



2025

Annual Report

Brandeis THE HELLER SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Lurie Institute for Disability Policy

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter from the Director	<u>3</u>
About the Institute	<u>4</u>
2025 by the Numbers	<u>4</u>
Research & Policy	<u>5</u>
2025 Highlights	<u>5</u>
Community Living Policy Center	<u>6</u>
Community Living Equity Center	<u>7</u>
National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities	<u>8</u>
National Center for Disability and Pregnancy Research	<u>9</u>
Ongoing Lurie Institute Grants and Projects	<u>10</u>
Selected Publications	<u>12</u>
Community Engagement	<u>13</u>
Conferences	<u>13</u>
Events	<u>14</u>
Public Lectures, Guest Talks, & International Lectures	<u>15</u>
Lurie in the News	<u>17</u>
Education and Mentorship	<u>18</u>
Carrie Buck Distinguished Fellowship	<u>18</u>
Lurie Student Fellowship in Disability Policy	<u>19</u>
Hon. Jonathan Brant Endowed Doctoral Fellowship	<u>20</u>
Postdoctoral Fellowship in Disability and Health Policy	<u>20</u>
Student and Graduate Researchers	<u>21</u>
Awards, Fellowships, and Honors	<u>22</u>
Acknowledgments	<u>24</u>
Our Staff	<u>24</u>
Advisory Boards	<u>25</u>

Welcome Letter from the Director

Welcome, friends of the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy to our 2025 Annual Report. It is an honor to share this summary of our work and our accomplishments over the past year.

In 2025, the Lurie Institute expanded its engagement in global disability health initiatives, joining international efforts such as The Lancet Commission on Disability and Health and the World Health Organization Disability Health Equity Initiative.

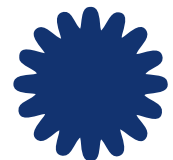
We welcomed an outstanding cohort of seven Brandeis Student Disability Policy Fellows, investing in the next generation of scholars and leaders in the field. We launched new research projects and developed innovative interventions aimed at addressing health disparities, including the first-of-its-kind Accessible Pregnancy Action Plan. We also produced accessible summaries of our research to ensure our work reaches broader audiences beyond academia.

Over the past year, we strengthened our ties with the disability community and our partners by hiring disabled scholars and implementing more effective outreach strategies. We wrapped up the year with our third annual Carrie Buck Distinguished Fellowship featuring Laura Millar, a blind sexual and reproductive health advocate. While this has been a meaningful and

productive year, like many of our peers in the science, public health, and advocacy fields, the Lurie Institute has also faced challenges. Ongoing threats to research funding directly affected our ability to advance our work. It was also a year of loss as our community mourned the passing of visionary leaders such as Patty Berne, Alice Wong, and others who have been instrumental in the fight for disability justice. Guided by their legacy and perseverance, we remain unwavering in our commitment to advancing disability research, policy, and justice. We will continue to adapt and respond to changing circumstances so that our work remains strong, relevant, and responsive to community needs.

Thank you for your continued support of our Institute, research centers, students, and staff. With your support, we will continue to advance disability rights, access, and justice.

With gratitude,



Monika Mitra

Director,

Lurie Institute for Disability Policy

Nancy Lurie Marks Professor of Disability Policy



About the Lurie Institute

The Lurie Institute for Disability Policy at Brandeis University is a nationally recognized research institute dedicated to conducting rigorous research that improves the lives of people with disabilities across the lifespan. Guided by principles of disability justice and equity, the Institute conducts rigorous, community-engaged research that advances inclusion, health, economic security, and civil rights for disabled people and their families.

The Institute leads multiple federally funded centers and studies focused on disability and health, parenting and reproductive justice, economic well-being, and access to community-based services and supports. Through partnerships with community members, advocates, policymakers, and interdisciplinary scholars, the Lurie Institute translates research into actionable policy solutions, training initiatives, and public engagement efforts that drive meaningful systems change at the state and national levels.

2025 by the Numbers

12

Webinars

36

**Conferences,
Presentations,
& Lectures**

29

**Research Articles
& Peer-Reviewed
Publications**

9

**Conferences
attended**

16

**Reports
& Briefs**

7

**Awards
& Fellowships**

13

**Media mentions
and guest articles**

Research & Policy

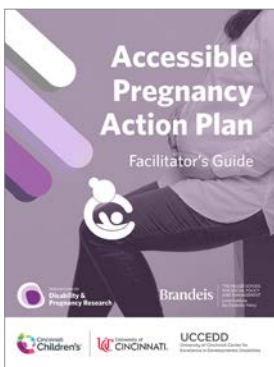
2025 Highlights



Lurie Goes Global

The Lurie Institute for Disability Policy continues to expand its global public health engagement. Institute Director Dr. Mitra was appointed as a Commissioner on the inaugural [The Lancet Commission on Disability and Health](#). It is an honor to contribute to this first-of-its-kind Commission focused on disability and health, which generates action-oriented evidence to advance a disability-inclusive global health agenda.

Additionally, the Lurie Institute joined the [World Health Organization's Disability Health Equity](#) Initiative. This initiative, comprising over 150 global organizations, aims to close the avoidable health gaps between persons with disabilities and the broader population. In addition to these efforts, Dr. Mitra and other staff delivered lectures and participated in events around the globe, including in India, Ireland, and Dubai.



A Year of Firsts

2025 was a year of many firsts. The National Center for Disability and Pregnancy Research produced the novel [Accessible Pregnancy Action Plan \(APAP\)](#). The APAP is a tool for disabled people, their supporters, and practitioners to develop a pregnancy plan that is supportive of what the disabled pregnant person needs to have a safe, supported, healthy pregnancy. The plan is guided by the framework of 'What Matters Most,' which centers on the individual's needs and wants first and foremost when constructing a plan for their pregnancy.

The Community Living Policy Center produced the first-ever [Special Issue focused on Community Living Policy](#). This special edition of the Disability Health Journal (DHJO) includes articles addressing critical issues such as housing and transportation supports, access to home- and community-based services (HCBS) and unmet needs, system design and delivery, and HCBS outcome measures.

Our team also produced community-informed webinars on timely topics that had not been explored before. These webinars addressed [disability and lactation](#), [disabled parents and disaster preparedness](#), as well as a [training for state and national disability advocates on our disability data dashboards](#) and how to use them as a tool to advance disability policy and activism.



