

News & Updates

from the Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration Project



April 2021

Resource Reminders

COVID-19 Rapid Response Requests

We are now over a year into the pandemic. The Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration (TX RPC) Project continues to create accessible and accurate information from experts in the field. If you would like to request information on a public health topic related to the upcoming legislative session, please complete the following form.

[ACCESS FORM HERE](#)

The Texas RPC Project resources are available on our website. We hope these resources are valuable to your respective offices.

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

General COVID-19 Resources

The TX RPC Project is committed to promoting optimal health for all Texans. For further information and updates on the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the [Texas Department of State Health Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), and [World Health Organization](#) provide masking, social distancing guidelines, and recommended best practices to limit transmission of the coronavirus.

Resources from TX RPC Members Conducting COVID-19 Research

Texas CARES Project Update

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

The Texas Coronavirus Antibody REsponse Survey (CARES) project is a Texas Population Health initiative in partnership with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and UTHealth School of Public Health. The Texas CARES project is now collecting the Elecsys Anti-SARS-CoV-2 S-Test that can semi-quantitatively measure the immune response to RBD-containing vaccines. The addition of the S-Test allows the project to identify natural (exposure) and vaccine-triggered antibody response, providing individuals and communities with more specific information on antibodies. The Texas CARES project is continuing to enroll participants ages 5-80 years old across Texas, regardless of vaccination status.



Key Takeaways:

- Data from the Texas CARES population estimate that 26% of Texans, including 29% of Hispanic Texans, have COVID-19 antibodies.
- Among Texas children (younger than 19 years of age), 34% have antibodies.

[VIEW THE TEXAS CARES DASHBOARD](#)

Highlights from TX RPC Members Conducting COVID-19 Research

Rooting for Your Home Team in Person? Here's What You Need to Know
Catherine Troisi, PhD, MS - UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston

With baseball season upon us, many states are determining the best way to keep fans safe while filling seats - from masking, to social distancing, to providing a negative COVID-19 test. Dr. Troisi was quoted in The New York Times saying, "Will people keep their masks on, will they be drinking alcohol, will they be shouting, will the roof be open or closed?...There are so many risk factors. Even if you're fully immunized, I'd advise against going." While it may be lower-risk for fully vaccinated people to attend, the risk of spread from vaccinated to unvaccinated people is still unclear. Health experts caution against attending full-capacity sporting events. States continue to reevaluate COVID-19 measures during sports games in order to keep all sports fans and their families safe.

Key Takeaways:

- Even fully vaccinated individuals should avoid attending full capacity sporting events.
- States continually reevaluate COVID-19 precautions at sporting games in order to keep fans safe.

[READ THE ARTICLE
HERE](#)

Will My Pandemic Weight Gain Hurt My Health?

Leah Whigham, PhD, FTOS - UTHealth School of Public Health in El Paso

A year into the pandemic and countless stress-induced, sleepless nights later, the world is slowly thinking about a return to normal. Many have experienced weight gain since the beginning of the pandemic due a more sedentary lifestyle. However, Dr. Whigham spoke with VICE about not judging ourselves for gaining a few extra pounds during quarantine and how a return to normal routines such as commuting and going to the gym can help shed those pandemic pounds. She said, “Weight is something that can be driven in either direction... if people gained weight because of the pandemic, it’s not the end of the world.” Other health experts noted that food can be a coping mechanism for many during stressful times, especially during the past year and the focus should be on how you feel while performing basic daily tasks instead focusing on the number on the scale.

Key Takeaways:

- Food makes us feel comfortable in times of stress, and the pandemic was no exception.
- Many are focused on the weight they have gained during quarantine instead of focusing on other aspects of health.
- As the world returns to normal routines, so too will our bodies.

[READ THE ARTICLE
HERE](#)

CDC Emergency Meeting on J&J Vaccine

Katelyn Jetelina, PhD, MPH - UTHealth School of Public Health in Dallas

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) paused administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine due to unforeseen symptoms in some people who received the vaccine. Approximately 6.8 million doses have been administered, and six recipients, all women between the ages of 18 and 48, developed blood clots. While there does not appear to be a causal relationship between the vaccine and the blood clots, it is important to watch your symptoms if you received the J&J vaccine. The CDC called for an emergency meeting to discuss the J&J vaccine. Dr. Katelyn Jetelina was interviewed by KHOU about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, saying “we need more people to get the vaccine to see if this is a true safety signal or just something about randomness in error”. However, she also said this could be a pattern among adenovirus vaccines, which uses deactivated virus DNA. Dr.

