How to avoid getting sick as school starts, PHHP students coordinate community research involvement, applications open for 2026 Gator100

**Welcome new students!**

The College of Public Health and Health Professions welcomed hundreds of new faces last month as classes kicked off for the start of the 2025-2026 academic year. They come from different places and with different goals, but the newest students at PHHP share one thing in common: a passion for helping people live healthier lives. [Read more.](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/08/21/welcome-new-students/)

**PHHP students and alumni bring research and community together at UF Health Cancer Center**

The center’s Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, staffed by several current and former PHHP students, seeks to involve community members in research to reach target populations and achieve better outcomes. [Read more.](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/08/18/phhp-students-and-alumni-bring-research-and-community-together-at-uf-health-cancer-center/)

**Epidemiologist shares top tips for avoiding back-to-school bugs**

The start of the school year brings the promise of new friends and fresh opportunities — along with strep throat, head lice, pink eye and the common cold. PHHP epidemiologist Jerne Shapiro explains what to watch out for and how to stay safe. [Read more.](https://epi.ufl.edu/2025/08/11/how-to-avoid-getting-sick-during-back-to-school-season/)

**O.T.D. student turns personal experience into advocacy**

Avanna Tiwarie first encountered occupational therapists as a child learning to move through the world with severe hearing loss. Now on the path to becoming a Doctor of Occupational Therapy, Tiwarie advocates on behalf of others with hearing loss. [Read more.](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/08/13/finding-my-voice-and-breaking-barriers/)

**Researcher spotlight: Joy Gabrielli**

In her Youth Risk & Resilience Lab, clinical and health psychology associate professor Joy Gabrielli, Ph.D., combines her long-standing interest in youth in foster care with substance use prevention strategies. [Read more.](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/08/15/researcher-spotlight-joy-gabrielli/)

**Au.D. student completes prestigious NIH-funded training program**

Ava Moran was one of only five audiology students in the country to be selected for the hands-on research experience, which took place over the summer at Vanderbilt University. [Read more](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/08/28/au-d-student-completes-prestigious-nih-funded-training-program/).

**Applications now open for Gator100**

The road to success goes through Gainesville. Apply by October 27 for the 2026 Gator100 for a chance to join an elite network of UF alumni business leaders and entrepreneurs representing the world’s 100 fastest-growing Gator alumni-led businesses. This year, four PHHP alumni made the list — could you be next? [Apply now.](https://my.reviewr.com/s2/site/26gator100)

**Alumni updates**

**Jaewon Kang, OTR/L,** (Ph.D. in rehabilitation science ’23) completed postdoctoral training at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and joined Colorado State University as an assistant professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy. She earned the prestigious Nedra Gillette Endowed Research Fellowship during her postdoc and, in her first year as faculty, received the highly competitive Intervention Research Grant from the American Occupational Therapy Foundation. Her research focuses on improving access to home safety evaluations through 3D modeling for remote assessments and enabling timely interventions for individuals in rural areas.

**Diana Rojas Alvarez, M.D.,** (Ph.D. in epidemiology ’17) is the arboviruses team lead at the World Health Organization. She was recently quoted in a [New York Times article](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/19/health/chikungunya-virus-mosquitoes-what-to-know.html) on the rapid spread of chikungunya cases.

**Geoffrey Silvera, Ph.D.,** (M.H.A. ’10)is an associate professor of health services administration and program director of graduate programs in healthcare quality and safety at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. [Read more](https://phhp.ufl.edu/2025/08/29/teaching-the-next-generation-of-health-administration-geoffrey-a-silvera-ph-d-m-h-a/).