



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

THE CHOICE INSTITUTE

School of Pharmacy

## *From the Director*

Dear Colleagues,

This autumn quarter is a special one for The CHOICE Institute as we celebrate our 30th anniversary. It is a moment to honor the faculty, students, alumni, and partners who have shaped CHOICE into a global leader in health economics and outcomes research, and to reflect on the values that will guide us into our next decades of impact.

This newsletter offers a snapshot of that impact in action. We highlight our 30-year story and share ways in which CHOICE faculty are helping to steer the national and international research agenda, from Jing Li's leadership role for the 2026 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, to Doug Barthold presentation at CBO, and many other influential contributions on dementia, influenza treatment access, pharmacovigilance, and the behavioral economics of AI adoption in health systems.

Our students continue to be the heart of CHOICE. You will read about their dissertation milestones, podium presentations at national conferences, and research that is informing pressing policy questions around Medicare price negotiation, biosimilars, opioid use disorder treatment, and more.

We also celebrate the accomplishments of our alumni, whose leadership in academia, industry, and health systems is extending the CHOICE mission around the world, from advancing real-world evidence and AI methods to shaping debates on drug pricing and mental health treatments. A special shoutout to Boshen Jiao for winning this year's ISPOR Methodology Excellence Award. Finally, our Kudos section highlights the everyday acts of mentorship, service, and collegiality that make CHOICE a supportive place to learn and work.

Thank you for being part of this community. I hope you enjoy this look back at the history of The CHOICE Institute, and I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the years ahead.

Warmly,

Anirban Basu, PhD  
Professor & Stergachis Family Endowed Director  
The CHOICE Institute

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## FALL QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS



### [Professor Anirban Basu Honored with HEOR Application Award](#)

Congratulations to Professor & Stergachis Family Endowed Director, Anirban Basu, who received this award for his study comparing gene therapy vs. standard care for sickle cell disease in the U.S., funded by NHLBI's Cure Sickle Cell Initiative.



### [Celebrating 30 Years of The CHOICE Institute](#)

Our story is shaped by people: faculty, students, and partners who have built CHOICE over three decades. Join us in honoring this legacy of innovation and exploring the achievements and vision that guide our future.



### [Jing Li to Co-Lead Methods Theme at AcademyHealth ARM 2026](#)

Jing Li, Associate Professor and Associate Director of CHOICE, will serve as co-leader for the Methods and Measurement Science Theme at the 2026 AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting in Seattle.

## CHOICE ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In September, Associate Professor Douglas Barthold presented his research to the [Congressional Budget Office's Panel of Health Advisers](#). In a special session on the implications of dementia for the federal budget, Barthold summarized evidence on modifiable risk factors for dementia, and their potential for prevention. This included results of his new study, titled "Effects of improved access to diabetes medications on risk of dementia".

CHOICE PhD students Julia Fox and Zilin Cheng presented their research with Dr. Jing Li at the [2025 Association of Public Policy and Management \(APPAM\) conference](#) in Seattle in November. This was a milestone for both students as their first podium presentations at a conference with assigned discussants. Julia Fox presented "Preventive Healthcare Utilization and Health Outcomes Among Sexual Minority and Heterosexual Older Adults" and Zilin Cheng presented "Medicare Reimbursement for Advance Care Planning and Presence of Advance Directives: Evidence from Health and Retirement Study- Medicare Linked Data".

In November, Associate Professor Jing Li [presented](#) at the Hopkins Economics of Alzheimer's Disease & Services (HEADS) Center at Johns Hopkins University, sharing research on how dementia shapes the long-term trajectories of household finances. This work, conducted in collaboration with co-authors at National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and other institutions, offers important insights into the lesser-known economic challenges families face during the years leading up to dementia onset due to impaired financial decision-making.

PhD Candidate Emma Cousin's dissertation research was recently published in the *Journal of Managed Care & Specialty Pharmacy*. For IPAY 2028, the list of drugs eligible for price negotiation with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) expands for the first time to include both Part B and Part D drugs. The study, titled, "Drugs anticipated to be selected for Medicare price negotiation in 2026 for implementation in 2028" predicts which products are most likely to be selected and evaluates how the Orphan Drug Exclusion under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) reshapes eligibility. The analysis found that the 15 products predicted for selection had projected Medicare expenditures exceeding \$800 million in 2024. OBBBA significantly changes the landscape by delaying eligibility for five products and excluding at least three from future negotiations, including Keytruda and Darzalex Faspro. The predicted list includes eight biologics and seven small molecule drugs, with seven products spanning both Part B and Part D and eight exclusively Part D.

