

# Briona Phillips Ph.D., MPH, MSW, LCSW

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Pronouns: she/her/hers

## Professional Summary

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Dr. Briona Phillips (she/her/hers) is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with dual graduate training in Public Health (MPH) and Social Work (MSW). She earned her Ph.D. from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and is a scholar-practitioner whose work integrates public health, social work, and health equity frameworks to address structural determinants of health disparities.

Dr. Phillips' research agenda is grounded in community-engaged and community-based participatory research (CEnR/CBPR), with a focus on oral health disparities, social determinants of oral health, patient-provider discordance, psychophysiology, and bi-directional communication in clinical and community settings. Her scholarship emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration across social work, public health, dentistry, and behavioral health to reduce barriers to care and advance equity, particularly among Black and underserved urban populations in Baltimore.

As an educator, Dr. Phillips is committed to student mentorship, inclusive pedagogy, and curriculum development that prepares future social workers for interdisciplinary and community-based practice. She mentors undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students, supporting their academic development, research training, professional socialization, and career pathways. Her teaching and curriculum development are informed by her clinical expertise in trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, biopsychosocial assessment, and mental health and substance use interventions, ensuring strong integration of theory, research, and practice.

Dr. Phillips actively contributes to academic and professional service through engagement in interdisciplinary research networks and professional organizations, including the American Public Health Association (APHA), the Oral Health Progress and Equity Network (OPEN), Tri-Iota, and Phi Alpha Theta. Her combined commitments to research, teaching, mentorship, and service reflect a tenure-track trajectory centered on advancing health equity through scholarship, education, and community partnership.

## Academic Appointments

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<b>Morgan State University</b> <b>School of Social Work</b> Assistant Professor	<b>Baltimore, Maryland</b> January 2026- Present
<b>University of Maryland</b> <b>School of Dentistry (UMSOD)</b> Postdoctoral Research Fellow	<b>Baltimore, Maryland</b> January 2024- June 2025
<b>Morgan State University</b> <b>The Center for Urban Health Equity (CUHE)</b> Postdoctoral research fellow Mentor: Dr. Kim Dobson- Syndor	<b>Baltimore, Maryland</b> September 2024-December 2025

## Education

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<b>Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)</b> <b>School of Medicine: Health Behavior &amp; Policy</b> Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Department: Social and Behavioral Sciences <i>GPA: 4.0</i> <i>Dissertation Title: Intersectionality, Racial Discrimination And Oral Health Care Utilization among Black Adults in Baltimore City, Maryland</i>	<b>Richmond, Virginia</b> August 2020-May 2024
<b>University of Illinois at Chicago Dual Degree Program</b> <b>Jane Addams College of Social Work</b> Master of Social Work (MSW) <i>Specialization: Child and Family GPA: 4.0</i>	<b>Chicago, Illinois</b> May 2020
<b>School of Public Health</b> Master of Public Health (MPH) <i>Division: Community Health Sciences (CHS)</i> <i>Concentration: Global Health GPA: 4.0</i>	May 2020

## **Research Agenda**

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Dr. Phillips' research program examines how structural and social determinants of health shape oral and overall health outcomes among Black and underserved populations. Grounded in community-engaged and community-based participatory research (CBPR), her work integrates public health, social work, and health systems frameworks to address inequities in access, quality, and utilization of care.

A central focus of her scholarship is patient-provider discordance and bi-directional communication in oral and medical settings, with particular attention to psychosocial and psychophysiological mechanisms that influence care experiences, treatment adherence, and patterns of health care utilization. Her research investigates how communication quality, structural barriers, and unmet oral health needs contribute to downstream outcomes, including avoidable emergency department use, fragmented care, and increased health system burden.

Using mixed-methods and interdisciplinary approaches, Dr. Phillips' work seeks to develop and test scalable, community-informed interventions that integrate oral health within holistic models of care. Her long-term goal is to generate actionable evidence that informs utilization management strategies, improves care coordination, and advances health equity by positioning oral health as a critical component of whole-person health across clinical, community, and policy contexts.

