

2026

RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared By :
**SOMG Office
of Research**

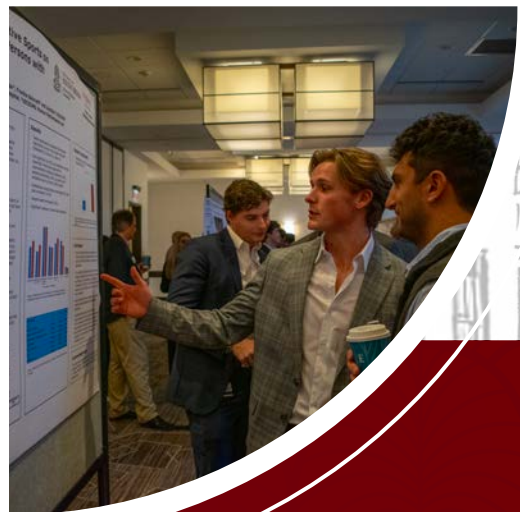


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Educate. Innovate. Serve.
Where Lifestyle is Medicine.

The Office of Research (OoR) advances the research mission of the USC School of Medicine Greenville by fostering an environment that promotes innovation, integrity, collaboration, and excellence in biomedical, clinical, educational, and population health research. The Office provides strategic leadership, infrastructure, and resources to enable faculty, learners, and staff to pursue transformational research that improves the health of people in South Carolina.

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FROM THE DEAN

Phyllis MacGilvray, MD, FAAFP, DipABLM | Dean USC School of Medicine Greenville

At the USC School of Medicine Greenville, research reflects both who we are today and who we are becoming. Guided by our mission - **Educate. Innovate. Serve. Where Lifestyle is Medicine.** - my passion as dean is the continued growth of our community of educators and learners. As a young medical school, our research mission is gaining momentum and taking shape.

Central to this progress is our close partnership with Prisma Health, whose collaboration enables us to translate discovery into meaningful improvements in patient care and population health. Together with our clinical, academic, and regional partners, we are building a culture of discovery that spans the full continuum—from student scholarship to faculty-led innovation.

To fully realize this promise, intentional investment is essential. Transformational support allows us to recruit and retain outstanding investigators, expand opportunities for our learners, and accelerate research that directly benefits the people of South Carolina. This report highlights the collective efforts of our learners, faculty, and staff, and the growing momentum made possible through partnership. I am deeply proud of what we have achieved and energized by what we can accomplish together in the years ahead.



FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

Sudha Garimella, MD, FAAP | Associate Dean for Research, USC School of Medicine Greenville

I am proud to share the first Annual Research Report of SOMG, highlighting a year of meaningful progress in building a mission-driven research enterprise in Greenville and the Upstate. This inaugural report reflects our commitment to advancing discovery, improving health, and empowering the next generation of physicians and scholars.

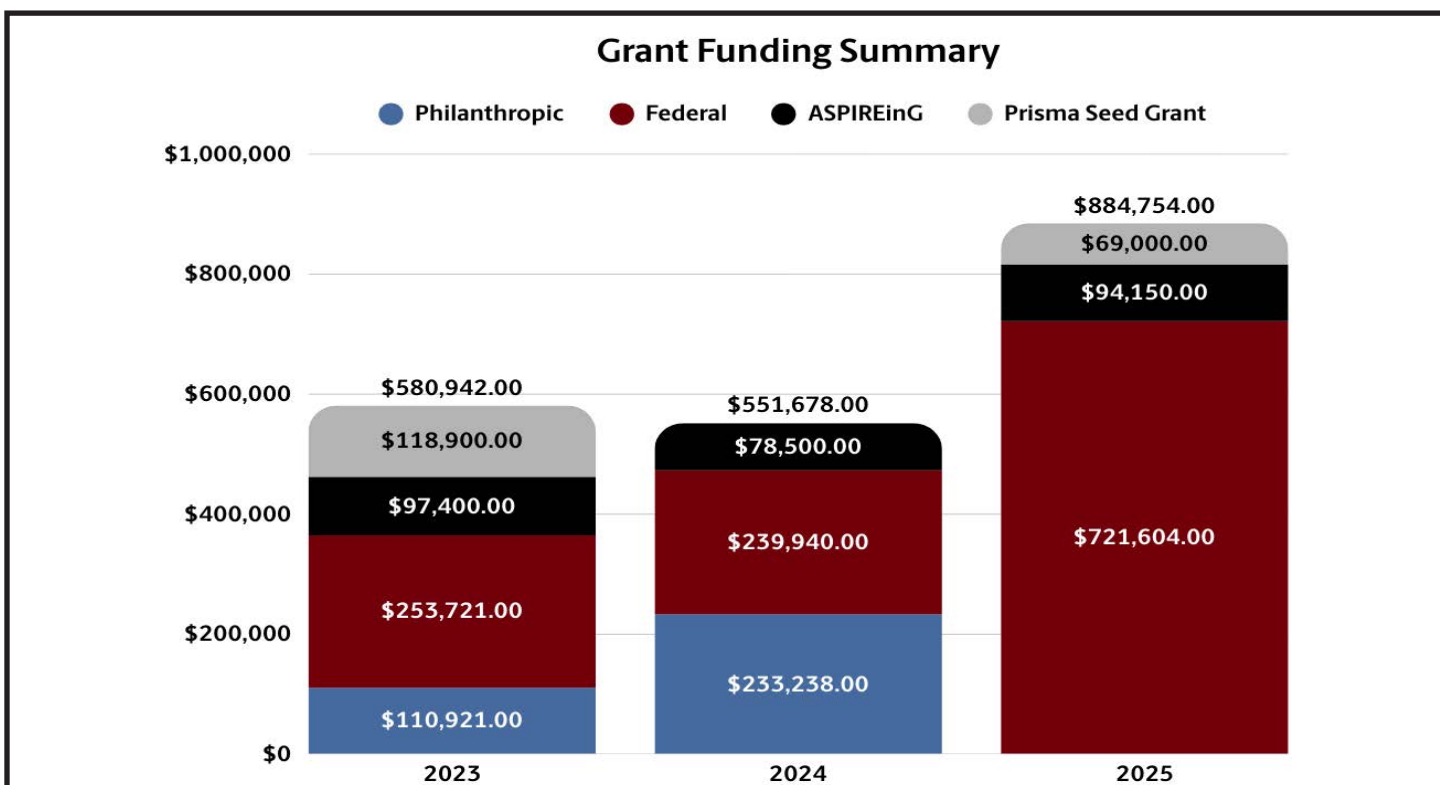
Guided by our mission, research at SOMG focuses on questions with real-world impact. Over the past year, our faculty expanded scholarly output, increased externally funded research activity, and strengthened collaborations across clinical, educational, and community settings. Just as importantly, our students and trainees played an active role in discovery—engaging in mentored research, contributing to publications and presentations, and developing the skills essential to careers in medicine and science.

