

News & Updates

from the Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration Project



November 2020

Resource Reminders

COVID-19 Rapid Response Requests

Since the start of the pandemic, Texas legislators have expressed the need for access to accurate information in a timely manner from experts in the field. As a result, the Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration (TX RPC) Project has created multiple reports and/or one-pagers using Texas data on public health topics of interest expressed by Texas legislators. If you would like to request additional information on a public health topic related to the upcoming legislative session, please complete the following form.

[ACCESS FORM HERE](#)

The TX RPC Project Team wants to remind you that all of our resources are available on our website. We hope these resources are valuable to your respective offices.

- [Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living Webinars \(includes COVID-19 specific webinars\)](#)
- [TX RPC Resources for Improving Measurable Impact \(resources available to policymakers to provide facts and evidence on health-related topics\)](#)
- [TX RPC Newsletters Archive](#)
- [Texas Legislative Bill Tracker](#)
- [Texas Child Health Status Reports and Toolkits](#)

The TX RPC Project Team wants to share our recently released reports:

- [COVID-19: Impact of Adult Obesity on Health Outcomes](#)
- [COVID-19: Impact of Childhood Obesity on Health Outcomes](#)
- [SNAP Utilization and Eligibility in Texas and Texas Legislative Districts](#)

Resources from TX RPC Members and Organizations

UTHealth and Texas DSHS Launch Nation's Largest COVID-19 Serological Testing Assessment

Steven Kelder, PhD - UTHealth School of Public Health in Austin

Harold W. (Bill) Kohl, III, PhD - UTHealth School of Public Health in Austin

Sarah Messiah, PhD - UTHealth School of Public Health in Dallas
Melissa Valerio-Shewmaker, PhD - UTHealth School of Public Health in Brownsville

TX RPC Network Members, Drs. Kelder, Kohl, Messiah, and Valerio-Shewmaker are part of the collaborative team managing the Texas Coronavirus Antibody Response Survey (CARES) project in partnership with Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Clinical Pathology Laboratories (CPL), and the UT System. Texas CARES seeks to understand the human antibody response to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Texas CARES aims to learn more about the number of people who have been infected in Texas, follow the spread of infection over time, understand risk factors for the disease, and inform planning for future health care needs due to COVID-19.

Key Takeaways:

- Texans who participate in this survey will provide valuable information about how COVID-19 antibodies work which can in turn inform local and state policy, as well as safety procedures.
- The survey team is looking to enroll a diverse population of participants to gather insights on why some individuals infected with the virus are asymptomatic and how that affects their antibody response.
- Eligible participants include: school-age children 5-17 years old; teachers and education professionals, employees in retail, business or service sectors; and patients at community clinics.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

[READ ABOUT THE TEXAS CARES STUDY](#)

Highlights from TX RPC Members Conducting COVID-19 Research

Rising COVID-19 Case Counts in Harris County

Shreela Sharma, PhD - UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston

Shreela Sharma, TX RPC Network Member, was quoted in the Houston Chronicle. "I'd say we're currently in a yellow zone, not a red zone like we were in mid-summer nor a green zone, where we're in control," said Sharma.

Key Takeaways:

- Though experts acknowledged it's difficult to pinpoint the causes of the uptick, many used the same phrase to describe one big culprit: COVID fatigue.
- A surge in COVID-19 case counts is expected because winter will drive people indoors, particularly for the holidays.
- Due to the COVID-19 case counts increasing, we need to be more vigilant, and practice social distancing, wear face masks, and wash our hands.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

Sick of COVID-19?

Jay Maddock, PhD - Texas A&M University School of Public Health

As the pandemic drags on, following COVID-19 prevention guidelines can feel like more and more of a challenge. Pandemic fatigue is real, and it's draining to stay on high alert month after month. Understanding how to cope might help people strengthen their resolve. In this article Dr. Maddock, TX RPC Network Member, explains COVID fatigue and suggests tactics to help people stay safe by protecting their mental health and well-being.

Key Takeaways:

- With all kinds of health-related behavior changes - including physical activity, eating healthy, and decreasing tobacco use - at least half of those participating in those behavior changes relapse within six months.
- When you see people socializing without masks and skipping physical distancing, it looks "normal" and could make you more likely to forgo those behaviors yourself.
- Social isolation can lead to a variety of poor health outcomes including hypertension and poorer sleep.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

TX RPC Partner Events

New Ideas for the New Normal

Texas Action for Healthy Kids 2020 Virtual Summit

Texas Action for Healthy Kids will host a virtual summit on Monday, November 16th from 11:30am - 5:30pm and Tuesday, November 17th from 8:30am - 12:00pm. TX RPC Network Members involved in the summit include Dr. Harold W. Kohl moderating the "*Town Hall Session - What is the New Normal?*", Dr. Deanna Hoelscher presenting "*Anticipation! 87th Legislative Session*" with TX RPC Advisor, Joel Romo, and Alice Kirk moderating "*The Chew*", presenting "*Chew Review*", and moderating "*Wrapping it All Up!*"

[VIEW THE AGENDA](#)

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Payment/Delivery Reform and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Help or Hindrance?

Dell Med Grand Rounds: Lewis Sandry, MD, FACP

The University of Texas at Austin, Dell Medical School will host their next installment of Dell Med Grand Rounds featuring Lewis Sandy, M.D., FACP on Wednesday, December 2nd from 5:00-6:00pm. Dr. Sandy is the executive vice president of clinical advancement at UnitedHealth Group, a diversified health care company dedicated to helping people live healthier lives and helping make the health system work better for everyone. At UnitedHealth Group he focuses on clinical innovation, payment/delivery reform practice and policy, and physician/health professional collaboration.

