



CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY

# Institute for Population Health

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*Impact Report July 2024-June 2025*



## A Message from Scott Shipman, MD, MPH

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As most of us know, and many have experienced, healthcare costs in the U.S. are extreme and continue to rise, creating an unsustainable trend. Employers increasingly strain to cover healthcare insurance costs for their employees, leading to less opportunity for salary growth and rising out of pocket healthcare costs for employees and families. States are faced with an increased burden of healthcare costs, diverting money from other priority areas, including education and infrastructure, while also driving cutbacks in coverage for needed healthcare services for those with limited resources. Alongside these trends, a growing prevalence of social needs, including food, housing and transportation, has profound implications for health and well-being.

Despite spending more than any other country on healthcare, the U.S. ranks 32nd out of 38 comparable economically advanced and wealthy OECD countries in life expectancy, with life expectancy four years lower than the OECD average. We don't get what we pay for. Without a significant transformation in the systems and policies that impact health, there is a high risk that we will continue in an inexorable downward spiral.

The Creighton Institute for Population Health is a catalyst for the innovations needed to enable better health for all. It is a tall task to expand access to more effective and less wasteful healthcare, to advance evidence-based and effective health and social policies and to promote health equity for all in our communities—but the IPH is ready for the challenges, and bold in its commitments.

Still, the massive challenges in front of us require a dose of humility, and a recognition that solving complex problems requires the inputs and insights of those with a wide range of experience and expertise. At the IPH, we place a premium on authentic partnerships and recognize the value of convening leaders from diverse sectors to understand and address common priorities to promote health and health equity, especially focused on those communities with the greatest unwarranted variations in health.

On behalf of the entire IPH team, we welcome your interest in our work. We invite you to join us in a commitment to making an impact today to create a future where everyone can lead their healthiest lives.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Shipman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**SCOTT SHIPMAN, MD, MPH**

Executive Director of the Institute for Population Health  
CynHealth Endowed Professor in Population Health

# Who We Are

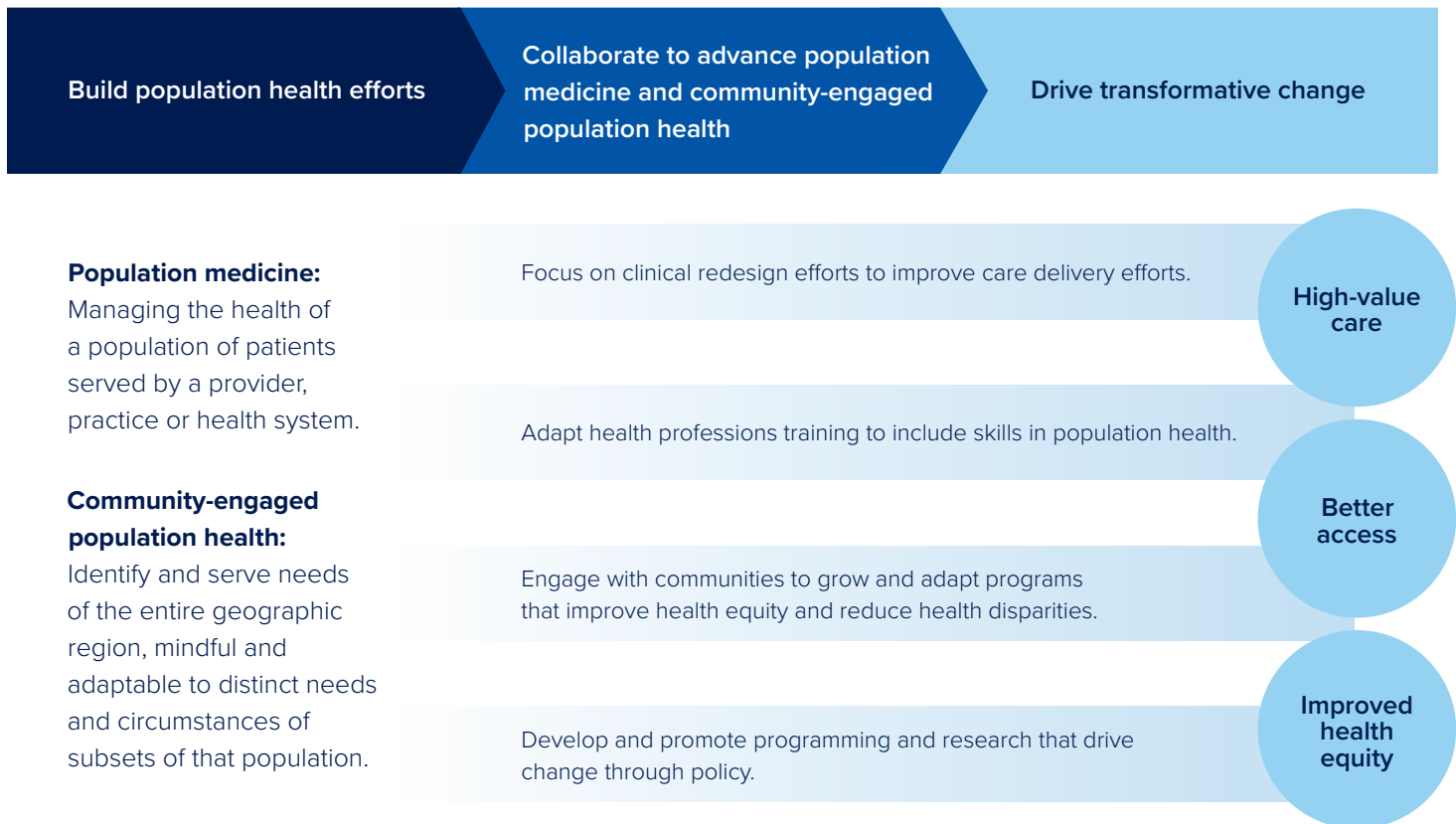
## A Collaborative Approach to Improving the Health of All