These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication and mentorship of our faculty, whose leadership and scholarly excellence are the foundation of our research success. We are deeply grateful for their commitment to inquiry, education, and service. The research accomplishments highlighted in this inaugural Annual Research Report would not be possible without the steadfast leadership and vision of our Dean. We also extend our sincere appreciation to our donors and partners. Your support enables us to invest in people, infrastructure, and opportunities that drive innovation and expand research experiences for students and faculty alike. Together, we are strengthening a research culture that advances health and serves our region.



Thank you for your partnership and continued support of research at SOMG.

RESEARCH AT A GLANCE

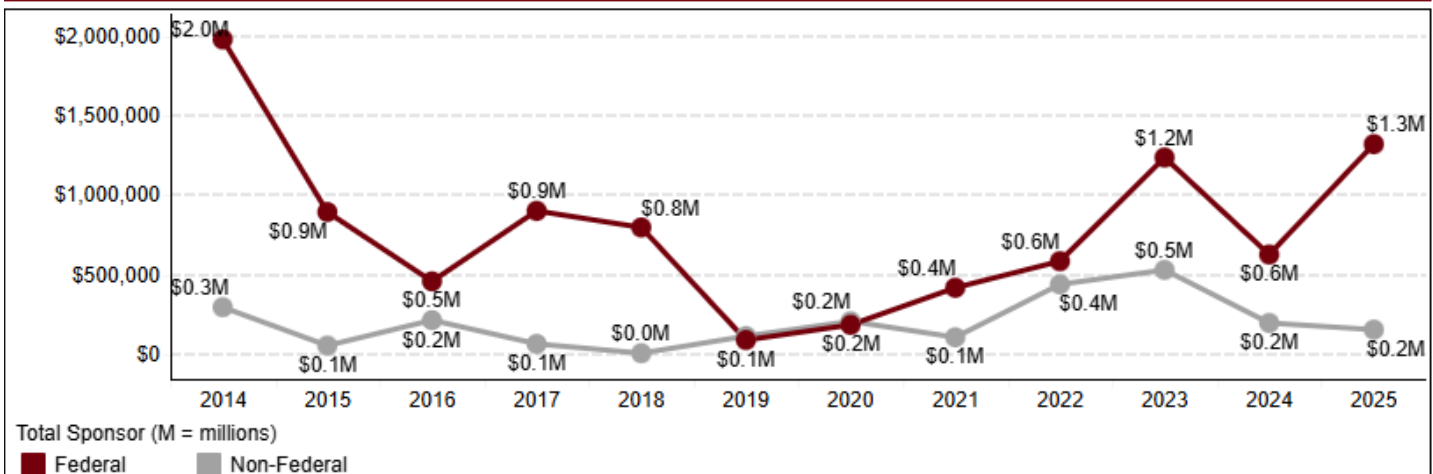


Research Network



Sponsored Awards Trend

Graph shows trend lines of federal and non-federal sponsored awards from 2013 to 2025. Amounts are represented in millions of US dollars.



Sponsored Awards Year-to-Date Comparison

Table shows sponsored awards by source year-to-date compared to prior, same point in time. (July-January)
 Comparison represents percent change from prior year.

January Fiscal Year-to-Date Comparison

*Data as of January 31, 2025

	2026	2025	
Federal	211,015	702,684	-70%
Private	28,500	66,000	-57%
Grand Total	239,515	768,684	-69%

-100% 100%

Sponsored Awards Fiscal Year Comparison

Table shows sponsored awards by source in year 2025 compared to prior, selected year. Comparison represents percent change from prior year selected.

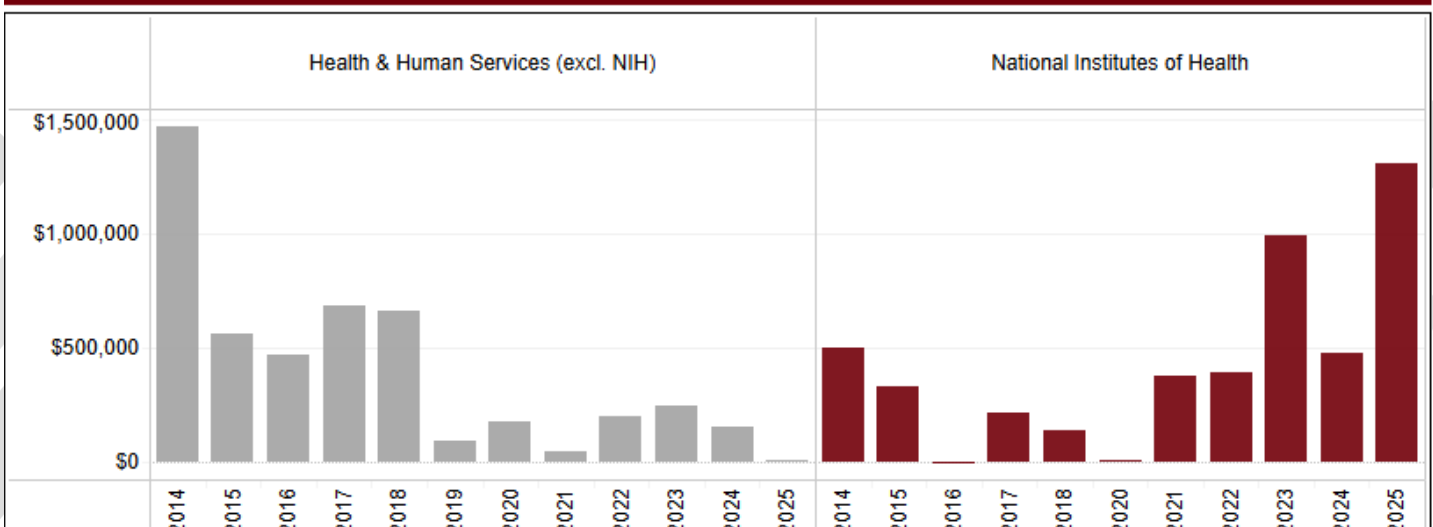
Compare to: 2024

	2025	2024	
Federal	1,320,767	629,130	110%
Private	159,000	196,989	-19%
Other		3,800	-100%
Grand Total	1,479,767	829,919	78%

-100% 100%

Sponsored Awards Trend by Top Federal Sponsors

Length of bar shows total sponsored awards by year and top federal sponsors.



Sponsored Awards Overall Year-to-Date (July-January)

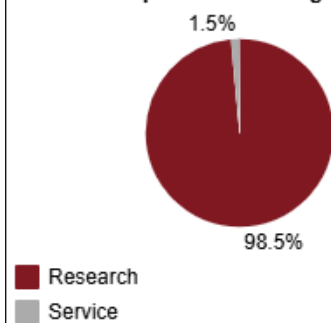
Overall US dollar amount represents current year-to-date of sponsored awards at the University of South Carolina.

\$239,515

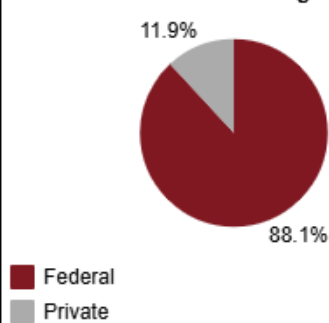
Sponsored Awards Distribution Year-to-Date (July-January)

Pie charts show current year-to-date distribution of sponsored awards by purpose of funding, source of funding, and top federal sponsors.

