

# Newsletter

September 2020

## UT Faculty Spotlight



**Dr. Karen Derefinko**

The Get Solid Initiative is a research program led by Dr. Karen Derefinko, a Clinical Psychologist and Assistant Professor of Preventive Medicine at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

This campaign targets the early stages of opioid exposure and misuse to identify and prevent problematic use, and seeks to help those with opioid use disorder who are seeking treatment find what is right for them and stick with it.

Dr. Derefinko's team is currently recruiting for two large scale clinical studies, one funded by the University of Tennessee Health Science Center leadership and one funded by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The first of these studies, "Safe Options for ACL Recovery," is a randomized clinical trial that examines safe, non-narcotic pain relief strategies for patients age 12 years and older following ACL reconstruction surgery.

The second of these studies, "Testing the Effects of Behavioral Economics Interventions on Buprenorphine-Naloxone Treatment Adherence" is a randomized clinical trial directed at improving buprenorphine-naloxone treatment retention for individuals with Opioid Use Disorder.

If you have questions or would like to read more about ongoing research studies, visit [www.getsolidinitiative.org](http://www.getsolidinitiative.org) or contact Dr. Derefinko at [kderefin@uthsc.edu](mailto:kderefin@uthsc.edu).

## ● New System Wide Initiative



As part of the UT Strategic Plan, Fostering Outreach and Engagement, providing leadership in mitigating the opioid crisis in TN, UT has started a new system-wide initiative. The purpose of this project, led by **Jennifer Tourville**, UT System Director of Substance Misuse Outreach and Engagement, is to use research and data to inform evidence-based policy related to substance misuse in TN.

The SMART Policy Network (Substance Misuse and Addiction Policy Resources for TN) will focus on 2-3 issues per legislative session related to substance misuse prevention, treatment, and recovery. The project will bridge your research and expertise with recommendations developed by the SMART Policy Network Steering Committee. For more information, you can [access the project website here](#)

## ● NAS and Broadband Access in Rural TN

Three Senior Advisors with the White House National Drug Control Policy reached out to learn about research being done on campus related to NAS and broadband access in rural TN areas.

Two members of our CoS spoke with the advisors. **Julia Jaekel**, UTK Associate Professor Department of Child and Family Studies, discussed the impressive research she and her collaborators are currently conducting related to the long-term effects of NAS.

Additionally, **Shreedar Uphendam**, Assistant Professor UTIA Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, discussed the work being done to increase access to broadband services in rural TN. The advisors were extremely impressed with the excellent work being done at UT. We will continue to highlight your work with the ONDCP.



## ● Connect the CoS and SMART Policy Network

Jennifer Tourville is working to connect the CoS and SMART Policy Network with other faculty conducting research related to SM across the system. If you have any colleagues at UTK or other campuses working in this area, please reach out to Jennifer ([jtourvil@utk.edu](mailto:jtourvil@utk.edu)).

## ● Join the Cause

Regularly scheduled meetings for the fall semester will be held via Zoom on the **3rd Thursday of each month from 12:00-1:00** starting in September, with the first of the semester being **September 17th**.

In-person Networking Social planned to take place of the October meeting, date and location TBD. Members of the CoS will be given the opportunity to present their projects and research with a 1-slide, 3-minute presentation. Prior RSVP and registration will be required, information on sign-up to follow.