Event Highlights:

- Dell Med Grand Rounds is a school-wide series that brings world-renowned speakers who are leaders in delivering and teaching about value-based health care. The event is open to the entire medical community in Austin as part of Dell Med's mission to create a medical ecosystem built upon the foundation of value-based health care.
- Join the meeting to learn more about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health

REGISTER HERE

87th Legislative Briefing

Presentation of the Partnership for a Healthy Texas' 2021 Legislative Agenda

The Partnership for a Healthy Texas hosted a virtual briefing for lawmakers, their staff, and other external stakeholders to present their agenda for the 87th Legislative Session on Tuesday, November 10th from 12:00 - 2:00 pm. Presenters included Michelle Smith and Dr. Leah Whigham, TX RPC Network Members.

Event Highlights:

- COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of an appropriately resourced public health infectious disease infrastructure. This same emphasis should be placed on chronic diseases, including obesity, that receive less attention than global pandemics but have a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of Texans.
- Join the legislative briefing to learn more about how the Texas Legislature can put interventions in place to make all Texans healthier and more productive citizens.

VIEW THE SLIDES HERE

Recent Publications by TX RPC Researchers

October

McKay, S., Patnaik, A., Topolski, N., Ibraheim, M. K., Zhao, N., & **Aitken, M. E.** (2020). Addressing Firearm Safety Counseling: Integration of a Multidisciplinary Workshop in a Pediatric Residency Program. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 12(5), 591-597.

Shrestha, N., Shad, M. Y., Ulvi, O., Khan, M. H., Karamehic-Muratovic, A., Nguyen, U. S. D., **Cervantes, D** ... & Nahiduzzaman, K. M. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on globalization. *One Health*, 100180.

Akinlotan, M. A., & **Ferdinand, A. O.** (2020). Emergency department visits for nontraumatic dental conditions: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*, 1-14.

Jetelina, K. K., Molsberry, R. J., Gonzalez, J. R., Beauchamp, A. M., & Hall, T. (2020). Prevalence of mental illness and mental health care use among police officers. *JAMA Network Open*, 3(10), e2019658-e2019658. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.19658>

Gonzalez, J. M. R., Molsberry, R., Maskaly, J., & **Jetelina, K. K.** (2020). Trends in Family Violence Are Not Causally Associated with COVID-19 Stay-at-Home Orders: a Commentary on Piquero et al. *American Journal of Criminal Justice (AJCJ)*, 1-11.

Kelder, S. H., Mantey, D. S., Van Dusen, D., Vaughn, T., Bianco, M., & **Springer, A. E.** (2020). Dissemination of CATCH My Breath, A Middle School E-Cigarette Prevention Program. *Addictive Behaviors*, 113:106698.

Porter, A. K., **Kohl III, H. W.**, **Pérez, A.**, **Reininger, B.**, Pettee Gabriel, K., & Salvo, D. (2020). Bikeability: assessing the objectively measured environment in relation to recreation and transportation bicycling. *Environment and Behavior*, 52(8), 861-894.

Horney, J. A., Karaye, I. M., Abuabara, A., Gearhart, S., Grabich, S., & **Perez-Patron, M.** (2020). The

Impact of Natural Disasters on Suicide in the United States, 2003–2015. *Crisis. The Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention*.

Meyer, M. R. U., Ylitalo, K. R., Prochnow, T., Gómez, L. A., & **Sharkey, J. R.** (2020). Physical Activity Space Methodology for Assessment and Prioritization (PASMAPP): Combining systematic observations with community perceptions to identify community physical activity resource priorities. *Health & Place*, 66, 102443.

Prochnow, T., Patterson, M. S., **Sharkey, J.**, & Meyer, M. R. U. (2020). Health coalition collaboration network, perceived satisfaction and success. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*. 34(8): 885-897.

Sharma, S. V., Chuang, R. J., Rushing, M., Naylor, B., Ranjit, N., Pomeroy, M., & **Markham, C.** (2020). Peer Reviewed: Social Determinants of Health–Related Needs During COVID-19 Among Low-Income Households With Children. *Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy*, 17(119): 1-16.

TX RPC Project Presentations

[Society of Public Health Educators \(SOPHE\) Advocacy Summit, October 17-19, 2020.](#)

Bringing Evidence to Policy: How a Research-to-Policy Collaboration is Bridging the Gap at the State and the Federal Level. Christine Jovanovic, PhD, MPH

[American Public Health Association Virtual Annual Meeting and Expo, October 24-28, 2020:](#)

Adapting a federal research-to-policy collaboration model to improve state health: The Texas RPC project. Deanna Hoelscher, PhD, RD, LD, CNS, FISBNPA

Tools for translating research to policy and practice: The Texas child health status reports and Texas legislation bill tracker. Tiffni Menendez, MPH

Building the Texas research-to-policy collaboration network: Engaging legislators. Amelia Roebuck, MPH

[The Obesity Society, November 2-6, 2020:](#)

Advancing State-Level Policy through Needs Assessment, Relationship Building, and Rapid Response. Deanna Hoelscher, PhD, RD, LD, CNS, FISBNPA

About the TX RPC Project

The Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration (Texas RPC) project is a non-partisan network that aims to bridge research and policy by supporting partnerships between child health researchers and policymakers.

[Learn more online.](#)

The Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration Project team and overall network are available to support Texas policymakers with informational requests or resources related to health topics, during the interim and throughout the 2021 Legislative Session.

Contact Us

For more information, email TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu.

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