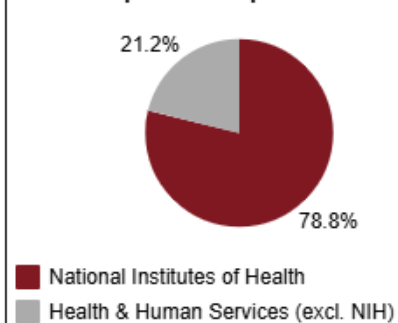
Purpose of Funding YTD



Source of Funding YTD

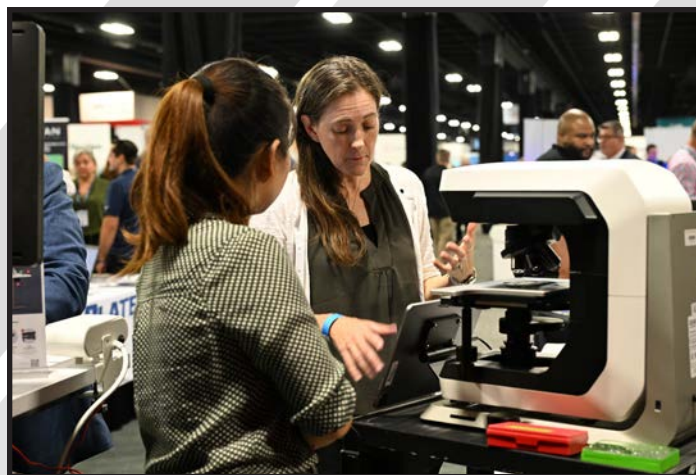
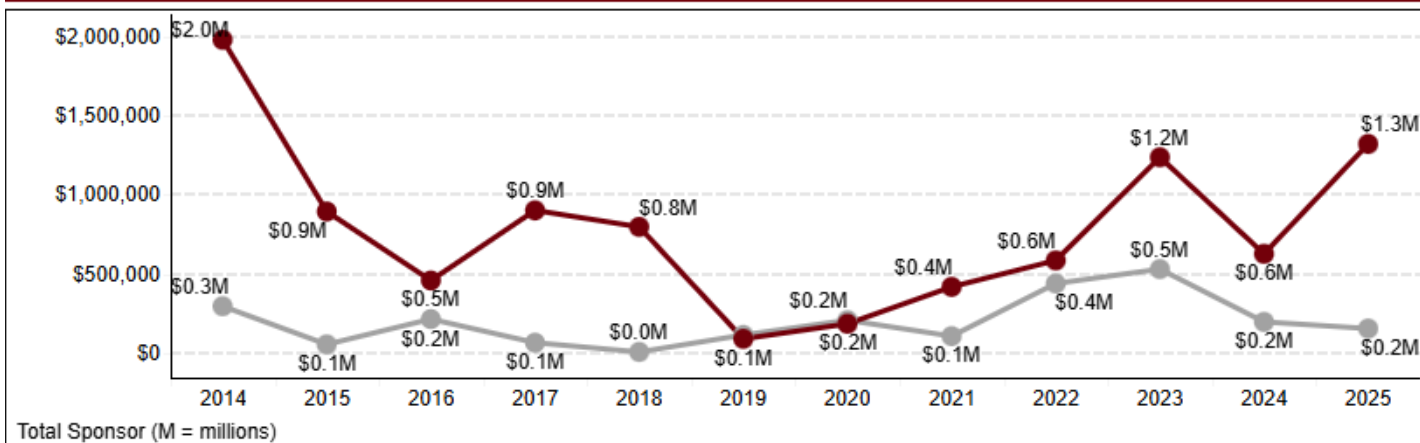


Top Federal Sponsor YTD



Sponsored Awards Trend

Graph shows trend lines of federal and non-federal sponsored awards from 2013 to 2025. Amounts are represented in millions of US dollars.

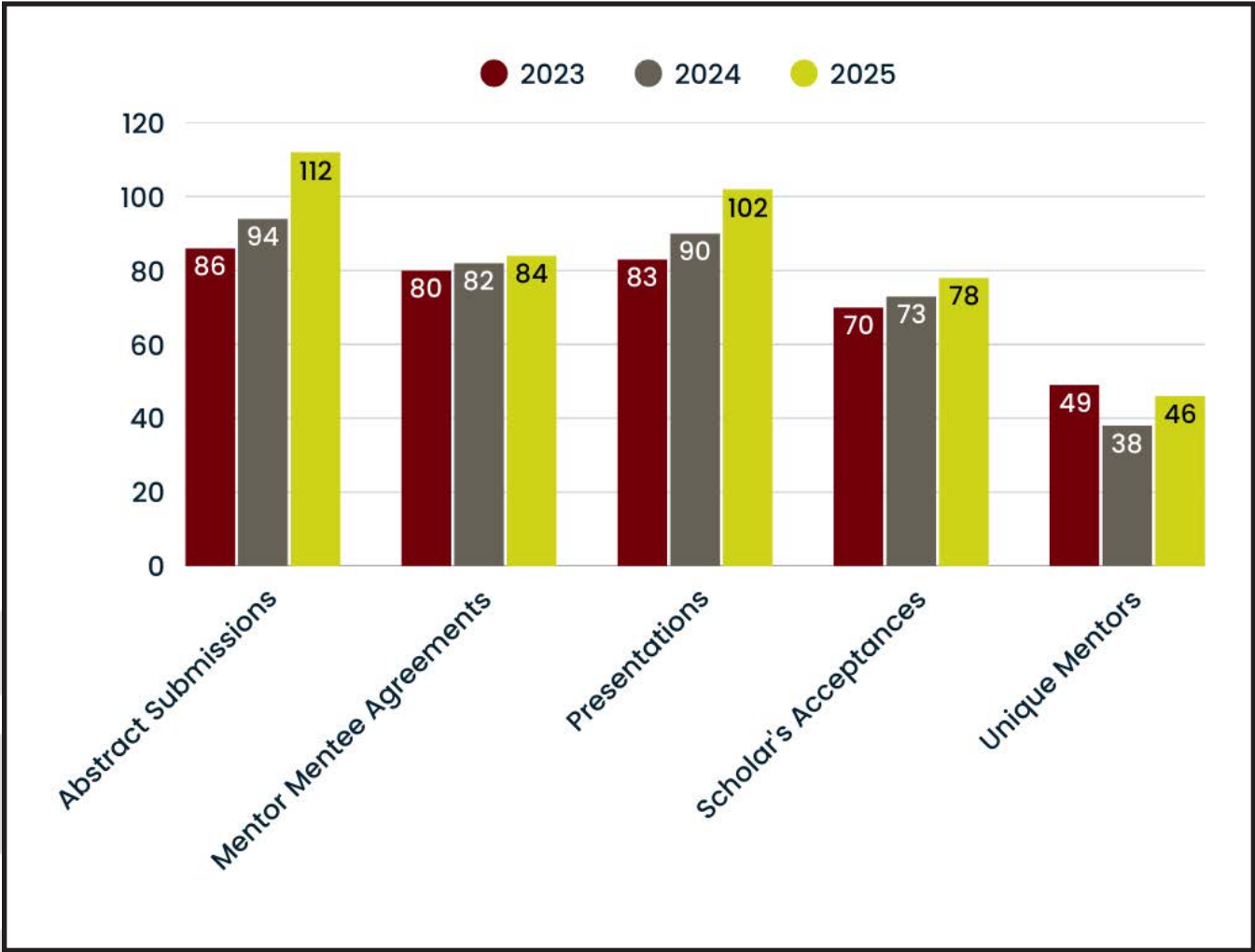


STUDENT RESEARCH

Student research is an important component of the USC School of Medicine Greenville's commitment to educate, innovate, and serve. While research is not a required element of the curriculum, the school is committed to providing meaningful opportunities through structured programs, dedicated mentorship, and close collaboration with clinical and regional partners. These partnerships enable students to engage in innovative biomedical, clinical, educational, and population health research that addresses real-world health needs, fosters critical thinking and creativity, and prepares future physicians to translate new ideas into improved care for patients and communities in the upstate region and beyond.

