

DHERN September 2026 Newsletter

DHERN Announcements

- **Save the date for the annual DHERN conference** on September 29th from 12 to 3 pm EST. This year's topic will be "*At the Intersection of Structural Ableism and Disability Health Equity*". We are excited to announce our keynote presenter for "Defining Structural Ableism," will be [Joel Michael Reynolds, Ph.D., Provost's Distinguished Associate Professor of Philosophy and Disability Studies at Georgetown University](#). See the attached flyer for more details about panels. [Register for our conference now!](#)
 - a. 12:45-1:30 PM ET | Session 1: Structural Ableism at Local, National, and International Levels
 - i. Panelists: [Maria Town](#), [Dessa Cosma](#), [Jane Dunhamn](#)
 - b. 1:30-2:15 PM ET | Session 2: Impact of Structural Ableism
 - i. Panelists: [Rupa Valdez](#), [Jae Kennedy](#), [Dielle Lundberg](#)
 - c. 2:15-3:00 PM ET | Session 3: The Role of Funders in Advancing Research and Dismantling Structural Ableism
 - i. Panelists: [Patrick Cokley](#) and [Ryan Easterly](#)
- Join the [Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center \(DHRC\)](#) for three events highlighting disability health research in September. The series is open to the Johns Hopkins community and the broader public. ASL interpretation and real-time captioning will be provided. [Register for the Seminar Series here](#). Save the dates:
 - a. September 15th from 12:00-1:00 PM ET: Joint meeting with [the JHU Center on Aging and Health](#): Dr. Jennifer Schrack will discuss the National Health and Aging Trends Study (NHATS) and how this data can be used to examine the health of people with disabilities and support disability health research.
 - b. September 22nd from 12:00-1:00 PM ET: Kerry Devlin, PhD, LPMT, MT-BC and Kausik Datta, PhD, MA will discuss Music Therapy in Neurocritical Care: Co-Constructing Music and Meaning.
 - c. September 29th from 12:00-3:00 PM ET: [Disability Health Equity Research Network \(DHERN\)](#) Annual Conference, "At the Intersection of Structural Ableism and Disability Health Equity.

- **Announcing the University of Michigan Center for Inclusive Mobility Environments Public Transit Accessibility Dashboard.** The [Public Transit Accessibility Dashboard](#) evaluates and compares accessibility across the top 100 federally funded public transit systems in the United States. Accessible public transit is more than whether a bus or train is physically present. It also depends on whether riders can find clear accessibility information, reach meaningful destinations, access frequent service, and afford the trip. The dashboard reflects this broader view by assessing multiple dimensions of transit accessibility and showing that accessibility varies widely across cities and transit systems. A system may perform well in one area, such as affordability, while still facing challenges in another, such as service frequency or destination access. This tool is designed to help disabled riders, advocates, researchers, transit agencies, policymakers, and community members better understand where transit accessibility is stronger and where improvements are needed. By making accessibility data easier to find, compare, download, and use, the dashboard supports data-informed planning and advocacy. Details about rankings, scoring, methods, and helpful links are available on [the dashboard](#).
- The *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research* is seeking submissions for a special issue on “Improving Health Outcomes for People with Intellectual Disability: Inclusive Research, Responsible Inclusion in Research, and Equitable Clinical Trials for People with Intellectual Disability.” The call welcomes research focused on improving the inclusion and representation of people with intellectual disability in health research and clinical trials. [Learn more about the call for papers here.](#)
- *Disability and Health Journal* is seeking submissions for a Special Issue on global disability health equity, focusing on implementation science and applied research that generates practical evidence for improving health systems, services, and outcomes for people with disabilities. The Special Issue welcomes original research and brief reports examining disability-inclusive policies, programmes, interventions, implementation strategies, and system-level changes, with particular interest in research conducted in meaningful partnership with people with disabilities and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), as well as research from low- and middle-income countries, the Global South, and other underrepresented settings. [Learn more and submit here.](#)
- 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 30th of September.

Study Recruitment

- Kristin Walker, a doctoral student in clinical psychology at Stony Brook University, is recruiting Deaf and hard-of-hearing autistic adults to share their experiences with mental health therapy and accessibility in research. Participants must be 18 or older, live in the United States, be autistic, and have sought or received mental health therapy. Participants must also be able to communicate using ASL, written or spoken English, or AAC; other communication methods may also be discussed. Participation involves two brief surveys (5–10 minutes each) and a 1-hour Zoom interview. If you are interested in learning more or finding out if you are eligible, you can complete the [eligibility survey here](#). You can also watch an [ASL video about the study](#) or a [12-minute video introduction to the research](#). For more information or questions, please contact Kristin.walker@stonybrook.edu. This study is approved by the Stony Brook University IRB #2025-00735.
- The Yang-Institute on Employment and Disability and The Worker Institute at Cornell University are recruiting participants for a study about how the need for personal assistance and other home care services influences the employment of adults with disabilities. Participants must live or work in New York, Oklahoma, or Washington State. One in ten survey participants will receive a \$50 gift card after completing the survey. Survey participants who are selected for a focus group or individual interview will be sent a \$50 gift card after completing the focus group or interview. [To find out if you are eligible, please take the screening survey here](#). For more information, contact bcg54@cornell.edu. This study is approved by the Cornell University. IRB #150039.
- The Texas Center for Disability Studies at the University of Texas at Austin is recruiting adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their caregivers to share their experiences. Adults who have been told they have an intellectual or developmental disability, live with their family, are between the ages of 22 and 49, and live in Texas may be eligible to participate. The study, titled “Supporting Access to Learning, Understanding, and Healthy Development for Adults with IDD,” focuses on participants’ life experiences. If you are interested in learning more or finding out if you are eligible, you can complete the [research interest form here](#). For more information or questions, please contact Nicholas.nelson@austin.utexas.edu or 512-232-0743.

[Disability Data Equity Research Working Group](#) Featured Article

- Beuoy, A., Goddard, K., Kurth, N., Myers, A., Ipsen, C., & Hall, J. (2026). [Broad disability question in the BRFSS identifies populations missed by the American Community Survey six disability questions](#). *Research Connections*, 1(3).
 - a. Disability measures used in national surveys can identify different populations of people with disabilities. This study examines how a broad disability question in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) compares with the six disability questions used in the American Community Survey (ACS). The authors find that the

broader BRFSS question identifies people with disabilities who may be missed by the ACS questions, highlighting how differences in disability measurement can affect who is counted in population health data and research.

Health Affairs Featured Article

- Kaufman, B. G., Smith, M., & Franklin, M. S. (2026). [Bridging Systems to Support Families Aging Together](#). *Health Affairs Forefront*.
 - Building integrated, person-centered systems is essential to meet the needs of families aging together. Strategic planning at the federal and state level must recognize overlapping needs between older adults and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), while leveraging opportunities for efficiency through integrated programs. Although the aging experience will differ across individuals, policies that expand Medicaid-funded home- and community-based services (HCBS) self-direction, strengthen family caregiver supports, and promote integration of disability and aging services are critical to enabling older adults and people with I/DD to live healthy, fulfilling lives in the homes of their choice.

From,
The DHERN Team

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