CONNECTING THE DOTS

2019 Annual Report

THE INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATIVE HEALTH
Looking out of our hotel window on our first morning in Chile last October, we saw scenes of uprising and protest throughout the capital city. We had travelled to South America for the 2019 Cochrane Colloquium, hosted by the global organization at the pinnacle of evidence-based medicine. The theme of this event — Embracing Diversity — played out in more ways than we expected.

Organizers had promoted the ways in which Chile itself exemplifies extraordinary diversity — landscapes that range from high desert to impenetrable wilderness; people who include the indigenous Mapuche and Quechua, and the descendants of immigrants from Europe and Asia. But the unrest we witnessed in the streets of Santiago spoke to a different kind of diversity: social injustice and increasing inequities within a society — particularly in its health and education systems — and unacceptably poor living conditions for many. These factors and others, including the degradation of the environment for narrow economic gain, have echoed vehemently in protests around the world, including in Hong Kong, Iran, and our own hometown of Baltimore.

As the protests in Santiago intensified and spread across the country, organizers of the Cochrane Colloquium cancelled the event. That decision and the grounding of much air travel due to the unrest offered us unexpected opportunities to encounter people and gain insights that we never would have found in conference lecture halls, and that resonate profoundly with our work in integrative health.

In this report, and in so many of the Institute’s recent efforts, we try to shine a light on the spectrum of factors that deeply affect our health, and on the need to engage locally in conversation and action for change. Early in the year, at our Winter Scholars and Fellows meeting, for example, we hosted an evening symposium on Consequential Public Health at which eminent leaders from across disciplines discussed 10 factors that have the greatest impact on our health, from gun violence to food access — and not one was directly related to medical care. The Institute is also looking at bold new approaches to wellness. Consider just a few. Our researchers — Fellows such as Heidi Gullet and Visiting Visionaries such as Rebecca Etz — are responding to the United States’s fragmented health system by articulating a novel vision for the importance of primary care, asking what role it can and should play in integrating the diverse needs of individuals and how it can serve as a force for social equity. Our Culinary Health and Medicine program is imparting new skills to health professionals and community members alike through hands-on teaching about flavorful, healthy eating (often in our wonderful new teaching kitchen!). And our Vet Arts Connect program is considering how art and nature can nurture resilience and self-care.

A few weeks after the Colloquium in Chile was cancelled, organizers and participants from a diverse, global community had to turn to virtual meetings to cover some of the content and explore some of the themes that had been planned. We had no idea how prescient this approach would soon seem. In the midst of protests and pandemics, we feel the urgency of our work more deeply. Indeed, it may never be so important as when events expose the disparities in our society and further reveal the broad range of factors affecting our health and wellness.

We are, as ever, deeply grateful to the many people and organizations that partner with us. Thank you for continuing to support this vital work.

To your good health!
The Questions We’re Asking

- What programs and policies will make the greatest positive impact on the health of communities and reduce inequalities?
- How can Black women’s historical and spiritual connection to the land and experiences with nature bring forth holistic healing?
- How do we increase awareness among policy makers and voters about the powerful connections between social policies and health?
- How can we incorporate nature as a healing experience?
- What is primary care’s role in building social capital to a patient’s movement out of poverty?
- What elements of artwork in health care settings enhance patients’ well-being?
- What are the best strategies for reducing stress in order to improve health?
- How can clinical research generate better evidence and informed choices about health?
- What factors — such as nutrition, exercise, and mental stimulation — are most influential in healthy aging?
- What conditions enable a healing response and how?

THE IMPORTANT THING IS NOT TO STOP QUESTIONING.
Curiosity has its own reason for existing.
It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day.”
— Albert Einstein
At the Institute, we thrive on questions.

The kinds of questions that draw in physicians, researchers, policymakers, community activists, teachers, and students to wrestle with novel ideas and launch creative explorations. The kinds of questions that spark conversations and make us think differently about wellness. The kinds of questions that connect the dots in new ways and lead us to better understand how health is shaped by so much more than medical care.

