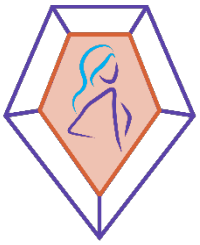

AMETHIST

ACHIEVING MATERNAL EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMING HEALTH THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE AND TRAINING

Year 3 In Review

What is AMETHIST?

The goals of Advancing Maternal Empowerment and Transforming Health through Implementation Science and Training (AMETHIST) are to:

- ***Advise*** *IMPROVE investigators in engaging diverse and sometimes marginalized communities*
- ***Guide*** *the process of implementation research, including the selection of theories, models, frameworks, strategies, and outcomes*
- ***Accelerate*** *implementation skills development in emerging and established maternal health scientists*
- ***Advance*** *knowledge about successfully conducting implementation research.*

Letter from AMETHIST@Penn Co-Directors/Principal Investigators

We are honored to write to you after our third year leading AMETHIST@Penn. This past year, we expanded our role as the implementation science hub for the IMPROVE network, deepening our engagement with the 12 Centers of Excellence (CoEs) and 4 Community Implementation Programs (CIPs). Through site visits, tailored consultations, workshops, seminars, forums, and network events, we strengthened relationships among teams. We supported the ongoing adoption of rigorous, community-engaged implementation science in maternal health research.

We feel privileged to support the incredible work happening across IMPROVE and are grateful for the opportunities to build trust and connections with teams. As we continue, we look forward to enhancing collaboration across the network, meeting more teams in person, and drawing future learning and inspiration from investigators, community partners, and research teams.

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Administration, Leadership, & Evaluation Core

The Admin Core, the central coordinating point for AMETHIST@Penn, continued to support communication and collaboration within IMPROVE, strengthening our relationships with the sites through numerous virtual and in-person interactions. We continued to host biannual in-person internal 'Family' Meetings to convene core leads, staff, and consultants. We distributed our monthly newsletter to the IMPROVE network and **launched our new public website, amethist.org, which serves as a centralized location for resources, events, and programs. We** distributed follow-up surveys to all 12 Centers of Excellence (CoEs) to document research progress and identify where additional support may be useful. We continued to advance our research agenda to understand barriers and facilitators to conducting maternal health implementation research, conducting qualitative interviews and artifact analyses.

Our annual site visits with 11 CoE teams were conducted virtually. We met in person for site visits with Thomas Jefferson University CIP (September 30, 2025) and Mississippi Delta CoE (November 6-7, 2025), **providing opportunities to reflect on progress, troubleshoot implementation challenges, and connect with AMETHIST@Penn leadership across our areas of expertise**. AMETHIST@Penn hosted an IS for Maternal Health (IS4MH) adjunct session at the December 2025 Academy Health D&I Conference, and an IMPROVE networking lunch at the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine Pregnancy Meeting in February 2026, creating space for investigators, trainees, and staff to connect informally and build cross-network relationships.

We expanded our engagement with the 4 IMPROVE-CIPs, working closely with Westat and NIH to provide tailored consultative support. PI Hamm presented on IS at the October 2025 Learning Community Meeting, and Westat and AMETHIST@Penn collaborated on a session at the 2025 D&I Conference. We attended the 2026 CEAL Annual Meeting and facilitated a breakout session on IS during the Maternal Health Annual Meeting.

Design, Methods, & Analysis Core

The Design Core provides consultative and technical assistance services to IMPROVE investigators across the network. **In Year 3, the Core supported teams in selecting and applying implementation research frameworks, theories, and models; designing implementation-compatible studies; conducting qualitative and mixed-methods research; specifying implementation strategies and outcomes; and connecting investigators with subject-matter experts through the Design Core Consultant Panel.**

Rather than functioning solely as a traditional technical assistance unit, the Design Core has expanded its presence as a collaborative thought partner for IMPROVE teams by facilitating "working meetings," hosting recurring cross-team consultations, and providing asynchronous feedback on research products. Our Y3 consultations have helped investigators refine study designs, address implementation challenges, and align project methods with the realities of maternal health practice and community settings.