Creating Tangible, Research-Driven Interventions

We know and understand the disparities people with disabilities face in getting meaningful, accessible healthcare. In 2025, we launched two new projects to develop research-driven interventions to improve health outcomes for disabled people. First, we are creating a toolkit for doulas and healthcare providers that will help them better support women with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) through labor and delivery. In addition, Lurie researchers are investigating leading severe maternal mortality and morbidity (SMMM) indicators for Deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) people, particularly Black DHH people. Using these findings, we will develop a patient-informed toolkit with the long-term goal of improving maternal healthcare for DHH and Black DHH pregnant individuals.



Community Living Policy Center

Funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. We conduct research on the provision and quality of home- and community-based service programs for people with disabilities in the United States.

Projects



First Community Living Policy edition of DHJO

The Community Living Policy Center (CLPC) produced the first-ever Community Living Policy Special issue in the [Disability Health Journal \(DHJO\)](#). Articles addressed housing and transportation, HCBS access and outcome measures, and system design and delivery. Read article summaries in [Disability and Health Journal Special Issue on Community Living Policy: At a Glance](#).

Addressing the Direct Care Workforce Crisis

The CLPC continued its efforts to strengthen the Direct Care Workforce to help disabled people maintain community independence. Our [Interested Parties Advisory Groups \(IPAG\) brief](#) outlines actionable steps that states, advocates, and stakeholders can use to address some of the most urgent challenges in this area.

Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Data Dashboard

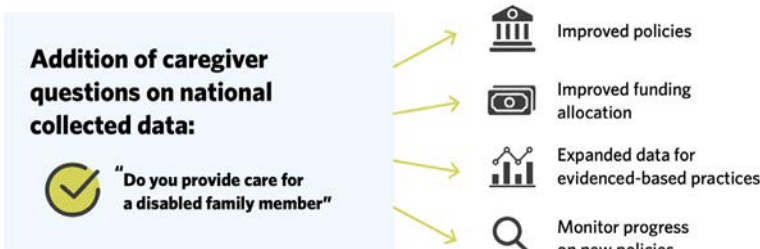
In 2025, we expanded the reach and use of the [Community Living Dashboard](#)! It presents data on who needs and receives LTSS and access disparities. The dashboard helps policymakers and disability advocates at the state and national levels advocate for shifts in policies and services to advance community living outcomes.



Research and Policy Collaboration

The CLPC works closely with the [University of Chicago's Family Support Research and Training Center](#). In 2025, we developed a [policy brief](#) recommending the inclusion of family caregiving questions in the American Community Survey to expand data, research, and evidence-based practices that support family caregivers and help inform policies and funding allocation to family caregiver programs.

The CLPC continued its work with state advocates and policymakers, and in August 2025, the Massachusetts [Permanent Commission on Persons with Disabilities](#) invited CLPC staff to give a virtual overview of CLPC research to their [Long Term Services and Supports and Health Equity Subcommittee](#).



Notable Research Findings

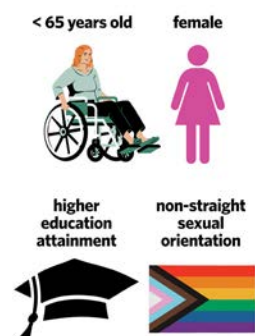


Family caregivers are an "invisible" population, not identified within most current national surveys.

[Adding family caregiver questions to the American Community Survey can improve policies and funding allocation, expand data for evidenced-based practices, and monitor progress on new policies.](#)

"what's most exciting about the IPAG is bringing workers and advocates, and folks that care about the programs and care about workers, into the process with the State."

[Collaborative Interested Parties Advisory Groups address the current direct care worker crisis in a meaningful way.](#)



[People with unmet needs for LTSS needs are more likely to be younger, female, have higher education, and be LGBTQ+.](#)



Community Living Equity Center

Funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. We examine barriers in access to community living services and support for underserved people with disabilities.

Our Latest Work

Publications

The Community Living Equity Center (CLEC) is entering its fourth year of work, and our research findings are now being made available to the public through publications, briefs, and webinars. This year, we published research and policy briefs on [barriers to community living for disabled people of color, the parallels between prisons and nursing homes, race and ethnicity data quality for those utilizing LTSS](#), and [the benefit of the Money Follows the Person program](#).

Conferences

CLEC staff attended multiple conferences to present our research and build connections within disability, aging, and caregiving networks. At the annual conference of the American Public Health Association, staff presented on barriers, supports, and cultural factors related to nursing home transition for disabled people of color, as well as racial and ethnic disparities in HCBS utilization among adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Webinars & Outreach

Since launching the Community Living Dashboard, advocates and policymakers have used it to evaluate state LTSS need and utilization. In July, we held a webinar that described how the dashboard can aid the work of disability rights and policy advocates.



Notable Research Findings

In ten states, 20-50% of race and ethnicity data is missing.



[The quality of LTSS race and ethnicity data varies greatly by state.](#)



[People of color face systemic barriers to transitioning to community living.](#)



[Individuals who were interviewed compared nursing homes to prisons, had their movement restricted, experienced retribution from facilities, and faced obstacles to transitioning to the community.](#)



National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities

Funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. We conduct research and provide training and technical assistance to improve the lives of parents with disabilities and their families.

Our Latest Work

Data Dashboard Update

We published our [Parents with Disabilities Data Dashboard](#) in 2024. This year, we increased the Dashboard's visibility and usage. Our staff hosted a [training](#) to teach disability advocates how to use the dashboard as a tool to advance disability policy. We also published a [paper](#) that shares key findings about the prevalence and life circumstances of parents with disabilities in the United States.



Conferences & Trainings

Each year, we educate researchers, lawyers, social workers, and other professionals about the needs and experiences of disabled parents. In 2025, we attended multiple conferences and provided over 18 legal and policy presentations on discrimination toward disabled parents within the child welfare system, including termination of parental rights.

International Perspectives

Our Center hosts the [International Consortium of Research on Parents, Parenting, and Pregnancy with Disabilities](#), collaborating with partners to investigate the experiences of parents with disabilities worldwide. One example of our global approach is our recent [analysis of existing international studies about parents with physical disabilities](#).



Webinars & Resource Guides

Browse all webinars on our [YouTube channel](#).

