

APRIL

Stress Awareness Month

SAVE THE DATE

All Department Meeting

Friday May 22nd, 2026 12pm

Congratulations Severine Lannoy!

*Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award from VCU
Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry*

VCU's Dogs on Call

"This is the only time someone walks into that room who doesn't want something from them. They're not going to take a blood sample, they're not there to give medication, they're not there to do anything, they're just there to relax and talk to that person,"

Nancy R. Gee, PhD, C-AAIS

Read the full article here

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/vcu-therapy-dogs-feb-25-2026>



VCU therapy dogs get free Lyme disease vaccines from researcher

Read full article here

<https://www.wtvr.com/news/local-news/vcu-therapy-dogs-lyme-disease-vaccines-april-15-2026>



Great Job!

VCU's Global Initiatives Leadership Award Winner!

Jasmin L. Vassileva, Ph.D.



Question: Do I need to get written consent from my patient in order to share information with another health care provider?

Answer: Under both HIPAA and Virginia law, health care providers for a patient are permitted to share information necessary for the treatment of the patient without the patient's consent. However, from a clinical standpoint it is usually a good idea to have the patient's assent to share information, even though not legally required. One should of course use discretion in how much information to share. I would typically share more sensitive information with my patient's psychotherapist than their PCP.



James Levenson, M.D
*Department Vice Chair
Division Chief-C/L*

VCU MOTIVATE Nicotine Cessation Clinic

VCU is excited to share the launch of a new resource for our patients: the VCU MOTIVATE Nicotine Cessation Clinic.

This clinic will be led by Dr. Anna Peyton, who brings specialized training and advanced skills in evidence-based treatment of nicotine dependence. Dr. Peyton works collaboratively with patients who want to stop using nicotine products—including cigarettes, vaping products, and other forms of tobacco—meeting them where they are and supporting them through every stage of change.

Nicotine use remains one of the most significant modifiable risk factors affecting the health of our patients across nearly every specialty. The MOTIVATE Nicotine Cessation Clinic is designed to provide:

- Comprehensive assessments of nicotine use
- Individualized, evidence-based treatment plans
- Pharmacologic and behavioral support
- Compassionate, patient-centered care that emphasizes motivation and long-term success

We encourage you to consider referring patients who are interested in quitting—or even those who are simply curious about their options.

To refer a patient to Dr. Peyton please use the "Ambulatory Referral for Addiction Treatment Program" order in Epic and specify Dr. Peyton & nicotine in the referral.

Great work!

Minhui Chen, PH.D completed his first authored paper, Cell type-specific eQTLs underlie the genetic architecture of complex traits, which has been accepted in principle at Nature!





Help me wish Regina Piercy-Ross a **Happy 30TH Work Anniversary!**

Regina is a Fiscal Tech in Finance for the Psychiatry Department.



NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Alex Holdaway, Ph.D

Assistant Clinical Professor, VTCC



Are you new to the area? Where were you working/living previously?

I am new to the area and was previously working at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Describe your role and area(s) of focus at VCU.

I am a clinical psychologist working as both a clinician and researcher to support youth and their families with mental health concerns. I have a special focus on youth with ADHD and associated concerns (e.g., aggression, executive dysfunction) and delivering mental health treatment and supports in the community (e.g., schools, primary care offices).

What inspired you to pursue a career in this field?

I love helping and I love discovering. Being a small part of answering new and important questions about how to help youth and their families is a big driver for me.

What gives you the greatest satisfaction in your job?

Clinically, seeing the pride a child or family feels when they see progress and growth is incredible. With regard to research, hearing from participants or colleagues that the work matters to children and their families is always really validating.

What do you do for fun outside of work?

I enjoy being outside on a hike or at the beach with my wife and two kids.

