

SCHOLARS FOR APPLIED RESEARCH AND IMPACT

Meet the 2026 SARI Cohort

A cross-institution initiative training nurse scientists and transdisciplinary scholars to address systemic and institutional factors shaping health equity across communities.

Scholars for Applied Research and Impact

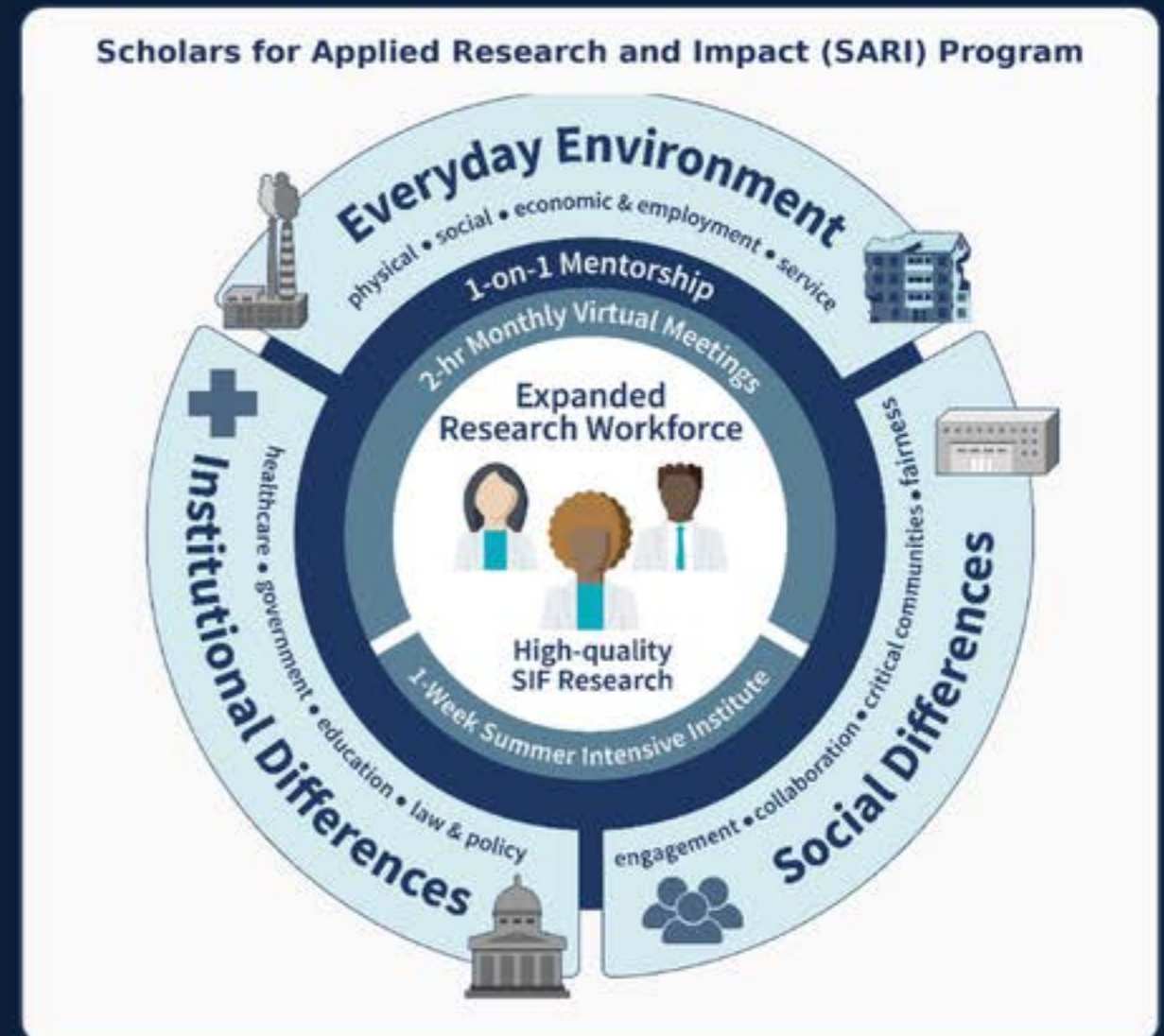
A 12-month, cohort-style Research Education Program

The SARI Program equips PhD students through mid-career nurse scientists with the knowledge, training, and mentorship to conduct rigorous research on **systemic and institutional factors (SIF)** shaping health outcomes. Grounded in the NIH Conceptualization, the Program explicitly trains Scholars to investigate the everyday environment (physical, social, economic), institutional differences (healthcare, government, education, law, policy), and social differences (engagement, collaboration, fairness).