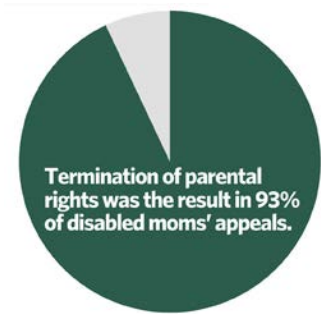


[Disaster Preparedness: A Resource by and for Disabled Parents](#)



[Disabled Parents' Adoption Experiences: Webinar Recap & Guide](#)

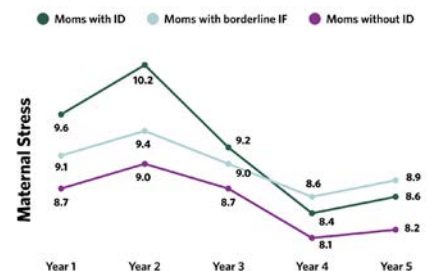
Notable Research Findings



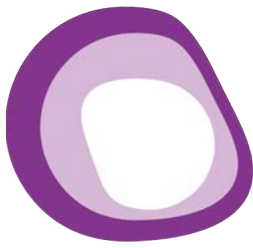
[Moms with disabilities are much more likely to lose custody of their kids due to their disability.](#)



[Parents with disabilities have less access to the internet compared to nondisabled parents.](#)



[Moms with intellectual disabilities \(ID\) and borderline intellectual functioning \(IF\) experience higher rates of maternal stress.](#)



National Center for Disability and Pregnancy Research

Funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. We conduct research about reproduction, pregnancy, and disability, including reproductive health, sex education, prenatal health, childbirth, interactions with obstetricians, and support networks.

Our Latest Work & Projects

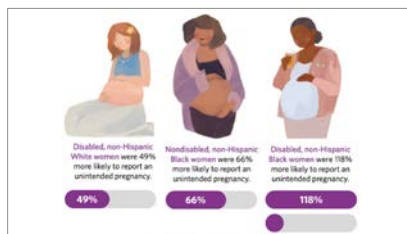
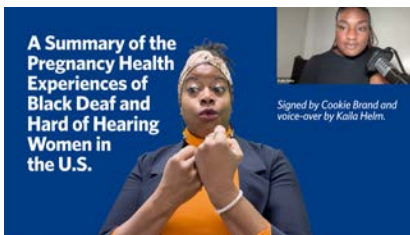
The Accessible Pregnancy Action Plan (APAP)

In 2025, we launched the [APAP](#), an innovative tool designed to support people with disabilities during pregnancy. It facilitates structured peer-to-peer conversations between a disabled pregnant woman and her peers about her needs during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and postpartum.

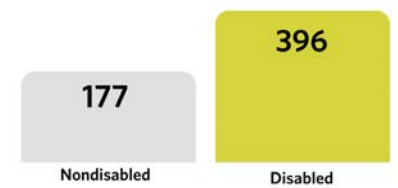
Research Dissemination

Getting our research out to the disability community, healthcare providers, and advocates is a key part of our mission. This year, we produced two videos and two short papers summarizing key data from our publications.

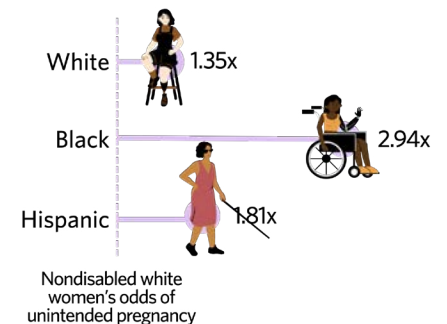
Click each thumbnail below to explore the research:



Notable Research Findings



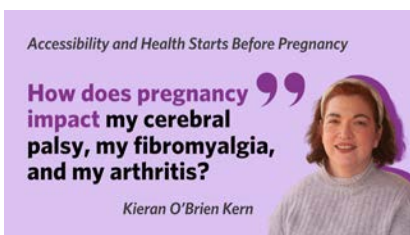
Disabled women were 2x+ more likely to experience Severe Maternal Morbidity. Out of 10,000 deliveries, 396 disabled women experienced SMM.



Disabled women who have experienced sexual violence are more likely to experience unintended pregnancy compared to white nondisabled women.

Webinars & Resource Guides

Browse all webinars on our [YouTube channel](#).



[Accessibility and Health Starts Before Pregnancy](#)

[Lactation and Breastfeeding with a Disability](#)



Women with significant disabilities are less likely to access meaningful pregnancy care, before, during, and after pregnancy.

Ongoing Lurie Institute Grants and Projects

Researching Barriers to Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare

Young people with disabilities can face many obstacles to getting adequate sexual and reproductive healthcare. Common barriers include difficulties finding providers and an overall lack of disability-inclusive resources and education. Through this NIH-funded study, we are conducting interviews to inform the development of a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health toolkit for youth with disabilities. To date, we have completed over 55 interviews and published data-driven papers examining healthcare receipt for young [males](#) and [females](#) with disabilities.

41+ Youth Interviews

14 Parent/Caregiver Interviews

3 Publications

Addressing Ableism in Obstetrics Through New Curriculum

Many obstetricians lack the training needed to provide quality care for disabled pregnant people, contributing to stark disparities in maternal and child health outcomes. With funding from NIH, we are currently developing a continuing education course for practicing obstetric clinicians to improve the safety and accessibility of perinatal care for women with various disabilities. This year, we completed interviews and focus groups with 24 obstetric clinicians to identify necessary curriculum topics and course design. With this information, we will begin developing the course itself.

Understanding the Intersection of Physical Disability, Race, and Ethnicity

Through an NIH-funded project, Lurie researchers continue to investigate pregnancy outcomes, costs, and the factors that impact them for Black women and Latinas with physical disabilities. This project will lay the groundwork for developing and testing interventions aimed at improving maternal and infant outcomes. In 2025, we published multiple papers on these topics, such as [intersectional inequities in maternal mortality](#), and presented findings at the National American Public Health Association conference.

Addressing Severe Maternal Morbidity of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Individuals by Targeting Clinical and Health System Factors

Deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) individuals, especially Black DHH people, are at much higher risk of adverse birth outcomes and severe maternal morbidity and mortality (SMMM). In partnership with University of Michigan researchers, Lurie Institute staff received NIH funding to analyze data to identify the leading SMMM indicators for DHH and Black DHH people. We will then use these findings to develop a patient-informed toolkit with the long-term goal of reducing SMMM and improving maternal health outcomes.

