



# Pilot Projects Program



## Meet Our Latest Round of Funded Researchers!

The Northern New England Clinical & Translational Research Network is pleased to introduce you to our Round 7 Pilot Project recipients. As a result of their funding, these researchers are engaged in research to help improve the health of the residents of northern New England. Co-PIs of the NNE-CTR Dr. Gary Stein Dr. Cliff Rosen said, "Each year, through a competitive application process, projects are chosen based on their potential to make our region healthier and safer, and we are proud and excited about this year's recipients." The NNE-CTR's Pilot Project program funds a wide range of research topics. The application process opens each summer and closes in September.

**Christopher Turner, MD, MPH, Director of Pediatric Trauma, Maine Medical Center**

Dr. Turner's project is entitled, *Assessment of Firearm Owners' Opinions on Safe Storage in Northern New England*. Firearms are not always stored safely, resulting in injuries and fatalities, including suicides. Turner's project explores firearm owners' storage practices with the aim of guiding community-based strategies to create a safer gun culture in northern New England.



**Meagan Stabler, Ph.D., Dartmouth Health**

Dr. Stabler's project, *Northern New England Provider Insights and Participatory Engagement (NNE PIPE) Survey* has several goals, including understanding the needs of rural northern New England patients, promoting collaboration among clinicians, strengthening the NNE CO-OP Practice and Community Based Research Network's research capabilities, and better understanding the challenges and opportunities facing clinical practices.

**Benjamin King, Ph.D., University of Maine**

The basis for Dr. King's project, *Genetic Factors of Non-Diabetic Chronic Kidney Disease in Maine* is that while diabetes and hypertension are primary risk indicators for chronic kidney disease, genetic factors may also contribute. This study will help answer this question.



**Bikki Tran Smith, Ph.D., University of Vermont**

Dr. Tran Smith’s project, *When Formal Supports End: Picturing Health Access for Afghan Refugees in Small Town Refugee Resettlement Communities in Vermont* explores “how race and ethnicity, class, politics, and immigrant status intersect within rural geography to produce health disparities and inequities among Afghan refugees living in small town resettlement communities in Vermont.” Tran Smith hopes to identify and shed light on the barriers to health access that result in poorer health outcomes.



**Kahsi Pederson, Ph.D., MaineHealth Institute for Research**

Dr. Pederson’s project is *Assessing a Mobile App-based Mindfulness Training to Improve Mental Health of Caregivers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Rural Areas*. She and her team are seeking to learn if a mindfulness app—requiring little time or investment of funds—can help decrease caregiver stress and lead to improved mental health.

**Niccolo Fiorentino, Ph.D., University of Vermont**

Dr. Fiorentino’s project is *Development and Evaluation of ErMo™, an Affordable DIY Power Mobility Device for Children with Neuromotor Disabilities*. Fiorentino’s team has developed a power mobility vehicle that helps children with cerebral palsy and other disabilities gain mobility at a critical time in their development. The goal is to provide a device that costs in the hundreds—versus thousands—of dollars to all caregivers.