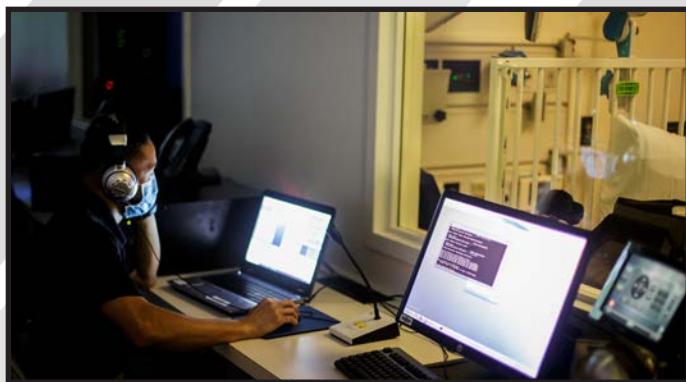
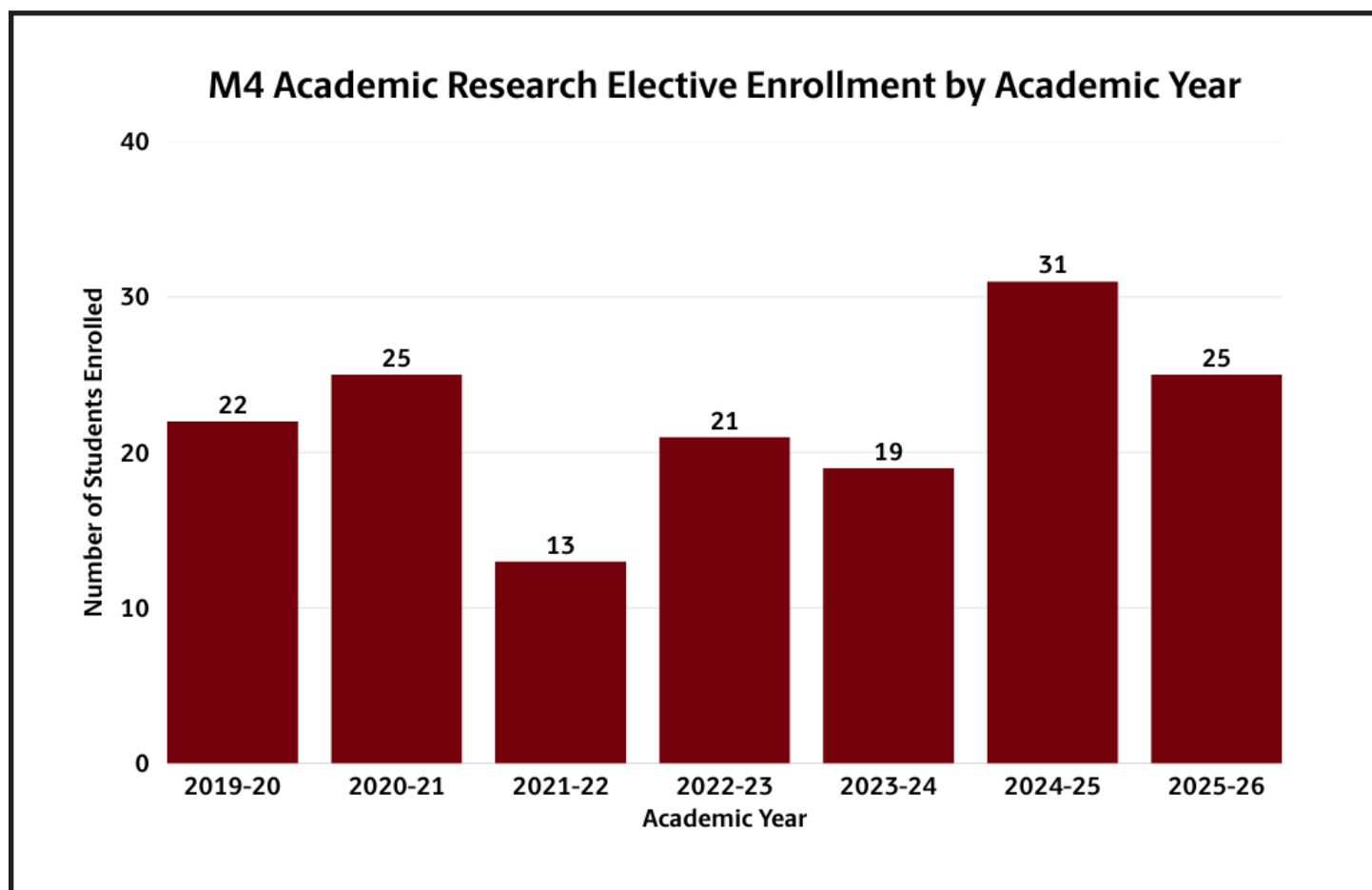
SOARinG

Launched as a centralized hub for rising second-year medical student research, the Student Opportunities for Academic Achievement Through Research in Greenville (SOARinG) Program matches M1 students with mentored projects conducted during the 6–8 week summer period between the first and second years. Participants build core research skills through a required weekly seminar series (including biomedical literature discussions) while completing a focused research project with faculty mentorship. The program culminates in the school's annual student research symposium, where students submit abstracts and present their work as posters or oral presentations. Competitive stipend support is available for eligible projects.



M4 Academic Medicine Research Longitudinal Elective

The Academic Medicine Research Elective provides an opportunity for 4th year medical students to participate in an ongoing project with a researcher from SOMG or Prisma Health. Students enrolled in the elective complete a short research proposal outlining their goals and timeline for the project. The proposal describes the deliverable (research abstract, research poster, book chapter, manuscript, etc.) that the student will have completed at the end of the elective. Students identify a research mentor for their project, and the mentors works with the students over the year to help them develop their research interests.