Documenting the Joys of Disabled Motherhood

While a majority of research focuses on the barriers people with disabilities face, few highlight disabled people’s positive and joyful experiences. In a project funded by the National Research Consortium on Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NRC), we interviewed moms with intellectual and developmental disabilities about their positive parenting experiences. We heard stories that illuminated disabled parents’ character strengths, like perspective, kindness, gratitude, and many more.

"I think because I'm disabled my kids have a more rich childhood. They've gotten to meet, I mean, my daughter at the age of 2 was doing national advocacy work in Washington, DC with Judy Heumann. You know, things like that. May she rest in peace. But they've learned. To them, disability is just part of the diversity of the fabric of society. And I think they'll be better people for it and I think they will be better regardless of what they choose to do in their lives. They'll just be better advocates for people in general."

Economic Inclusion for Black Disabled Families Study

Generational economic growth and participation are critical for families seeking improved outcomes in health, wellness, and overall quality of life. While all families deserve economic well-being, persistent racial and ethnic inequities continue to shape access to opportunity and financial security. In 2025, we launched a research initiative focused on the economic inclusion of Black disabled families. The project has included a qualitative component, conducting focus groups with Black disabled families to better understand their aspirations for economic justice and long-term financial stability. We have also been analyzing data from the 2018–2022 American Community Survey (ACS) to examine the demographic and economic characteristics of Black disabled families across the United States. Findings from this work will inform policy recommendations and community-centered strategies to advance economic justice and long-term financial security for Black disabled families.

Creating Doula Supports for Pregnant Women with IDD

Women with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have high rates of poor birth outcomes and postpartum care experiences, and they report having few sources of support during pregnancy. Despite evidence suggesting that perinatal doula support has the potential to enhance maternal health, current doula practices do not address the specific needs of women with IDD. With a 2-year grant from the WITH Foundation, we will develop a toolkit that highlights disability-inclusive practices for doulas and healthcare professionals caring for women with IDD through labor and delivery.



Are you a doula, nurse practitioner, certified midwife, or related health professional that cares for people in labor and delivery in the United States?

We want to learn more about your experiences serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

If you are interested in joining a focus group, please contact Miriam Heyman at MiriamHeyman@Brandeis.edu.




Participants will receive a \$50 gift card for their time.

Brandeis THE HESLER SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
Lurie Institute for Disability Policy




WITH
The project is funded by the WITH Foundation.

Selected Publications




Pregnancy

-  [Intersectional Disparities in Severe Maternal Morbidity Across the Perinatal Continuum: A Population-based Analysis.](#)
-  [Pregnancy Experiences of Women With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#)
-  [Attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs of obstetric care clinicians regarding perinatal care of women with intellectual and developmental disabilities](#)

Parenting

-  [Parents with physical disabilities and their parenting experiences: a scoping review of qualitative studies](#)
-  [ParentingWell: adapting a family-focused practice for parents with mental illness](#)
-  [Manifestations of eugenic ideology in New York termination of parental rights decisions involving parents labeled with intellectual disabilities, 2013-2023](#)

Community Living

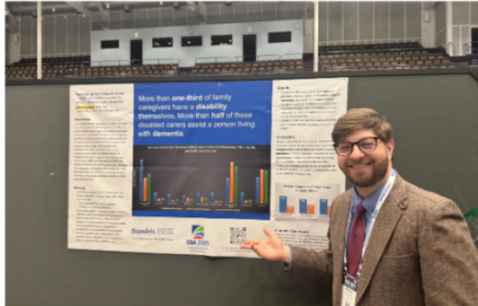
-  [Explorations of the long term supports coordinator role in managed care for people who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid: A participatory action research-informed study](#)
-  [Bridging Aging and Disability Networks to Support Aging Adults With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Family Caregivers](#)
-  [Housing stability for households with LTSS needs in America: Contrasting pre-pandemic housing data from 2017 with data from 2021](#)

Research & Healthcare Advocacy

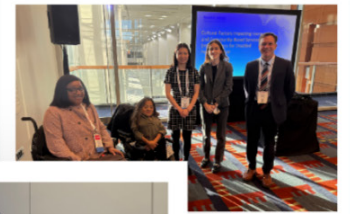
-  [Aging with a disability: A call for research, policy, and practice](#)
-  [Community Living Policy: Progress, Uncertainty, and Research to Inform Paths Forward](#)
-  [A call to action to include disability in intersectional health equity research and policy](#)
-  [Healthcare's blind spot—why people with disabilities remain marginalized and overlooked](#)
-  [Guidelines for the Creation of Accessible Consent Materials and Procedures: Lessons from Research with Autistic People and People with Intellectual Disability](#)

Community Engagement

Conferences



Gerontological Society of America
Location: National Harbor, MD
Nick Mirin



American Public Health Association
Location: Washington, DC
Anne-Marie Gomes, Teresa Nguyen, Kim The, Ruby Siegel, Joe Caldwell

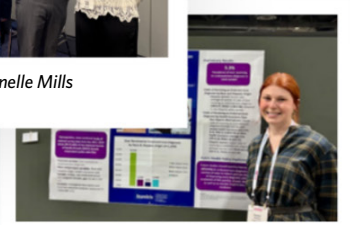


Lauren Smith, John Harris, Janelle Mills



Alex Levine, Ilhom Akobirshoev, Tori Lajous, Laurin Bixby

AcademyHealth
Minneapolis, MN



Carolyn Hoffman

NARRTC (National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers)
Location: Alexandria, VA



Elad Daniels



Kim The, Miriam Heyman



Joe Caldwell

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) 2025
Location: Arlington, Virginia



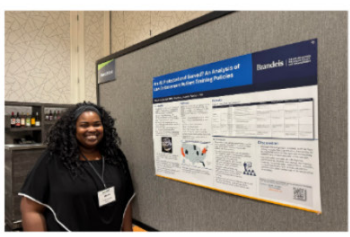
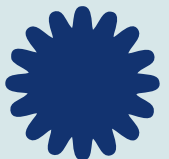
Kaitlin Stober



HCBS Conference
Location: Baltimore, MD
Jennifer Lee-Rambharose



Kim The



Sarah Jerome



Miriam Heyman, Anne Valentine

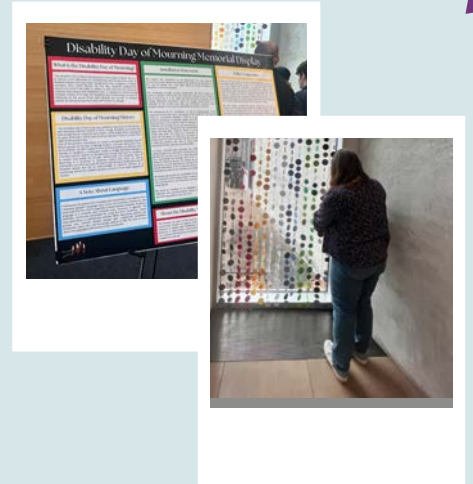
National Research Consortium on Mental Health in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
Location: Baltimore, MD