In February, our Winter Scholars & Fellows Meeting included an *evening symposium on Consequential Public Health* that featured Dr. Sandro Galea, dean of Boston University’s School of Public Health, who framed just these kinds of questions. He talked about how medicine and medical treatments alone will never be enough, how a person’s health emerges as the cumulative effect of their life course, and how power, politics, and money are inextricably linked to health. “We need to have the humility to recognize that our lens on what produces health really matters,” he said. Other speakers — Senator Barbara Mikulski, the longest serving woman in the history of the U.S. Congress; and Dr. Jay Perman, then-president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore — echoed and affirmed his challenges for our society to do more to fundamentally change our approach to health care.
We also hosted a powerful conversation on the public health approach to reducing violence in places like Baltimore, with ideas and data spilling forth from experts, advocates, and our own Institute Scholars and Fellows. Inspired by the passion of organizers behind successful efforts such as Baltimore Ceasefire and Safe Streets Baltimore, one of our scholars asked about the driving force.

“Love,” said Dante Barksdale, outreach coordinator for Safe Streets. “It’s really about just loving and being around them and talking, and just letting them be in your space because eventually they start figuring it out.”

The Well-Being Project

At places such as Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, building on our SpiceMyPlate work to encourage healthy eating among students, the Well-Being Project has been exploring how to introduce practical mind-body techniques such as breath-work and meditation in school settings to promote stress management and wellness.

In 2019, a dynamic engagement process, the dedication of champions within the school, and the commitment of important influencers and school leaders were all keys to success as we brought mind-body practices into faculty and staff meetings and select student clubs. Even in a busy school, the demand for an intentional focus on activities that promote well-being, stress reduction, and mental resilience is high among students and staff — and we are encouraged by the conversations ignited by these activities.
Even those who understand that health is about far more than the absence of disease may struggle to envision another approach that promotes wellness and closes the gaps in our systems.

Our scholars and fellows, however, are helping to illuminate other options and opportunities, with a key focus on the U.S. primary care system — a crucial and largely under valued aspect of health care today.

Our inaugural Visiting Visionary, Rebecca S. Etz, PhD, who joined the Institute in 2019, is focused on the fragmentation in the current primary care system, which overemphasizes precedent and short-term problem solving. She sees the potential for primary care to be a force for integration across U.S. health care, and has focused her work on three strategies: rediscovering and highlighting the philosophical foundations that enable whole-person care; meeting with leaders across primary care practice, research, policy, and education to understand what they want — and want to remove — from primary care today; and articulating a new vision that will deliver on the promise of primary care at a time when our country seems ready to improve our system and experiment with new options.

Meanwhile, Heidi Gullett, MD, MPH, who was named an Institute Fellow in 2019, is looking more specifically at the role of primary care in supporting a patient’s move out of poverty — one of the most recalcitrant determinants of health. Specifically, she is building on previous research to understand how primary care helps forge personal ties that bridge economic classes or social divides, creating the kind of social capital that can be critical to helping people find stronger economic footing. This research has the potential to redesign the role of primary care as a key force for integration in the U.S. health system.
Fellows Carley Riley, MD, MPH, MPP and Brita Roy, MD, MPH, MHS are looking at the well-being of people across the U.S. Through four studies launched in 2019, they will estimate average adult well-being scores nationally, and by region, state, and county; estimate differences by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status; consider well-being by gender, education, marital status, and occupation; and develop a measure of inequality in well-being that can be used across the country. This project will give health care providers and systems, public health organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders a clearer understanding of the true health of our nation.

We are delighted to welcome these new pioneers into our Institute family, which now includes twelve scholars, eight fellows, and our first visiting visionary. Together, they will enhance the multi-disciplinary exchange of knowledge and ideas within this innovative research network.

“Poverty remains a determinant of health that is hard to displace. Making it more difficult are the layers of inequities involving race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and religion. As a family and public health physician, I am interested in examining ways that primary care can serve as a bridge to support people’s effort to transition out of poverty, as well as testing new paradigms to transform health care into a more integrated, equitable system.”

— Heidi Gullett, MD, MPH
The Culinary Health and Medicine Program (CHMP), launched in 2019, is a powerful new strategy that seeks to harness and understand the connections between food and optimal health.