[Read the study.](#)

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Assistant Professor Noémi Kreif recently published a paper titled, "Estimating the Causal Effect of Realistic Treatment Strategies Using Longitudinal Observational Data" in *Medical Decision Making*, highlighting collaborative work between researchers at the University of Washington and the Centre for Health Economics, University of York. The study focuses on patients with Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS), a group of rare blood disorders. It demonstrates how advanced causal inference methods combined with real-world observational data can provide insights into the effectiveness of adaptive medical decisions—an area where randomized trials often fall short. Using longitudinal targeted minimum loss-based estimation (TMLE), the research compared dynamic treatment regimes for initiating and adjusting erythropoietin-stimulating agents (ESAs) based on hemoglobin levels, transfusion history, and individual response. Findings indicate that patients treated under these dynamic ESA regimes experienced improved quality of life and survival compared to those who never received treatment. This work was conducted as part of the European Commission-funded HTx Project – Next Generation Health Technology Assessment, with Andrea Manca leading the York team. The project also emphasized clinician engagement to ensure meaningful research questions and provided mentorship opportunities for emerging researchers. [Read the study.](#)

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Assistant Professor Kyu Lee published a timely supplement article in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases* examining barriers to accessing effective influenza treatments. The study explores alternative dispensing strategies aimed at improving access as we approach another influenza season. [Read the article.](#)

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Associate Professor Jing Li published a first-authored Editorial article at the Nature family journal *npj Health Systems*, where she is an Associate Editor. The article is titled "Aligning incentives: the importance of behavioral economic perspectives in AI adoption" (Li, Navathe & Zhang, 2025). In this piece, the authors explore how core concepts from behavioral economics—specifically cognitive overload, risk aversion, and social preferences—shape clinicians' decisions when implementing artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare settings. The paper argues that successful AI deployment requires not just technological capability, but careful alignment of incentives among providers, patients, and institutions. This work advances our understanding of the human side of AI adoption in health systems and underscores actionable recommendations for policymakers, hospital systems, and technology developers. [Read the open-access article.](#)

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Professor Andy Stergachis participated in the [International Society for Pharmacovigilance Annual Conference](#) in Cairo, Egypt (October 24–26, 2026) delivering two podium presentations and a poster focused on vaccine safety. His work addressed harmonizing vaccine safety definitions, generating evidence during public health emergencies through the case study of Mpox vaccine active safety surveillance protocols, and leveraging existing health system infrastructure to support active surveillance in low- and middle-income countries.

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Continuing his contributions to vaccine safety research, Dr. Stergachis co-authored "Safety and Effectiveness of COVID-19 Vaccines During Pregnancy: A Living Systematic Review and Meta-analysis," which has been recognized as one of Drug Safety's most cited and downloaded publications of 2024. With 7,728 accesses and an Altmetric score of 619, the article ranks in the top 5% of all research outputs tracked by Altmetric and has been featured by 73 news outlets worldwide. [Revisit the study.](#)

Professor Emeritus Lou Garrison organized and led a short course at ISPOR Glasgow on the "Valuation of Innovative Drugs" with co-instructors Afschin Gandjour of the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management and Mark Nuijten of consultancy A2M (Netherlands). The course provided the economics background for a discussion of the cutting-edge cell & gene therapies from the perspectives of payers, patients, and investors. There were 50 participants from more than 20 different countries. Also at ISPOR Glasgow, Lou Garrison was a discussant at a "Fast Facts" session on the draft report of the Health Economics Methods Advisory entitled; "Defining Appropriate Benefits for Economic Evaluation: Do Recommendations from HEMA Help?" He argued that the draft report identified a number of key issues, but had a number of shortcomings, as discussed in [a commentary by the USC Schaeffer Center](#), to which Lou as a contributor.

Affiliate Professor Ruth Etzioni was recognized at the [Early Detection of Cancer Conference](#) with the *2025 Early Detection Impact Award*. Selected through a global nomination process, Etzioni was honored for her seminal contributions to cancer early detection biomarker research. Her groundbreaking work in prostate cancer screening has shaped both research and clinical guidelines, and her leadership in developing decision models for evaluating multi-cancer early detection tests continues to influence the field. [Read more](#).

Professor Emeritus Lou Garrison recently led a high-level discussion on improving global access to innovative medicines at the ACCESS Forum EU25 in Athens. [Read more](#).

## STUDENT MILESTONES

Tori Dayer successfully defended her dissertation in November and will graduate this quarter. Her dissertation, "Biosimilars in the United States: Market Dynamics and Patient Out-of-Pocket Costs," examines how biosimilars compete in today's healthcare market and the implications for patient affordability. Tori's research was guided by her dissertation chair, Sean D. Sullivan, with committee members Ryan Hansen, Josh Roth, Mireia Jofre-Bonet, and Sam Arnold (GSR). After graduation, Tori will continue working at Curta as a Senior Research Associate. Outside of her professional achievements, Tori and her husband, Guerin, are thrilled to be welcoming their second child- a baby girl- very soon!

Congratulations to Shiven Bhardwaj for also passing his oral general exam in November! Shiven's dissertation examines whether the 2019 CMS rule, which allowed Medicare Part D plans to remove brand drugs midyear when generics become available, effectively increased generic utilization and reduced spending. Shiven also aims to estimate potential cost savings under alternative generic substitution policies to inform future strategies for promoting generics and biosimilars in Medicare Part D. We're excited to see Shiven's research move forward with the guidance and support of his dissertation reading committee: Douglas Barthold (Chair), Ryan Hansen, Yevgeniy Feyman, and Steve Mooney (GSR).