 <p>1-on-1 Mentorship 12 months with leading SIF researchers</p>	 <p>Summer Intensive 1-week in-person institute June 8–12, 2026</p>
 <p>Monthly Meetings 2-hr virtual cohort sessions on SIF content</p>	 <p>Certificate & CEUs Certificate in SIF Research + CEU credit</p>

<p>15 SCHOLARS</p>	<p>20+ INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p>30+ EXPERT FACULTY</p>	<p>12 MONTHS</p>
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SARI CONCEPTUAL MODEL



SARI LEADERSHIP & RESEARCH SUPPORT TEAM

PROGRAM DIRECTORS (MPIs)



Bridgette M. Rice

PhD, MDiv, APRN, FAAN

Associate Dean for Research & Innovation · Kreider Endowed Chair

Villanova University



Kamila A. Alexander

PhD, MPH, RN

Associate Professor · Natalie & Wes Bush Rising Professor

Johns Hopkins School of Nursing



Priscilla O. Okunji

PhD, CRNP, FNP-BC, FIMC

Professor, College of Nursing & Allied Health Sciences

Howard University

RESEARCH & ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT



Margaret Brace, PhD

Co-Investigator · Research Assistant Professor

Villanova Nursing



Jill Sinha, MS

Program Coordinator

Villanova Nursing



Nabina Karki, BSN, RN

Graduate Research Assistant · MSN-FNP Student

Villanova Nursing



Celumusa Ndlangamandla

Graduate Research Assistant · PhD Student

Johns Hopkins School of Nursing



Barbara Morris, MSN, RN, CPN

Graduate Research Assistant · PhD Student

Villanova Nursing

Brianna A. Baker

CREDENTIALS

Ph.D.

ROLE

Postdoctoral Fellow

• INSTITUTION

CUNY Center for Innovation in Mental Health

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Kamila A. Alexander

PhD, MPH, RN · Johns Hopkins School of Nursing

MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH

HEALTH EQUITY

BLACK FAMILIES

SARI 2026

Dr. Brianna A. Baker is a public health psychologist and prevention scientist whose work focuses on Black families, maternal mental health, and structural determinants of health. She is an Implementation Science Postdoctoral Fellow at the CUNY Center for Innovation in Mental Health and an affiliated researcher with the Stanford Medicine Sports Equity Lab. Her research integrates family systems, biobehavioral processes, and community-engaged approaches to develop culturally responsive interventions that address health disparities.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Baker will develop a conceptual and empirical foundation for a study examining how structural determinants shape mental and physical health outcomes among Black mothers during the perinatal period. She will refine an integrative framework linking structural stressors—such as racism and economic instability—to psychological and biobehavioral processes, producing a manuscript or grant-ready framework to inform a movement-based intervention promoting well-being among Black mothers.



SARI 2026

Lilian G. Bravo

CREDENTIALS

PhD, RN

ROLE

Assistant Professor

• INSTITUTION

University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Dalmacio Dennis Flores

PhD, RN, FAAN · University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

SUICIDE PREVENTION

LATINX HEALTH EQUITY

Dr. Lilian Bravo is an Assistant Professor at the University of Miami's School of Nursing and Health Studies and a National Clinician Scholars Program fellow (UCLA). Her research focuses on identifying culturally and contextually congruent risk and protective mechanisms in self-injurious thoughts and behaviors, and developing youth-informed solutions to improve mental health support access for ethno-racially minoritized youth and young adults at risk for suicide.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Bravo will develop and submit an NIH R34 grant application proposing the adaptation and pilot testing of the eHealth Familias Unidas Mental Health intervention to address social and institutional factors that barrier optimal mental health among Hispanic college-entering youth. She will assess feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effects on mental health outcomes, family functioning, and help-seeking behaviors.