Events

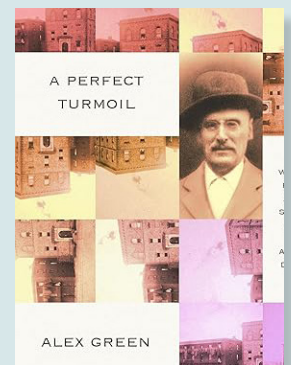
Honoring Those Lost to Filicide: Disability Day of Mourning

In March, we supported the Heller School’s Disability Working Group’s week-long display to honor individuals with disabilities who were killed by family members and caretakers in the United States. At the heart of the display was a centerpiece of hanging paper circles, each bearing the names of one of the 200 known victims from the Northeast from the past year. Some circles were intentionally left blank to represent those whose names and stories remain undocumented.



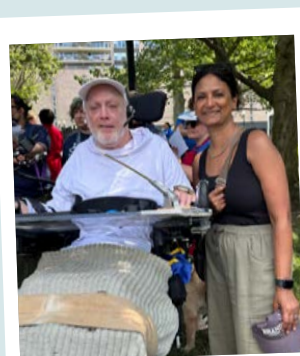
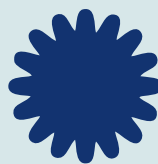
‘A Perfect Turmoil’ BookTalk with Alex Green

In April, Visiting Scholar Alex Green released the book ‘A Perfect Turmoil: Walter E. Fernald and the Struggle to Care for America’s Disabled.’ The Lurie Institute hosted a hybrid book event where Green talked about how he uncovered the hidden story of Walter Fernald and the creation of America’s first public school for people with mental disabilities, founded by Fernald in Waltham, Massachusetts, the very same town where the Lurie Institute is located.



Boston Disability Pride Celebration

In July, the Lurie Institute joined the Boston Center for Independent Living, the Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and over 1,400 attendees at Boston City Hall Plaza to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act with a rally and march.

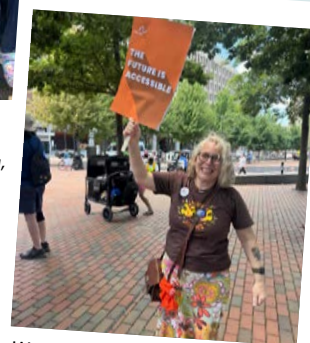


Dennis Heaphy, Monika Mitra



Back L to R:
Wendy Peverill-Conti,
Miriam Heyman, Monika Mitra,
Amy AbuShanab

Front L to R: Keith Jones,
Nicole Lomerson

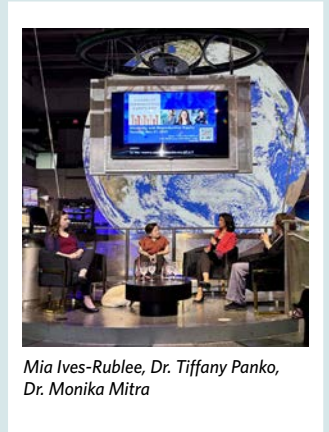


Wendy Peverill-Conti

Public Lectures, Guest Talks, & International Lectures

Disability Reproductive Justice Equity Day

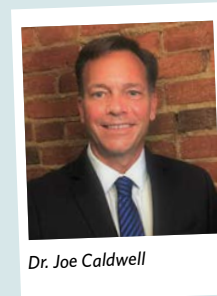
On May 23, Dr. Mitra spoke on a [panel](#) with Mia Ives-Rublee and Dr. Tiffany Panko at the Boston Museum of Science, where Dr. Mitra highlighted the importance of accessible and inclusive reproductive health services for people with disabilities.



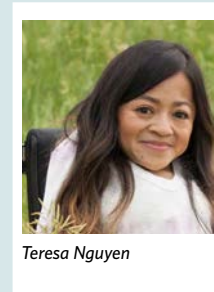
Mia Ives-Rublee, Dr. Tiffany Panko, Dr. Monika Mitra

2025 Developmental Disability Legislative Symposium

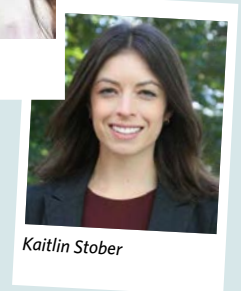
Dr. Joe Caldwell, Teresa Nguyen, and Kaitlin Stober presented to state legislators about transition to adulthood, supporting aging adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and family caregivers, and outreach to diverse racial and ethnic families.



Dr. Joe Caldwell



Teresa Nguyen



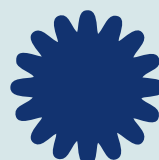
Kaitlin Stober

Massachusetts State House Panel on Disability & Health

Advisory Board members Heather Watkins and Keith Jones, as well as research partner Dr. Linda Long-Bellil, offered expert opinions and insights on disability health access and inclusion at the Massachusetts State House. These conversations are crucial to ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to health care and services.



Heather Watkins, Monika Mitra, Keith Jones, Linda Long-Bellil, Nicole Lomerson



Healthcare Access and Inclusion Presentations In India

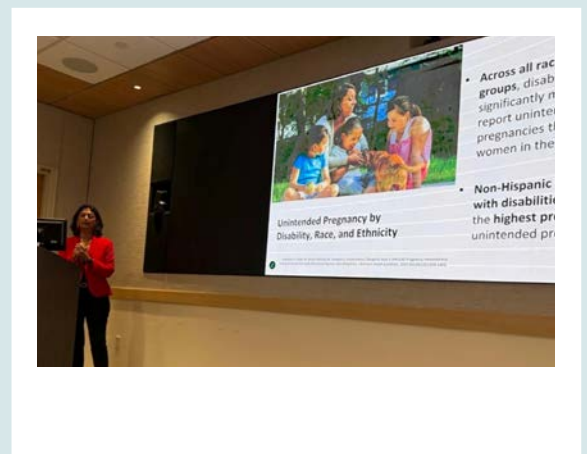
In January, Dr. Mitra visited New Delhi and Kolkata to deliver two invited guest lectures on disability-inclusive healthcare models and strategies to address persistent gaps in access, quality, and equity within health systems.



