

**August 2025** **| Jewish Healthcare Foundation news, events, milestones, & more**

Contents

[National Healthcare Leaders to Design an *Ambition Health System* with Safety at its Core 2](#_Toc207285377)

[Data in Motion: AIDS Free Pittsburgh Walks Build Awareness and Shape Policy 4](#_Toc207285378)

[Health Careers Futures Board Builds Momentum for Teen Mental Health Services 5](#_Toc207285379)

[Justin Reid Ehrenwerth Award Empowers Pittsburgh Youth 6](#_Toc207285380)

[Patient Safety Tech Challenge Winner Kalogon is Making Smart Seating More Accessible 7](#_Toc207285381)

[Fellowship Alumni Spotlight: Joyzen C. Ramos 10](#_Toc207285382)

[Dr. David Kelley Brings Rural Roots to Enhance Pennsylvania’s Health Policy 11](#_Toc207285383)

[Other JHF News in August 15](#_Toc207285384)

National Healthcare Leaders to Design an *Ambition Health System* with Safety at its Core

A person holding a tablet

AI-generated content may be incorrect.The prevalence of medical error is widely discussed, with reports of 1 in 4 Americans receiving health care in the U.S. experiencing harm. Despite the increasing availability of tech solutions to support safer health care and political momentum with the introduction of [bipartisan legislation in 2024](https://jhf.org/news/bipartisan-legislation-makes-patient-safety-a-national-priority) to establish a National Patient Safety Board, progress has stalled. Medical errors cost more than 200,000 patient lives each year, and these preventable harms such as surgical complications, infections and medication errors cost the U.S. healthcare system upwards of $35 billion dollars annually. And, a July 2025 [Office of the Inspector General report](https://oig.hhs.gov/documents/evaluation/10840/OEI-06-18-00401.pdf) found that hospitals failed to capture half of patient harm events.

In a new effort to demonstrate what is possible in patient safety, the [Jewish Healthcare Foundation](https://www.jhf.org/?__hstc=153684135.5a0801c0a747554dd72a5559bdb0ab91.1721677894560.1730990490160.1731595616192.16&__hssc=153684135.2.1731595616192&__hsfp=4044781704) (JHF) and [Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative](https://www.prhi.org/?__hstc=153684135.5a0801c0a747554dd72a5559bdb0ab91.1721677894560.1730990490160.1731595616192.16&__hssc=153684135.2.1731595616192&__hsfp=4044781704) (PRHI), pioneers in the push to end medical harm, announce the launch of the Coalition for Advancing Safer Healthcare (CASH). In collaboration with four major health systems and leaders in healthcare safety, CASH will work to build a model for an ideal yet feasible health system of the future designed for safety, nicknamed the *Ambition Health System*.

With an initial focus on four strategic areas, each partner hub will lead a national, multidisciplinary work group to identify specific safety solutions that would define the *Ambition Health System.* The four partners and their strategic focus areas are:

* **Johns Hopkins Medicine Armstrong Institute for Patient Safety and Quality**: Large-Scale Health System Technology
* **MedStar Health National Center for Human Factors in Healthcare**: Human Factors Solutions
* **UC San Diego Health**: Data for Improvement
* **The University of Utah Center for Evaluation of Health AI Research**: Direct-to-Consumer Technology

"Empowering patients with real-time access to all relevant information enables them to actively participate in enhancing the safety and quality of their own care,” said David Classen, MD, professor of Medicine at the University of Utah Health, team leader at the Center for Evaluation of Health AI Research, and head of the CASH working group for direct-to-consumer technology.

PRHI, as a non-profit operating arm of JHF, will serve as the CASH organizing entity, with technical expertise provided by Ken Catchpole, PhD, Medical University of South Carolina’s SmartState Endowed Chair in Clinical Practice and Human Factors and a member of the [Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation’s](https://www.apsf.org/profile/ken-catchpole/) Committee on Scientific Evaluation.

“The JHF CASH initiative is an exceptional opportunity to shape the future of patient safety. I’m energized by the depth and diversity of expertise in our workgroup and across the program. Together we’ll generate innovative, actionable ideas with practical near-term impact and build the learning systems that will guide safer care for years to come. I’m hopeful that by convening diverse talent and real-world experience, we can rethink and redesign safety,” said Michael Rosen, MA, PhD, Human Factors Psychologist and Professor in the Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, leader of the working group on large-scale health system technology.