Established in October 2023, the Institute for Population Health embodies Creighton’s commitment to service and social justice and the Jesuit mission to seek a more just world. The University-wide institute works to strengthen Creighton’s campus, clinical and community partnerships to ultimately improve health equity, access to care and high-value care. This population approach is intentionally collaborative across sectors—health systems, local government, community, academia, public health, businesses and more—so that together we identify distinct local needs of populations and then design and implement strategies and policies that achieve better health outcomes.

## What is Population Health?

Population health has been defined as “health outcomes of a group of individuals, including the distribution of such outcomes within the group” (Kindig). Here at Creighton, we approach population health through population medicine and community—engaged population health efforts—both of which work to improve health equity, access to care and high-value care.

## A Framework for Population Health at Creighton



## Building our Programmatic Pillars

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### Education and Training

Expand educational opportunities for faculty, staff, students and the community to improve population health for all, both locally and nationally.



### Policy and Advocacy

Inform advocacy efforts and policy through evidence synthesis and data analysis, particularly policies impacting social determinants of health, access to care and the healthcare workforce.



### Research and Evaluation

Develop and promote research that drives change in our communities through program implementation, policy and clinical innovation.



### Community Engagement

Be a valued partner to community organizations in Omaha, Phoenix and rural communities through service and support that grows, adapts and sustains programs that reduce health disparities.



### Clinical Transformation

Facilitate successful clinical redesign initiatives through implementation support and impact evaluation, building a shared commitment to equity in access, quality and outcomes of care.

## IPH Engagement By the Numbers

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# 370

students participating in IPH activities and experiences

# 200+

faculty across Creighton contributing to IPH programs

**9 IPH-funded grants** working to improve the health of our communities through faculty-led projects based in the community and/or healthcare setting.

**7 implementation and impact assessments** being conducted for community and health system partners.

**>\$4 million** secured through awarded contracts, grants and gifts since Oct 2023 launch.

# Engaging our Campus Community

## The President's Fund in Population Health

The President's Fund in Population Health program supports faculty-led efforts to improve health and well-being of communities. In the past year, nine projects have been funded across two cohorts, spanning Creighton's schools and colleges in Omaha and Phoenix. Teams are guided to apply implementation science methods to their work, aiming to build towards effective, impactful and sustainable interventions.