In December, Dr. Mitra gave the keynote address on Health Care and Persons with Disabilities in the US: A Policy History during the 9th annual celebration of the Indian Rights of Persons with Disability Act in Kolkata, India.

Boston Children's Hospital Disability Health Equity Symposium

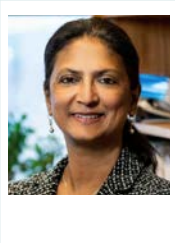
Dr. Mitra presented on advancing sexual and reproductive health for people with disabilities, highlighting persistent inequities in access to care, gaps in provider training, and structural barriers that undermine reproductive autonomy.



Lurie In the News



The narrative has to change... so that disabled people have the right to be pregnant, and the right to have children—and the right not to have children."

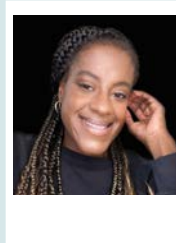


**Monika
Mitra**

Mother Jones "[Forced Sterilization of Disabled People Isn't a Relic of the Past](#)" and "[Pregnancy Is a Minefield When You're Disabled](#)"



Data is immensely valuable for policymakers, service providers and state advocates to effectively measure their impact and prepare for the future of care delivery."



**Jennifer
Lee-Rambharose**

American Society on Aging "[Nothing About Us Without Us](#)"



Many disabled people plan and live their lives based around their disability. As a disabled immigrant, I also plan and live my life based on my immigration status."

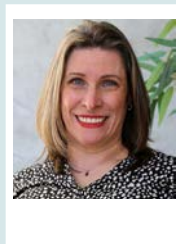


**Luanjiao
Hu**

AAPD Blog "[Living an Immigrant Life with a Disability](#)"



I'm not accusing MassHealth of engaging in eugenics. However, these policies have larger implications. The policies we make say something about what we as a society value."

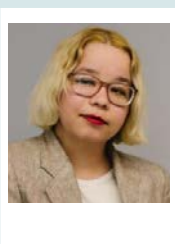


**Nicole
Lomerson**

Boston Globe "[Massachusetts' IVF insurance law leaves many out](#)"



But I do not want a cure [for autism]. I do not think my mom should have prevented me. And I certainly do not want a crucial part of my identity to be reversed. What I want is for U.S. politicians to stop bemoaning my existence and to actually fund supports for my community."

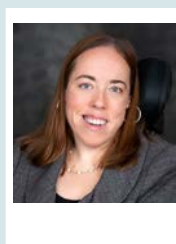


**Marcy
Waring**

AAPD Blog "[I am autistic. No, I don't want a cure.](#)"



Children of parents with disabilities often have really important positive outcomes, and so I think what I really found from the report is that we need to focus on those strengths and less on sort of those challenges, because for so long, we focused just on sort of what we believe is wrong and not really what we know parents with disabilities can do."



**Robyn
Powell**

ADA Live Podcast "[Parental Rights of Parents with Disabilities](#)"

Education and Mentorship

3rd Annual Carrie Buck Distinguished Fellowship

Each year, the Lurie Institute awards the [Carrie Buck Distinguished Fellowship](#) to a distinguished activist, scholar, or community organizer with disabilities whose work advances the intersection of disability and reproductive justice. This Fellowship honors Carrie Buck, the plaintiff in the infamous Buck v. Bell Supreme Court case, which upheld the involuntary sterilization of people with disabilities and had lasting repercussions on reproductive autonomy.

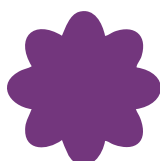
[2025's Distinguished Fellow was Laura Millar](#), an independent consultant and the co-executive director of the Blind Sexuality Access Network. Laura offers a new perspective to our Fellowship as a blind, queer woman. Her work focuses on sexual ableism and how it devalues disabled people, as well as their sexuality, sexual autonomy, and access to reproductive care. Sexual ableism manifests in many ways, including dating bias, inaccessible fertility testing, and the termination of parental rights based on disability. Learn more about these issues by watching the full keynote conversation between Laura and Rebecca Cokley of the Ford Foundation on our [YouTube channel](#).

Thank you to the Ford Foundation for supporting this Fellowship and helping us amplify the voices of disability justice leaders.



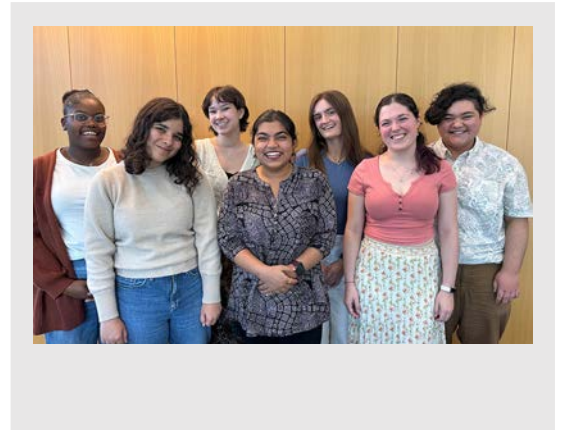
The messages and the seeds they plant today will turn into the relationships of tomorrow."

-Laura Millar



Lurie Student Fellowship in Disability Policy

As society’s understanding of disability policy evolves, so do the research questions about the needs, experiences, and unmet needs of people with disabilities. New voices and perspectives are needed to best meet the current moment of disability advocacy. That’s why we created the [Student Fellowship in Disability Policy](#) in 2019. This fellowship offers Brandeis students with hands-on research training, allowing them to develop critical research skills and deepen their knowledge of disability policy. Our seven 2025-26 fellows worked closely with Lurie Institute investigators, engaging in research that addresses pressing policy issues and advances disability rights and justice.



2025-26 Fellows

Back L to R:
 Quieraney Belvin, Emma Ortman, Ella Chase, Del Abney
 Front L to R:
 Aamna Tirmazi, Bipasha Roy, Lauren Farley



Fellows’ Research & Policy Activities:



Ella



I currently assist with a strengths-based study on mothers with intellectual and developmental disabilities that aims to uplift participants’ parenting strengths and experiences.”



Lauren



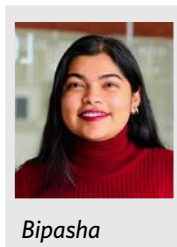
I’m working on a thematic analysis of the direct care worker interviews and helping write about the people of color transitioning out of nursing homes study.”



