Amy Beck, MD, MPH

*Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, School of Medicine*

Dr. Beck was appointed to the UCSF faculty in 2014 and, in addition to her research, serves as the Co-Director of the Healthy Lifestyles Clinic at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital. She studies how nutrition and screen time education can prevent obesity in Latino infants. The aim of this project is to test the effect of a mobile health intervention on child sweet beverage consumption among low-income Latino children. She will develop culturally tailored videos that parents can watch during a primary care visit with a series of 24 text messages that reinforce key concepts. The intervention design capitalizes on parents’ trust in getting nutrition information from their child’s health care provider and allows parents to revisit the educational content after the clinic visit and share it with family and friends.

Dr. Beck received her BA degree Magna Cum Laude in the History of Science from Harvard College, her MD and MPH degrees from the University of Connecticut, and completed her residency and fellowship in Pediatrics at UCSF, serving as Chief Resident.

Alissa Bernstein, PhD, MPH, MA

*Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, History and Social Medicine, School of Medicine*

Dr. Bernstein is a medical anthropologist and health policy researcher who was just recently appointed to the faculty in the Department of Anthropology, History and Social Medicine. She collaborates with behavioral neurologists, neuropsychologists, primary care providers, social scientists, and health policy experts and uses social science methods to understand and address problems in the health care system with a specific focus on reducing disparities.

Her project aims to understand the experience and needs related to dementia care from the perspective of primary care physicians who work in community health and safety net settings and about the people with dementia and their care providers who receive medical care. She will use the funding to collect preliminary data to understand these experiences and needs among vulnerable populations to support future grant proposals.

Dr. Bernstein received BA and MA degrees in Cultural and Social Anthropology and Physiology from Stanford University and an MPH in Health Policy and PhD in Medical Anthropology at UC Berkeley.

Nadia Diamond-Smith, PhD, MS

*Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Medicine*

Dr. Diamond-Smith is a public health demographer with expertise in maternal and child health in the developing world, with a focus on gender inequality/women's empowerment, family planning and abortion and nutrition in the preconception and pregnancy period.

Dr. Diamond-Smith’s research has been focused in low and middle-income countries, primarily South Asia, and she explores discrimination against women across their life course and the impact on women and children’s health. This funding will allow her to extend this research to the US and give her the opportunity to explore issues and analyze data of social inequality and birth outcomes on mothers in California. Specifically, she will look at disparities in birth outcomes by race, poverty, and low body mass index (BMI), and the interplay of these factors.

Dr. Diamond-Smith received a BA degree with honors in Biology, an MSc in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and a PhD in Population, Family, and Reproductive Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Cristin Kearns, DDS, MBA

*Assistant Professor, Department of Preventive & Restorative Dental Sciences, School of Dentistry*

Dr. Kearns’s research interests stemmed from her observation that dental professionals were not routinely engaged in activities related to sugar reduction policy and the public debates about sugar-sweetened beverage taxes.

She plans to use this funding to examine facilitators and barriers to dentists’ support for sugar reduction policies for dental caries prevention. This focus in unique because it will encourage collective action to drive population-based strategies to reduce sugar intake.

Dr. Kearns received her BA degree in Neuroscience from Trinity College, a DDS degree from University of North Carolina, and an MBA in Health Administration at the University of Colorado.

Catherine Koss, MD

*Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine*

Dr. Koss conducts clinical research on HIV prevention and treatment, with a major focus on developing strategies to optimize uptake of and adherence to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) among women in the United States and East Africa. She also has an interest in adherence to treatment and virologic outcomes among pregnant and postpartum women living with HIV. She is a clinical provider in HIV and Infectious Diseases at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital.

Dr. Koss will examine preferences for long-acting HIV prevention products and care delivery among young women at risk for HIV in Kenya and Uganda and elucidate anticipated barriers to and facilitators of retention and adherence to PrEP formulations and care, including behavioral and structural drivers of product and service delivery preferences. These efforts will integrate end-user input into interventions tailored to the needs of young women in sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Koss received her AB degree with Honors in Biochemical Sciences from Harvard College and her MD degree from Northwestern University. She completed her clinical training in Infectious Disease and received advanced training in clinical research at UCSF.

