



# ALERT

*Supporting research and early career endeavors of scientists in drug discovery and development*

## **PhRMA Foundation Announces Winners of Valuing Diversity: Addressing Health Disparities Challenge Award**

The PhRMA Foundation announced today the winners of a new Challenge Award aiming to support bold and vital research into how value assessment methods and processes can better consider population diversity and drivers of health disparities.

“The unprecedented events of 2020 – from the COVID-19 pandemic to a nationwide reckoning with systemic racism in health care – have magnified the urgent need to rethink our conceptions of value in a more inclusive context,” said Eileen Cannon, President of the PhRMA Foundation. “The Foundation is excited to play an important role in supporting the development of new methods and processes for value assessment that are inclusive of all patient communities.”

The Foundation invited submissions that addressed the following question:

***How can value assessment methods and processes better account for populations that are typically underrepresented in research and address drivers of health disparities?***

The 2021 Award winners are:

### **First Place – \$50,000**

**Research Proposal: *Drivers of Health Disparities and Consequences for COVID-19 Vaccine Choices: Modelling Health Preference Heterogeneity among Underserved Populations***

Award Recipients:

- Eline M. van den Broek-Altenburg, PhD, Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont
- Jamie S. Benson, BA, Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont
- Adam J. Atherly, PhD, Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont
- Stephane Hess, PhD, Choice Modelling Centre & Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds

New approaches to capture drivers of health disparities and account for underrepresented groups in value assessment methods are warranted. Dr. van den Broek-Altenburg and co-authors conducted an analysis of COVID-19 vaccine preferences among underrepresented populations and explored methodological approaches to incorporate

differences between individual preferences in value assessment. The authors propose the use of discrete distributions and probabilistically segmenting a sample population into different segments, better reflecting the underlying values of individuals in underrepresented populations. The research concludes that health care interventions intended to reduce health disparities that do not reflect the underlying values of individuals in underrepresented populations are unlikely to be successful.

### **Second Place – \$25,000**

#### **Research Proposal: *Using Latent Class and Quantum Models to Value Equity in Healthcare: A Tale of Two Stories***

Award Recipient:

- Surachat Ngorsuraches, PhD – Auburn University

To adequately capture the value of health equity in value assessment, systematic consideration of health equity in decision making is critical. In this research, Dr. Ngorsuraches describes two approaches to empirically address health equity in value assessment by valuing health care attributes with an equity lens. The first approach uses a discrete choice experiment to elicit preferences from individuals on preferences value attributes with a latent class model to derive the value of equity, and the second approach uses a flexible choice model to value health equity. These methodological approaches can be used by value assessors to determine how equity enters the preferences for decision makers.

### **Third Place (Tie) \$5,000 each**

#### **Research Proposal: *It's Time to Represent: Shifting the paradigm to improve the quality of inputs into value assessment frameworks***

Award Recipients:

- Leticia R. Moczygamba, PharmD, PhD – TxCORE, The University of Texas at Austin
- Carolyn M. Brown, PhD – TxCORE, The University of Texas at Austin
- Michael Johnsrud, PhD, RPh – TxCORE, The University of Texas at Austin

To better understand the importance of equity in value frameworks, advancing the racial/ethnicity representation inputs in value assessment is critical. In this work, Dr. Moczygamba and colleagues propose a two-pronged strategy to increase the diversity of populations that participate in research and address drivers of health disparities to better inform value assessment with the following objectives: 1) Launch a comprehensive national campaign using a community-engaged approach to inform, create buy-in, and generate excitement for participation in research, and 2) Enhance information used in value assessment frameworks by expediting current methodological initiatives to require a minimum set of patient-reported social determinants of health elements to be collected and reported in research, including clinical trials and observational (real world) studies. Through this work, scalable efforts to increase representation of diverse racial/ethnic groups and social determinants of health in value assessment can be attained.

#### **Research Proposal: *Incorporating Health Equity into Value Assessment: Frameworks, Promising Alternatives, and Future directions***

Award Recipients:

- Vakaramoko Diaby, PhD – University of Florida
- Askal Ali, PhD – Florida A&M University
- Aram Babcock, PharmD, MS, MBA – University of Florida
- Joseph Fuhr, PhD – University of Florida
- Dejana Braithwaite, PhD – University of Florida

To better understand the value of health equity in value assessment frameworks, exploring methods that value diverse perspectives is critical. In this study, Dr. Diaby and colleagues examine emerging value assessment frameworks in the United States and present examples, where evidence on outcomes and preferences for value do not take into consideration diverse perspectives. The authors identify possible solutions to improve

existing value assessment methods and illustrate – using a hypothetical shared decision-making case study – an alternative to current value-assessment frameworks, “equitable multi-criteria decision analysis,” that could be implemented in the context of the value-based assessment of prevention choices for women at high risk of developing breast cancer. These proposed alternatives and solutions can be used by researchers and decision makers to incorporate health equity into value assessment.

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The Challenge Awards were first launched in 2017 as a part of the Foundation’s multi-faceted Value Assessment Initiative, which supports a variety of research and innovation projects to support the shift to a value-based health care system.

Award recipients will also become part of the Value Assessment Research Network, which has been established to encourage collaboration and dissemination of findings that emerge from various projects the Foundation is supporting through its Value Assessment Initiative.

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### **About the PhRMA Foundation**

For 56 years, the PhRMA Foundation has been helping to build a larger pool of highly-trained, top-quality scientists to meet the growing needs of scientific and academic institutions, government, and the research-intensive pharmaceutical industry. To advance this mission, the PhRMA Foundation has awarded more than \$100 million in competitive research fellowships and grants since its founding. The Foundation’s emphasis on evidence-based research that determines the true value of medicines is supported by its Value Assessment Initiative. To date, the Foundation has awarded more than \$4.3 million to support a variety of research projects to help advance this goal, including the establishment of four national Centers of Excellence in Value Assessment.

To learn more, please visit [www.phrmafoundation.org](http://www.phrmafoundation.org).

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