

# KRISTEN M.J. AZAR, PHD RN MSN/MPH FAHA CPHQ

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## PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

2023- PRESENT	Executive Director Sutter Health Institute for Advancing Health Equity Sutter Health, Sacramento, CA
2023- PRESENT	Faculty, Health Equity Subject Matter Expert Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), Boston, MA
2020- PRESENT	Senior Research Scientist Center for Health Systems Research Sutter Health, Walnut Creek, CA
2020- 2023	Scientific Medical Director Sutter Health Institute for Advancing Health Equity Sutter Health, Sacramento, CA
2015-2020	Research Scientist Research, Development and Dissemination/ Center for Health Systems Research Sutter Health, Walnut Creek, CA
2015-2017	Community Health Research and Development Program Manager for Alameda County Sutter Health, Walnut Creek, CA
2012-2015	Professional Researcher Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute/Sutter Health, Palo Alto, CA
2009-2012	Research Associate Palo Alto Medical Foundation Research Institute/Sutter Health, Palo Alto, CA
2009-2012	Registered Nurse, South Asian Consult Service – PRANA Palo Alto Medical Foundation/Sutter Health, Palo Alto, CA

## EDUCATION

### *Universities Attended*

2019 - 2024	Ph.D. (Epidemiology and Translational Science), University of California San Francisco, School of Medicine, San Francisco, CA
2007-2009	M.S.N./M.P.H. (Nursing and Public Health) Johns Hopkins University, School of Nursing, Baltimore, MD Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD
2005-2007	B.S.N. (Nursing), Research Honors Program Johns Hopkins University, School of Nursing, Baltimore, MD
2000-2004	B.A. (English), Dean's Honor List Pre-medical requirements completed University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

### *Additional Training*

2017	Open School Basic Certificate Quality Improvement Institute for Healthcare Improvement
2011	37th Ten-Day Seminar on the Epidemiology and Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship American Heart Association
2010	Group Lifestyle Balance Facilitator Training
2010	University of Pittsburgh, Diabetes Prevention Support Center Lipid Management Training Course and Comprehensive Cardiometabolic Risk Reduction Program National Lipid Association
2009	Gladstone Institute Lipid Disorders Mini Fellowship University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, CA
2009	Intramural Research Training Award National Institutes of Health Clinical Center, Bethesda, MD

### *Other Leadership Training*

2022-2023	Sutter Health Leadership Academy Executive Training Program Sutter Health, Sacramento, CA
2021	Sutter Health Accelerated Change Excellence (ACE) Program Sutter Health, Sacramento, CA
2013	Palo Alto Medical Foundation Leadership Excellence Program Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Palo Alto, CA

### **HONORS AND AWARDS**

2021	Recipient, Nurse Leader Award in Health Equity Association of California Nurse Leaders (ACNL) Sac Sierra Chapter
2018	Elected Fellow: American Heart Association Council on Lifestyle and Cardiometabolic Health
2014	Invited Presenter "Top 10% Best of Specialty Conferences" American Heart Association Scientific Sessions
2009	Graduate Leadership Award Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing
2009	Delta Omega Public Health Honor Society, Alpha Chapter
2007	Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
2007	Edna Schoen Memorial Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing
2000-2004	Member, Biology Scholars Program University of California, Berkeley