“Nothing can replace a hands-on experience preparing fresh, healthy foods to get students interested in nutrition. I think that every medical student should have a similar experience!”

Between August and December, we welcomed more than 125 first- and second-year students from the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) into our newly expanded teaching kitchen for a credit-granting course in culinary medicine. The program provided teaching and cooking classes to future physicians, deepening their knowledge about clinical nutrition, how it affects chronic diseases, and how it can help treat health conditions, as well as how cooking can inspire patients to make healthy nutrition changes. Through post-event surveys, 87% of participants said they would use the information in their own lives, while 80% affirmed the course would help them offer practical nutrition advice to future patients. In 2019, based on the success of this effort, UMSOM added culinary medicine as a required course for those earning a medical degree — making it the first medical school in the country to do so. Future efforts will extend the opportunity to interprofessional cohorts, and establish a program that allows health care providers to refer patients to clinical cooking classes focused on their chronic diseases, broadening the reach of this important work.

In March, our first intensive nutrition education offering brought the founder of Google's Global Teaching Kitchen Programs, the esteemed Chef Liv Wu, to our facility for Kitchen Jazz, a one-of-a-kind professional development opportunity for our staff. The four-day event highlighted gastronomy and culinary skills, nutritional science and improvised cognitive and artistic expression to create healthful and flavorful meals — and we have incorporated Chef Wu's creative approach into various culinary programs.
CHMP has also built on the successes of our community programs, including Five Times a Feast and Mission Thrive Summer (MTS), which found a host of different expressions in 2019.

MTS crew members, for example, taught youth at the Greenmount West Community Center using our SpiceMyPlate curriculum, developed creative health-focused games for young children, and helped prepare more than 2,000 meals for Moveable Feast, a local organization that serves people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic diseases.

The Institute continued to provide training in other communities through our Five Times a Feast program, including at the National Pike Health Center, a community-based outpatient mental health clinic and psychiatric rehabilitation program, which now hopes to bring the training to its three Baltimore City clinics. Future directions include publishing the results of our SpiceMyPlate outcomes research.

“That summer was one of the hardest for me, and Mission Thrive Summer helped to make it so much easier. I really want to come back.”
Better Caring for Veterans Through Art & Nature

Artists who served in the military were showcased in the exhibit **Sticks & Stones: Behavioral Health and Veterans Art Show**. Four veterans shared their histories and artistry in an effort to overcome the stigma of trauma related to substance abuse and mental health. The exhibit was a joint initiative of the **Institute**, our **Vet Arts Connect** initiative, and the **New Day Campaign**, with curation by J.W. Rone and Peter Bruun.

Military service members returning to their communities often struggle to become whole again in the wake of debilitating injuries, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. Our **Vet Arts Connect** initiative reduces the burden of traumatic military injuries and supports the well-being of Maryland military veterans by advancing opportunities for them to experience nature and the creative arts. This work has helped ease symptoms such as sleeplessness, stress, and depression. In 2019, we worked with community organizations, individuals, and governmental agencies to increase the program’s reach across Maryland and beyond. Our services and events reached approximately 150 veterans, also touching their families and friends.

To further this work, the Institute developed a 15-hour Veteran/Military Cultural Awareness training program for individuals and organizations who desire to offer these opportunities to veterans and active-duty military personnel in their communities. The training is specifically designed to provide community artists, instructors, and programs the tools and skills they need to develop and offer cultural awareness programming.
Like nature, art and creative expression can be powerful forces for health — supporting healing and promoting solace and empathy. Whether creating or experiencing, art can help restore our sense of well-being. In 2019, we maintained our deep commitment to using the force of both nature and art to bring healing and spark restorative inspiration.

Forging Partnerships to Equip Arts Instructors

The Institute continued to partner with other organizations to promote new ways of using the arts to sustain health. We joined with the Maryland State Arts Council and the Maryland State Department of Education to create the Veteran-Ready Community Arts Micro-Credential course. This concise training opportunity offers a range of competency-based courses to teachers, community members, and artists to help them offer instruction in the creative arts to veterans.

