

PPHS RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Translational AI in Public Health Research

DATE: Thursday, October 8, 2026
TIME: 9:00 AM–3:30 PM (Check-in and Breakfast at 8:30 am)
LOCATION: 1845 N Soto St., Los Angeles, CA 90032

Keck School of Medicine of USC
Department of Population and
Public Health Sciences

Purpose: The annual PPHS research symposium aims to foster cross-division collaboration, promote team science, and create energy and synergy across PPHS.

TIME	SPEAKER	DIVISION/ROLE
8:30–9:00	Registration & Light Breakfast	(Presenters hang posters in courtyard)
9:00–9:05	Welcome from Chanita Hughes Halbert, PhD	Executive Vice Chair and Vice Chair for Research
9:05–9:10	Highlights from 2026: Ricky Bluthenthal, PhD	Department Chair
MORNING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS		
9:10–10:00	David Friedland, MD, PhD	Associate Dean for Clinical Research and Director of Clinical Artificial Intelligence (AI) Applications, KSOM
	Vasiliki (Vas) Anest, PhD	Chief Innovation Officer, USC Norris Head of MESH Strategic Partnerships, KSOM
PPHS FACULTY PRESENTATIONS		
10:00–10:30	Julia Vassey, PhD	Assistant Professor (Health Behavior Research)
Coffee Break		
10:40–11:10	Laura Ferguson, PhD	Associate Professor (Global Health)
11:10–11:40	Kelly Street, PhD	Assistant Professor (Biostatistics)
11:40–1:00	Lunch and Student Poster Session	In the Courtyard
AFTERNOON KEYNOTE SPEAKERS		
1:10–1:40	John Blosnich, PhD	Co-Director of the USC Center for AI in Society and Associate Professor (Social Work)
	Bistra Dilkina, PhD	Co-Director of the USC Center for AI in Society and Associate Professor (Computer Science)
PPHS FACULTY PRESENTATION		
1:40–2:10	Jesse Goodrich, PhD	Assistant Professor (Environmental Health)
Coffee Break		
RAPID-FIRE RESEARCH		
2:20–3:10	Yi-Chun Chang, PhD	Postdoctoral Researcher, Institute for Addiction Science
	Noelle Pardo, PhD, MPH	Postdoctoral Researcher, Environmental Health
	Qing Tan, PhD	Postdoctoral Researcher, Center for Genetic Epidemiology
	Yara Tapia, Project Leader	Klausner Research Group
CLOSING REMARKS		
3:10–3:30	Chanita Hughes Halbert, PhD	What's the Big Idea? Takeaways and Closing Thoughts