

# Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch (HCIRB)

[cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/hcirb](https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/hcirb)



## Mission

The mission of HCIRB is to advance research on the processes and effects of communication and informatics across the [cancer control continuum](#).

HCIRB supports research on patient-provider communication, the impact of technology on health communication, cancer communication inequalities, and the acceleration and translation of research discoveries into public health and clinical practice. The branch also engages in surveillance regarding the American public's use of cancer-related information and the changing health communication environment.

## Scientific Priority Areas



### Behavioral Informatics

- Data and technology use by consumers, patients, caregivers, providers, public health organizations, and health care systems
- Improved care through use of electronic health records and patient portals, patient-generated data, and telehealth services



### Health Literacy and Health Disparities

- Identification of factors related to communication inequalities and their subsequent effect on health disparities
- Interventions to narrow the digital divide, address limited health literacy, and improve health equity



### Public Health Communication Environment

- Multilevel approaches to communication about cancer prevention and control topics such as vaccination, tobacco use, diet and physical activity, genetic testing, and decision-making about treatment and care
- Integration of socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, and policy factors into health message design, evaluation, and dissemination



### Media Effects

- Effect of media on individual-level knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and population-level norms and trends
- Implementation of and communication about guidelines and policies related to cancer prevention and control



### Social Media and Technology-Mediated Communication

- Analyses of user-generated social media content using innovative approaches (e.g., Natural Language Processing, network analysis) to examine cancer-related attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors
- Communication interventions using social media platforms and rapid, iterative approaches
- Research to better understand and mitigate risks of online health-related misinformation

## Resources

### Health Information National Trends Survey

[hints.cancer.gov](https://hints.cancer.gov)

A nationally representative survey designed to monitor changes in the rapidly evolving health communication environment and collect data regarding public need for, access to, and use of health information.



## Selected Funding Opportunities

Title	Contact	Expires
Exploratory Grants in Cancer Control <a href="#">PAR-21-341</a> (R21 Clinical Trial Optional)	Mukesh Verma <a href="mailto:vermam@mail.nih.gov">vermam@mail.nih.gov</a>	October 9, 2024
Innovative Approaches to Studying Cancer Communication in the New Information Ecosystem <a href="#">PAR-19-348</a> , <a href="#">PAR-19-350</a> (R01/R21 Clinical Trial Optional)	Kelly Blake <a href="mailto:kelly.blake@nih.gov">kelly.blake@nih.gov</a>	June 9, 2022
Modular R01s in Cancer Control and Population Sciences <a href="#">PAR-21-190</a> (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)	Scott Rogers <a href="mailto:rogerssc@mail.nih.gov">rogerssc@mail.nih.gov</a>	March 8, 2024
<a href="#">Smart Health and Biomedical Research in the Era of Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Data Science</a> NIH-NSF Joint Funding Opportunity	Dana Wolff-Hughes <a href="mailto:dana.wolff@nih.gov">dana.wolff@nih.gov</a>	November 10, annually
Social and Behavioral Intervention Research to Address Modifiable Risk Factors for Cancer in Rural Populations <a href="#">RFA-CA-20-051</a> (R01 Clinical Trial Required)	Kelly Blake <a href="mailto:kelly.blake@nih.gov">kelly.blake@nih.gov</a>	January 19, 2022
Telehealth in Cancer Care <a href="#">NOT-CA-21-043</a>	Kelly Blake <a href="mailto:kelly.blake@nih.gov">kelly.blake@nih.gov</a> Gurvaneet Randhawa <a href="mailto:gurvaneet.randhawa@nih.gov">gurvaneet.randhawa@nih.gov</a>	March 8, 2024

Find a complete list of BRP funding opportunities at [cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brpfunding](https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brpfunding).

View sample grant applications at [cancercontrol.cancer.gov/samplegrants](https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/samplegrants).

Learn about our HCIRB-funded grantees at [cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brpgrantees](https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brpgrantees).

## Recent Priority Publications

Gaysynsky A, Rising CJ, Trivedi N, et al. [Communication research at the National Cancer Institute, 2013–2019: A grant portfolio analysis](#). *Cancer Causes Control*. 2021 Jul 27. Doi:10.1007/s10552-021-01481-7.

Klein WMP, O'Connell ME, Bloch MH, et al. [Behavioral Research in Cancer Prevention and Control: Emerging Challenges and Opportunities](#). *J Natl Cancer Inst*. 2021 Jul 7:djab139. doi:1093/jnci/djab139.

Chou WS, Gaysynsky A (Eds). Health misinformation on social media [Special Issue]. *Am J Public Health* (2020). <https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/hcirb/misinformation-social-media/ajph-special-issue>

## HCIRB Team



### Robin Vanderpool, Dr.P.H.

Branch Chief  
[robin.vanderpool@nih.gov](mailto:robin.vanderpool@nih.gov)

Rural cancer control, HPV vaccination, community outreach and engagement, patient-centered communication, and telehealth



### Kelly Blake, Sc.D.

Program Director  
[kelly.blake@nih.gov](mailto:kelly.blake@nih.gov)

Media effects, communication inequality, public health policy, social epidemiology, and rural cancer control



### Nicole Senft Everson, Ph.D.

Program Director  
[nicole.everson@nih.gov](mailto:nicole.everson@nih.gov)

Patient-centered communication, intergroup interactions, technology-mediated communication disparities, and affective behavior



### Heather D'Angelo, Ph.D., M.H.S.

Program Director  
[heather.dangelo@nih.gov](mailto:heather.dangelo@nih.gov)

Multilevel health communication research; implementation science, technology, and health equity; contextual influences on diet, physical activity, and tobacco use



### Wen-Ying Sylvia Chou, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Program Director  
[wen-ying.chou@nih.gov](mailto:wen-ying.chou@nih.gov)

Social media, palliative care, goals of care communication, and health-related misinformation



### Anna Gaysynsky, M.P.H.

Marketing Communications Analyst, ICF  
[anna.gaysynsky@nih.gov](mailto:anna.gaysynsky@nih.gov)

Patient-provider communication, social media, social support, trust in health information, and digital health

[Katie Heley, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#) and [Yuki Lama, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#) are fellows in the branch.

[Wendy Nelson, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#), [April Oh, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#), [Maria Roditis, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#), and [Cynthia Vinson, Ph.D., M.P.A.](#) have secondary appointments in the branch.

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