Del



I’m working on projects aiming to support disabled youths’ sexual and reproductive health!”

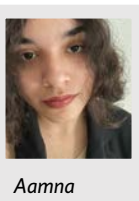


Bipasha



I am working on a project that examines Source-of-Income discrimination and its impact on housing access for people with disabilities who use housing vouchers.”

What they have to say about the Fellowship:



Aamna



I’ve greatly appreciated learning the ins and outs of putting a research paper together.”



Emma



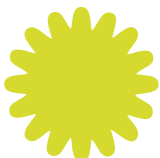
I’ve appreciated the autonomy to shape our research project, which has enabled me to examine disability policy through a public health lens and thoughtfully connect it to my broader studies.”



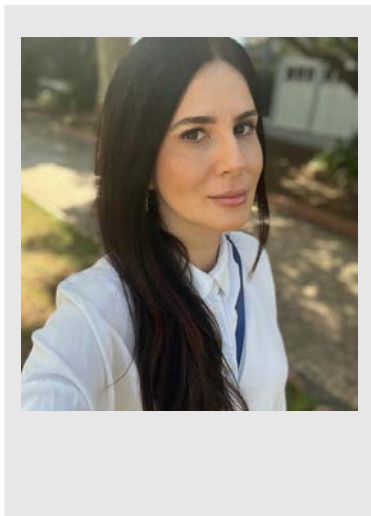
Quieraney



My confidence with quantitative analysis and working with large datasets in STATA has grown substantially during the fellowship, thanks to the strong mentorship and thoughtful guidance I’ve received.”



Hon. Jonathan Brant Endowed Doctoral Fellowship



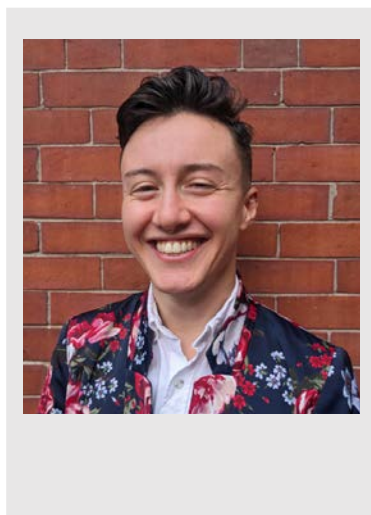
Through the support of the [Hon. Jonathan Brant '68 Endowed Doctoral Fellowship](#), **Fernanda Artimos de Oliveira**, 2025-26 Fellow, has conducted research focused on addressing bureaucratic barriers that hinder access to health care, social welfare, and rights for people with disabilities. She shares that it is both an honor and a motivating force to learn from and collaborate with the distinguished team at the Lurie Institute.



Postdoctoral Fellowship in Disability and Health Policy



Dr. Carolyn Faith Hoffman began her [Fellowship](#) in Summer 2025. During her time at the Lurie Institute, Carolyn has collaborated with Dr. Anne Valentine and her team at the National Center for Disability and Pregnancy Research on several grants investigating the impact of Medicaid-covered doula support for women with disabilities. Carolyn also worked with Dr. Miriam Heyman and her team at the National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities on a grant examining the impact of adverse childhood experiences on biomarkers and health outcomes among individuals with developmental disabilities. In addition, Carolyn has continued her doctoral work on the intersection between disability and endometriosis. Beyond her research, Carolyn became a Board-Certified Patient Advocate (BCPA) in Fall 2025.



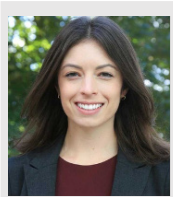
In December 2025, **Dr. A. Alex Levine** began their [postdoctoral Fellowship](#) at the Lurie Institute after completing the Phyllis Torda Health Care Quality and Equity Fellowship at the National Committee on Quality Assurance (NCQA), where they led efforts to develop equity-focused health plan performance measures. At Lurie, they join Drs. Joe Caldwell and Laurin Bixby at the Community Living Policy Center and Community Living Equity Center to conduct policy-relevant work exploring access to and outcomes of home- and community-based services (HCBS). Alex also plans to extend their doctoral work evaluating the impact of Medicaid policy design on racial equity in HCBS access among enrollees with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.



Student Research Assistant Opportunities

Our Institute fosters opportunities for Brandeis students to work directly with our team on a variety of projects. As Research Assistants and Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), students have direct involvement at all stages of the research process, pursue authorship, get mentorship from staff, and build connections within the broader disability research and policy network.

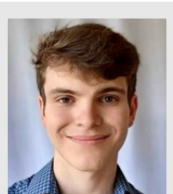
What they are working on:



Kaitlin Stober



Through my work with CLPC, I use national data to examine differences in self-direction utilization, person-centered planning experiences, and associated health and community living outcomes among adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities."



David Cahn



I'm assisting the CLPC in a rapid analysis of National Survey on Health and Disability data, focusing on how different housing outcomes are associated with sociodemographic factors and unmet medical needs."

Their experience at Lurie:



Eben Kwapong



My experience at Lurie has been truly exceptional. I'm especially grateful for the freedom and trust extended by staff and supervisors to explore personal ideas and interests, while also being given the space to genuinely learn, grow, and improve."



Nick Mirin



Working as a Lurie GRA has been a wonderful opportunity to connect with senior researchers who are mentors, collaborators, and genuine thought partners."



Sarah Jerome



Working as a GRA at Lurie has been a meaningful and invaluable part of my doctoral training, giving me the opportunity to engage deeply in research that addresses structural inequities while continuing to strengthen my skills in mixed-methods research alongside a team that is generous with their knowledge and deeply committed to the work. The research is not only academically rigorous, but also grounded in lived experience and focused on advancing real-world justice."