### 2024-2025 Projects:

- Creighton Community Connecting Children, Youth and Families to a Hope-Filled and Housed Future at the Stephen Center
- Fostering Health Equity through a Community-Based Advanced Care Planning Clinic
- Life Together: Seeking What Makes Us Whole
- Listening and Learning: Informing Hospitals' Response Based on the Experiences of North and South Omaha Residents
- Meeting Patients Where They Are: A Street Psychiatry Initiative & Mental Health Needs Assessment with Omaha's Unhoused Community

### 2025-2026 Projects:

- AI-Enhanced Refugee Health: Smarter Solutions for Wellness
- Assessing the Needs of the Unhoused Populations Served by St. Vincent de Paul in Phoenix
- Empowering Vulnerable and Unhoused Youth for Positive Change through Cross-Sector Collaboration
- Understanding and Addressing the Needs of Youth and Families at the Stephen Center



Scan the QR code or visit [creighton.edu/iph-fund](https://creighton.edu/iph-fund) to learn more about the Institute's past and future projects.



*"The funding of our Advance Care Planning project has made it possible for us to explore interprofessional connections across the university, and in our communities, so that ultimately, we can prepare a workforce that is ready to help families have the hard but necessary conversations about their future care.*

*We hope that our project will build meaningful dialogue around some of life's hardest moments and ensure our community members feel heard and respected."*

**Jennifer Jessen, EdD, RN, CNOR**

*Associate Professor, College of Nursing*



*"The Population Health Grant was a lifeline for children and families experiencing homelessness in South Omaha. It empowered Creighton to extend its mission and bring meaningful impact to our community's most vulnerable population."*

**Kylie Widhelm, OTD, OTR/L, BCPR**

*Assistant Professor, Occupational Therapy*

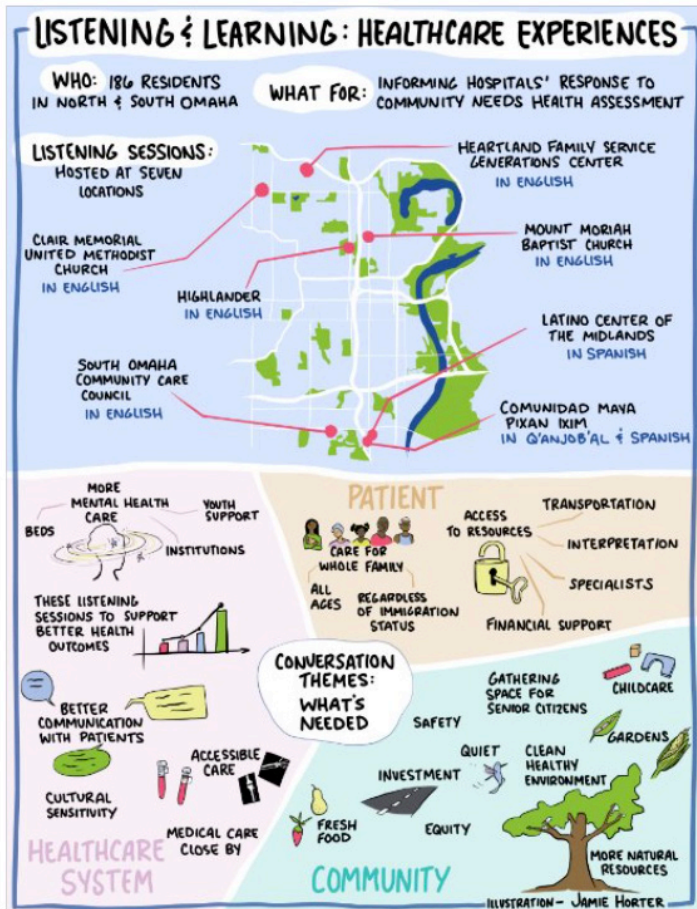


“The IPH President’s Fund grant allowed CHI Health to meaningfully engage the community in our health needs assessment process, allowing us to glean deeper insights about individual perceptions of health and recent healthcare experiences, along with neighborhood assets and opportunities to guide our fund stewardship.

We are translating these insights into focused strategies within our new community health improvement plan, including expanding our health career pipeline programs, involving more providers in community events to build trust in healthcare and forming a task force to address barriers to access, such as transportation.”