Year 3 Design Consultations: 24 consultations across 9 CoEs and CIPs

Seminars & Workshops Hosted: 4

- Studying the Implementation of Community Health Workers: July 2025
- Studying the Implementation of Doulas (Part 2): October 2025
- Preparing to Sustain Clinical Programs after Completion of the IMPROVE Funding Cycle: October 2025
- Applying CFIR to Maternal Health Research Workshop: April 2026

Resource Created: Adaptations in Implementation Science

Policy, Dissemination, and Communication Core

The Policy Core supports effective communication within, across, and beyond the IMPROVE network. In Year 3, the Core's efforts **emphasized translating maternal health research into clear, compelling, and actionable messages for diverse audiences, including policymakers, community partners, health systems, and the broader public.** Through 7 individual consultations and 2 group consultations, the Policy Core worked with IMPROVE investigators to refine their dissemination goals, develop strategic messaging, and identify opportunities to advance systems-level change.

The Policy Core also held our **second annual Communications Summit**, exploring themes of messaging, misinformation, and mistrust within maternal health. The summit addressed key topics of interest amongst IMPROVE teams, including strategies for influencing policy beyond governmental systems, engaging partners early to enhance research relevance and uptake, leveraging accessible communication tools such as social media, and recognizing and responding to misinformation. Through these discussions, attendees gained practical insights for strengthening the reach, credibility, and impact of their maternal health innovations.

Seminars & Workshops Hosted: 6

- Persuasive and Strategic Communication for Policy Impact
- AMETHIST Messaging Series: Strategies for Correcting Health Misinformation
- Using Audience Segmentation to Combat Misinformation
- Source Credibility and Re-Establishing Trust in Science
- Collecting and Sharing Impactful Stories: An Interactive Panel Discussion
- Communication Strategy Workshop with Penn LDI

Resources Created: 5

- Social Media and Maternal Health Empowerment
- Practical and Persuasive Communication with Policymakers
- Using Audience Segmentation to Correct Health Misinformation
- Elevator Pitch Guidance for IMPROVE Teams
- Methods for Reaching Legislators

Community and Stakeholder Engagement Core

The Engagement Core works to ensure that community and stakeholder engagement are integrated throughout AMETHIST@Penn activities and across IMPROVE network projects. **In Year 3, the Core continued to create structured spaces for teams and community partners to share strategies, challenges, and lessons learned related to community-engaged maternal health research.** In August 2025, we distributed our first **Engagement Considerations Report**.

The Engagement Enhancement Collaborative met quarterly and evolved into **a forum model designed to support shared learning across the IMPROVE network.** These forums invited CoE members and affiliates to discuss priority topics in maternal health, community partnerships, and engagement in IS research.

Engagement Enhancement Collaborative (EEC) Year 3 Forums

- June 2025: Pregnancy Related Legislation and Maternal Health
- October 2025: Affirming Gender in the Context of Pregnancy, Birth, and Parenthood
- March 2026: Geographic Challenges in Maternal Health & Medicaid Extensions
- July 2026: Community Engagement Metrics and Evaluation Strategies

Engagement Considerations Report Themes:

- Building trust within Black communities
- Creatively and authentically developing equal research partnerships with communities
- Transcending the bureaucracy of research infrastructure to partner with communities
- Incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing

Training Core

The Training Core focuses on **building capacity in maternal health IS and providing career development opportunities and training, including monthly seminars, skills workshops, and other educational offerings. The Training Core held 7 monthly seminars and 2 workshops in Year 3, with a total of 147 seminar attendees and 62 workshop attendees.** Recordings are featured on our YouTube channel and new website. We held workshops on rapid qualitative analysis in maternal health research and on graphic design for policy change, as well as seminars on a variety of topics at the intersection of maternal health and IS.

We developed supplemental funding projects to expand AMETHIST training opportunities for community partners, identified opportunities for new training programs, and determined how to grow our existing mentorship pathways. We held a Training Core team retreat to identify shared learning and mutual opportunities for support within our network, and to plan future bidirectional learning within the IMPROVE network.

Year 3 Training Opportunities

- 12 trainee office hour sessions
- 1 CoE-tailored IS training session
- Individualized Development Plan (IDP): created and shared with the network
- 27 sponsored attendees (22 CoE and 5 CIP) for the 2026 10th Annual Penn **Implementation Science Institute**
- 3 CoE community partner participants completed the pilot REACH Community Scholars Program

Year 3 Trainees

- 1 Summer undergraduate student
- 1 Summer medical student
- 2 Maternal Health IS Physician Research Scholars
- 2 Maternal Health IS Nurse Research Scholars
- 3 Postdoctoral Fellows
- 3 2025 Pilot Grant Recipients