“Building on the [patient safety AI conference](https://jhf.org/news/jhf-sponsors-exclusive-ai-to-advance-patient-safety-summit) cohosted at UC San Diego Health with JHF and the National Academy of Medicine, we are striving to make transformative improvements by taking full advantage of data across the healthcare continuum. We will outline actionable recommendations to break down silos, integrate diverse data sources, and use advanced analytics to prevent patient harm, promote transparency, and support our care teams. Using data to drive continuous learning and collaboration, we are working to create a safer, smarter, more efficient healthcare system where every decision is informed, and every patient is protected,” said working group leader Chris Longhurst, MD, MS, chief clinical & innovation officer, associate dean and clinical professor at UC San Diego Health.

Raj Ratwani, PhD, vice president of scientific affairs, MedStar Health Research Institute, professor at Georgetown University School of Medicine, and director of the National Center for Human Factors in Healthcare said: “My aspirations for the human factors working group is that we will illuminate the hidden risks in healthcare settings through the science of human factors and champion sustainable solutions that put patient well-being first.”

Partner organizations will lead working groups through December 2025, with recommendations for the *Ambition Health System* to be released in the spring of 2026.

“Our Foundation has attempted to advance patient safety since the late nineties,” said JHF and PRHI President and CEO Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD. “We know medical error can lead to permanent disability and death for patients, but it also adds cost and demoralizes staff in an already fragile healthcare system. As our hopes of creating a federal agency totally focused on patient safety dissolved, we envisioned an alternative, private-sector effort to identify the fundamentals of a health system designed for safety. We’re grateful to the healthcare visionaries who have partnered to create the *Ambition Health System*.”

Data in Motion: AIDS Free Pittsburgh Walks Build Awareness and Shape Policy

**Midway through its series of [PrEP Data Walks](https://jhf.org/news/community-data-walks-boost-local-prep-awareness), [AIDS Free Pittsburgh (AFP)](https://www.aidsfreepittsburgh.org/) is finding that bringing local HIV prevention data directly into community spaces sparks powerful dialogue.

These interactive displays, featuring the results of AFP’s recent [county-wide PrEP awareness survey,](https://jhf.org/news/aids-free-pittsburgh-completes-its-most-comprehensive-assessment-of-prep-awareness-and-knowledge-in-allegheny-county) are designed to meet people where they gather. To date, AFP has brought the Data Walk experience to a dozen community events and clinics with venues ranging from farmers markets and Black Pride celebrations to Shepherd Wellness Community’s OUTrageous Bingo and the City of Pittsburgh’s overdose prevention pop-ups. Each site was chosen to reflect the diversity of survey respondents and of communities most affected by HIV. At each stop, the goal is the same: to turn statistics into conversations that inspire action.

One early lesson is that awareness is only the first step. Many participants leave the Data Walks wanting to know how to obtain PrEP. In response, AFP developed the [*MyPrEP Access Guide*](https://jhf.org/publications/my-prep-your-guide-to-navigating-health-care-for-hiv-prevention), a practical, user-friendly resource created with community input.

AIDS Free Pittsburgh’s Data Walk on display.

The guide outlines the four PrEP options currently available, how to determine if PrEP is right for an individual, conversation tips for speaking with a healthcare provider, strategies for managing costs and side effects, and connections to local resources. AFP is distributing the guide digitally and in-person at outreach events and through partner organizations across the city.

The timing of the Data Walks coincides with an important national development: FDA approval of lenacapavir (Yeztugo) for PrEP. This long-acting injectable is administered just twice a year, offering an alternative for those who face challenges with daily pills or frequent clinic visits. By expanding prevention options, lenacapavir could help more people find a form of PrEP that fits their lives.

The same PrEP survey data fueling community conversations is also shaping national discussions. In August, AFP was invited to present the PrEP survey findings to the HIV subcommittee of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. The presentation was well received, with over 130 attendees from state and local health departments across the country, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors. Members of the Allegheny County Medical Society will also have the chance to read about the PrEP survey findings in the next edition of the *ACMS Bulletin*, guest-authored by AIDS Free Pittsburgh.

For community audiences, the emphasis is on making the numbers relatable and actionable. For public health professionals, the focus shifts to survey methodology, demographic trends, and implications for prevention planning. By tailoring the presentation to each audience, AFP ensures that the data empower in the community while also informing epidemiologists and policymakers who guide HIV prevention strategies nationwide.