Awards, Fellowships, and Honors



Maria Madison, Miriam Heyman, Monika Mitra

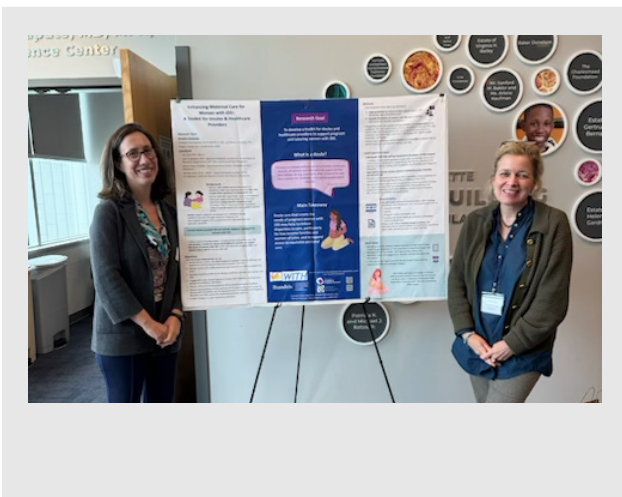
The Heller School's 2025 Early Career Research Investigator Award

Miriam Heyman, Research Scientist at the Lurie Institute and Project Manager of the National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities, was awarded the 2025 Early Career Research Investigator Award.



Finalist for the Best Research Paper Award at NARRTC

Natalie Chong, Joseph Caldwell, H. Stephen Kaye, and Monika Mitra's research paper 'Outcomes of Person-Centered Planning in Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services' was named a finalist for Best Research Paper at the National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers Conference.



Best Poster at NRC Conference

Miriam Heyman, Anne Valentine, and Janelle Mills were awarded 'Best Poster' at the National Research Consortium on Mental Health in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities conference. Their poster highlighted our project 'Enhancing Maternal Care for Women with IDD: A Toolkit for Doulas & Healthcare Providers.'



American Society on Aging (ASA) RISE Fellowship

Jennifer Lee-Rambharose was selected to join Cohort 4 of the ASA RISE Fellowship, a six-month, equity-centered leadership program for emerging leaders of color committed to reshaping the future of aging.



National Academy of Social Insurance's 2026 Membership Class

Joseph Caldwell and Ian Moura were selected to be members of the National Academy of Social Insurance's (NASI) 2026 class. NASI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of the nation's leading experts on social insurance policy, practice, research, and innovation.



American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) Student and Early Career Professional Travel Award

Kaitlin Stober was given this award to attend a conference where she presented her dissertation proposal at the pre-conference colloquium as well as presented a CLPC project at the conference.

Acknowledgments

Our Staff

- Monika Mitra, Director and Nancy Lurie Marks Professor of Disability Policy
- Amy AbuShanab, Associate Director of Administration and Engagement
- Ilhom Akobirshoev, Director of Research
- Laurin Bixby, Research Scientist
- Joseph Caldwell, Senior Scientist
- Maddie Crowley, Communications Specialist
- Elad Daniels, Data Analyst II
- Fernanda Escobar, Research Associate
- Miriam Heyman, Research Scientist
- Carolyn Faith Hoffman, Postdoctoral Fellow
- Jennifer Lee-Rambharose, Senior Project Manager
- Alex Levine, Postdoctoral Fellow
- Frank S. Li, Data Scientist I
- Nicole Lomerson, Research Associate II
- Janelle Mills, Research Associate II
- Ian Moura, Senior Research Associate
- Teresa Nguyen, Senior Research Associate
- Wendy Peverill-Conti, Department Administrator
- Sydney “Syd” Pickern, Senior Research Associate
- Robyn Powell, Senior Research Associate
- Mel Ptacek, Communications Specialist
- Ruby Siegel, Research Associate
- Lauren Smith, Associate Director of Research Operations
- Rajan Sonik, Associate Research Professor
- Luci Swinford, Research Associate
- Kimberly The, Senior Research Associate
- Anne Valentine, Research Scientist
- Marji Erickson Warfield, Senior Scientist and Lecturer

Visiting Scholars

- Taline Alonso Da Silva
- Joan Beasley
- Henry Claypool
- Dr. A. H. Monjurul Kabir
- Anjali J. Forber-Pratt
- Alex Green
- John Harris
- Dennis Heaphy
- LuanJiao Hu
- A. H. Monjurul Kabir
- Sonya Rudra
- Maggie Sheets
- Dalton Stevens
- Weiwen Zeng

Student Research Assistants

- David Cahn
- Sarah Jerome
- Ebenezer Kwapong
- Nicholas Mirin
- Kaitlin Stober

Peer Researchers

- Tyree Brown
- Nancy Garr-Colzie
- Anne-Marie Gomes
- Timotheus “T.J.” Gordon Jr.
- Valerie Novack
- Maria Palacios
- Jennifer Senda
- Heather Watkins
- Sherria D. Young-Smith

Advisory Boards

National Center for Disability and Pregnancy Research Advisory Board

- Sofiya Cheyenne
- Samantha Crane
- Joanne (JoJo) Forbes
- Morénike Giwa-Onaiwu
- Anna Holly
- Charity Hueckstedt
- Norma Morán
- Jessie Owen
- Jennifer Senda
- Heather Watkins
- Robin Wilson-Beattie

National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities Advisory Board

- Judith Brown
- Patrick Cokley
- Morénike Giwa-Onaiwu
- Keith Jones
- Julie Petty
- Tana Pradia
- Jennifer Senda
- Laura Stout
- Heather Watkins

Community Living Equity Center Community Advisory Committee

- Christine Liao
- Germán Parodi
- Janie Mejias
- LaWanda Cook
- Andy Arias
- Bernard Baker
- Melody Cooper
- Conchita Hernandez Legorreta
- Tyree Brown
- Jean-Luc Pierite
- Elaina Seep

Carrie Buck Distinguished Fellowship Advisory Board

- Robin Wilson-Beattie
- Morénike Giwa Onaiwu
- Heather Watkins
- Colleen Flanagan
- Ayesha Elaine Lewis
- Renee Bracey Sherman

A Continuing Education Curriculum for Obstetric Clinicians on Perinatal Care of Women with Disabilities: Clinician Advisory Board

- Mike McKee
- Nili Amir
- Ellen Tilden
- Margaret Turk
- Serah Nthenge
- Margarita Berwick
- Yvonne Butler Tobah
- Karen Jefferson
- Leigh Anne McKingsley

A Continuing Education Curriculum for Obstetric Clinicians on Perinatal Care of Women with Disabilities: Community Advisory Board

- Heather Watkins
- Lindsay B.
- Jennifer Senda
- Lisa Wasikowski
- Norma Moran
- Alesha Thomas

Sexual and Reproductive Health of Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities Advisory Board

- Diana M. Cejas
- Quinn Vermillion
- Ian Watlington
- Brittany Orians
- Alix Herer
- Dominic Mondon-Poirier
- Ben Peverill-Conti



415 South Street MS 035 Waltham, MA 02453