Jetelina also said that the benefits continue to outweigh the risks of the vaccine. Possible outcomes from the meeting include proceeding with the vaccine, proceeding with a warning, giving the vaccine to only specific groups, or stopping the vaccine completely. Dr. Jetelina says she does not see the fourth option of stopping the vaccine completely as an option the CDC will exercise.

Key Takeaways:

- There is currently a pause in administration of the J&J vaccine due to blood clotting in patients who have received the vaccine.
- The CDC will be holding an emergency meeting to discuss the future of the vaccine, including only giving the vaccine to certain groups of people.
- The benefits of the vaccine continue to outweigh the associated risks.

[WATCH THE INTERVIEW](#)

TX RPC Partner Events

Michael & Susan Dell Center Lectureship in Child Health: When it Comes to Your Health, Does Your Zip Code Matter More Than Your Genetic Code?

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

The 2021 Michael & Susan Dell Center Lectureship in Child Health was held on April 22 and featured Keynote Speaker Anthony B. Iton, MD, JD, MPH. In 2013 when Forbes magazine listed the top ten healthcare quotes for 2013, the number one quote was attributed to Dr. Iton was: “When it comes to health, your zip code matters more than your genetic code.”

This presentation addressed some of the data and evidence behind that quote by exploring the strength of the relationship between life expectancy and neighborhood. Using hundreds of thousands of death certificates, GIS mapping and other simple data analyses, a profile of life expectancy by neighborhood in seven different cities and regions was presented. The implications for US health spending and population health management was discussed and a model for understanding the social determinants of health was presented.

[VIEW THE EVENT RECORDING](#)

Webinar: All You Want to Know About the Vaccines That Prevent COVID-19

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

During this webinar on April 27th, presenters Drs. Susan Fischer-Hoch and Joseph McCormick will discuss how the current vaccines are made, how they induce immunity, vaccine side effects, effectiveness, their distribution, and why people should get vaccinated. Presenters will also discuss the virus variants and the effectiveness of the vaccine against the variants, herd immunity and why it is

important, and the potential need for booster doses.

[REGISTER FOR THE
WEBINAR](#)

Webinar: Taking it to the STREETS: Evaluating health effects of Safe Routes to School infrastructure changes in Austin, Texas

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

In coordination with the approaching Bike to School day on May 5, 2021, this webinar will highlight the importance of active travel to school, and a current Safe Routes to School (SRTS) initiative that seeks to improve child health by creating safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to bicycle or walk to and from school through transportation projects centered around schools. The 2016 City of Austin Mobility Bond included \$27.5 million allocated for large-scale, transformative SRTS infrastructure projects such as new sidewalks, protected bike lanes, pedestrian islands, shared use paths, and pedestrian hybrid beacons. This initiative is one of the largest and most rigorously implemented SRTS built environment programs in a metropolitan area in the U.S. The UTHealth STREETS Study is evaluating the child health effects from these transformative infrastructure changes. Stakeholders from the City of Austin and the STREETS Study will present implementation and evaluation methods and preliminary data.

[REGISTER FOR THE
WEBINAR](#)

Celebrate Every Kid Healthy Week - April 26-30!

Action for Healthy Kids

Don't miss out on celebrating Every Kid Healthy Week from April 26th-30th! From Mindful Monday to Fitness Friday, plan a schedule of fun activities that help kids be healthy in body and mind. Our partners at Action for Healthy Kids have tons of ways to participate at home or at school and will be posting activities on social media throughout the week, too.

[LEARN MORE
HERE](#)

Webinar: How School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs) Develop Strong Family-School-Community Partnerships

Action for Healthy Kids

On Tuesday, May 11th from 11am-12pm, Action for Healthy Kids in collaboration with It's Time Texas is hosting a webinar. Kids are part of families and families are part of communities. School-community partnerships build capacity so that kids,

families and communities can live healthier lives. How do SHACs create partnerships with community members, agencies, and organizations that have the same health goals? How can strong partnerships impact the health of the school and the larger community? Join Texas Action for Healthy Kids and get answers to these questions and more.

**REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR
HERE**

Recent Publications by TX RPC Researchers

COVID-19 Publications

Gallagher, S., Roy, A., Domeracki, S. J., Mohrmann, T., Missar, V., Jule, J., **Sharma, S.**, & DeWitt, R. (2021). The Low-Wage Essential Worker: Occupational Concerns and Needs in the COVID-19 Pandemic-A Round Table. *Workplace Health & Safety*, 69(4), 154–160.