In the coming months, AFP plans to continue hosting Data Walks across the region and tracking their impact. This unique approach has already sparked interest among peer organizations who have seen increases in PrEP inquiries and are exploring ways to adapt the format for other health topics. AFP’s experience shows that bringing data off the page and into the heart of the community can catalyze awareness, foster connections, and inspire action.

Health Careers Futures Board Builds Momentum for Teen Mental Health Services

**JHF’s [Health Careers Futures (HCF)](https://hcfutures.org/) Board met on August 27 focused on advancing sustainable, community-based teen mental health services across Pennsylvania. What began as a reflection on JHF’s journey in this space evolved into a dynamic working session—featuring tested models and cross-sector ideas for what comes next.

Opening the meeting, Dr. Feinstein traced the evolution of the Foundation’s teen mental health efforts. She recalled JHF’s early work responding to behavioral health needs beginning in 2016, where conversations with administrators sparked deeper thinking about long-term solutions. But it was direct engagement with families and teens that shifted the Foundation’s strategy.

Kara Petrosky discusses the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western PA’s approach to teen mental health programming with the HCF Board.

Inspired by Australia’s headspace centres, a national network of youth mental health centers, JHF began investing in localized, stigma-free spaces for teens, resulting in the development and support of UpStreet, The Beacon, and other emerging models in the Pittsburgh region.

Staff from the [Persad Center,](https://www.persadcenter.org/) a national leader in LGBTQ+ mental health care, shared how their services and business model has evolved over the decades, seeking to provide a roadmap for other community-based organizations to leverage various funding streams to support the growth of available on-site mental health services. Founded in 1972 as one of the country’s first licensed LGBTQ+ counseling centers, Persad has been at the forefront of community mental health for decades, now offering a wide range of therapy, psychiatric care, and peer support groups. With a diversified funding model, Persad serves 460–500 behavioral health clients weekly and continues to expand whole-person care programs, including Phoenix Fitness, Pennsylvania’s first nonprofit trans gym.

The meeting’s panel discussion, moderated by JHF Executive Vice President Danny Rosen, PhD, MSW, featured [Jordan Golin](https://jhf.org/news/jordan-golin-and-jfcs-stand-steadfast-as-a-community-safety-net-in-uncertain-times) of Jewish Family & Community Services ([UpStreet),](https://jhf.org/news/lt-governor-austin-davis-and-allegheny-county-legislators-visit-teen-mental-health-collaborative-members-to-learn-about-innovative-programs) Kaitlin Hans-Greco of The Friendship Circle’s [The Beacon](https://jhf.org/news/trustees-tour-jhf-supported-teen-mental-health-spaces-during-all-boards-meeting), and Kara Petrosky of Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania. The discussion provided insights into strategies for providing drop-in therapy, school-based care, telehealth, and family engagement while underscoring common challenges: sustainability, reliance on short-term funding, and workforce shortages. Panelists also reflected on what they could adopt from Persad’s model, including more intentional use of reimbursable services and diversified funding portfolios.

JHF staff presented the Foundation’s strategy to scale and sustain teen safe spaces statewide. Highlights include leveraging the [PA Youth Advocacy Network,](https://jhf.org/projects/pa-youth-advocacy-network) the [PA Teen Mental Health Coalition](https://jhf.org/projects/pa-teen-mental-health-coalition), and [Teen Mental Health Collaborative](https://jhf.org/projects/teen-mental-health-collaborative) to help community-based organizations and existing teen safe spaces demonstrate their community impact and advocate for state funding for mental health and out-of-school programs.

The HCF Board was enthusiastic about the ambitious goals but recognized the myriad of challenges facing the work of expanding teen safe spaces in the current landscape. Board members were especially pointed in wanting to see more healthcare dollars ultimately go towards supporting and paying for the kinds of services offered by teen safe spaces and related teen mental health services at community-based organizations.

Justin Reid Ehrenwerth Award Empowers Pittsburgh Youth

A group of people standing in front of a glass wall

AI-generated content may be incorrect.The legacy of civic leader and environmental advocate Justin Reid Ehrenwerth continues to inspire a new generation of changemakers through the Justin Reid Ehrenwerth Emerging Scholar Award, granted annually to high school students pursuing public health and environmental justice research in Pittsburgh.

Administered by JHF and the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health, the award is part of the larger [Justin Reid Ehrenwerth Community Impact Award initiative](https://jhf.org/news/adl-hosts-tribute-to-justin-ehrenwerth-and-recognizes-the-justin-reid-ehrenwerth-community-impact-award), which supports community-based projects aligned with Ehrenwerth’s lifelong commitment to equity, sustainability, and public service.