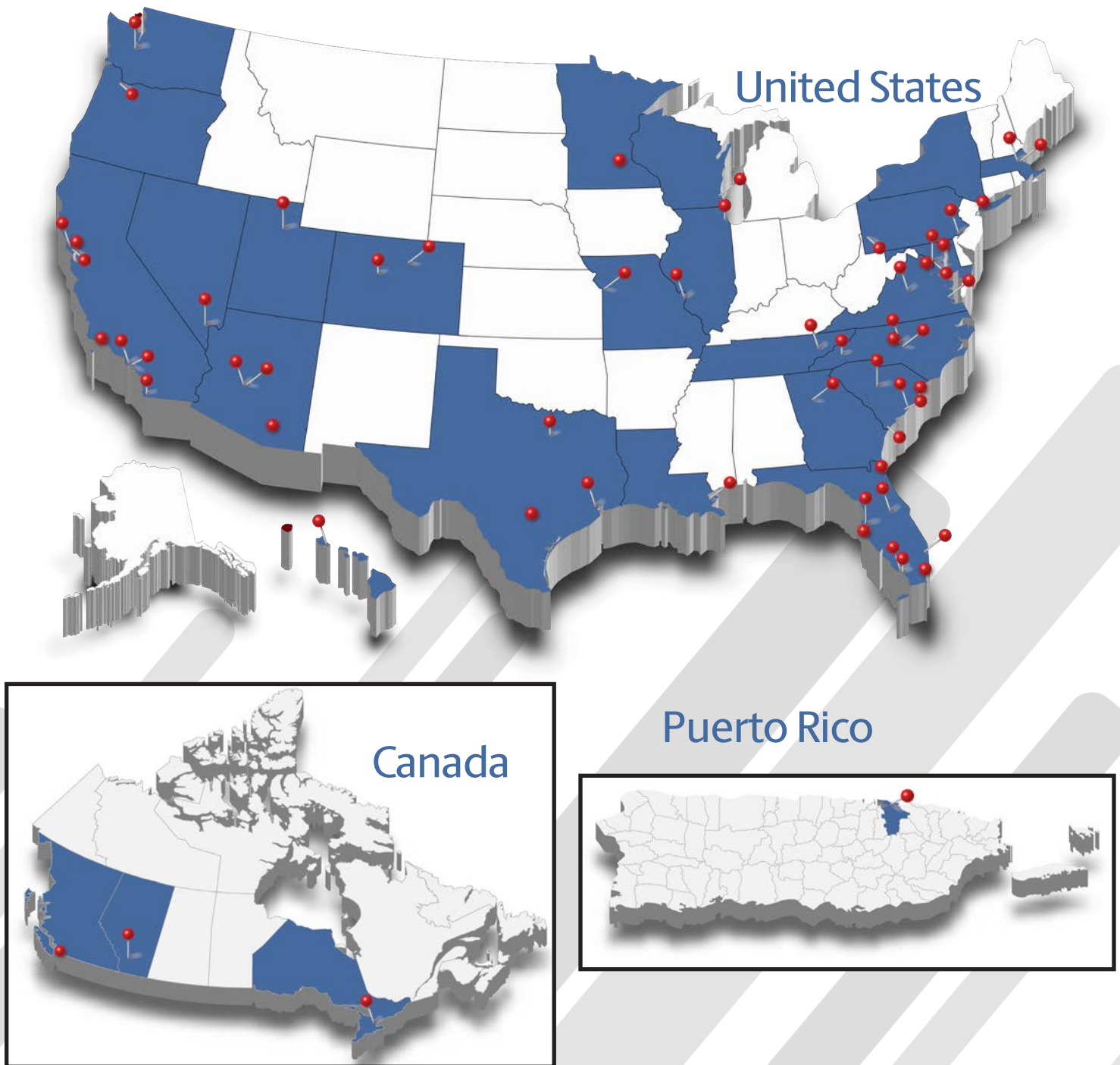
Student Travel

The USC School of Medicine Greenville Office of Research provides financial support for student travel to present research locally, nationally, and internationally. As institutional support for research continues to grow, an increasing number of students have been able to share their scholarly work each year. Medical students working with a faculty mentor may apply for research travel funding to support poster and oral presentations at scientific meetings.

Total Students Supported Through Office of Research Travel Funds:

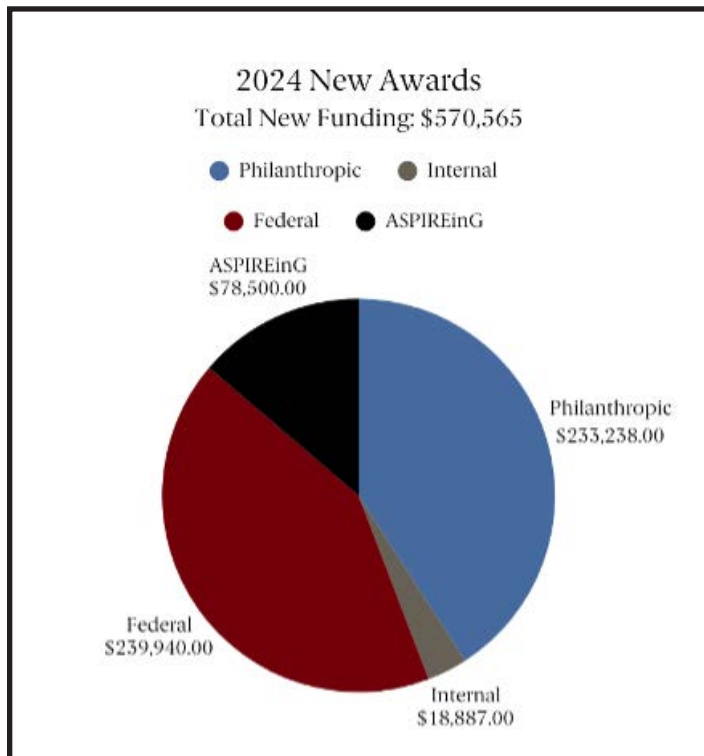
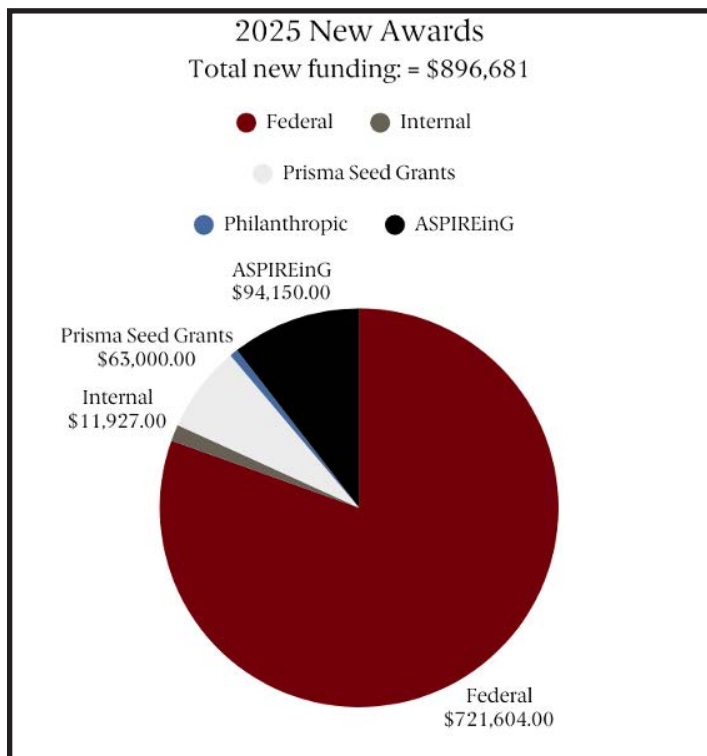
- 2024-25 AY: 57
- 2023-24 AY: 44