Jablonski B, Casnovski J, Clark J, Cleary R, Feingold B, Freedman D, GrayS, Romeiko X, Schmitt L, Torres M, **van den Berg A**, Walsh C, Wentworth C. (2021). Emergency food provision for children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic: Examples from five U.S. cities. *Applied Economics Perspective and Policy*, 2021 Mar;43(1):169-84.

Janda, K.M., Hood, R., Price, A., Night, S., Marty, W.E., Rohlich, A., Hanson, K., Espinoza, M., **van den Berg, A.** (2021). Examining Food Insecurity and Areas with Unmet Food Needs during COVID-19: A Geospatial, Community-Specific Approach. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, Community Development*, In press.

Lee, R. E., Joseph, R. P., Blackman Carr, L. T., Strayhorn, S. M., Faro, J. M., Lane, H., Monroe, C., Pekmezi, D., & **Szeszulski, J.** (2021). Still striding toward social justice? Redirecting physical activity research in a post-COVID-19 world. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, ibab026. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibab026>

Maddock, J., & Seguin-Fowler, R. (2021). Healthy Eating and Active Living in a Post-Pandemic World. *Journal of Healthy Eating and Active Living*, 1(2), 39-40.

Payne, J. L., Morgan, A., & **Piquero, A. R.** (2021). Exploring regional variability in the short-term impact of COVID-19 on property crime in Queensland, Australia. *Crime Science*, 10(1), 7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40163-020-00136-3>

Other Publications

Figuroa-Solis, E., de Porras, D. G. R., & **Delclos, G. L.** (2021). Pilot study determining the feasibility of implementing the Disadvantaged Populations eGFR Epidemiology Study (DEGREE) protocol, point-of-care field measurements and a new module on risk factors for chronic kidney disease of unknown origin in Hispanic outdoor workers. *BMC Nephrology*, 22(1), 1-9.

Francis, J. K., Andresen, J. A., Guzman, A., **McLeigh, J. D.**, Kloster, H. M., & Rosenthal, S. L. (2021). Research Participation of Minor Adolescents in Foster Care. *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology*, 34(2), 190-195.

Holcomb, J. L., **Wilkerson, J. M.**, **Gemeinhardt, G. L.**, Robison, A. J., & **Schick, V. R.** (2021). A qualitative study examining the social network types of older sexual and gender minority (SGM) women and gender non-binary adults. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 1-20.

Johnson, A. M., Gabriel, K. P., Ranjit, N., **Kohl, H. W.**, & **Springer, A. E.** (2021). In-School, Out-of-School, and Weekend Physical Activity Levels Vary Across Sociodemographic Subgroups of US Adolescents. *Journal of Physical Activity & Health*, 1–8. Advance online publication.

Reefe, R. J., **Cummings, A.**, Van Horne, B., & Greeley, C. (2021). A Comparative Study of Mental Health Diagnoses of Foster and Non-Foster Children on Medicaid. *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*; 147.

Knell, G., Caze, T., & Burkhart, S. O. (2021). Evaluation of the vestibular and ocular motor screening (VOMS) as a prognostic tool for protracted recovery following paediatric sports-related concussion. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine*, 7(1), e000970.

Matas, J. L., Mitchell, L. E., **Sharma, S. V.**, Louis, J. M., & Salemi, J. L. (2021). Severe maternal morbidity at delivery and postpartum readmission in the United States. *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*. 10.1111/ppe.12762. Advance online publication.

McLeigh, J. D., Tunnell, K., & Lazcano, C. (2021). Developmental Status of Young Children in Foster Care. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*; 1(2): 39-40

Moore, J., Jee, S., Kemper, B., **Maddock, J.**, & Li, R. (2021). Association between social isolation and eating alone on foods consumed by Chinese adolescents. *Journal of Healthy Eating and Active Living*, 1(2), 64-73.

Pérez, A., San N'hpang, R., Callahan, E., Bluestein, M., Kuk, A. E., Chen, B., Perry, C.L. & Harrell, M. B. (2021). Age at Initiation of Cigarette Use in a Nationally Representative Sample of US Youth, 2013-2017. *JAMA Network Open*, 4(2), e210218-e210218.

