

Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch (HCIRB)

cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/hcirb

Mission

The mission of HCIRB is to advance research on the processes and effects of communication and informatics across the [cancer control continuum](#).

HCIRB supports research on patient-centered communication, the impact of technology on health communication, equity in communication, and the acceleration and translation of health communication research into public health and clinical practice. The branch also engages in surveillance research regarding the public's use of cancer-related information in a changing health communication environment.

Scientific Priority Areas



Behavioral Informatics

- Digital technology use by – and data generated from – consumers, patients, caregivers, providers, public health organizations, and health care systems
- Improved care and cancer-related outcomes through use of electronic health records and patient portals, patient-generated data, and telehealth services



Health Disparities and Health Literacy

- Identification of factors that contribute to inequitable access, use, and benefit from health information and the subsequent effects on health disparities
- Interventions to narrow the digital divide, address limited health literacy, and improve health equity



Media Effects

- Effect of media and the health communication ecosystem on individual-level knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and population-level norms and trends
- Communication about and implementation of guidelines and policies related to cancer prevention and control



Social Media and Technology-Mediated Communication

- Analyses of user-generated social media content using innovative approaches (e.g., Natural Language Processing, network analysis) to examine health-related attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors
- Interventions using social media platforms and rapid, iterative approaches
- Research to better understand and mitigate risks of online health and science misinformation



Public Health Communication Environment

- Multilevel communication approaches to address cancer control topics such as vaccination, tobacco use, diet and physical activity, genetic testing, and decision-making about treatment and survivorship care
- Integration of socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, and policy factors into health message design, evaluation, and dissemination

Resources and Initiatives

Health Information National Trends Survey

hints.cancer.gov

HINTS is a nationally representative survey designed to monitor changes in the rapidly evolving health communication environment and collect data regarding public need for, access to, and use of health information.



Advancing Health Communication Science and Practice

commonfund.nih.gov/healthcommresearch

This NIH Common Fund program will investigate, develop, test, and share new approaches for effective and equitable health communication.

Selected Funding Opportunities

Title	Contact	Expires
Exploratory Grants in Cancer Control PAR-21-341 (R21 Clinical Trial Optional)	Tanya Agurs-Collins tanya.agurs-collins@nih.gov Mukesh Verma vermam@mail.nih.gov	October 9, 2024
Innovative Approaches to Studying Cancer Communication in the New Information Ecosystem PAR-22-164 , PAR-22-165 (R01/R21 Clinical Trial Optional)	Kelly Blake kelly.blake@nih.gov	September 8, 2025
Modular R01s in Cancer Control and Population Sciences PAR-21-190 (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)	Scott Rogers rogerssc@mail.nih.gov	March 8, 2024
Leveraging Health Information Technology (Health IT) to Address and Reduce Health Care Disparities PAR-22-145 (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)	Heather D'Angelo heather.dangelo@nih.gov	May 8, 2025
Patient-Clinician Relationship: Improving Health Outcomes in Populations that Experience Health Care Disparities PAR-22-064 (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)	Amanda Acevedo amanda.acevedo@nih.gov Sallie Weaver sallie.weaver@nih.gov	January 8, 2025
Telehealth in Cancer Care NOT-CA-21-043	Kelly Blake kelly.blake@nih.gov Gurvaneet Randhawa gurvaneet.randhawa@nih.gov	March 8, 2024

Find a complete list of BRP funding opportunities at cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brpfunding.

View sample grant applications at cancercontrol.cancer.gov/samplegrants.

Learn about our HCIRB-funded grantees at cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brpgrantees.

Recent Priority Publications

Vanderpool RC, Gaysynsky A, Chou WS, Tonorezos ES. [Using Behavioral Science to Address COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy among Cancer Survivors: Communication Strategies and Research Opportunities](#). *J Behav Med*. 2022 March 19;1-11. doi:10.1007/s10865-022-00304-7.

Blake KD, Gaysynsky A, Mayne RG, et al. [U.S. public opinion toward policy restrictions to limit tobacco product placement and advertising at point-of-sale and on social media](#). *Prev Med*. 2022 Feb;155:106930. doi: 10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106930.

Lama Y, Davidoff A, Vanderpool RC, Jensen RE. [Telehealth Availability and Use of Related Technologies among Medicare-enrolled Cancer Survivors: Cross-sectional Findings from the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). *J Med Internet Res*. 2022 Jan 25;24(1). doi:10.2196/34616.

HCIRB Team



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Social media, health misinformation, palliative care, goals of care communication, and mixed methods research



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Patient-provider communication, social media, social support, trust in health information, and digital health



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[Katie Heley, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#), [George Kueppers, Ph.D.](#), [Abigail Muro, B.S.](#), and [Jacob Rohde, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#) are fellows in the branch. [Amanda Acevedo, Ph.D.](#), [Wendy Nelson, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#), [April Oh, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#), [Maria Roditis, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#), and [Cynthia Vinson, Ph.D., M.P.A.](#) have secondary appointments in the branch.

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