**Ashley Carroll, MPH**

Market Director, Healthy Communities & Population Health, CommonSpirit Health



Visual reports: Overview of listening sessions & perceptions of healthcare opportunities and barriers



## Human-Centered Design Development

The Institute for Population Health and the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE) partnered with leading national experts to launch a noncredit online course, “Leading Change through Human-Centered Design,” which introduces a problem-solving approach that prioritizes people through collaboration, empathy and teamwork. HCD brings together diverse perspectives to identify, brainstorm and iteratively develop solutions that address the real needs of a population. The course will continue to be offered multiple times each year through CPCE.



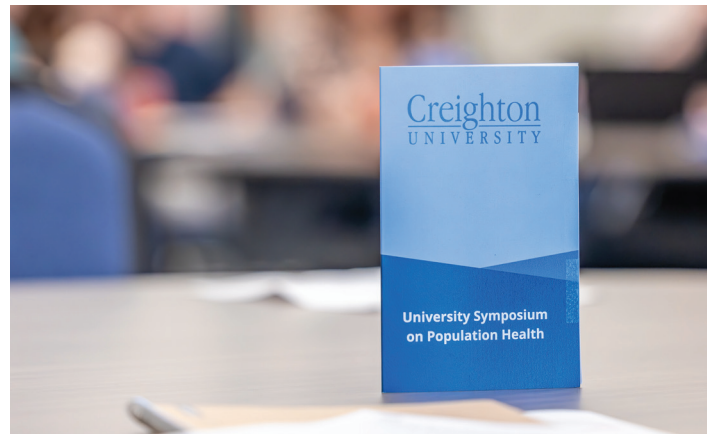
*“In my experience supporting refugee health literacy and chronic disease management, we often design programs assuming we know what’s best for the community. Rather than focusing only on data metrics, I’m rethinking how we might visualize wellness journeys and offer personalized, culturally relevant pathways to engagement.*”

*By applying design thinking, I’m beginning to identify not just problems, but new ways of understanding and addressing them that are more inclusive, iterative and ultimately more impactful.”*

**Falah Nayif Rashoka, PhD, RN, MS, MPH, CPH, Assistant Professor, College of Nursing**

## Second Annual University Symposium on Population Health

The second annual University Symposium on Population Health, *Beyond Barriers: Advancing Population Health in Arizona*, was held in October 2024 on Creighton’s Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix. The symposium brought together national and local speakers to discuss innovations that promote access to high-value care and advance workforce diversity to improve the health and well-being of all in Arizona and beyond. Keynote national speakers included Nana Coleman, MD, EdM, system vice president of academic affairs and faculty affairs and chief academic officer at CommonSpirit Health, and Helen Hughes, MD, MPH, medical director, Office of Telemedicine, and assistant professor of pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Medicine. Local leaders included Michael White, MD, MBA, chief clinical officer at ValleyWise Health; Viren Bavishi, DO, president at Dignity Health Medical Group; and John Anwar, MD, chief medical officer, and Shannon Clancy, chief executive officer, at Virginia G. Piper Medical Clinic and St. Vincent de Paul. The symposium highlighted critical efforts led by Creighton and its partners in understanding and directly addressing the health and social needs of the Arizona populations.

