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The Michelle and Larry Goodman, MD, Professor
of Health Equity



Advancement of Health Equity

In 2025, my work as an endowed professor centered on advancing father-inclusive approaches to maternal and child health, growing team-science scholarship, and strengthening equity-focused education and community engagement. Building on my prior foundation, I led design-driven, community-based activities that elevated the role of fathers in prenatal care; expanded the Health Equity Anti-Racism Training, or HEAT, Initiative and Health Equity Teaching Series; and mentored doctoral students and early career faculty whose scholarship contributed to eight publications in calendar year 2025, along with multiple podium and invited presentations. These efforts collectively advance Rush's mission to improve health and eliminate inequities by pairing rigorous research with practical, community-anchored solutions.

Endowment support was pivotal in sustaining key collaborations and execution capacity. Specifically, funds enabled continued partnership with **Santosh Basapur, PhD**, during a challenging funding climate, preserving critical design-thinking and human-centered research activities focused on Black maternal health and father engagement. Resources also covered targeted administrative assistance for community outreach, education and scholarly coordination — support that allowed me to maintain momentum across research, dissemination and mentoring while meeting time-sensitive opportunities.

External Funding Catalyzed by Endowment-Supported Activities

Endowment-enabled work directly informed 2025 proposal and award activities. We prepared and submitted a competitive federal grant application in July 2025 (Administration for Children and Families' Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood grants); advanced a proposal to the Robert



Wood Johnson Foundation Exploring Equitable Futures Initiative (Men Of Color Eradicating Maternal Health Adversities, or MOCHA); advanced a pilot study, currently under Institutional Review Board evaluation (Fathers First: Prebiotics Balance Study); and submitted a National Institute of Nursing Research R21 grant application focused on the microbiota-gut-brain axis and mental health outcomes among African American non-resident fathers. The year 2025 saw the close-out of an Administration for Children and Families-funded five-year study in my portfolio (Father-Inclusive Prenatal Care). The four-year Genentech Foundation Innovation Fund project (Health Equity Anti-Racism Training) continued in 2025 and has benefited from the administrative continuity the endowment provides.

Education, Mentorship and Community Engagement Highlights

In 2025, I accomplished the following milestones:

- Implemented and scaled Transforming Health Sciences Education Through Health Equity, Anti-Racist Training, with two five-part workshop series supporting faculty adoption of anti-racist pedagogy
- Collaborated with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion on a series of faculty workshops supporting the adoption of equity-focused pedagogy
- Advised six doctoral students (one successfully completed their doctoral studies) and mentored three faculty members. Collaboration with students and mentees resulted in eight peer-reviewed publications
- Provided ongoing co-mentorship on K- and L-series awards supporting early-stage investigators in technology-enabled youth mental health and maternal-child health
- Co-produced community-facing dissemination events (podcasts and design studios), elevating father-inclusive solutions for Black Maternal Health
- Continued service and leadership in community and policy arenas, including by serving as vice chair/board member of PCC Community Wellness Center and accepting appointment to the Illinois Task Force on Infant and Maternal Mortality Among African Americans, or IMMT, Community Engagement Subcommittee



Selected Scholarly and Professional Achievements

- Published a commentary (ahead of print), Julion & Basapur (2025). “From the Margins to the Center: Black Fathers as Change Agents in Maternal Health,” in the *Journal of Perinatal & Neonatal Nursing*
- Delivered an oral presentation at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Maternal & Child Health Division, “Enhancing affirmative and informed paternal involvement in maternal and child health advocacy,” Washington, D.C., Nov. 5, 2025.

The Year Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

In the year ahead, we will:

- Advance father-inclusive maternal health research by executing MOCHA design studios and mixed methods inquiry, developing a Father Advisory Toolkit, and integrating findings from the Administration for Children and Families prenatal care trial to accelerate implementation
- Strengthen anti-racist education by expanding HEAT workshop reach and evaluation beyond Rush to sustain and disseminate anti-racist competencies across curricula, clinical training and faculty development
- Grow external funding and team science through submission of the Community-Partnered Nursing Research Centers of Excellence Mechanism to build nurse investigator capacity to conduct community-engaged research
- Mentor trainees toward practice-embedded student learning activities, PhD completion and independent awards
- Deepen community partnerships through co-created dissemination with community boards (e.g., PCC Community Wellness Center), aligning scholarship with measurable community outcomes

With Gratitude

I am deeply grateful for the generosity that underwrites this endowed professorship. Your investment catalyzes the science, education and community engagement needed to protect mothers and infants — and to elevate fathers as essential partners in health. With your support, we are translating equity-centered ideas into programs, policies, and outcomes that change lives across Chicago and beyond.