



**AMETHIST**  
ACHIEVING MATERNAL EMPOWERMENT  
AND TRANSFORMING HEALTH THROUGH  
IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE AND  
TRAINING

## June 2026 News & Updates

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### Announcements & Upcoming Events



View our full  
calendar of events!

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**Virtual Seminar: Qualitative Methodology in Maternal Health: Ethnography and Field Methods**  
*Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup> | 1-200 PM ET*

Many medical and public health researchers use qualitative methods such as interviewing to further their research in maternal health. However, there are other types of qualitative methods that could benefit these studies and their aims. Using their own experiences in these methods, **Micki Burdick, PhD** will explain an approach to qualitative research in maternal health that centers on fieldwork and ethnographic methods. Dr. Burdick will explore particular strategies within these methods and practical advice to engage these methods in your own work.

[Seminar Registration](#)

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### **Administrative Supplement Opportunity:** IMPROVE Highlighted Topic

The NIH recently published a highlighted topic asking for administrative supplements for existing IMPROVE awardees/investigators. More information about the announcement can be found here: [Enhancing the IMPROVE-funded Maternal Health Centers of Excellence | Grants & Funding](#)

**The deadline to submit an administrative supplement is  
Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>.**

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**Call for Applications:** *The National Institute for Healthcare Management Foundation (NIHCM), Policy Research Grant Program*

The *National Institute for Healthcare Management Foundation (NIHCM)* is currently accepting letters of inquiry for the 2026-2027 funding cycle of their Policy Research Grant program. **Up to \$500,000 in grant funding will be awarded.**

Requests for funding should align with one or more of the following areas: health care costs and quality, health care consolidation, artificial intelligence, pharmaceutical drugs & technology, rural health, or maternal health.

**The application deadline is June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 5:00 PM Eastern.**

[Policy Research Grant Information](#)

[Submit a Brief Letter of Inquiry](#)

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**June Office Hours for IMPROVE Trainees**

*Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>*

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.

[Select a Session Here](#)

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**Recapping the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual AMETHIST@Penn Communications Summit**

Thank you for joining us at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual AMETHIST Communications Summit! We had an incredible day full of learning, connection, and discussion on topics of messaging, misinformation, and mistrust within maternal health.

We truly appreciate you taking the time to attend and contributing your questions and insights to help create such an engaging experience. We hope the conversations, insights, and connections made throughout the event continue to support and inspire your work moving forward.

To watch some of the presentations from this year's event, visit our [AMETHIST@Penn YouTube page](#).

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**Interested in more opportunities  
to engage with communications topics?**

**Join the AMETHIST Policy, Dissemination, and Communication  
Core at two upcoming events:**

**Communications Strategy Workshop with Penn LDI**

*Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> | 1-2:00 PM ET*

Join **Julia Hinckley, JD** of the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics ([Penn LDI](#)) for an interactive post-Communications Summit workshop that offers attendees the space to reflect on what they learned from the event and what they want to carry forward into their work. The session will provide practical tips for sustaining relationships with key audience members and provide a dedicated space for participants to raise lingering questions, test ideas, and identify practical actions they are ready to bring into their communication efforts. Attendees are asked to bring questions as well as a piece of communications-related work they'd like workshop during this session.

[Link to Register](#)

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**Collecting and Sharing Impactful Stories –  
An Interactive Panel Discussion**

*Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> | 1-2:00 PM ET*

Led by **Dr. Aaron Levy** of the [Penn Listening Lab \(PLL\)](#) alongside patient advocate, **Debora Grandison**, and Chief of Family Planning in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Perelman School of Medicine, **Dr. Courtney Schreiber**, this interactive discussion will highlight the impact and importance of stories within healthcare and share how IMPROVE members can collect and share them responsibly. Attendees will leave this session understanding the value of storytelling, the care involved in their collection, and the insights they can offer when we slow down and listen.

[Link to Register](#)

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**A special thank-you to our AMETHIST Postdoctoral Trainees!**

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to our AMETHIST@Penn postdocs as they complete their time with the team. Your expertise, dedication, and thoughtful contributions have been instrumental in advancing our work. We are truly appreciative of the impact you've made and wish you continued success in the next chapter of your career.

Their future plans are highlighted below:



**Emily Pfender, PhD** is starting as a temporary Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Delaware in August 2026. She will be teaching courses on digital media and communication. Emily will continue working on the policy and communication core at AMETHIST@Penn. She is also excited to continue working as a content creator to correct women's health misinformation in real time and apply her research findings.



**Alexis Zollo, PhD** has opened The Reproductive Wellness Center, a Philadelphia-based mental health practice offering specialized perinatal mental health therapy for those who are trying to conceive, pregnant, postpartum or in early parenthood. They offer individual and couples therapy, support groups, and education for expecting parents and professionals.

Access her website here!

[www.reproductivewellnesscenter.com](http://www.reproductivewellnesscenter.com)



**Sammy Dhaliwal, PhD, MSc** will be continuing her research at the University of Pennsylvania as a postdoctoral fellow with Derek Griffith, PhD, PIK Professor at the Penn School of Nursing and the Perelman School of Medicine. Her work will expand her focus on perinatal sleep disturbance as a modifiable risk factor for mood disorder onset during reproductive transitions, with a growing emphasis on family systems and implementation science, using funds from two grants awarded over the past year. She remains committed to developing scalable, community-centered approaches to perinatal mental health.

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## Thank you to all who attended the 6<sup>th</sup> AMETHIST@Penn Family Meeting!

Thank you to all who attended the 6<sup>th</sup> AMETHIST@Penn Family Meeting in May, whether virtually or in-person! We enjoyed hearing about Core updates and learning about your future project plans. We look forward to reconvening later this year!

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### 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@penncare.upenn.edu](mailto:AMETHIST@penncare.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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