## **Research Projects**

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### **Exploring Trust, Fear, and Discrimination in Oral Health Care and Its Impact on Help-Seeking Behaviors among Black Adults in Baltimore City, MD**

*Principal Investigator*, [2024–Present]

Community-engaged, mixed-methods study examining how trust, fear, and perceived discrimination in oral health care settings influence help-seeking behaviors, care utilization patterns, and delayed treatment among Black adults in Baltimore City. The project integrates CBPR principles to assess patient-provider communication, structural barriers to care, and psychosocial mechanisms shaping oral and overall health outcomes. Findings aim to inform the development of culturally responsive interventions to improve engagement in oral health care and reduce preventable utilization across health systems.

### **REWARD Grant: Implicit Bias, Oral Health Equity, and Workforce Development**

*Postdoctoral Fellow*, [University of Maryland School of Dentistry], [National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research], [2023-2025]

Contributed to a multi-level research initiative examining the impact of implicit bias on oral health care delivery and workforce diversity. The project assessed how implicit bias influences clinician decision-making and the recruitment and retention of a diverse oral health research workforce. As a postdoctoral fellow, supported the implementation and evaluation of interventions aimed at mitigating implicit bias among dental providers and strengthening psychosocial supports for underrepresented trainees to advance oral health equity.

### **University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)**

**Community Health Sciences**; Course Instructor: Dr. Rohan Jeremiah

2019 Title: *PASEO Project 2.0: Establishing Wraparound Services for HIV Prevention on the South Side of Chicago*

### **Chicago, IL**

Fall 2018, Spring

Purpose: To develop a comprehensive and contextually relevant prevention program in partnership with a community-based organization that would decrease the risk for HIV and Hep C diagnosis for ethnic sexual gender minorities aged 13-24 residing on the South Side of Chicago.

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**Global Health;** Course Instructor: Dr. Donald Zeigler  
2019 Title: *Oral Health Promotion in Matuu, Kenya*

Spring

Purpose: To evaluate the element of successes within a local organization that worked to promote positive oral health behaviors amongst children in Matuu, Kenya

**Analytic and Research Methods;** Course Instructor: Dr. Sreenivas Konda      Fall 2018

Title: *From Weight to Caries: An Analysis of the Association of Body Mass Index (BMI) and Oral Health Outcomes Amongst Children*

Purpose: To assess the prevalence of BMI and its relationship to oral health problems of children and adolescents aged 10-17 in the United States using data from the 2017 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) dataset

## **Teaching Experience**

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**SOWK 652 — Maternal and Child Health Macro Practice, Programs, and Policies (Graduate)**

*Spring 2026, [Morgan State University]*

Provides a comprehensive introduction to maternal and child health (MCH) from public health and social work perspectives. Covers historical development, key legislation, and major public health challenges affecting mothers, children, and families. Emphasizes how health systems, policy, and community conditions shape MCH outcomes, particularly in populations experiencing inequities. Students analyze policy and programmatic responses to maternal and infant mortality, reproductive health, child and adolescent health, immigrant health, and families with special needs children, using macro social work frameworks and evidence-based public health strategies.

**Enrollment:** 18 students | **Student Evaluation:** TBD

**HLTH 204.001 — Community Health Practice (Undergraduate)**

*Fall 2025, [Morgan State University]*

Course provides an overview of real-world factors that influence the design, implementation, and delivery of health promotion and health education programs in community settings. Emphasizes the role of health educators, historical context, social determinants of health, and culturally competent programming across public, private, and voluntary health agencies.

**Enrollment:** 30 students (juniors and seniors) | **Student Evaluation:** 4.5/5.0

## **Course Development**

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***Spring 2026***

Course Name: ***SOWK 652 — Maternal and Child Health Macro Practice, Programs, and Policies (Graduate)***

***Course Description:*** Developed graduate-level course integrating maternal and child health (MCH) content from public health and social work perspectives. Designed curriculum covering key legislation, policy, and systems-level determinants shaping maternal and child health outcomes, with emphasis on equity and population-level interventions. Created evidence-based modules on maternal/infant mortality, reproductive health, child/adolescent health, immigrant health, and services for families with special needs children, with macro-level frameworks for program development, implementation, and evaluation.