From left to right: Hritika Basu, Milo Rent, and David Ehrenwerth, JD.

This year’s Emerging Scholar Award recipients, participants in Pitt Public Health’s Public Health Science Academy, have turned personal insight into purpose-driven inquiry. Milo Rent and Hritika Basu, both rising juniors at Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy, will share the Justin Reid Ehrenwerth Emerging Scholar Award, a $15,000 award funded through JHF and offered for the first time during the 2025 summer session.

As Academy participants, the pair studied the negative health impacts of flooding, outdated sewer systems, and antiquated lead-lined pipes prevalent in Pittsburgh’s low-lying and predominantly low-income older neighborhoods.

Through the program, 10th and 11th grade students from under-resourced high schools in Pittsburgh gained access to intensive research opportunities, faculty mentorship, and platforms to present their findings at professional conferences.

“Receiving this award is a great honor. The sheer excitement of the opportunity is a stimulus in and of itself! Additionally, the work we began has already invoked a feeling of determination to challenge the systems in place and welcome innovation. This project is personal to me because I live in the Hazelwood neighborhood. The proximity of my community to the river line is alarming, considering the increase of flooding in Pittsburgh. I am eager to explore and advocate for resources and initiatives to handle flooding issues within the city for all communities. I believe our work can and will contribute to the impetus for proper and equitable flood mitigation in the city of Pittsburgh,” Basu said.

Established in late 2023, the first Justin Reid Ehrenwerth Community Impact Award was given in 2024 to the [Anti-Defamation League's Cleveland Chapter,](https://jhf.org/news/adl-hosts-tribute-to-justin-ehrenwerth-and-recognizes-the-justin-reid-ehrenwerth-community-impact-award) an homage to the great dedication and appreciation Ehrenwerth held for the chapter’s work.

“This project, in my opinion, embodies the values of Justin Reid Ehrenwerth because the water crisis does not affect everyone equally. For example…I live further from the river so in my life the water crisis isn't as big an issue as it would be for people in flood zones, who are often impoverished. This really connects to social justice as well as environmental leadership due to the lack of urgency on this increasingly dangerous crisis here in Pittsburgh,” Rent said. “I feel that through our continuing advocacy on this matter I feel that me and Hritika could make a change and educate people on this matter, bringing light and action to preventing further damages to our water.”

Patient Safety Tech Challenge Winner Kalogon is Making Smart Seating More Accessible

**[Kalogon](https://www.kalogon.com/), the world’s first smart wheelchair cushion company, was founded in 2019 and [has continued to grow](https://www.kalogon.com/history) through a combination of product innovation, strategic partnerships, and targeted funding.

In July 2021, the company raised $500,000 in seed funding to support early operations and product development. By February 2022, Kalogon began shipping its first product, the Orbiter wheelchair cushion, which achieved product-market fit and gained significant traction among Veterans Affairs customers. That June, it secured a $98,000 grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), followed in September by a $1.2 million U.S. Air Force Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase II contract for B-52 applications and an additional $2 million in seed funding.

From left to right: Evan Rosenberg, Tim Balz, and Kenny Menendez pose with PRHI patient safety consultant Ariana Longley, MPH at the SXSW competition in 2023.

On March 13, 2023, Kalogon won the Patient Safety Technology Innovation Award at [South by Southwest (SXSW) Innovation Awards](https://www.patientsafetytech.com/past-competitions/sxswinnovationaward2023), sponsored by the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative. This event increased the visibility of the issue of medical harm for the nearly 1,000 people in attendance at the awards ceremony.

In November 2023, Kalogon expanded into automotive applications, delivering a paid proof of concept to Hyundai in Seoul, South Korea, and the following month earned a $630,000 Air Force contract. The momentum continued in January 2024 with the launch of an assistive technology accessory co-developed with Etac, one of the largest providers in the sector. May 2024 marked several milestones, including shipping Medicare-coded cushions eligible for reimbursement, debuting a business-class seat cushion proof of concept at the Aircraft Interiors Expo, and closing a $1.2 million convertible note financing round. In July 2024, Kalogon secured both a $1.6 million Phase III SBIR contract with the U.S. Air Force to develop cushioning solutions for the E-4B aircraft and a $585,000 expanded grant from NIDILRR, further strengthening its research and development capabilities.