## GRANT AWARDS

2020-2022	<p><u>Funder:</u> NIH-NIA 5R61AG068927</p> <p><u>Title:</u> An Electronic Health Record based Dashboard-driven Intervention Improve Identification and Management of Preventive Care for Cardiovascular Disease</p> <p><u>Role:</u> Co-Investigator</p> <p><u>Principal Investigator (PI):</u> Sherry Yan, PhD</p>
2017-2023	<p><u>Funder:</u> NIH-NIDDK 1R18DK110739-01A1</p> <p><u>Title:</u> Evaluation of a Lifestyle Intervention Adopted for Clinical Practice for Diabetes Prevention (ELEVATE-DP)</p> <p><u>Role:</u> Co-Principal Investigator (PI)</p> <p><u>Co-PI:</u> Robert Romanelli, PhD</p>
2020-2022	<p><u>Funder:</u> PCORI</p> <p><u>Title:</u> Comparing patient-reported impact of COVID-19 shelter-in-place policies and access to containment and mitigation strategies, overall and in vulnerable populations</p> <p><u>Role:</u> Subaward PI &amp; Co-Investigator</p> <p><u>PI:</u> Mark Pletcher, PhD</p>
2020-2022	<p><u>Funder:</u> Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc</p> <p><u>Title:</u> Health systems and Homelessness: Analysis of homelessness data from a large healthcare system in Northern California</p> <p><u>Role:</u> PI</p>
2020-2022	<p><u>Funder:</u> Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc</p> <p><u>Title:</u> Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior (STB): Examining screening, detection and follow-up care within a large multispecialty healthcare system</p> <p><u>Role:</u> Co-PI</p> <p><u>Co-PI:</u> Ellis Dillon, PhD</p>
2016-2020	<p><u>Funder:</u> PCORI Addressing Disparities (R-1511-33394)</p> <p><u>Title:</u> The HOMBRE trial: Comparing two innovative approaches to reduce chronic disease risk among Latino men</p> <p><u>Role:</u> Subaward PI &amp; Co-Investigator</p> <p><u>PI:</u> Lisa Goldman Rosas, PhD</p>
2018-2019	<p><u>Funder:</u> Takeda Grant #MACS-2017-102367</p> <p><u>Title:</u> Understanding Primary Care Detection and Management of Major Depressive Disorder</p> <p><u>Role:</u> PI</p>
2014-2019	<p><u>Funder:</u> AHRQ (R01 HS022702)</p> <p><u>Title:</u> Culturally-adapted DPP intervention for Mexican Americans in primary care: an RCT</p> <p><u>Role:</u> Subaward PI &amp; Co-Investigator</p> <p><u>PI:</u> Jun Ma, MD PhD</p>
2014-2019	<p><u>Funder:</u> NIH-NHLBI (R01 HL119453)</p> <p><u>Title:</u> RAINBOW: RCT on Co-management of Obesity, Depression, and Elevated CVD Risk in Primary Care</p> <p><u>Role:</u> Subaward PI &amp; Co-Investigator</p> <p><u>PI:</u> Jun Ma, MD PhD</p>

2017-2018	<u>Funder:</u> Regeneron <u>Title:</u> Assessment of Statin Utilization and Outcomes among Diverse Racial and Ethnic Groups in Mixed-Payer Healthcare Delivery System <u>Role:</u> Co-Investigator <u>PI:</u> Robert Romanelli, PhD
2017-2018	<u>Funder:</u> Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc <u>Title:</u> Serious Mental Illness and Other Health Multi-level factors Associated with Regional Health System Super Utilization <u>Role:</u> PI
2015-2017	<u>Funder:</u> Better Health East Bay (Sutter Health)/ California Health Care Foundation <u>Title:</u> PreManage ED™ East Bay Pilot Study <u>Role:</u> Project Director
2015-2016	<u>Funder:</u> Palo Alto Medical Foundation/Sutter Health <u>Title:</u> Teen Lifestyle Balance Study <u>Role:</u> PI
2016	<u>Funder:</u> Better Health East Bay (Sutter Health). <u>Title:</u> Understanding the Needs and Experiences of High Utilizers at the Emergency Department of Highland Hospital <u>Role:</u> PI
2012-2015	<u>Funder:</u> NIH/SBIR 4R44NR012617-02/ Berkeley Analytics Inc. <u>Title:</u> ALIVE: A Lifestyle Intervention by Email for Pre-Diabetes <u>Role:</u> Subaward PI & Co-Investigator <u>PI:</u> Gladys Block, PhD
2014	<u>Funder:</u> Palo Alto Medical Foundation <u>Title:</u> CardioMetabolic Program meets eHealth (eCMP): Redesign and evaluation for optimal reach and impact <u>Role:</u> Co-Investigator; <u>PI:</u> Jun Ma, MD PhD
2012-2013	<u>Funder:</u> The Verizon Foundation <u>Title:</u> Virtual Small Groups for Weight Management: An innovative delivery mechanism for evidence-based lifestyle interventions (VITAL)” Study <u>Role:</u> PI

#### GLOBAL HEALTH EXPERIENCE

2008	Public Health Intern- Designed and conducted a program evaluation of the HIV/AIDS Home-Based Care Program, International Orthodox Christian Charities, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2008	Completed special course in Nursing in Global Humanitarian Relief; Institute for Johns Hopkins Nursing, Center for Refugees and Disaster Response
2007	Nursing Intern- Public Health Nursing Clinical Rotation;