***Fall 2025***

Course Name: ***HLTH 204.001 — Community Health Practice***

***Course Description:*** Developed and implemented a community health practice course focused on the design, implementation, and evaluation of health promotion and education programs in community settings. Curriculum emphasizes historical context, social determinants of health, and culturally competent programming across public, private, and voluntary health agencies. Designed experiential learning activities, case studies, and community-based assignments to strengthen students' applied skills in health education and program planning.

***Fall 2023***

Course Name: ***Implicit Bias: Continuing Education Course (CE Course)***

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**Course Description:** To support clinicians and members of the oral health team in advancing health equity and promoting population-level health, this course is designed to explore how bias influences health outcomes with specific focus on vulnerable and historically excluded populations. This course will immerse oral health professionals in an educational journey that goes beyond numbers and epidemiological data to introspection and reflection of personal biases and exploration of differences among the professional's race, ethnicity, and cultural norms to those of patients serviced. At the end of the course, participants will be able to lead, contribute and participate in organizational practices and changes across the culture of dentistry in supporting population-level oral health outcomes and promoting oral health equity. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss implicit bias, the effects of structural and systemic racism and strategies to address using effective communication techniques presented in modules within the curriculum.

Course Name: ***Community Engagement Onboarding Curriculum***

**Course Description:** This course was developed with the aim of providing a comprehensive onboarding program for all students who are interning, volunteering or employed in the division. This course is tailored for those working with the community engagement team and various stakeholders, including partners, residents, faculty, and staff, the program aims to prepare students for effective collaboration in community engagement, outreach, and research. The overarching objective of this onboarding course is to provide students with vital training and knowledge in best practices for community engagement.

**Spring 2022**

Course Name: ***Building a Culture of Belonging through Diversity and Inclusion Training for Dental, Dental Hygiene, Law and Social Work Students***

**Course Description:** This 13-month diversity and inclusion pilot course aimed to foster a culture of belonging among interprofessional students from dentistry, law, and social work. Grounded in Dr. Ranson's "SPARK" model, the curriculum comprised four phases: 1) assessing baseline knowledge on racial/ethnic bias, 2) identifying bias indicators, 3) engaging in interprofessional diversity training, and 4) reflection and evaluation. Participants underwent pre/posttests, with a focus on systemic racial bias. A discovery activity prompted students to recognize bias in patient interactions. Standardized patient training, utilizing role-play scenarios, allowed students to discuss implicit bias and systemic racism in a safe environment. The course aimed to guide students from implicit bias to "implicit belonging."

Course Name: ***Before Competence, Acknowledge & Awareness; Oral Health Equity Provider Training***

**Course Description:** This course is designed to foster a foundational understanding of awareness and cultural competence before approaching the intricacies of effective care. This course is crafted to equip participants with the knowledge and skills needed to promote oral health equity within clinical, professional practices. The curriculum centers on three key pillars: 1) *Cultivating Awareness:* Participants will embark on a journey of self-discovery, gaining insights into the nuances of oral health disparities and the impact of social determinants., 2) *Acknowledging Barriers:* The course also emphasizes the recognition and evaluation of barriers at various levels – individual, community, systems, and policy. Participants will develop the ability to identify impediments to oral health equity, laying the groundwork for strategic interventions., and 3) *Building Cultural Competence:* Before achieving competence, participants will focus on developing cultural awareness and sensitivity. The course provides practical tools for understanding and appreciating diverse cultures, essential for delivering equitable and patient-centered oral health care.