Kalogon was started by Tim Balz, CEO and founder; Aaron Jones, director of Operations and co-founder; and Evan Rosenberg, innovation engineer and co-founder. We were able to catch up with the team about Kalogon’s progress, accomplishments, and future.

1. **What specific patient safety issue or personal experience inspired your innovation, and how did you identify the gap in the current healthcare system that your solution addresses?**

Kalogon was founded to address the widespread and often overlooked harm caused by pressure injuries, an issue affecting millions of wheelchair users and patients with limited mobility. Our CEO, Tim Balz, drew from both personal experience and deep industry insight to develop a smarter, proactive approach to pressure relief, identifying a major gap in real-time, adaptive seating technology.

1. **What were/are the major challenges you face(d) during development, and how**

**did you overcome them?**

One of our greatest challenges was designing a system that adapts dynamically to users' micromovements while being rugged enough for daily use in medical and military environments. We overcame this by combining machine learning with iterative feedback from real users and clinical professionals, ultimately creating our Advanced Pressure Management System.

1. **Have you conducted any pilot studies or trials? If so, what were the outcomes? What steps have you taken/are you working toward to ensure compatibility with current healthcare systems and practices?**

Kalogon’s technology has been rigorously validated through clinical trials and peer-reviewed studies, confirming its ability to improve blood flow, enhance tissue oxygenation, and reduce pressure injury risk. Published in the *Journal of Tissue Viability and Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, these findings support the effectiveness and comfort of our smart seating solutions.

We’ve achieved key milestones in clinical integration, including Medicare approval for our flagship product, Orbiter Med, and our latest innovation, Bondar. We’ve also established strategic partnerships with the VA, assistive device providers, and major health systems to streamline adoption and reimbursement.

Our impact is reflected in the lives we help transform. Ms. Z, living with spina bifida and a chronic stage 4 sacral ulcer, experienced complete healing within 11 months after switching to the Orbiter. John, once limited by pain due to a fractured spine, was able to resume gardening, reconnect with his grandchildren, and even walk after 18+ years in a wheelchair thanks to the comfort of Kalogon’s technology.

Beyond individuals, we partner with organizations like All Wheels Up to push accessibility forward, bringing innovative seating solutions to more people across health care and aviation. Kalogon is redefining standards for comfort, mobility, and quality of life.

**4. How are you addressing potential barriers to access, especially in underserved communities? How are you addressing integration into current health systems?**

Kalogon’s mission is to eliminate the stresses of sitting and improve health through inventive seating technology; our vision is to become the trusted leader in seated health across industries. Our solutions are designed for people who must sit for extended periods, whether in wheelchairs, cockpits, or cars. By combining clinical research, real-world feedback, and rapid iteration, we’ve built a platform that is both effective and highly scalable.

Focusing on our medical products, the biggest thing we have done to improve accessibility to our products is achieve Medicare coding. When we first received this award, it was for Orbiter, our initial product, which did not receive adequate coding. In 2024 we launched Orbiter Med, a Medicare coded product (E2609), expanding access to our technology and products. In 2024, we also enhanced the Orbiter Med product by offering it in extended sizes, so that it is available in sizes from 15x15 to 27x27, accommodating even more bodies. June 2025 brought Bondar, a customizable back support also coded as a custom product for Medicare (E2617). Bondar is designed to pair with Orbiter Med and create complete seating systems.

We also collaborate with community clinics and veterans’ organizations, and our team runs free pressure mapping events to ensure populations receive appropriate and effective seating support. As we expand, we continue to keep accessibility at the forefront both with our users and within our production facility.

1. **How has the Patient Safety Technology Challenge impacted the trajectory of your innovation?**

Winning the Patient Safety Technology Challenge was pivotal for Kalogon. It validated our innovation, accelerated our clinical validation efforts, and elevated our credibility within the healthcare and technology communities. In an industry where few complex rehab technology companies participate in cutting-edge tech conferences—let alone win — this recognition positioned Kalogon as a true leader in the space.

The award also created momentum. Shortly after, we launched Orbiter Med in 2024 — our first Medicare-coded product—alongside Booster, an accessory for existing wheelchair cushions, and Bondar, a custom-coded smart backrest. These launches marked significant steps forward in our mission to expand access to intelligent pressure relief solutions.

Sharing this achievement with clinicians and consumers has been especially rewarding, reinforcing our commitment to collaboration and real-world impact.