Thu Nguyen, ScD, MSPH

*Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, School of Medicine*

Dr. Nguyen is an epidemiologist whose research focuses on the impact of modifiable social factors on minority health and health disparities. She uses a variety of different data sources (including Big Data) and approaches (including quantitative and qualitative research methods) to advance our understanding of social determinants of health.

Dr. Nguyen’s current research is focused on developing state and county indicators of negative sentiment towards racial/ethnic minorities by using Twitter data and examining the associations between the place-level measure of racial sentiment and adverse birth outcomes. This funding will support a new activity, using neural networks, a machine learning model, to create an area-level measure of racial bias and examine its association with adverse birth outcomes. Developing a place-level measure of racial bias will substantially advance the field and provide new opportunities to investigate the role of the social context in shaping health and health disparities.

Dr. Nguyen received BA degree with honors in Human Biology from Stanford University, an MSPH in Epidemiology at the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health, and a ScD in Social Epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Jerry John Nutor, PhD, RN, MS

*Assistant Professor, Department of Family Health Care Nursing, School of Nursing*

Dr. Nutor’s research interests are in maternal and child health in developing countries with a focus on HIV/AIDS and the social determinants of health. He also provides direct care to patients.

Research has shown that the majority of HIV+ mothers in sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia stop using antiretroviral treatment after childbirth. Dr. Nutor plans to study the barriers and facilitators related to postpartum retention in HIV care among HIV+ mothers in Uganda where 80% of HIV+ pregnant women are enrolled in HIV care but that drops to 21% six months after childbirth. He hopes to better understand the individual and environmental factors that affect retention in HIV care and design effective interventions that will improve postpartum adherence and retention.

Dr. Nutor received his BSc in Nursing Science at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, his MS in Nursing Science and Healthcare Leadership from UC Davis, and his PhD in Nursing Science from Drexel University.

David Pennington, PhD

*Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine*

Dr. Pennington is building a clinical research program that aims to leverage cognitive neuroscience to develop more efficacious digital health interventions for understudied populations that suffer from alcohol and substance use disorders. He is conducting formative work to enhance treatment engagement and care for rural Native American Veterans with Alcohol Use Disorder.

This project will specifically support Dr. Pennington’s effort to coordinate communication and collect consumer and provider information from the Veteran Outreach Program, the Hoopa Valley Tribal Council’s K’ima:w Medical Center, and heavy drinking Native American Veterans living on rural Hoopa Valley Tribal lands. This data collected during surveys and focus groups will contribute to the development of an alcohol self-monitoring app.

Dr. Pennington received a BS in Psychology and Sociology at Western New Mexico University and a MS and PhD from Palo Alto University. He continued his training in substance abuse treatment at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Judy Tan, PhD

*Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine*

Dr. Tan is a behavioural and prevention scientist trained in social and health psychological theory, quantitative research methods, and intervention development. Her research combines theory-building and quantitative and qualitative methods to explain causal processes of health and to develop novel interventions to reduce health disparities, particularly those among sexual and gender minority people of color.

Dr. Tan will leverage an established cohort of sexual and gender minorities to investigate associations between social climate, minority stress, and stress (cortisol levels in hair), as well as adherence to pre-exposure prophylaxis and antiretroviral therapy, and to test whether minority stress is a factor in associations between social climate and the biological outcomes.

Dr. Tan received her BA at Mt. Holyoke College and her MA and PhD at the University of Connecticut, all in Psychology.

Crystal Zhou, PharmD

*Assistant Professor, Department of Clinical Pharmacy, School of Pharmacy*

There is a well-established gap in hypertension control in the African American population. The Cut Hypertension Program currently supports partnerships with barbershops in Los Angeles and the Bay Area to provide health coach training and screening events in collaboration with the business owners.

Dr. Zhou plans to pilot an expanded scope of services in these barbershops adding barber health coaching, automatic blood pressure kiosks, and treatment by clinical pharmacists on-site and through virtual algorithms. If increases in hypertension control occur, she hopes to expand this model to other barbershops in other communities and potentially to other chronic health conditions.

Dr. Zhou received her BA in Biochemistry from Case Western Reserve University and her PharmD from UC San Diego. She completed clinical training at UCSF and University of Washington.