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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3. Dillon EC, Deng S, Li M., Huang Q, de Vera E, Pesa J., Nguyen T., Kiger A., Becker DF, **Azar K**, (2024) Analysis of Hospitals Switching From a “Danger to Self” Question to Universal Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale Screening: Impact on Screenings, Identification of Suicide Risk, and Documented Psychiatric Care; *Psychiatric Research and Clinical Practice*, April: 6(2)
4. Main E, Fuller M, Kovacheva V, Elkhateb R, **Azar K**, Caldwell M, Chiem V, Foster M, Gibbs R, Hughes BL, Johnson R, Kottukapally N, Rosenstein MG, Sanz Cortes M, Shields LE, Sudat S, Sutton CD, Toledo P, Traylor A, Wharton K, Bauer M (2024) Performance Characteristics of Sepsis Screening Tools During Delivery Admissions; *Obstet Gynecol* 2024 Mar 1;143(3):326-335. doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000005477. Epub 2023 Dec 12.
5. Bauer M, Fuller M, Kovacheva V, Elkhateb R, **Azar K**, Caldwell M, Chiem V, Foster M, Gibbs R, Hughes BL, Johnson R, Kottukapally N, Rosenstein MG, Sanz Cortes M, Shields LE, Sudat S, Sutton CD, Toledo P, Traylor A, Wharton K, Main E. (2024) Performance Characteristics of Sepsis Screening Tools During Antepartum and Postpartum Admissions; *Obstet Gynecol* 2024 Mar 1;143(3):336-345.Epub 2023 Dec 12.
6. Mudiganti S, Nasrallah C, Brown S, Pressman A, Kiger A, Casey JA, LaMori JC, Pesa J, **Azar KMJ**. (2024) Homelessness Among Acute Care Patients Within a Large Health Care System in Northern California. *Population Health Management*, Feb; 27(1): 13-25
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9. **Azar KJM** , Sudat S., Huang Q, Pressman AR, Szwedinski N, Nasrallah C, Venditti EM, Romanelli RJ,. Examining paradoxical session attendance and weight loss relationships in a clinic based lifestyle modification intervention. *Obesity Science & Practice*. (2023)
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66. Dixit AA, **Azar KM**, Gardner CD, Palaniappan LP. Incorporation of whole, ancient grains into a modern Asian Indian diet to reduce the burden of chronic disease. *Nutr Rev* 2011;69:479-88.

#### SUTTER HEALTH VITALS ARTICLES ARCHIVE

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2025 | Can AI Help Scale Eye Screening, Equitably?<br><a href="https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/can-ai-help-scale-eye-screening-equitably/">https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/can-ai-help-scale-eye-screening-equitably/</a>  |
| 2024 | Health Systems Creating Benchmark for Health Equity<br><a href="https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/health-systems-creating-benchmark-for-health-equity/">https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/health-systems-creating-benchmark-for-health-equity/</a><br>Walking the Talk: Health System Leads Health Equity Improvement<br><a href="https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/walking-the-talk-health-system-leads-health-equity-improvement/">https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/walking-the-talk-health-system-leads-health-equity-improvement/</a>  |
| 2023 | New Health Equity Nursing Fellowship Selects Inaugural Candidate<br><a href="https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/nations-first-health-equity-nursing-fellowship-selects-inaugural-candidate/">https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/nations-first-health-equity-nursing-fellowship-selects-inaugural-candidate/</a><br>How Existing Research Tools May Help or Hinder Health Equity<br><a href="https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/how-existing-research-tools-may-help-or-hinder-health-equity/">https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/how-existing-research-tools-may-help-or-hinder-health-equity/</a><br>Today's Research is Tomorrow's Best Medicine<br><a href="https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/todays-research-is-tomorrows-best-medicine/">https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/todays-research-is-tomorrows-best-medicine/</a> |
| 2022 | Addressing Unconscious Bias in Healthcare: The Power of Partnerships  |



<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/addressing-unconscious-bias-in-healthcare-the-power-of-partnerships/>

Health Equity Takes Center Stage at Recent Symposium

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/health-equity-takes-center-stage-at-recent-symposium/>

Study Uncovers How Medical Device Bias Could Lead to 5-Hour Delays in COVID-19 Treatment for Black Patients

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/study-uncovers-how-medical-device-bias-could-lead-to-5-hour-delays-in-covid-19-treatment-for-black-patients/>

Innovation Lab Dedicated to Maternal Health Equity Launches

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/innovation-lab-dedicated-to-maternal-health-equity-launches/>

Researchers Call for More Diversity in Clinical Trials

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/researchers-call-for-more-diversity-in-clinical-trials/>

Study: Hispanic Pregnant Patients More Likely to Contract COVID

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/new-research-bolsters-need-to-prioritize-vaccination-for-hispanic-patients-early-in-pregnancy/>

2021 How Data Is Driving Health Equity Work to Improve Healthcare for All

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/data-drives-health-equity-work/>

Nurses Play Special Role in Health Equity Efforts

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/nurses-play-special-role-in-health-equity-efforts/>

Equality vs. Equity: Do You Know the Difference?