1. **If you could give one piece of advice to an early innovator, what would it be?**

Stay laser-focused on real-world impact. Ground your solution in feedback from the people you're trying to help; move fast, but with purpose.

Fellowship Alumni Spotlight: Joyzen C. Ramos

Joyzen C. Ramos, a former participant in JHF’s Patient Safety Fellowship and Salk Health Activist Fellowship, is the current chapter president of the Philippine Nurses Association, Inc. Oriental Mindoro Chapter and was a past national chairperson of its Disaster Preparedness Committee. She is also a member of the Digital Transformation Leadership and Telenursing Working Group Committee of the International Society for Telemedicine and eHealth. She was a former faculty member of the University of Santo Tomas College of Nursing, Philippines, and had clinical exposures in the pediatric intensive care unit and emergency room of the Philippine Heart Center.

She earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing at the University of Santo Tomas as Magna Cum Laude and completed her Master of Science in Nursing with a Clinical Nurse Leader concentration at the University of Pittsburgh.

[Watch now.](https://youtu.be/EafJ53Jk5Kk)

Dr. David Kelley Brings Rural Roots to Enhance Pennsylvania’s Health Policy

David Kelley, MD, MPA, a physician and public health leader, has spent his career bridging the gaps between bedside care and system-wide change.

Growing up in the rolling hills of central Pennsylvania and with deep familial roots near Hershey dating back to the 1730s, Dr. Kelley’s path from a small-town upbringing to the upper levels of administration in Pennsylvania’s Department of Human Services (DHS) reflects not just a personal calling, but a sustained mission: to ensure that vulnerable populations receive the compassionate, equitable health care they deserve.

Educated at Palmyra High School, Elizabethtown College, and the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Dr. Kelley honed his clinical training in Houston at Baylor College of Medicine and the Texas Heart Institute. There, during his rotations across public, veterans, and private hospitals, he was struck by the stark inequities in access and care.

“At Ben Taub (Hospital), we saw patients who had never seen a doctor until a crisis brought them in,” he recalled. “Meanwhile, private hospitals were actively transferring unstable patients to the VA—just to avoid liability. That made the flaws in our system undeniable to me.”

Those early experiences galvanized his transition from clinical medicine to public administration. After treating patients with HIV/AIDS in central Pennsylvania and witnessing the isolation many faced due to stigma and lack of family support, he moved deeper into systems work, joining Hamilton Health Center, engaging with Medicaid populations, and becoming a faculty member at Penn State University, where he focused on inpatient quality and utilization management.

But it was at the Pennsylvania DHS, where he has served for over two decades and most recently as Chief Medical Officer, that Dr. Kelley made his most far-reaching impact. Here, his work has touched nearly every corner of the Medicaid landscape: from improving childhood nutrition and tobacco cessation policies to ensuring equitable access to dental care and behavioral health services.

"I really saw this as a huge opportunity to come back to my foundational roots and where I was really committed,” Dr. Kelley said of the transition. "I view Medicaid as public health, and I wanted to get back into public health and population health."

Dr. Kelley serves as the chief medical officer for DHS’s Office of Medical Assistance Programs (OMAP), overseeing the clinical and quality aspects of the medical assistance programs that provide health benefits to over 2.5 million recipients.

In the past 10+ years OMAP has increased the Medicaid program’s effectiveness, healthcare quality, cost-efficiency, and system modernization. For example, the program has expanded adult Medicaid and postpartum coverage, implemented an integrated behavioral and physical health quality incentive program, established a pediatric behavioral health telephonic consultation program for primary care practitioners, and helped establish the statewide Perinatal Quality Collaborative. To evaluate programs and policies put into place, he helped develop the Medicaid Research Center with the University of Pittsburgh.

He was a key architect of many of the value-based payment programs, including the patient-centered medical home program, which has improved outcomes by fostering comprehensive, team-based care, particularly for individuals with complex needs.

“We had to move from volume to value,” he said. “These programs are about holding systems accountable for the quality, not just the quantity, of care.”

Dr. Kelley also deployed programs to meet the opioid epidemic head-on. Under his guidance, Pennsylvania launched its Centers of Excellence program, which prioritized medication-assisted treatment and care coordination for people with substance use disorders. Additionally, he advocated for eliminating prior authorization requirements for critical medications like naloxone, an emergency treatment that rapidly reverses opioid overdoses, enabling faster, life-saving intervention when every second counts.