In September, Karris Jeon passed her oral general exam as well! Her dissertation, "Inflation Reduction Act (IRA): Impact of the Medicare Price Negotiation on Spending for Part D Selected Drugs" explores how IRA provisions affect drug spending within Medicare. Her research aims to clarify the financial impact of the IRA's drug price negotiation policy and offer early insights into how spending patterns may evolve as additional drugs become subject to negotiation in future rounds. Karris' dissertation work is supported through mentorship of her doctoral supervisory committee: Sean D. Sullivan (Chair), Kristi Martin, Ryan Hansen, and Ed Kelly (GSR).



# STUDENT LEADERSHIP UPDATES

Our ISPOR student chapter held its first meeting on October 10, led by President Preetika Banerjee and appointed Faculty Advisor Dr. Noémi Kreif. During the meeting, current PhD students and MS fellows were introduced to the chapter's mission and activities. We also welcomed our new board members: Lijia Zheng (Vice-President), Hui-Hsuan Chan (Treasurer), and Janice Jang (Secretary). Later in the quarter, the University of Washington AMCP and ISPOR student chapters co-hosted a fall happy hour at The Westy in Roosevelt, bringing together students across cohorts to connect outside the classroom. The event provided a relaxed space for members to meet peers from both organizations, discuss shared interests in health economics, outcomes research, and managed care, and build community as the quarter wrapped up. Both chapters look forward to hosting more joint events in the future!

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We're excited to introduce our student leaders for the 2025-2026 academic year!

- Tom Hopkins – Student Representative (Year 1 of 2-year term)
- Julia Fox – Student Representative (Year 2 of 2-year term)
- Ben Nwogu – Curriculum Committee Member
- Ronald Dickerson – PhD Admissions Committee Member

Thank you to each of you for stepping into these important roles and making sure the student voice is always at the table.

## ALUMNI CORNER

PhD Alumni and Affiliate Faculty Blythe Adamson, MPH, PhD ('18) was selected for the University of Washington Pharmacy Alumni Association's Distinguished Alumni Award in Pharmaceutical Sciences & Research. This award recognizes School of Pharmacy graduate program alumni whose research and scientific contributions have significantly advanced the field. Blythe Adamson is a pharmacoepidemiologist and economist accelerating the development of valuable medicines and health policy. She serves as Head of Outcomes Research and Evidence Generation at Flatiron Health in New York City. Dr. Adamson designs treatment comparative-effectiveness studies and advances applications of artificial intelligence in the curation of electronic health records (EHR) for real world evidence (RWE) in the US, UK, Germany, and Japan. Congratulations, Blythe, for this well-deserved honor!

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Boshen Jiao, PhD ('22), now a Scholar at USC Schaeffer Institute & Assistant Professor of Pharmaceutical & Health Economics at University of Southern California received the ISPOR Award for Excellence in Methodology of HEOR for his dissertation research "Evaluating Policies of Expanding Versus Restricting First-Line Treatment Choices: A Cost-Effectiveness Analysis Framework," completed at CHOICE with Dr. Basu as his dissertation committee chair. [Read more.](#)

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CHOICE Postdoctoral Scholar Alumni Julia Slejko of the University of Maryland and Professor Emeritus Lou Garrisonspoke about "Ethical Issues in Pharmacoconomics and Drug Pricing" in the Bioethics Interest Group (BIG) webinar series hosted by The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health and was attended by over 130 participants. [Watch the recording.](#)

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Lauren Strand, PhD ('21) recently published two studies highlighting long-acting injectable antipsychotics in neuropsychiatry and recently transitioned into a new role in Global Evidence and Outcomes at Takeda focusing on neurodegeneration. Outside of work, she welcomed twins in April, and she looks forward to sleeping through the night again someday. Read [Study 1](#) and [Study 2](#).

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Alexandra (Miller) Macdonald, PharmD, MPH, MS ('24) recently accepted a position as a Health Economics and Outcomes Researcher at Dandelion Health. In her work, she partners with the American Heart Association Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assessment Lab to validate and assess the value of new clinical AI algorithms using real world data. [Read more.](#)



# CHOICE KUDOS

CHOICE Kudos offers a space to recognize the everyday ways we support one another across the CHOICE community. If someone has made a positive impact—whether through a helpful gesture, organizing an event, offering support, or contributing to a welcoming environment. These small acts of kindness and collaboration deserve acknowledgment. Feel free to share a brief note of appreciation to a colleague for a future newsletter by submitting a kudos to Marina Gano at [mcgano@uw.edu](mailto:mcgano@uw.edu).

*Kudos to Jing for advocating for APPAM to create a session for CHOICE students to present our work! - Julia Fox*

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*Thanks to Lizzy Brouwer, Tricia Rodriguez, and Samantha Clark for the motivational and hilarious career text message threads. - Lauren Strand*

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*A heartfelt thank you to Marina for her attention to detail and dedication throughout the graduate student hiring process for their research assistant and teaching assistant positions. - Andy Stergachis*

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*Thank you to Tom Hopkins for his dedicated and thoughtful work supporting our MS fellowship recruitment this cycle- we couldn't have done it without you! - Marina Gano*



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