Exploring the Role of Nature in Health

What is the relationship between women and nature and how can it foster health for all — people, animals, plants — amid a time of environmental change? That is the focus of Sara L. Warber, MD, of the University of Michigan School of Medicine, a new TIIH Scholar. Partnering with an interdisciplinary women’s collaborative of academics, arts professionals, and forest therapists, she is working to inspire others to imagine anew our human ways of living and develop a template for transformative action to support an expanded view of health that includes both humans and the environment.

“Our findings suggest that something as simple as joining an outdoor walking group may not only improve someone’s daily positive emotions but may also contribute a non-pharmacological approach to serious conditions like depression.” — Sara L. Warber, MD
2019 Timeline

JANUARY 2019

“How are You Healing?,” a multimedia exhibit by Institute Scholar Paul Dieppe, is featured at the University of Lapland in Finland — using drawings, sounds, quotes, and other expressions that consider the question, “What does healing mean to you?”

The Institute hosts a mini-symposium for Johns Hopkins University undergrads: “What Can I Do with a Public Health Career?”

The Summer Scholars & Fellows meeting focused on the health impact of light, art, movement, and nature, including a forest bathing experience in Baltimore’s Mount Washington Arboretum.

Institute Fellow Jeffrey Greeson, PhD, publishes “Mindfulness and Physical Disease: A Concise Review” in Current Opinion in Psychology.

AUGUST 2019

With the Cooking Coach Team at Sisters Together and Reaching (STAR), Five Times a Feast hosts community-based courses, expanding knowledge of healthy cooking practices and techniques.

The Institute welcomes its inaugural Visiting Visionary Rebecca Etz, PhD, of Virginia Commonwealth University, expanding innovative thinking on the future of primary care.

SEPTEMBER 2019

“Issue,” an empathetic art exhibit led by Institute Scholar Judy Rollins, PhD, RN, moves to Children’s National Medical Center Hospital as part of a nine-month tour of the Washington, D.C., area, with artists and clinicians exploring whether artistic interpretations of young patients could help them feel understood.

Mission Thrive Summer engages Baltimore City high school students in urban farming, cooking, fitness, mindfulness, and leadership training.

FEBRUARY 2019

The Winter Scholars and Fellows meeting features a symposium with Sandro Galea, MD, former Univ. of Maryland, Baltimore President Jay Perman, and former U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski on the urgent need to reorient epidemiology and public health to make a difference in health outcomes.

Dr. Brian Berman leads a panel discussion focused on “Translating the Fundamental Science of Acupuncture into Clinical Practice” for cancer patients, hosted by the National Cancer Institute and National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health.

JULY 2019

The 2019 SHIFT Awards honor the Institute’s Green Road initiative, recognizing the ways the two-acre site preserves and restores the natural environment while facilitating psycho-social-spiritual healing for wounded warriors and their caregivers at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

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“Being Heard,” an empathetic art exhibit led by Institute Scholar Judy Rollins, PhD, RN, moves to Children’s National Medical Center Hospital as part of a nine-month tour of the Washington, D.C., area, with artists and clinicians exploring whether artistic interpretations of young patients could help them feel understood.

Mission Thrive Summer engages Baltimore City high school students in urban farming, cooking, fitness, mindfulness, and leadership training.
The Culinary Health and Medicine program hosts the last of its 2019 cohorts for 125 first- and second-year medical students from the University of Maryland for an experiential course on nutrition and healthy cooking; the course breaks ground as the first of its kind to be part of the required curriculum at a U.S. medical school.

Dr. Brian Berman is an invited panelist at a National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health conference focused on “Implementation and De-implementation of Complementary and Integrative Health Approaches.”
Support and Other Revenues

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Expenses

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Expenses by Category

- Scholars/Fellows/Visiting Visionaries: 30%
- Community Programs: 13%
- Development: 11%
- Leadership/Administration: 11%
- Integrated Clinical Programs: 7%
- Educational Programs/Forums: 16%
- Green Road and Vet Arts Connect: 12%

Our Supporters

The Institute is deeply grateful to the many people and organizations who make our work possible. To your good health!

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- Mental Insight Foundation

**$100,000-50,000**
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