"We’ve developed quality improvement incentive programs for providers, managed care organizations, dental providers, and hospitals to reduce preventable admissions,” Dr. Kelley said. “We stood up the Centers of Excellence program as part of the response to the opioid crisis, opening up quick access to care and pushing the use of medication-assisted treatment."

Technology, too, has been central to Dr. Kelley’s strategy. He championed efforts to expand telemedicine access, particularly in rural and underserved communities, and helped direct over $500 million in incentives to hospitals and Medicaid providers for the adoption of electronic health records. During the COVID-19 pandemic, his team’s early investments paid off: telehealth became a vital link for behavioral health services, maternal care, and pediatric well-child visits.

He oversaw the development of PA Navigate, a health information exchange initiative that screens for social determinants like housing and food insecurity, linking individuals to resources that address the root causes of poor health. He also notes that one of his proudest achievements is the increase in the number of Pennsylvania children accessing dental care.

"When I started 20 years ago, less than a third of our kids were accessing dental care. We’re now at probably 60-some percent accessing dental care on an annual basis,” Dr. Kelley said.

Never one to accept the status quo, Dr. Kelley brought a proactive, strategic mindset to Medicaid policymaking. He worked on national quality improvement boards, including the National Quality Forum and National Committee for Quality Assurance, ensuring that equity metrics and performance data drove funding decisions and care models. In collaboration with managed care plans, he designed adjustments that saved Pennsylvania over $2 billion, cutting down on preventable hospital admissions and inappropriate pharmacy use.

His recent focus includes expanding access to GLP-1 medications for diabetes and streamlining approvals for continuous glucose monitoring devices, vital tools in the fight against chronic disease, particularly among Medicaid populations disproportionately affected by it.

Central to Dr. Kelley’s success has been his steadfast commitment to collaboration. He praises partners like the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, whose work on demonstration projects, quality collaboratives and end-of-life care has helped elevate Pennsylvania’s health outcomes. Together, they have advanced initiatives like behavioral health collaborative care models, the maternal health TIPS line, [Teaching Nursing Home Collaborative](https://jhf.org/projects/teaching-nursing-home-collaborative), [PA Perinatal Quality Collaborative,](https://www.papqc.org/) [Patient-Centered Medical Home Learning Network,](https://jhf.org/news/pennsylvanias-patient-centered-medical-home-learning-collaborative-enters-exciting-new-chapter) [OUD Centers of Excellence Learning Network](https://jhf.org/projects/centers-of-excellence-learning-network), and enhanced patient safety efforts across care settings.

“The Jewish Healthcare Foundation has been an important ally,” he said. “Their ability to bring people together—from community partners to policymakers—has strengthened everything we do.”

Dr. Kelley has also been a consistent and reliable ally of health foundations across the Commonwealth through the PA Health Funders Collaborative. Through these types of public-private collaborations, new ideas to improve the quality and safety of the 2.3 million Medicaid members can be quickly tested, scaled, and sustained.

Even as he reflects on decades of progress, Dr. Kelley remains focused on the road ahead. Future priorities include improving Medicaid redetermination processes through community engagement and technology, advancing maternal and behavioral health services, and addressing rural health challenges.

“The work is never done,” he said. “But when we collaborate across sectors—with data, compassion, and purpose—we can move the needle toward a more just healthcare system.”

In a field often overwhelmed by complexity, Dr. Kelley stands out not only for his clarity of vision but for his deep, unwavering commitment to the people behind the policies. For him, public service is not a job, it’s a mission. And Pennsylvanians are healthier for it.

**Work in Progress**

****

(From left to right): JHF Chief Relationship Officer and Project Director (HIV/AIDS) Richard Smith, MSW; JHF Chief Program and Strategy Officer Nancy Zionts, MBA; Dr. Feinstein; and Jim Pieffer, President and CEO, Presbyterian SeniorCare Network, visited the future site of Mosaic Apartments, a 48-apartment complex in Oakland marketed to LGBTQ+ seniors with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and community support. In 2022, JHF awarded [a three-year grant](https://jhf.org/news/jewish-healthcare-foundation-approves-over-1m-in-grants-including-patient-safety-research-at-carnegie-mellon-women-s-reproductive-health-emergency-grant-fund-and-oakland-s-lgbtq-friendly-senior-housing-community) totaling $100,000 to support a service coordinator at the facility.