**Fall 2021**

Course Name: ***Community Engagement- Health Hub Experiential Learning***

**Course Description:** This course was developed to provide a structured opportunity for innovation in community-engaged partnerships, impactful research, health and wellness services, interdisciplinary science, and high-impact experiential learning with the explicit goal of addressing social determinants of health, reducing health disparities, and improving the overall health and wellbeing of the East End community in Richmond, VA. Through this course, students are able to work in partnership with faculty and students from diverse disciplines, VCU Health, health care providers, community partners, and community stakeholders to provide equitable services and mutually beneficial programming, facilitate high-impact research. Students have the opportunity to report and reflect on their internship

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activities, provide weekly updates on their progress related to their final project, and benefit from mini lessons of direct relevance to their competent and successful engagement with community partners.

### **Publications & Scholarly Projects**

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**Phillips, B.** (2024, October 30). “*Understanding Barriers to Care: How Discrimination Influences Access to Dental Services*” Presented at the VCU School of Dentistry, Office of Inclusive Excellence, Ethics, and Community Engagement. Richmond, VA; USA.

**Phillips, B.** (2024, May 3). “Improving oral health outcomes for Black patients through interdisciplinary collaboration” Presented at the UB/CBU International Social Work Research Conference (ISWRC), Belize City, Belize.

**Phillips, B.** (2024, April 20). “Effects of intersectional racial discrimination on oral health utilization patterns among Black residents in Baltimore” Presented at the BDN Western Regional Conference, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA.

Mosavel, M., & **Phillips, B.** (2023). Community Researchers and Ethical Considerations: Burdens in the Field In Ethical Issues in Community and Patient Stakeholder–Engaged Health Research (pp. 107-119). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

**Phillips, B.** “Community Engaged Research & Health Disparities: Applications to promote Health Equity” Honors Summer Undergraduate Research Program, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Summer 2022.

**Phillips, B.** “Racial/Ethnic Bias in Oral Health Care,” Panel Discussion, University of Maryland School of Dentistry (UMSOD), Spring 2022.

**Phillips, B.** “Empathetic Oral health Care a Trauma-Informed Perspective to Change the Narrative” Dental Hygiene Student Seminar, University of Maryland School of Dentistry (UMSOD), Spring 2022.

Mosavel, M. **Phillips, B.** July 2022. (Virtual) Oral health narratives: the forgotten health disparity was accepted to the 20th International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Communication, Medicine and Ethics. Hong Kong.

Mosavel, M., **Phillips, B.** July 2022. (Virtual) The increased clarion call for community participation unintended ethical dilemmas when engaging peer researchers, COMET, 20th International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Communication, Medicine and Ethic, Hong Kong.

**Phillips, B.** (2021, October). Smile together Jamkhed: A comprehensive oral health education program for school-aged children in rural India. In APHA 2021 Annual Meeting and Expo. APHA.

Namoos, A., Abosamak, N. E., Abdelkarim, M., Ramadan, R., **Phillips, B.**, Ramadan, D., & Gal, T. S. (2021). Muslim Women and Disparities in Cancer Diagnosis: A Retrospective Study. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 41(3), 541-547.

Namoos, A., Gal, T., **Phillips, B.**, Ramadan, R., Abdelkarim, M., Ramdan, D., ... & Abosamak, N. (2021, October). Muslim women and disparities in cancer. In APHA 2021 Annual Meeting and Expo. APHA.

### **Professional Service**

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*Scholarship Committee Reviewer*

Fall 2020-Spring 2024

APHA-Kaiser Permanente Community Health Scholarship

*Mentorship*

Angel Aubourg- Loyola University Maryland (pre-medical undergraduate)

Fall 2021-Spring 2023

Derrick Givens, MSW- DePaul University Chicago (Social Work Grad Student)

Fall 2019-Spring 2021

Cynthia Steven -Moody Bible Institute (Clinical Counseling Grad student)

Fall 2018- Spring 2024

Naija DeLong -Morgan State University (Health Undergrad Student)

Fall 2025- Present

### **Awards**

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*Charles C. Clayton School of Medicine Scholarship Nominee*

Spring 2022

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)

**Declaration:**

I hereby declare that the information provided in this Curriculum Vitae is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**Signature:**

Briona M. Phillips Ph.D., MPH, MSW, LCSW-C

**Date:** 30 January 2026

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