Where SOMG Students are presenting Research

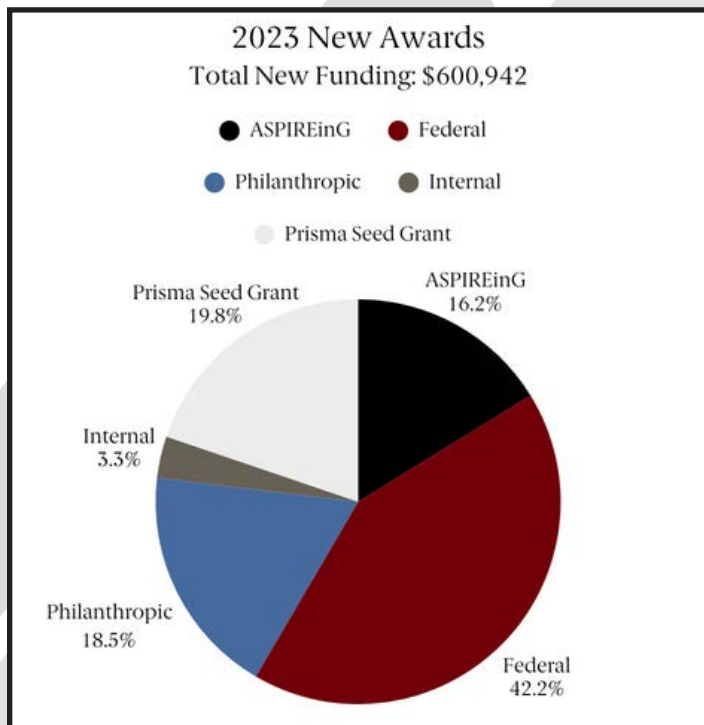


FACULTY RESEARCH

USC SOMG has a history of active biomedical and clinical faculty engaging in cutting edge research. 100% of Biomedical Sciences faculty along with a growing number of clinical faculty participate in research spanning several key areas. Faculty engage in collaborative, multi-disciplinary work with a wide range of institutions across the Upstate. In the 24-25 academic year, our faculty published approximately 500 times across peer reviewed abstracts, journal articles, book chapters, and books.



SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS
Nº494
ACROSS BMS AND CLINICAL FACULTY FOR THE
2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR



RESEARCH ACTIVITY AT SOMG

ITOR

The Biomedical Sciences (BMS) research laboratory of the School of Medicine Greenville (SOMG), located in the Institute for Translational Oncology Research (ITOR) on the Prisma Health–Upstate campus, is a hub for translational research that bridges foundational biomedical discovery with clinical application. Faculty investigators direct innovative research programs focused on crucial issues in biomedical research with an emphasis on generating clinically actionable insights that improve human health outcomes. Key areas of research include reproductive biology, cancer biomarker development, infection immunology, and the intersection of the microbiome and disease. A distinctive strength of the lab is its hands-on involvement of medical students in hypothesis-driven experimentation and analysis. By working directly alongside faculty mentors, students gain meaningful research experience while helping drive discoveries that can impact human health.

The laboratory is equipped with sophisticated technology that allows researchers to analyze genes, proteins, and cells with detail and precision. Supporting instrumentation includes real-time and endpoint PCR systems, nucleic acid and protein imaging platforms, a bioanalyzer, spectrophotometric and microplate-based assay systems, and an Attune NxT four-laser flow cytometer with autosampler. The lab maintains capabilities for both eukaryotic and prokaryotic cell culture systems as well as advanced centrifugation, electroporation, and cold storage systems for cell isolation, modification, and storage. Fluorescent and light microscopy systems further enable rigorous translational investigation by the skilled researchers of SOMG. Collectively, the BMS laboratory's integrated faculty expertise, medical student engagement, and robust technical infrastructure position it as a strategic asset within SOMG and the Prisma Health–Upstate academic medical environment, advancing innovative research with tangible benefits to human health.

ITOR Research Spotlights

From the Laboratory of Dr. Renee Chosed

Nguyen, D.T., Archer, H., Earle, A., Petyak, E., Collins, C., Vaillant, K., Lanford, H., Roudebush, W.E., Chang, T.A., Kordus, R., Green, L., Clay-Gilmour, A., Chosed, R.J. (2025) Maternal Age is associated with apoptotic gene abundance patterns in blastocoel fluid-conditioned media from euploid embryos: a pilot study. *J Assist Reprod Genet.* 42:1651–1661. doi: 10.1007/s10815-025-03485-7. PMID: 40261460.

This work details the use of RNASeq technology to identify an apoptotic gene expression signature in blastocoel fluid associated advanced maternal age. This publication represents a true collaborative effort. Blastocoel fluid from IVF embryos was provided by Prisma Health's Fertility Center the Carolinas, analysis of the RNASeq data was conducted by researchers at USC's Arnold School of Public Health and five talented SOMG medical students worked to validate the RNASeq findings using Real-Time PCR in the ITOIR lab space.

From the Laboratory of Dr. Jennifer Grier

Meltzer HC, Goodwin JL, Fowler LA, Britt TW, Pirrallo RG, Grier JT. Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2-reactive salivary antibody detection in South Carolina emergency healthcare workers, September 2019-March 2020. *Epidemiol Infect.* 2024 Sep 25;152:e102. doi: 10.1017/S0950268824000967. PMID: 39320488; PMCID: PMC11427973.

This study investigated saliva samples from emergency healthcare workers and identified the presence of antibodies against the SARS-CoV-2 virus prior to reported cases in the state, highlighting the usefulness of saliva testing for emergency medicine providers as a tool for tracking emerging diseases and immunity. This work was made possible due to strong collaborations between SOMG researchers and the Prisma Health Department of Emergency Medicine, Clemson University, and Wake Forest School of Medicine.

From the Laboratory of Dr. William Roudebush

Saha S, Cho A, Smith C, Roudebush WE, Chosed RJ. (2026) Platelet-activating factor modulates apoptotic gene expression in developing sea urchin embryos. *Frontiers in Cell and Developmental Biology.* 14:1728206. doi: 10.3389/fcell.2026.1728206
This research focuses on the events and processes which regulate fertilization and early embryo development. Research findings from Dr. Roudebush's lab have helped assist couples in the process of overcoming infertility.

Medical Education Research Incubator (MEDRI)

The Medical Education Research Incubator (MEDRI) advances medical education research at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville by offering a structured seminar series, administering a competitive medical education grants program, and providing individualized research consultations.