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/equality-vs-equity-do-you-know-the-difference/>

Sutter Health Launches New Tool to Increase COVID-19 Vaccine Equity for Communities of Color

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/sutter-health-launches-new-tool-to-increase-covid-19-vaccine-equity-for-communities-of-color/>

Medical Record Data Potential Key to Unlocking Health Equity Barriers

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/medical-record-data-potential-key-to-unlocking-health-equity-barriers/>

Nurse Leader Trio Earns Awards from CA Association

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/nurse-leader-trio-earns-awards/>

COVID-19 Makes It Clear: Without Equity, There's No Cure

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/covid-19-makes-it-clear-without-equity-theres-no-cure/>

2020 Change Takes Root in East Oakland in Fight Against the Coronavirus

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/change-takes-root-in-fight-against-covid/>

Study Shines Light on COVID-19 Racial Disparities

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/study-shines-light-on-covid-19-racial-disparities/>

Moving Health Equity From a Buzzword to Reality

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/moving-health-equity-from-a-buzzword-to-reality/>

2019 AHA Equity of Care Award

<https://vitals.sutterhealth.org/aha-equity-of-care-award/>

## SELECTED NEWS AND MEDIA

- 2024 Our work featured in Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) blog [Defining the Gold Standard for Identifying and Measuring Health Disparities](#) (by Nikki Tennermann and Natalie Martinez)
- 2024 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Health Equity Conference in Washington DC. Kristen Azar, RN, MSN/MPH, FAHA, Ph.D. (Sutter Health); Nikki Tennermann, LICSW, MBA (Institute for Healthcare Improvement); Rachel Harrington, PhD (National Committee for Quality Assurance); and Whitney Haggerson, MHA (Providence) presented on [Gold Standard: Aligning on Best Practice for Measuring Health Inequities and the Impact of Efforts to Reduce Them Across the U.S. Health Care Industry](#).
- 2023 The Urban Institute featured Sutter Health's journey in implementing self-reported race ethnicity, ancestry and language data in their piece entitled [Using Race and Ethnicity Data to Advance Health Equity Examples, Promising Practices, Remaining Challenges, and Next Steps](#) by Cara V. James, Jennifer M. Haley, Eva H. Allen and Taylor Nelson
- 2023 The Sutter Health Institute for Advancing Health Equity (Dr. William Isenberg, Dr. Kristen Azar and Dr. Stephanie Brown) participated in [Modern Healthcare's Social Determinants of Health Symposium](#). This opportunity was two-fold, and included both a [pre-recorded video about the IAHE](#) and its work, as well as a [fireside chat with Modern Healthcare](#) health disparities reporter Kara Hartnett.

- 2023 **Politico.** [How a health equity tool might backfire](#) and **Modern Healthcare.** [CMS Tests Payment Models to Identify Underserved Communities.](#) articles regarding our Health Affairs article “[ACO Benchmarks Based On Area Deprivation Index Mask Inequities](#)” **Azar KMJ, Alexander M, Smits K, Tio A, deGhetaldi L**
- 2023 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) inaugural health equity conference, a two-day program in Washington, D.C. featuring the research and work of health equity leaders and government partners to address social determinants of health. Presented a session entitled [Measure What Matters: Examining Variation in Health Equity Tracking & Measurement Practices](#) and discussed variation in health equity tracking and measurement practices across healthcare systems in the U.S.
- 2022 [Axios](#) that highlights the FDA panel that met regarding the Pulse Oximeter bias issue and links to Sutter’s press release highlighting the research from IAHE; Our paper was referenced in the FDA meeting documents
- 2022 Broadcast coverage in major Bay Area and Sacramento markets including [ABC 10](#) and [KRON 4](#) News which highlighted the Pulse Oximeter bias work
- 2022 Live interview on [CapRadio’s Insight Show \(NPR\)](#) featuring Kristen M.J. Azar RN MSN/MPH and Noha Aboelata, M.D., CEO, Roots Community Health Center regarding Pulse Oximeter Device Bias
- 2022 Leon Clark, Kristen M.J. Azar, **Politico.** [Health equity must reshape post-pandemic health care](#)
- 2021 After the Fact Podcast. Race and Research: The Gaps in Health. **Pew Charitable Trusts.** [Race and Research: The Gaps in Health](#) explaining how using electronic health record information and data collection can address health disparities and translate to bedside care
- 2021 Jackie Drees. Sutter Health looks to close vaccine gaps with new 'equity targets' patient data tool. **Becker’s Hospital Review.** July 13, 2021. [Sutter Health looks to close vaccine gaps with new 'equity targets' patient data tool](#)
- 2020 Godoy M. Black Medicare Patients with COVID-19 Nearly 4 Times As Likely To End Up In Hospital. **National Public Radio (NPR).** June 22, 2020. [Medicare Patients with COVID-19 Nearly 4 Times As Likely To End Up In Hospital](#)
- 2020 Crespo G. African Americans with Covid-19 more likely to be hospitalized than non-Hispanic whites, new study finds. **CNN.** May 21, 2020. [African Americans with Covid-19 more likely to be hospitalized than non-Hispanic whites, new study finds](#)
- 2020 Rabin R. Black Coronavirus Patients Land in Hospitals More Often, Study Finds. **New York Times.** May 23, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/23/health/coronavirus-black-patients.html>