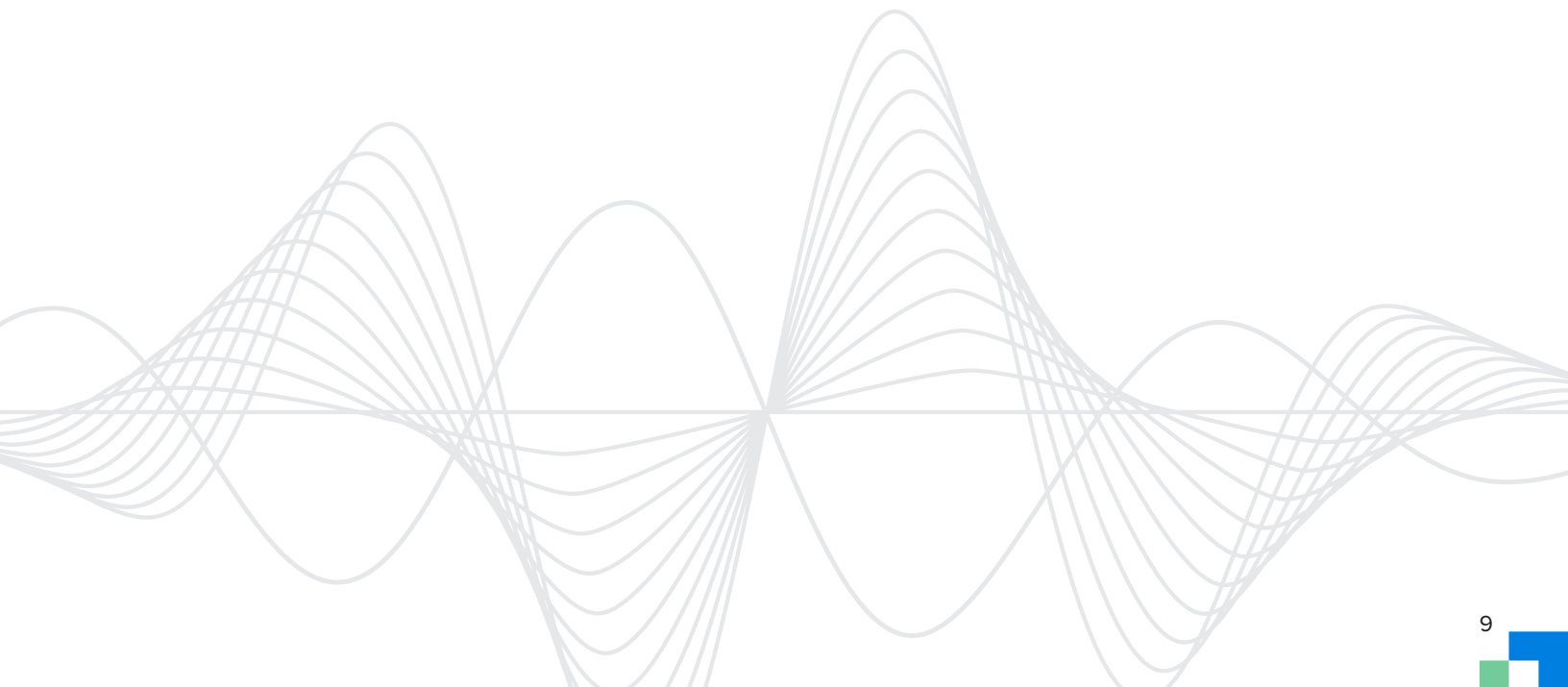


## Advancing Equity in Healthcare: The CommonSpirit Health LEAD Scholars Program

Through the CommonSpirit Health LEAD Scholars program, the IPH aims to equip our current and future healthcare workforce with the necessary skills to lead change and improve healthcare for all. Launched in October 2024, the LEAD Scholars Program is a leadership and service development program for medical students, physician assistant students, medical residents, faculty physicians and advanced practice providers at Creighton University's Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix and generously funded by CommonSpirit Health. Through mentorship, participants develop and strengthen leadership skills, learn principles and strategies for becoming leaders who advance healthcare equity, gain a deeper understanding of health system management and become change agents who improve health and healthcare for the communities we serve.



*The Inaugural class of the CommonSpirit Health LEAD Scholars Program, Creighton Health Sciences Campus - Phoenix*



## Envisioning Population Health: 2025 Student Photo Contest

Every day we are surrounded by factors that influence our collective health and well-being. This year, the IPH and Kingfisher Institute co-sponsored the second annual Envisioning Population Health photo contest open to all Creighton students. Nearly 100 photo submissions were received across this year's three topic areas: 1) Mental health and well-being, 2) Social determinants of health and 3) Planetary health. The entries were judged by faculty, staff and community members representing a cross-section of campus. First- and second-place winners were selected for both the Omaha and Phoenix campuses for a total of 12 student winners. First-place winners selected a local nonprofit to receive a donation in their name. Through awards luncheons in Omaha and Phoenix, the IPH brought together students and the selected nonprofits to highlight the passion and service evident through the students' photos and share the important and meaningful work led by local nonprofits every day in our community. [View the full gallery](https://creighton.edu/iph-photo) of this year's winning photographs at [creighton.edu/iph-photo](https://creighton.edu/iph-photo)