*25 Foundations
of Medical
Education
Research
certificates
earned*

**18 medical
education
research
project
consultations
conducted**

**6 medical
education
research grants
awarded**

During MEDRI's inaugural year, the program hosted the five-session Foundations of Medical Education Research seminar series. The session topics included:

- What is MedEd Scholarship?
- Methodologies for MedEd Research
- IRB and Ethical Considerations for MedEd Research
- Survey Design for MedEd Research
- Theoretical Frameworks for MedEd Research

More than 40 unique participants attended at least one session, and 25 dedicated individuals completed the entire series, earning the Foundations of Medical Education Research Certificate.



The first year of the MEDRI grants program attracted strong applications from faculty at the School of Medicine Greenville and Prisma Health. Six grants were awarded:

- Prevalence and Implications of Cadaveric Anatomic Variation in Undergraduate Medical Education; principal investigator: Dr. Kristina Zarenko
- Sex and Gender Integration in Medical Education Since a 2016 National Survey: How Far have We Come?; principal investigator: Dr. Jennica Siddle
- Improving Faculty Feedback Through Artificial Intelligence; principal investigator: Dr. Zachary Kahler
- Implementation and Efficacy of the LEAP Initiative: From Aspiring Physicians to Healthcare Leaders; principal investigator: Dr. Jennifer Springhart
- Bridging of Integrated Practice of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Faculty to Integrate Application and Synthesis of Knowledge Sessions: A Pilot Study in the Gastrointestinal/Hepatic and Reproductive Systems Modules; principal investigator: Dr. Kristina Zarenko
- Competency of a Low Frequency Procedure through Deliberate Practice; principal investigator: Dr. Yuliya Pecheny

In addition, MEDRI has delivered professional consultation support for 18 unique medical education research projects. These consultations have assisted investigators with refining research questions, selecting appropriate methodologies, designing surveys, developing data analysis plans, and editing abstracts.

Current MEDRI Leadership

Executive Director: Kirsten A. Porter-Stransky, PhD

Director of Grants and Scholarship: Caroline Astemborski, MD

Many thanks to our past executive director and founder of MEDRI, Kelly Quesnelle, PhD



Patient Engagement Studio

The Patient Engagement Studio (PES) is a research core for the University of South Carolina that is housed between the School of Medicine Greenville and the Arnold School of Public Health. The mission of the PES is to meaningfully integrate the patient voice in all stages of research by promoting collaboration with scientists and clinicians to optimize health and research outcomes. We ultimately want to bridge the gap between researchers and the patients their work is intended to impact.

The core PES team is small but mighty. The Executive Director of the PES, Ann Blair Kennedy, DrPH is based at SOMG with the PES Program Manager, Sebrina Brink and CARES Center Coordinator, Destiny Jordan, MPH. The Scientific Director of the PES, Nabil Natafqi, PhD, is based at the Arnold School of Public Health. In addition to core staff, the PES is also currently working with graduate students at the Arnold School and College of Social Work, an undergraduate student in the South Carolina Honors College, and medical students from the School of Medicine Greenville.

Since its inception in 2016, the goal of the PES has been to revolutionize science so that it serves the patients. We do this by including patient voices in all aspects of the research continuum and at different engagement levels. Over 100 Patient Experts have been trained to work with researchers as research participants, consultants, advisory board members, co-investigators, co-authors on research papers, and Principal Investigators.

The work of the PES is interdisciplinary by nature, employs quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and we believe Patient Experts are experts in their own lives and conditions in the same way researchers are experts in their own disciplines. That being said, the PES has collaborated on and lead projects focused on a number of research areas. The PES has worked with numerous researchers from the University of South Carolina, Prisma Health, Clemson University, Furman University, the University of North Carolina, Duke University, the South Carolina Department of Public Health. Our research has also extended internationally as we have projects with a researcher and Patient Experts in Australia. The PES has existing grant collaborations with the Brain Health Network at USC focusing on post-stroke aphasia and dementia, with Exercise is Medicine Greenville to improve the program for current and future participants, and with the SC Maternal Health Innovation Collaborative to shape maternal health research and policy in our state. Currently, active and pending PES collaborations focus on:

- Postnatal hypertension
- Colorectal cancer prevention
- Patient family-centered care and policies in the NICU
- Persons living with HIV
- PrEP and how individuals seek care
- Emergency department care for children with autism
- Gestational diabetes
- Survivors of childhood cancers
- AI companions for patients with cancer
- Pregnancy after loss and proposed benefits of massage in Australia
- Diversity in images on websites of massage therapists and general practitioners in Australia

In the past, the PES has also created condition- and population-specific panels focused on rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, long COVID, and breast cancer. Of all of the work the PES has done, a major win came in 2024 when the PES was awarded an R24 grant from the National Institutes of Health for the CARES Center. The CARES Center is a five-year project that focuses on substance use disorder treatment preferences among members of sexual and gender minorities (SGM) compared to those who are not members of the SGM community. This collaboration helped to pave the way for another grant collaboration with researchers examining substance use disorder treatment with pharmaceuticals that already exist.

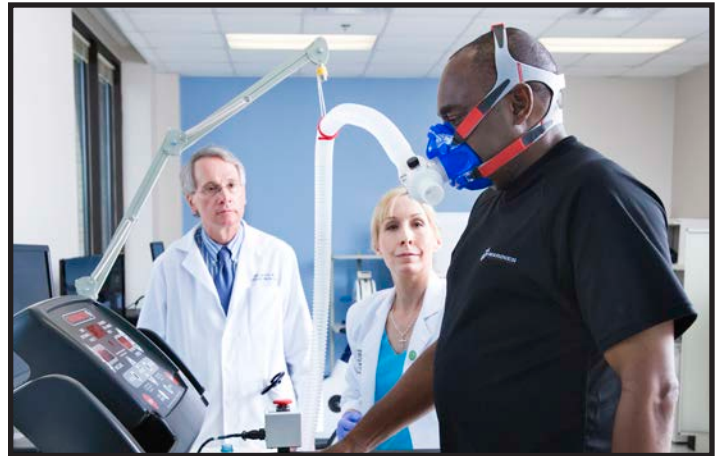
The goal of the PES is to make sure the voice of the patient is seen, heard, and valued across all stages of research. As Dr. Kennedy stated, “[When] researchers and health system innovators listen to patients share their experiences, knowledge and stories about their health conditions, it changes the way they approach their research. This is the heart and soul of the patient engagement — patients, researchers and innovators working together to make research better and improve the health of our families, friends, communities and ourselves.”



Human Performance Lab

The Human Performance Laboratory (HPL) at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville is located in the Cancer Institute at Prisma Health Upstate. The 800-square-foot multipurpose facility opened in January of 2014 under the leadership of Dr. Jennifer Trilk and was one of the first laboratories in the nation to be embedded into a cancer research and treatment program. Since its inception, the lab has been used as a testing center for Roger C Peace Elite Paracycling Program from 2013-2017 and has brought in over \$7 million in external grant dollars to date.

Exercise science research has been conducted across diverse clinical populations, including individuals with cancer, spinal cord injury, and Parkinson's disease. These efforts are supported by collaborative partnerships with Furman University, Prisma Health Cancer Institute, Prisma Health–Upstate Neurology, and Greenville Cycling and Multisport.



