural Early Pregnancy-Epidemiology of Complications (REP-EC)” in response to NOT-GM-22-005: Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Administrative Supplements for Research on Women’s Health in the IDEa States. This project will determine the prevalence of abnormal early pregnancy diagnoses, complications and miscarriage management, and assess their racial/ethnic and rural disparities in New Mexico.



## Miria Kano, PhD: Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Preventive Medicine

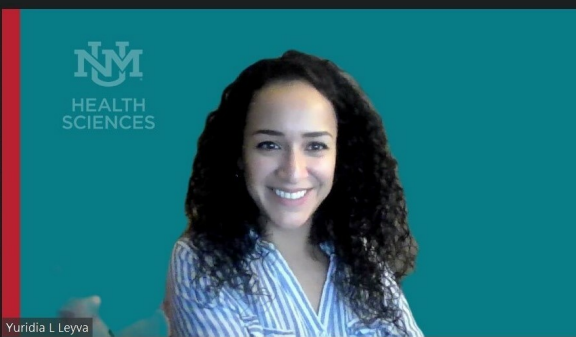
Dr. Myaskovsky worked with Dr. Miria Kano and colleagues to submit an R01 entitled, “Addressing Multilevel Challenges to Improve Sexual and Gender Minority Cancer Care (ACT on SGM Cancer Care)” to the National Institutes of Minority Health and Health Disparities. The project goals are to conduct an exploratory, multiphase, mixed-methods study, guided by ecological theory and the Implementation of Change Model, to (a) assess organizational attributes and staff attitudes relevant to SGM cancer care at five National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated cancer centers; (b) document patient and caregiver perspectives on cancer and survivorship care through QoL surveys and in-depth qualitative interviews; and (c) develop a toolkit for NCI Cancer Centers to improve SGM-centered cancer care.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION

<https://hsc.unm.edu/research/centers-programs/chek-d/>



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Yuridia L Leyva

## Community Outreach

The purpose of the CHEK-D Statistics Outreach Project is to educate New Mexican high school students about statistics, and introduce them to potential careers in statistics. The students also learn about college majors that require statistics classes. Our goal is to motivate students to consider taking a statistics class, and to learn critical thinking and analytical skills when reading research study findings in scientific and popular press. Ms. Yuri Leyva from our CHEK-D team was doing this outreach in person before the pandemic, and switched her presentation to Zoom in response to COVID restrictions. Currently, she makes these presentations using either approach in order to reach middle and high school students all over New Mexico.

## Planned Events for 2023



On April 20, 2023, CHEK-D will co-host Grand Rounds with the Department of Internal Medicine and welcome Dr. Elisa Gordon. Dr. Gordon is a Professor, Director of Surgical Outcomes Research, and Director of Transplant Outcomes Research at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Before joining Vanderbilt in 2023, she was at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine for 14 years. Dr. Gordon is trained in medical anthropology and clinical medical ethics, with over 160 peer-reviewed publications. She also serves as the Chair of the American Society of Transplantation's Psychosocial and Ethics Community of Practice, and served as the Chair of the UNOS Ethics Committee, and the Associate Editor of the American Journal of Transplantation.



On June 15, 2023, CHEK-D and the Nephrology Division of the Department of Internal Medicine will host Dr. Opeyemi Olabisi. Dr. Olabisi is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Duke University School of Medicine, and a member of the Duke Molecular Physiology Institute. He obtained his MD and PhD degrees at Yeshiva University, Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He completed a residency in Internal Medicine, and a Fellowship in Nephrology at Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Olabisi uses patient-stem cell-derived podocytes and reprogrammed mammalian cell lines as tools for uncovering disease mechanisms of APOL1 nephropathy. He has a passion for translating basic research into prevention and innovative therapy for patients at risk for or suffering from chronic kidney disease.

## Latest Proposal Submission

CHEK-D partnered with Dr. Lilia Cervantes from the University of Colorado, School of Medicine, on a U01 submission entitled, NAVIGATE-Kidney: A Multi-Level Navigator Intervention to Reduce Kidney Health Disparities, in response to NIDDK RFA DK-22-014: Interventions that Address Structural Racism to Reduce Kidney Health Disparities. NAVIGATE-Kidney is a multi-level, community-engaged, language and culturally concordant community health worker intervention for Latinx with advanced CKD. Results from this study will provide important research evidence for solutions to reduce kidney health disparities and inform local, state, and federal health policy changes. The grant proposal is currently under review at NIDDK.



**CHEK-D is committed to developing and supporting scientists and clinicians on research to reduce and eliminate disparities in health processes and outcomes for patients with kidney disease**

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