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

### *National Institutes of Health (NIH) Service*

- Feb 2019 Invited member, Special Emphasis Panel on Pragmatic Research in Healthcare and Natural Experiments (R18/R34), National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health
- March 2018 Invited member, Special Emphasis Panel on Pragmatic Research in Healthcare and Natural Experiments (R18/R34), National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health
- Feb 2018 Invited member, Special Emphasis Panel on Pragmatic Research and Natural Experiments (R18/R34), National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health

### *Ad Hoc Journal Reviews*

- American Public Health Association
- Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing
- American Journal of Managed Care
- Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine
- Journal of Medical Internet Research
- Translational Behavioral Medicine
- Journal of the American Medical Association-Internal Medicine

- International Journal of Obesity
- American Journal of Epidemiology

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### *Elected Professional Society Fellowships*

2018- PRESENT                      American Heart Association (FAHA)

### *Professional Society Memberships*

2025 – PRESENT                      National Association for Healthcare Quality  
 2022 – PRESENT                      Leadership Alliance Member  
    Institute for Healthcare Improvement  
 2010 – PRESENT                      Member, American Heart Association  
 2007 – PRESENT                      Member, American Public Health Association  
 2009-2013                              Member, National Lipid Association  
 2009-2015                              Member, Preventive Cardiology Nurses Association

### *Committee Membership*

2023 – PRESENT                      EPI/CVSN Scientific Committee, Invited Member  
    **American Heart Association**  
 2021 – 2025                              Health Equity Network Advisory Committee, Invited Member  
    **Vizient**  
 2022 – 2023                              Sutter Medicare Direct Board, Member  
    **Sutter Health**  
 2021- 2023                              Health Equity Committee  
    **Integrated Healthcare Association**  
 2010-2011                              Chronic Care Task Force, Member  
    **Palo Alto Medical Foundation**  
 2009-2015                              Organizational Cultural Competence Committee, Founding Member  
    **Palo Alto Medical Foundation**

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2025                                      Instructor, Designing Clinical Research (DCR)  
    University of California San Francisco, School of Medicine  
 2022, 2024, 2025                      Guest Lecturer, Healthcare Policy,  
    University of California Berkeley School of Public Health  
 2023                                      Co-Director, Epidemiology and Translational Science Doctoral Seminar,  
    University of California San Francisco, School of Medicine  
 2021                                      Biostatistical Methods for Clinical Research IV (Biostatistics 210)  
    Graduate Student Instructor  
    University of California San Francisco, School of Medicine  
 2015                                      Stanford Health for All (H4A) Fellowship Program  
    Co-Instructor

## Stanford University School of Medicine

### MENTEES

Irene Arroyo- Romero– Mentored as our inaugural Samuel Merritt DNP fellow with the Sutter Health Institute for Advancing Health Equity and Samuel Merritt University in 2023-2024

Hallie Roth - Mentored as a UC Berkeley MPH fellow with the Sutter Health Institute for Advancing Health Equity in 2021-2023

Andres Gonzalez - Mentored as a UC Berkeley MPH fellow with the Sutter Health Institute for Advancing Health Equity in 2021-2023

Rachel Berkowitz DrPH MPH – Mentored as a UC Berkeley post-doctoral fellow with the Sutter Health Institute for Advancing Health Equity in 2020-2021; Is now Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health and Recreation, San José State University

Linh Bui PhD MPH - Mentored as a UC Berkeley post-doctoral fellow with the Sutter Health Institute for Advancing Health Equity in 2020-2021; Is now Assistant Professor of Public Health, Department of Nursing, Cal State Bakersfield

### PERSONAL

Musician and proud mother of three amazing boys.