2025 Accomplishments

Exercise is Medicine Greenville Program

Awarded National Institute of Health R01 Grant to examine the impact of facilitator-led strategies on addressing barriers and improving EIMG® implementation

Articles Published

-Rosemeyer J, Trilk, JL, Jindal, M., Brooks, JM, McNulty, LK, Stoutenberg, M. Determining patient eligibility for a physical activity referral scheme through EHR data extraction. BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making. 2025 Jul (Accepted and In Press)

-Stoutenberg M, Estabrooks PA, Brooks JM, Jindal M, Wichman C, Rosemeyer J, Schumacher LM, McNulty LK, Ewing A, Eskuri S, Bennett F, Trilk JL. Implementing and evaluating the comprehensive integration of physical activity into a major health system: study design and protocol. BMJ Open. 2025 Jan 6;15(1):e091556. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2024-091556. PMID: 39762113; PMCID: PMC11749393.

-Schumacher LM, Trilk JL, McNulty LK, Ylitalo KR, Eskuri S, Brooks JM, Estabrooks PA, Jindal M, Stoutenberg M. Factors Influencing Patient Enrollment in a Community-based Physical Activity Program After Healthcare Provider Referral: A Mixed Methods Study. J Prim Care Community Health. 2024 Jan-Dec;15:21501319241306710. doi: 10.1177/21501319241306710. PMID: 39698984; PMCID: PMC11656516.

Near Infrared Spectroscopy (NIRS) Cancer Study Protocol Paper Published

-Hutchison RE, Smith S, Caudell C, Biddle S, Gluck WL, Trilk JL. Effects of chemotherapy on skeletal muscle mitochondrial oxidative capacity using near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS): Protocol paper for an observational mixed model repeated measures design in patients with breast and gynecological cancer. PLoS One. 2025 Jun 27;20(6):e0315351. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0315351. PMID: 40577323; PMCID: PMC12204469.

Poster Presentations

-Anderson Grace, Callum Allison, Jolie Guinn, Michael Wolfe, Frankie Bennett, Virginia van Staden, Randolph Hutchison, Larry Gluck, Jennifer Trilk "Regimen-Specific Impacts of Chemotherapy on Skeletal Muscle Mitochondrial Function in Patients with Breast or Gynecological Cancer" Presented at 2025 SOMG Summer Scholars Research Symposium

-Kennan Delbridge, Virginia Simmons van Staden, Frankie Bennett, Randolph Hutchison, Larry Gluck, Jennifer L. Trilk "Feasibility of Near-Infrared Spectroscopy to Assess Skeletal Muscle Mitochondrial Function in Women Undergoing Chemotherapy: A Pilot Study" Accepted to present at 2026 NCCN Conference

-Callum Allison, Grace Anderson, Jolie Guinn, Michael Wolfe, Frankie Bennett, Virginia van Staden, Randolph Hutchison, Larry Gluck, Jennifer L. Trilk "Reliability of Physiological Parameters in a Fatigue Recovery Protocol for Breast and Gynecological Cancer Patients" Accepted to present at 2026 ACSM Southeast Conference

Lifestyle Medicine

Poster Presentations

-Emily Russell, Sarah Brown, Jared Dawson, James Rosemeyer, Frankie Bennett, Alex Ewing, Phyllis MacGilvray, Jennifer Trilk "Facilitators and Barriers to Practicing Lifestyle Medicine in the Primary Care Setting" Presented at 2025 ACLM Conference

-Hanes Grafe, Ronnie Keel, Ryan Stover, Brice Ghent, Conner Magar, Frankie Bennett and Jennifer Trilk "Impact of Community-based Adaptive Sports on Depression and Quality of Life in Persons with Disabilities" Presented at 2025 Southeast ACSM and 2024 SOMG Research Symposium

Articles Published

-Polak R, Frates B, Mirsky J, Trilk J, Wood N, Moore M, Thomas O, Phillips EM. Defining Culinary Medicine: A Call for Consensus on Competencies to Improve Nutrition. Nutrients. 2025 Apr 22;17(9):1403. doi: 10.3390/nu17091403. PMID: 40362712; PMCID: PMC12073106.

-Rea B, Holmes S, Bernstein M, Schleiter Hitchell K, Howley L, Shetty P, Freeman K, Trilk J, Frates B. "Cultivating the Future: The Intersection of Education and Lifestyle Medicine". Am J Lifestyle Med. 2025 Mar 24;15598276251327925. doi: 10.1177/15598276251327925. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40161278; PMCID: PMC11948256.

LOOKING AHEAD

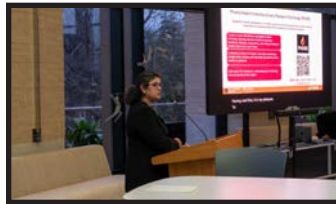
PHIRE

The Prisma Health Inter-Disciplinary Research Exchange (PHIRE) is a new initiative that brings together clinicians, faculty, learners, researchers, and leaders from across Prisma Health and its academic partners to build a more connected, cross-disciplinary research community.

PHIRE is designed to strengthen collaboration and innovation by helping people:

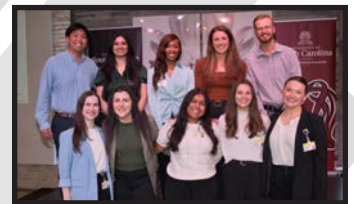
- Connect with colleagues across specialties and backgrounds
- Find or join research interest groups aligned with their interests
- Engage in mentorship—either by stepping into a mentor role or finding a mentor to support professional growth
- Explore new ideas and partnerships in an inclusive, welcoming environment

PHIRE is for clinicians and faculty from Prisma Health and its academic partners, medical residents and fellows, medical students, and clinical research leaders. More collaboration, participation, and engagements are heating up over the next year. Stay tuned!



Research Symposium

Please join us November 20th for the 7th Annual School of Medicine Research Symposium. Faculty, staff, and students will have an opportunity to demonstrate their scholarly pursuits, present their research, and connect with the campus community. More details to come!



Lifestyle Medicine Research Symposium

Lifestyle Medicine Symposium coming fall of 2026—bringing the latest evidence and practical insights into how everyday habits shape health.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research teams, partners, funders

Thank you to the research teams, collaborators, and operational partners whose expertise and dedication made this work possible. We also gratefully acknowledge our funders for their support and investment in advancing discovery, improving care, and expanding the impact of research across USC SOMG and our academic partners.

Mentors

Thank you to our faculty mentors for strengthening our research culture through mentorship and collaboration. Your guidance helps turn curiosity into projects, projects into partnerships, and partnerships into impact across Prisma Health and our academic partners. We are grateful for your time, expertise, and continued commitment to developing the next generation of clinicians and researchers.

Admin & Support

Thank you to our administrative and support teams for the behind-the-scenes coordination that makes this work possible. Your organization, responsiveness, and steady support keep projects moving forward and ensure our research efforts are carried out efficiently and with excellence.

A special thanks also to BMS Research Coordinator Kirby Allen, Research Program Manager Victoria Costello, and Marketing and Communications Manager Simon Whitaker for their tireless efforts in producing this year's research report.

Educate. Innovate. Serve. Where Lifestyle is Medicine.





**School of Medicine
Greenville**
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA