



Vol. 2 | 2026 Summer | Quarterly Member Newsletter

Attendees Give High Marks to the 2026 HCSRN Annual Conference

The 2026 HCSRN Annual Conference brought together 245 attendees in Dallas, TX, for three days of scientific exchange, collaboration, and learning focused on the theme, Scaling Learning Health Systems: Data-Driven Pathways to Better Outcomes. Based on post-conference evaluations, attendees overwhelmingly agreed that the meeting delivered exceptional value and meaningful opportunities to advance research and strengthen professional connections.

Scientific programming received some of the highest ratings in conference history. Panel presentations earned a 100% satisfaction rating, while the keynote address was rated positively by 98% of attendees. Oral presentations achieved 96% satisfaction, and specialized sessions on topics such as pragmatic clinical trials, the Virtual Data Warehouse, and innovative funding strategies all exceeded 93% satisfaction.

Networking remained one of the conference's greatest strengths. The Networking Reception and State of the Network and Awards Program each received 100% satisfaction ratings, while Scientific Interest Groups and ancillary meetings earned 94% satisfaction. Attendees consistently cited collaboration and relationship-building as key benefits of participating in HCSRN.

The conference also delivered significant professional impact. Nearly all respondents reported gaining new ideas they could apply to their work (98%) and insight into improving research practices (98%). In addition, 95% identified potential collaborators, 95% gained perspective on the state of the profession, and 93% agreed the conference represented a good value for the cost.

Perhaps most telling, 97% of respondents agreed that "HCSRN is fun to attend," underscoring the network's unique ability to combine scientific excellence with a welcoming and collaborative community. These results reinforce the Annual Conference's role as a premier venue for advancing learning health systems research and fostering partnerships that improve health and healthcare delivery.

And, congratulations to **Alyssa Vanderziel, PhD**, of **Henry Ford Health**, for receiving the 2026 **Biggest Reject Award!** Honored at the networking reception, Alyssa and presenter, Greg Simon,

MD, MPH, KP Washington, shared stories around the ongoing challenges of getting proposals accepted. And if we don't laugh about it, we'll cry!

And, congratulations to **Suzanne Swann, EdD**, of **KP Georgia**! Suzanne completed her conference evaluation, and was randomly selected to receive a free registration to the 2027 HCSRN Annual Conference in Vancouver, WA!

Lastly, we could not have had the success we did without the generous support of our sponsors. Thank you!

Thank You to Our Conference Sponsors!

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2027 HCSRN Annual Conference in Vancouver, WA
May 3-4, 2027

HCSRN Honors Outstanding Leaders, Researchers, and Innovators at 2026 Annual Conference

The Health Care Systems Research Network proudly recognized eight exceptional individuals and teams during its annual State of the Network and Awards Program at the 2026 Annual Conference in Dallas. These awards celebrate excellence in research, mentorship, collaboration, implementation, and service to the learning health systems community.



2026 HCSRN TRAINEE OF THE YEAR
Cynthia Ramirez, PhD, MPH
 Postdoctoral Research Fellow
 Kaiser Permanente Northern California
 Division of Research



2026 HCSRN EARLY CAREER INVESTIGATOR OF THE YEAR
Abdul Shour, MS, PhD
 Research Scientist
 Essentia Institute of Rural Health



2026 HCSRN PROGRAMMER/ANALYST OF THE YEAR
Chris Stewart, PhD
 Programmer/Analyst
 Kaiser Permanente Washington Health
 Research Institute



2026 HCSRN MENTOR OF THE YEAR
Michael Ho, MD, PhD
 Medical Director of Innovative Methods
 Promoting Operational Value and Efficiency
 (IMPROVE) and Senior Clinician Investigator
 Kaiser Permanente Colorado Institute for Health Research



2026 HCSRN PAPER OF THE YEAR
Stephanie Irving, MHS
 Research Associate
 Kaiser Permanente Northwest Center
 for Health Research



2026 HCSRN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE YEAR
Kris Wain, PhD
 Scientific Research Associate
 and Health Economist
 Kaiser Permanente Colorado Institute
 for Health Research



2026 HCSRN PROJECT COORDINATOR/MANAGER OF THE YEAR
Elisabeth Seburg, MPH
 Manager of the Research Project Management Office
 HealthPartners Institute



2026 HCSRN FOUNDERS' AWARD
Jerry Gurwitz, MD
 Dr. John Meyers Professor in Primary Care Medicine
 UMass Chan Medical School

Together, these award recipients exemplify HCSRN's mission to improve individual and population health through collaborative, population-based research. Their achievements continue to advance science, strengthen partnerships, and improve healthcare delivery for the communities we serve. Congratulations!

Welcome New Board Members!

We are pleased to welcome three new Governing Board members since the winter newsletter!



Mona Gahunia, DO, FACP, FIDSA
Associate Medical Director, Academic Affairs and Research
Chief Academic Officer
Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group

Dr. Mona Gahunia is a double-board-certified physician who oversees medical education, research and infection prevention at the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group. She has a wealth of operational and strategic leadership experience including expertise in clinical program development, physician

workflow enhancement, community preventative health education and vaccine promotion, health policy, and implementation of equity, inclusion, and diversity initiatives.

Under her leadership, the medical group is enriching programs in continuous medical education, undergraduate medical education and graduate medical education, including a fully accredited internal medicine residency program. The continuous medical education program bolsters the excellent clinical care that physicians provide through education on topics most relevant to everyday practice.

In addition, she provides strategic vision and oversight for the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Research Institute (MAPRI). MAPRI focuses on research to inform clinical practice and improve the lives of the populations we serve through investment in rigorous scientific investigations, study of innovative approaches to care delivery and an expanding clinical trials program.



Mercedes Robaina, EdD, MBA, MA, CRA
Director for Academic Research
Advocate Aurora Research Institute

Dr. Mercedes Robaina is the Director for Academic Research at Advocate Aurora Research Institute (AARI) servicing both Wisconsin and Illinois. She oversees the Office of Academic Support, a group that provides infrastructural support to investigators related to proposal submission and study team resources. She serves as the administrative resource for the Scientific Programs team of scientists. She assumed leadership responsibilities for the Biospecimen Resources Core (BSRC) in

2023 and serves as the site PI for specimen collection studies. She serves on multiple enterprise-wide committees.

Mercedes has over 20 years of extensive experience in Research Administration. Prior to joining AARI, she was employed at the Moffitt Cancer Center, which is an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center and truly learned and embraced the concepts of team science.



Tyler Ross, MA
Senior Director of Research Data and Applications
Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute

Tyler Ross work began as a research programmer at the University of Washington in the schools of Economics, Family Medicine, Dentistry, and Health Services Research. In 2005, he joined Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (then known as Group Health Research Institute), working on a breadth of studies with a focus in clinical system evaluations, such as the patient-centered

medical home and the learning health systems. Previously, Mr. Ross led the Health Care Systems Research Network's Virtual Data Warehouse (VDW) governance body and collaborated in the Cancer Research Network. In his current role, he leads research data programming and analysis, administrative application development, and data warehousing.

Engage in HCSRNI!

There are many opportunities to get involved in HCSRNI, depending on your interest and skill set. Choose from **11 scientific interest and work groups**, **10 VDW work groups**, the **2027 Annual Conference Planning Committee**, the **Abstract Review Team**, or the **Membership Committee**. Visit the HCSRNI website or email admin@hcsrn.org for more information!

Tell a Colleague

Keeping the HCSRNI communication list current is an ongoing task. We don't always know when new people join our member institutions and others leave. Please share this link with people in your organization who should know about the latest HCSRNI happenings. Whether it's conference updates, information about the next SDRF presentation, job postings, or Governing Board news, the best way to stay up-to-date, is by completing the form through the link above. For more information, visit us at www.hcsrn.org.



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