Sharp, C., Vanwoerden, S., Gallagher, M. W., Williams, L., & **Newlin, E.** (2021). The Course of Borderline Psychopathology in Adolescents with Complex Mental Health Problems: An 18 Month Longitudinal Follow-up Study. *Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology*, 49(4), 545-557.

Siembida, E. J., Loomans-Kropp, H. A., **Tami-Maury, I.**, Freyer, D. R., Sung, L., Crosswell, H. E., Pllack, B. H., & Roth, M. E. (2021). Barriers and Facilitators to Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Trial Enrollment: NCORP Site Perspectives. *JNCI Cancer Spectrum*.

Wilde, E. A., Merkley, T. L., Lindsey, H. M., Bigler, E. D., Hunter, J. V., Ewing-Cobbs, L., **Aitken, M.E.**, MacLeod, M.C., Hanten, Gerri, Chu, Z.D., Abildskov, T. J., Noble-Haeusslein, L., & Levin, H. S. (2021). Developmental alterations in cortical organization and socialization in adolescents who sustained a traumatic brain injury in early childhood. *Journal of Neurotrauma*, 38(1), 133-143.

Texas Population Publications

General:

Dooley, E.E., Browning, C., Thi, C.A., **Hoelscher, D.M.**, & **Byrd-Williams, C.E.** (2021). Association of the Quality Rating and Improvement System, Texas Rising Star, on Physical Activity and Screen Time Policies and Practices in Texas Child Care Centers. *American Journal of Health Promotion: AJHP*, 8901171211003826. Advance online publication.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/08901171211003826>

Kim, Y., Lee, S., Abdelkhaleq, R., Lopez-Rivera, V., Navi, B., Kamel, H., Savitz, S. I., Czap, A. L., Grotta, J. C., McCullough, L. D., **Krause, T. M.**, Giancardo, L., Vahidy, F. S., & Sheth, S. A. (2021). Utilization and Availability of Advanced Imaging in Patients With Acute Ischemic Stroke. *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*, CIRCOUTCOMES-120.

Central Texas:

Erickson, T. A., Munoz, F. M., **Troisi, C. L.**, Nolan, M. S., Hasbun, R., Brown, E. L., & **Murray, K. O.** (2021). The Epidemiology of Meningitis in Infants under 90 Days of Age in a Large Pediatric Hospital. *Microorganisms*, 9(3), 526.

Gwarzo, I. H., **Perez-Patron, M.**, Xu, X., Radcliff, T., & Horney, J. (2021). Traumatic brain injury related hospitalizations: factors associated with in-hospital mortality among elderly patients hospitalized with a TBI. *Brain injury*, 1-9.

Holcomb, J., Ferguson, G. M., Sun, J., **Walton, G. H.**, & Highfield, L. (2021). Stakeholder Engagement in Adoption, Implementation, and Sustainment of an Evidence-Based Intervention to Increase Mammography Adherence Among Low-Income Women. *Journal of Cancer Education*, 1-10.

Janda, K., Salvo, D., Ranjit, N., Hoelscher, D., Price, A., & van den Berg, A (2021). Mapping food insecurity-related 2-1-1 calls in a 10-county area of Central Texas by zip code: exploring the role of geographic food access, urbanicity and demographic indicators. *Journal of Community Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-020-00847-3>

Yamine, L., Green, C. E., Kosten, T. R., de Dios, C., Suchting, R., Lane, S. D., Verrico, C. D., & Schmitz, J. M. (2021). Exenatide Adjunct to Nicotine Patch Facilitates Smoking Cessation and May Reduce Post-Cessation Weight Gain: a Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*. Epub ahead of print.

South Texas:

Johnson, C. M., Sharkey, J. R., & Gómez, L. (2021). Latino Fathers as Catalistas (Agents of Change): Strategies to Support Latino Fathers in Childhood Obesity Prevention. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. S1499-4046(21)00021-X.

Mungia, R., Case, K., Valerio, M. A., Mendoza, M., Taverna, M., de la Rosa, E. M., Nguyen, T., Saenz, G., Winkler, P., & Tsevat, J. (2021). Development of an E-Cigarettes Education and Cessation Program: A South Texas Oral Health Network Study. *Health Promotion Practice*, 22(1), 18–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839920914870>

Zhang, K., Reininger, B., Lee, M., Xiao, Q., & Bauer, C. (2021). Individual and Community Social Determinants of Health Associated With Diabetes Management in a Mexican American Population. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8, 1084.

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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