

DHERN May 2026 Newsletter

DHERN Announcements

- **Save the date for the annual DHERN conference** on September 29th from 12 to 4 pm EST. This year's topic will be *"At the Intersection of Structural Ableism and Disability Health Equity"*.
- Recording from our March Meeting, "[Book Discussion: In Sickness and In Health: Love Stories from the Front Lines of America's Caregiving Crisis](#)", featuring Dr. Laura Mauldin, is now live on the DHERN website!
- Public health and research funding cuts have affected many underrepresented researchers. These cuts have also reduced funding for students' and early-career professionals' attendance at professional conferences. The American Public Health Association (APHA) Disability Section is currently seeking support for conference grants to support the next generation's attendance at the annual APHA conference. To learn more, [visit APHA's website](#).
- If you would like to contribute to our work advancing disability health equity research, connecting researchers and trainees, and fostering the inclusion of disabled people in these efforts, you can [make a donation](#) to help sustain DHERN's mission.
- Share your recent publications, upcoming events, job opportunities with the DHERN community! To contribute to the next newsletter, please send details to us at dhern@jh.edu by the 25th of May.

Study Recruitment

- A research team led by Scott Landes, a professor of sociology at Syracuse University, is seeking to learn how people with and without disabilities think about the experience of disability. To participate, you can take a brief 10-minute survey consisting of 25 multiple-choice questions. You are eligible to participate in this research study and complete the survey if you are age 18 or over and live in a U.S. State, District, or Territory. People with

and without a disability are eligible to take the survey. [You can access the survey here](#). This research study has been approved by the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board (IRB), Protocol #25-355.

- The Youth VIEW team at Texas Tech University is seeking families of children who are blind, low vision, or visually impaired to participate in a virtual research study. The goal of the study is to better understand how experiences in families, medical settings, schools, and the community may impact physical and mental health of blind, low vision, and visually impaired children. Children (ages 9 to 17) who are blind, low vision, or visually impaired, and living in the United States, are eligible to enroll, along with a parent or guardian. Participation is completely voluntary; whether or not you participate has no impact on you or your child's access to education, medical care, or employment. To learn more about the study, [please go to the prescreening survey page](#), which includes detailed information about study procedures, risks, and benefits. If, after reviewing this information, you would like to enroll, you can complete the prescreening survey, which takes 5-10 minutes of your time. Eligible families will then be contacted after completing the prescreener to answer additional questions and to schedule your study session. If you have any questions about the study, please contact the team at Psychology.Youthview@ttu.edu.

[Health Affairs](#) Featured Article

- Pham, H. H., Barkoff, A., Benevides, T., Caplan, R., Nygren, M., and Robinson, G. (2026) "[Safeguarding Health For People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Absent Federal Leadership, Others Must Step Up.](#)" Health Affairs
 - a. Recent federal actions have eliminated or weakened multiple programs and federal initiatives intended to improve the health and well-being of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Given the dismantling and fracturing of the federal health infrastructure, IDD-focused organizations should coalesce and step into the breach. They must exert leadership as a community to promote the health and well-being of the IDD population.

DHERN Member Submissions

- Dr. Mustafa Rfat successfully defended his dissertation, *"Enhancing the Well-Being of Refugees with Disabilities Through Equitable Access to Essential Services: A Participatory Qualitative Study in the United States."* He will be joining the University of Nebraska Omaha's Grace Abbott School of Social Work as an Assistant Professor.
- Dr. Rfat also presented his work, *"Advancing Participatory Research for Refugees with Disabilities: Addressing Structural Oppression,"* at the Consortium of Universities for Global Health and was honored with multiple awards recognizing his contributions to global health. These include the Student Leader in Global Health Award, an Honorable Mention for *Untold Global Health Stories of 2026* for his story on barriers to health care for refugees

with disabilities, and a Notable Entry in the Reflection in Global Health Contest for *“The Sound of Silence.”*

From,
The DHERN Team

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