SARI 2026

Lauren Covington

CREDENTIALS

PhD, RN

ROLE

Assistant Professor

• INSTITUTION

University of Delaware School of Nursing

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Trace Kershaw

PhD · Yale School of Public Health

SLEEP HEALTH EQUITY

INFANT MORTALITY

BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH

Dr. Lauren Covington is an Assistant Professor at the University of Delaware School of Nursing, a sleep health equity researcher, and a practicing Pediatric ICU nurse with over 15 years of experience. Her research focuses on improving sleep and health outcomes in socioeconomically disadvantaged families, with particular attention to reducing infant sleep-related mortality among Black families. As a Betty Irene Moore Fellow, she partners with Black mothers to co-create safe sleep strategies that reflect lived realities.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Covington will develop an NINR R01 grant proposal testing whether addressing structural determinants reduces sleep-related infant mortality among Black families compared to standard maternal education. The intervention will be co-designed with community organizations and Black mothers, targeting peer navigation, provider bias training, Black-led organizational partnerships, and structural supports such as transportation and childcare.



SARI 2026

Brenice Duroseau

CREDENTIALS

PhD, MSN, FNP-C, RNC-OB, AAHIVS

• INSTITUTION

Duke University School of Nursing

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Yzette Lanier

PhD · New York University

ROLE

Postdoctoral Fellow & Nurse Practitioner

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

HIV PREVENTION

DIGITAL HEALTH EQUITY

Dr. Brenice Duroseau is an infectious diseases and addiction medicine nurse practitioner and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) researcher. She earned her PhD from Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, where she received the Outstanding Dissertation Award, and is currently a T32 Postdoctoral Fellow at the Duke University School of Nursing. Her research examines the social, structural, and political determinants of SRH and HIV prevention, with a focus on designing equitable, integrated, and person-centered models of care for Black women.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Duroseau will co-develop a culturally responsive, AI-delivered video intervention to address the mental health and relational impacts of digital misogynoir among Black emerging adults. The research product will include a co-designed intervention informed by community participatory methods, along with a logic model and ethical AI framework to guide implementation. The intervention will leverage short-form video modules to promote self-esteem and mental well-being within digital environments.

Ngozi Victoria Enelamah

CREDENTIALS

PhD

ROLE

Assistant Professor

• INSTITUTION

Boston College

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Nkechi Enwerem

PhD, RN · Howard University

REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT HEALTH

CHILD & ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

SARI 2026

Dr. Ngozi V. Enelamah conducts research in global health and social work, focusing on the mental health and psychosocial support needs of immigrant, refugee, and Black youth. She explores how family, school, and neighborhood environments shape developmental and behavioral outcomes across contexts of displacement and structural adversity, applying socioecological frameworks to develop culturally responsive, resilience-focused interventions for children and families in U.S. and international settings.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Enelamah will develop a mixed-methods implementation science proposal to NIMH for a randomized controlled trial examining the efficacy of a culturally adapted mother-child mental health intervention (LaLaPaSu) for refugee mothers and young children. The intervention supports positive parenting, strengthens family bonds, and improves access to culturally responsive mental health resources, comparing in-person and digital delivery models.



SARI 2026

DeKeitra Griffin

CREDENTIALS

MSW, MPA, LCSW

ROLE

PhD Student

• INSTITUTION

Louisiana State University

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Orlando L. Harris

PhD, FNP, MPH · UC San Francisco School of Nursing

HIV EQUITY

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

BLACK SGLM COMMUNITIES

DeKeitra Griffin is a PhD student at Louisiana State University and a nationally engaged advocate advancing behavioral health and HIV equity. He holds leadership roles with the Professional Association of Social Workers in HIV/AIDS, the National HIV/AIDS Housing Coalition, and the U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus. President of LSU's Association of Black Social Workers, Griffin translates personal insight and lived experience into advocacy that strengthens services, informs policy, and improves outcomes for marginalized communities.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Griffin will develop a grant application supporting a quantitative study examining how intimate partner violence affects quality of life among Black same-gender-loving men in the United States. The project will incorporate structural factors—including housing instability, economic hardship, HIV criminalization, and healthcare access—into predictive and moderation analyses aimed at advancing structural health equity.