****

[**Are you planning to attend CES in Las Vegas in 2026?**](https://www.ces.tech/attend/registration-notification?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=announcement&utm_content=rsa&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22887033721&gclid=Cj0KCQjw_L_FBhDmARIsAItqgt70yumNI47Twlty47MrY-vPkFmnV3qVrU44OwTtgm2ZOGcB1iXEHPoaAieAEALw_wcB)

**[Let us know 🔗](https://ct2ts.share.hsforms.com/2Zc0hDjzzRyyUpNtRTLCPgg)**

# Other JHF News in August

* [Applications are open for JHF’s free, five-week virtual](https://jhf.org/projects/death-and-dying-series-for-healthcare-professionals?utm_campaign=18101008-Death%20and%20Dying%20Series%202025&utm_content=342057112&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin&hss_channel=lcp-2191808) **[2025 Death and Dying Series](https://jhf.org/projects/death-and-dying-series-for-healthcare-professionals?utm_campaign=18101008-Death%20and%20Dying%20Series%202025&utm_content=342057112&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin&hss_channel=lcp-2191808)** [(Oct. 9-Nov. 6), designed to help Pennsylvania-based professionals build confidence in end-of-life conversations 🔗](https://jhf.org/projects/death-and-dying-series-for-healthcare-professionals?utm_campaign=18101008-Death%20and%20Dying%20Series%202025&utm_content=342057112&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin&hss_channel=lcp-2191808)
* [Through the](https://nextpittsburgh.com/pittsburgh-for-all/pittsburgh-nonprofits-rally-around-immigrants-amid-ice-crackdowns/?utm_content=341867368&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin&hss_channel=lcp-2191808) **[Collaborative for Immigrant Impact](https://nextpittsburgh.com/pittsburgh-for-all/pittsburgh-nonprofits-rally-around-immigrants-amid-ice-crackdowns/?utm_content=341867368&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin&hss_channel=lcp-2191808)**[, JHF has joined nonprofits across Southwestern PA working to protect and support immigrant families 🔗](https://nextpittsburgh.com/pittsburgh-for-all/pittsburgh-nonprofits-rally-around-immigrants-amid-ice-crackdowns/?utm_content=341867368&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin&hss_channel=lcp-2191808)
* **[JHF welcomed two new staff](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jewish-healthcare-foundation_were-excited-to-officially-welcome-two-staff-activity-7366826602489339907-YrtA?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAauCn0BRZjy9uj9TKOi__x4iIhBqUv6-5Y)**[: J. Ashenayi, MPH as a program associate and Daniel Marquez as an administrative specialist. Prior to coming on as a program associate, Ashenayi was an intern at JHF supporting AIDS Free Pittsburgh. Marquez started at JHF earlier in 2025 and now has officially joined as a full-time team member 🔗](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jewish-healthcare-foundation_were-excited-to-officially-welcome-two-staff-activity-7366826602489339907-YrtA?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAauCn0BRZjy9uj9TKOi__x4iIhBqUv6-5Y)
* [The PA Long-Term Care Learning Network celebrated a milestone with 340 attendees joining a session, **the largest engagement since launching in 2022** 🔗](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jewish-healthcare-foundation_aging-caregiving-caregivers-activity-7358875527790641156-sqHn?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAauCn0BRZjy9uj9TKOi__x4iIhBqUv6-5Y)
* [JHF officially welcomed two staff: J. Ashenayi, MPH as a program associate and Daniel Marquez as an administrative specialist. Prior to coming on as a program associate, Ashenayi was an intern at JHF supporting AIDS Free Pittsburgh; and Marquez started at JHF earlier in 2025 and now has officially joined as a full-time team member 🔗](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jewish-healthcare-foundation_were-excited-to-officially-welcome-two-staff-activity-7366826602489339907-YrtA?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAauCn0BRZjy9uj9TKOi__x4iIhBqUv6-5Y)
* [The Pennsylvania Department of Aging is hosting **a free, interactive event introducing the PA Carekit** to caregivers in Pittsburgh on September 30 at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh in East Liberty 🔗](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jewish-healthcare-foundation_aging-caregiving-caregivers-activity-7358875527790641156-sqHn?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAauCn0BRZjy9uj9TKOi__x4iIhBqUv6-5Y)
* [**Anneliese Perry** has been nominated to the Shapiro Administration’s advisory committee to support the Commonwealth’s first-ever Alzheimer’s, Dementia & Related Disorders Office 🔗](https://www.pa.gov/agencies/aging/newsroom/shapiro-administration-announces-advisory-committee-to-support-adrd-office?utm_content=341625616&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin&hss_channel=lcp-2191808)