Our Impact in Health Policy

Research by **Christina Roberto, PhD,** on Philadelphia's "soda tax" demonstrated that after one year of its implementation, taxed beverage purchases dropped by 38%. This study **provided evidence that taxing sugar-sweetened beverages is one of the most effective policy strategies to reduce the purchase of these unhealthy drinks.**

Research by **Atheendar Venkataramani, MD, PhD,** demonstrated **the spillover mental health consequences of police killings of unarmed Black Americans.** These findings informed historic statements by the American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, American College of Physicians, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which identified police violence – and structural racism more generally – as a critical public health issue. Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Ayanna Pressley cited this research in a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Since 2017, **Amol Navathe, MD, PhD,** has provided guidance and conducted research to inform the **roll-out of a new HMSA (Blue Cross Blue Shield of Hawaii) provider payment initiative that shifted primary care provider payment from a fee-for-service model to a new value-based framework.** This payment model, which incentivizes providers for both efficiency and effectiveness, has now been implemented throughout most of the state of Hawaii.

After a pilot study led by **Kevin Volpp, MD, PhD,** indicated that incentives can double smoking cessation program enrollment, Volpp's team conducted three trials that demonstrated a **tripling of smoking cessation rates in General Electric employees, CVS employees, and members of 54 other employers.** This led to benefit design changes at GE and CVS and **contributed to 44% of large employers now using incentives for smoking cessation.**

Harsha Thirumurthy, PhD, and **Alison Buttenheim, PhD, MBA,** who has a secondary appointment in the Department, received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to **establish a first-of-its-kind nudge unit focused on HIV prevention in South Africa.** In partnership with the University of Witwatersrand's Health Economics and Epidemiology Research Office (HE^{2}RO), Drs. Thirumurthy and Buttenheim launched Indlela: Behavioural Insights for Better Health.

Norma B. Coe, PhD, leads The Policy and Economics of Disability, Aging, and Long Term Care (PEDAL) Lab, which studies issues centered around aging and disability, including insurance design, health care, long-term care, end-of-life care, and Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias, and **to provide policymakers the evidence-base to improve care for older adults and reduce spending.**
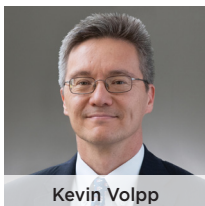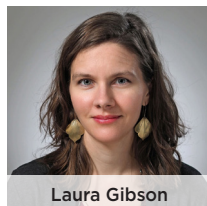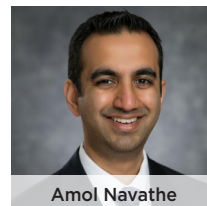

Kevin Volpp
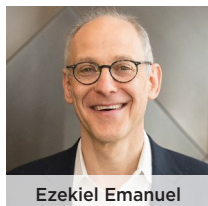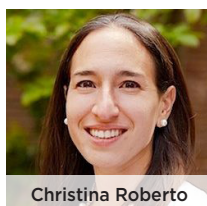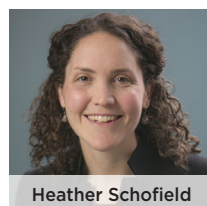

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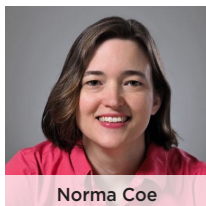
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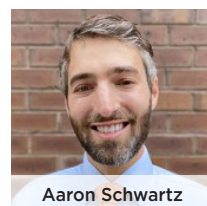

Laura Gibson

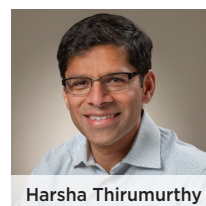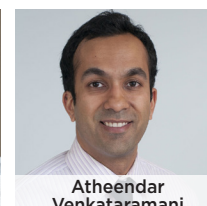Amol Navathe

Ravi Parikh

Christina Roberto

Heather Schofield

Aaron Schwartz

Harsha Thirumurthy

Atheendar Venkataramani