*Katrina Ostrom, School of Medicine, first place, planetary health – Phoenix*



*Dillon Cardinale, School of Medicine, first place, social determinants of health – Phoenix*



*Steven Nguyen, College of Arts and Sciences, first place, mental health and well-being – Phoenix*



*Ela Paske, Heider College of Business, first place, mental health and well-being – Omaha*



*Olivia Pasquale, School of Medicine, first place, mental health and well-being – Phoenix*



*Joshua Hart, Pharmacy Program, SPAHP, first place, planetary health – Omaha*

# Engaging with the Community

Guided by early and extensive outreach in Nebraska, the IPH has worked to build a team committed to establishing trust and partnerships in the community. As we learn more about community resources and opportunities in Phoenix, similar efforts are anticipated there. Areas with limited access to healthcare, prevalent health-related social needs and greater disparities in health are our priority. These communities possess significant civic and cultural pride, dedicated community leaders and numerous assets. The IPH aims to align with each community's priorities, bring added value through partnership with community-based organizations and help to measure impact and spread effective initiatives to expand the size of the population that can benefit.



*“The IPH is committed to meaningfully engaging with the community, to being a trustworthy and committed partner with community organizations and leaders. We are excited to support better health outcomes through our partnerships, and together, our community-based efforts.”*

**Scott Shipman, MD, MPH**

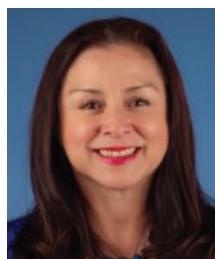
*Executive Director of the Institute for Population Health  
CynHealth Endowed Professor in Population Health*

## Highlander Accelerator and the IPH

This past year, IPH and Creighton renewed their commitment to be a valuable partner to 75 North's efforts to revitalize the Highlander neighborhood of North Omaha. Creighton's Highlander Accelerator, a hub for education, wellness and community engagement, opened in 2018 as part of 75 North's initiative. Now under the direction of the IPH, the Accelerator serves as a community space for Creighton to support community wellness, offering programs focused on health education, legal services for juveniles and outreach. Exciting new changes are coming to the space to ensure more community-centered programming and partnership across North Omaha.



**April Dixon, MPH**, serves as director of North Omaha Community Engagement based at Creighton at The Highlander.



**Alejandra Rebolledo-Gomez, MSHP**, is the community engagement manager for the IPH at the Highlander.

## United in Trust: A Multisectoral Community-Academic Approach to Building and Evaluating Trust in North Omaha

In 2024, the IPH, in partnership with the University of Nebraska Medical Center, received a grant to implement and assess the Association for American Medical Colleges' [Principles of Trustworthiness](#) in the community. Together, these two institutions partnered with Bluebird Cultural Initiative, Douglas County Health Department, Visionary Lions, LCC and Restoring Dignity to initiate a long overdue conversation about trust and how the area's medical and governmental institutions can demonstrate trustworthiness to the Black, Native American and Bhutanese, Karen, Somali and other refugee communities that call North Omaha home. Through three "Speak Freely" sessions, the team listened and sought to understand experiences surrounding the breakdown of trust across a variety of sections (e.g., health, policy, education, housing, etc.), in addition to gathering recommendations on how we can build trust moving forward.

## Understanding Community Perceptions for OneWorld Community Health Centers

This year, the IPH assisted OneWorld Community Health Centers with its 2026-2030 strategic planning process. The IPH conducted a mixed-methods analysis consisting of listening sessions in English and Spanish with OneWorld leadership and patients and interviews with key stakeholders throughout the Omaha community to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of OneWorld as an organization, the services it provides and opportunities for potential growth.