Melissa Hinds

CREDENTIALS

RN, MSN

ROLE

PhD Student

• INSTITUTION

University of Connecticut, Elizabeth DeLuca School of Nursing

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Foster Baah

MS-PhD, RN · Emory University

SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS

CARDIOMETABOLIC HEALTH

INTEGRATED CARE

SARI 2026

Melissa Hinds, MSN, RN, is a PhD student at the University of Connecticut's Elizabeth DeLuca School of Nursing and serves as Associate Director of Health and Technology at the Center for Practice Innovations (CPI). She leads curriculum development and system transformation initiatives, supporting the behavioral health workforce through training and education. Her work focuses on integrated care, first-episode psychosis, and leveraging technology to expand access in underserved communities. She champions evidence-based practice, culturally responsive care, and interprofessional education to enhance outcomes and advance nursing research.

RESEARCH PROJECT

This project shifts focus from individual behaviors to Systemic and Institutional Factors (SIF) that create silos between psychiatric and physical healthcare for emerging adults (ages 18–29) with serious mental illness (SMI), who face disproportionate cardiometabolic disease burden. The resulting Systemic Implementation Toolkit for Emerging Adult Cardiometabolic Health includes a SIF Audit Tool, a mobile-first equity adaptation guide, and an interprofessional collaborative map—providing preliminary data for an NIH F31 Pre-doctoral Fellowship application.



SARI 2026

Christine Kimpel

CREDENTIALS

PhD, RN, MA

ROLE

Assistant Professor

• INSTITUTION

The Ohio State University College of Nursing

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Linda Collins

BA, PhD · New York University

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

AGING & LOW-INCOME ADULTS

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

Dr. Christine C. Kimpel is an assistant professor and nurse scientist at The Ohio State University College of Nursing whose research focuses on improving advance care planning for older adults with limited income, with emphasis on trauma-informed approaches and age-friendly community environments. Her work examines how social, environmental, and life-course factors influence engagement in shared decision-making among underserved populations, using implementation science and community-engaged approaches.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Kimpel will develop a competitive NIH grant application proposing a community health worker-led advance care planning intervention for socioeconomically vulnerable persons at high risk for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The proposal will include co-design and feasibility testing of a culturally responsive intervention, a randomized controlled trial, and examination of multilevel implementation barriers within a real-world clinical network.

Pia Pauline Lenon

CREDENTIALS

BSN, RN

ROLE

PhD Candidate

• INSTITUTION

University of Illinois Chicago, College of Nursing

ASSIGNED MENTOR**Jane Jih**

MD, MPH, MAS - UC San Francisco

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

RURAL & INDIGENOUS HEALTH

MATERNAL MORTALITY

SARI 2026

Pia Pauline Lenon is a PhD Candidate in Nursing interested in policy-relevant research addressing systemic and institutional factors that shape the health of marginalized communities. Her work explores how structural inequities and trauma influence maternal and mental health outcomes. She aims to develop culturally grounded, evidence-based interventions in partnership with communities to promote sustainable improvements in health.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Lenon will develop a competitive NIH career development award focused on perinatal mental health screening and early identification in a rural tribal community. Perinatal mental health conditions contribute significantly to maternal morbidity and mortality, with rural and indigenous communities facing additional barriers including limited provider access, workforce shortages, historical trauma, healthcare distrust, and stigma.

Leah McClellan

CREDENTIALS

PhD, MSN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC

• INSTITUTION

Loyola University Chicago

ROLE

Instructor

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Bridgette M. Rice

PhD, MDiv, APRN, FAAN · Villanova University

OPIOID USE & PLACE

NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH

GIS & HEALTH POLICY

SARI 2026

Leah McClellan is a nursing instructor at Loyola University Chicago with clinical experience in emergency and psychiatric settings and prior work on the NIH-funded Women's Interagency HIV Study. Completing her PhD at Rush University (Spring 2026), her research focuses on neighborhood-level factors related to opioid use in Chicago. Her work bridges lived experience, policy, and geographic data to inform more equitable policies and approaches to care.