## IPH and Volleyball and Women's Basketball Teams Partner to Address Food Insecurity

You might know about the successful seasons the Creighton volleyball and basketball teams had last year. You may not have known that throughout their seasons, the teams partnered with the IPH to raise awareness about population health and make a difference in the community by addressing factors that lead to disparities in health. Together, the teams collected over 1,000 pounds of food, which equates to over 875 meals. Each team also presented a check to two local community organizations working to address food insecurity, No More Empty Pots and Foodbank for the Heartland.

Read how at [creighton.edu/iph-partners](https://creighton.edu/iph-partners)



# IPH in the Health System

## Health Needs & Priorities for Our Vulnerable Youths

In 2024, the IPH led a qualitative complement to the Community Health Needs Assessment for children, focusing on the needs of marginalized youth and families. The IPH conducted a series of qualitative listening sessions for parents and caregivers of marginalized youths. Each session explored the health needs and challenges faced by these populations, utilizing a broad definition of health and allowing the participants to openly share their experiences and perspectives. Through this work, our community and community-based organizations can better understand the health needs and priorities for marginalized youths and their families and partner together to ensure access and quality care for all.



**Kevin Fuji, PharmD**  
*Associate Professor  
of Pharmacy Practice*

## Clarkson Regional Health Foundation

The IPH is leading implementation support and evaluation planning for the Bridges to Mental Health program, which aims to expand access to quality mental health care throughout Nebraska. The first phase of the program involves trainings for providers throughout the state, while upcoming phases will establish new provider-to-provider consultation, online portals for access to real-time guidance and tools. This work, funded jointly by the Hawks Foundation and Clarkson, intends to transform access to mental and behavioral health care.

## Evaluating the Impact of Care Extenders

The IPH is overseeing the design and evaluation of an existing community health worker (CHW) program, a novel multistate CHW implementation and a doula pilot program all through CHI Health Central Region. Collectively, these programs aim to more effectively identify and address health related social needs, building a more effective connection between health care and social care services.

## Bridging the Health System and CUSOM to Advance Health Equity

To support Creighton's School of Medicine, the IPH, with guidance from a steering committee and input from health system leaders, established a health equity strategic plan that takes a holistic approach to advancing health equity in the health system, in the curriculum and in the community. The IPH is poised to support the SOM in its execution of the plan while also finding synergies with CHI Health's health equity goals. One such example is the implementation and optimization support the IPH is providing to CHI Health as it screens patients for health-related social needs to ultimately address health disparities in its patient population. Through partnership, Creighton and CHI Health can ensure better care and equity for its patients.



**Scan the QR code to view  
the IPH Advisory Committee**



# Raising Our Visibility

2024 [Nebraska Maternal Child Health Summit](#)  
in Lincoln, Nebraska

2024 [Public Health Innovation and Research Expo](#)  
in Omaha, Nebraska

2025 Public Health Association of Nebraska  
conference

2024 Surgical Equity: A Call to Action symposium,  
Phoenix, Arizona

Inaugural Rural Surgery Symposium 2025,  
Omaha, Nebraska.

# Publications, Presentations & Conferences

King SH, Rodriguez J, Shipman SA. “Opportunities and Risks for Telehealth in Advancing Health Equity in Academic Medicine,” *Academic Medicine* 2024; 12, 1454.

Scott Shipman, MD, MPH, Workforce Implications of Telehealth, HRSA invitational meeting, Washington D.C., Feb 11, 2025

Scott Shipman, MD, MPH, Grand Rounds, Department of Pediatrics, University of Iowa, March 10, 2025

Scott Shipman, MD, MPH, Grand Rounds, Department of Internal Medicine, Dartmouth Health, April 11, 2025

Fuji KT, Tonkinson C, Dingman H, Shirk J. “Exploring Child Health Needs for a Pediatric Community Health Needs Assessment.” AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting. Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 7, 2025. Podium presentation.

Co-sponsor — 2024 Nebraska Maternal Child Health Summit in Lincoln, Nebraska

Co-sponsor — 2024 Public Health Innovation and Research Expo in Omaha, Nebraska

Co-sponsor — 2025 Public Health Association of Nebraska conference

Co-sponsor — 2024 Surgical Equity: A Call to Action symposium, Phoenix, Arizona

Partner and host — Inaugural Rural Surgery Symposium 2025, Omaha, Nebraska.

# Creighton UNIVERSITY

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