RESEARCH PROJECT

McClellan's project will examine how decades of federal, state, and local policies have shaped neighborhood experiences and opioid outcomes in Chicago. The study will triangulate qualitative data, a policy timeline, and GIS mapping to visualize how neighborhoods changed over time—deepening understanding of how policies are experienced at the neighborhood level to guide equitable policymaking and place-based interventions.



SARI 2026

Kelly McGlothen-Bell

CREDENTIALS

PhD, RN, IBCLC, FAWHONN, FAAN

• INSTITUTION

UT San Antonio, School of Nursing

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Sara Jacoby

PhD, MPH, MSN, FAAN · University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

PERINATAL SUBSTANCE USE

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

HEALTH POLICY

Dr. Kelly McGlothen-Bell is an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is a nurse scientist and health equity scholar whose research focuses on perinatal substance use, maternal–infant health, and health policy, with an emphasis on how clinical practices and policies influence access to care for mother–infant dyads. Grounded in reproductive justice, her work advances family-centered, non-punitive models of care. She has authored more than 40 peer-reviewed publications and is a 2025 Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. McGlothen-Bell will develop an NIH R01 examining how systemic and institutional factors contribute to inequities in maternal–infant health among families affected by perinatal substance use. The study will focus on how value-laden language in clinical documentation varies by substance use status and drug testing practices, and how institutional policies and child protective services involvement shape documentation and care pathways.



SARI 2026

Kerry Nolte

CREDENTIALS

PhD, FNP-C

ROLE

Associate Professor

• INSTITUTION

University of New Hampshire School of Nursing

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Trace Kershaw

PhD · Yale School of Public Health

HARM REDUCTION

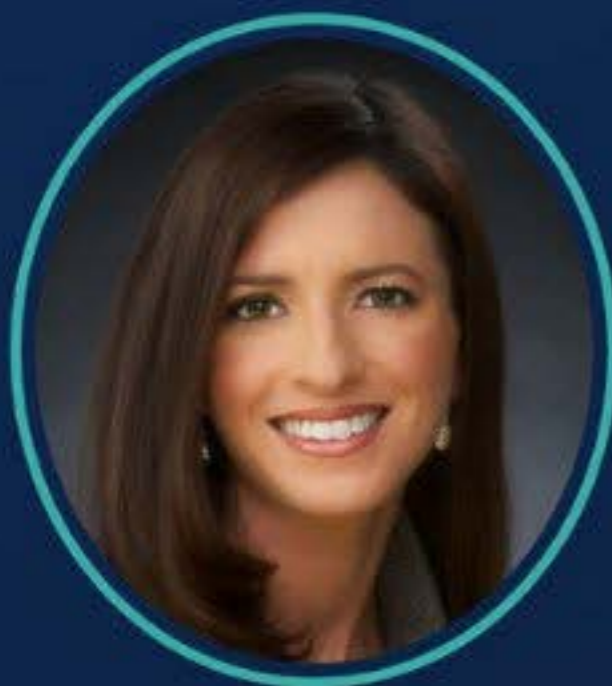
SUBSTANCE USE

DRUG POLICY & SIF

Dr. Kerry Nolte is an Associate Professor at the University of New Hampshire School of Nursing whose program of research seeks to reduce drug-related harm in collaboration with people who use drugs. She earned her PhD from Northeastern University with a focus on HIV prevention and collaborates closely with recovery community organizations and harm reduction programs across New England. Dr. Nolte has received the 2019 NH Nurses Association Excellence in Nurse Research award and the 2023 Excellence in Public Service Faculty Award, and continues practicing as an FNP in a healthcare for the homeless program.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Nolte will develop an NIH R15/R21 proposal examining how SIF factors—including stigma— influence transitions to and away from drug injecting. This addresses an emergent finding from her team's Health at Harm Reduction Programs study showing a 45% reduction in participants currently injecting. Understanding how social and institutional factors shape these transitions holds important evidence for substance use prevention and drug-related risk reduction.



SARI 2026

Jeni Page

CREDENTIALS

PhD, APRN, ACNP-BC

ROLE

Assistant Professor

• INSTITUTION

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Priscilla O. Okunji

PhD, CRNP, FNP-BC, FIMC · Howard University

CARDIOMETABOLIC RISK

RURAL WOMEN'S HEALTH

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Dr. Jeni Page is an assistant professor and nurse scientist at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, where her research examines how social determinants of health intersect with biological pathways to shape cardiometabolic risk among women in underserved rural communities. Drawing on a background in anthropology and nursing science, she integrates clinical, behavioral, and biomarker data to investigate systemic influences on metabolic vulnerability and health disparities.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Page will develop a peer-reviewed manuscript examining how adverse social determinants of health relate to cardiometabolic risk and systemic inflammation among perimenopausal women in rural West Texas. In partnership with a federally qualified health center, she will collect biological measures and contextual data to identify which structural conditions are most associated with cardiometabolic vulnerability in this underserved population.

Karyn Roberts

CREDENTIALS

PhD, MSN, RN

ROLE

Associate Professor

• INSTITUTION

UNC–Greensboro School of Nursing

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Jennifer Wenzel

PhD, RN, CCM, FAAN · Johns Hopkins School of Nursing

GENOMIC HEALTH EQUITY

PEDIATRIC CHRONIC ILLNESS

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH

SARI 2026

Dr. Karyn Roberts is an Associate Professor of Nursing at UNC–Greensboro and a former NIH Genomic Medicine Program Management Fellow. Her research advances health equity and quality of life for children with chronic conditions. Grounded in an anti-racist praxis, she builds transdisciplinary teams focused on individuals at risk for hereditary cancers and sickle cell disease/trait, with particular attention to access, trust, and continuity of care.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Roberts will develop a submission-ready NIH R16 SuRE First application focused on strengthening equitable recruitment, follow-up, and care coordination in a large population genomic screening initiative at Cone Health (Greensboro, NC) in partnership with Helix. The project will examine community and system barriers to engaging historically underrepresented communities and build institutional research capacity through student engagement.

Syketha J. Sprague

CREDENTIALS

RN, MSN, FNP-C

ROLE

PhD Student

• INSTITUTION

Rush University

ASSIGNED MENTOR



Foster Baah

MS-PhD, RN · Emory University

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH

CARDIOMETABOLIC RISK

NEPHROLOGY & SIF

SARI 2026

Syketha Sprague, RN, MSN, FNP-C, is a Renal Nurse Practitioner and PhD candidate in Nursing Science at Rush University with over twenty years of clinical experience in nephrology and cardiometabolic health, with expertise focusing on women veterans. Her research applies epidemiologic and health services methods to explore structural drivers of chronic disease and promote equity-focused solutions. She is dedicated to developing evidence-based strategies that improve population health, reduce disparities, and strengthen community-engaged research using advanced quantitative methods.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Women veterans face unique structural and institutional barriers intensified by gender- and service-related stressors, necessitating culturally responsive interventions. During SARI, Sprague will incorporate community advisory input to better address systemic factors, with a research goal to develop culturally responsive, prevention-focused interventions and promote equity-focused strategies through community-informed research targeting cardiometabolic health among women veterans.

SCHOLARS FOR APPLIED RESEARCH AND IMPACT

Join the SARI Community

Connect with our scholars, mentors, and faculty as we advance SIF research together.



Official Program Website

villanova.edu/university/nursing/faculty-and-research/studies-groups/sari

Learn more about the SARI Program, our mission, cohort news, and how to apply for future cohorts.



LinkedIn Group

[SARI: Scholars for Applied Research and Impact](#)

Connect with us.



Email the SARI Team

sari@villanova.edu

Questions about the program, the 2026 cohort, or future application cycles? Reach out directly to our program team.

Villanova University · Johns Hopkins School of Nursing · Howard University