



Society for Prevention Research 32nd Annual Meeting

Pre-Conference Workshop II

Date: Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Time: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Title: Developing Researcher-Policymaker Partnerships for Bringing Science to Scale and Achieving Research Impact

Organizers and Presenters:

- Taylor Scott, PhD, organizer and presenter: Executive Director of the Research Translation Platform at Penn State
- Emily Warthman, JD, MPH: Director of Policy Operations in the Research Translation Platform at Penn State
- Jessica Pugel, MA: Associate Director of Insights and Analytics in the Research Translation Platform at Penn State
- Beth Long, PhD: Director of Research and Evaluation of the Research Translation Platform at Penn State
- Rachel Storace, BA: Associate Director of Project Operations in the Research Translation Platform at Penn State
- Victoria Stamadianou, MA: Associate Director of the Research Translation Platform at Penn State

Purpose of the workshop: To train prevention scientists in scientifically tested strategies for developing policymaker partnerships that can achieve scale and impact of research findings. This workshop directly addresses a training need identified by prevention scientists, since a vast majority of surveyed prevention scientists have reported a desire to learn how to communicate with government officials. Presenters include those directly involved in government relations and scientific studies in this area to provide premium training content that was previously subject to randomized controlled trial (thus not previously widely available). This opportunity is also supported by an award recently received by the National Institutes of Drug Abuse to study the Research-to-Policy Collaboration model in state legislatures. This workshop prepares scholars of all career stages to achieve research impact by communicating directly with policymakers and shares best practices as revealed by hundreds of rapid-cycle field experiments that have demonstrated measurable impact in improving policymakers' use of

research evidence in legislation and public discourse. Partnerships and collaboration are a throughline of best practices in this area of study.

Specific learning objectives:

Objective 1: Define end-users of research evidence and recognize their involvement in achieving research impact

Objective 2: Understand how and when policymakers use research evidence (URE) and the implications for researchers' partnership and collaboration

Objective 3: Discover the science behind multiple policy engagement models that facilitate researcher-policymaker collaborations

Objective 4: Develop critical skills for navigating the policy environment, including understanding the legal definition of lobbying and the appropriate role of policy engagement for grant-funded scholars

Objective 5: Learn about effective science communication and engagement strategies

Objective 6: Create goals for individual engagement strategy development

Target workshop audience: This workshop is suitable for participants at all career stages who seek to translate research for policymakers. This includes both established academics as well as postdocs and graduate students who:

- Seek to achieve research impact via research translation
- Would like to increase public awareness and recognition of the science in their respective field
- Are interested in developing public impact strategies as part of their research agendas

Materials to be provided to attendees: Attendees will receive PowerPoint slides and handouts pertaining to interactive activities. They will also receive links to additional training materials that are available online.

Presenters:

Presenter 1: Taylor Scott, PhD is an Associate Research Professor in the Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center at The Pennsylvania State University. As the Executive Director of the Research Translation Platform, she investigates best practices for facilitating researcher-policymaker partnerships and the impact of researchers' policy engagement. She has nearly a decade of Congressional experience and routinely provides consultation to research centers on strategies for achieving policy impact. Currently she is a co-PI (with Dr. Max Crowley) on experimental studies of the Research-to-Policy Collaboration model, funded by the William T Grant Foundation and the National Institutes of Drug Abuse.

Presenter 2 Emily Warthman, JD, MPH: As the Director of Policy Operations in the Research Translation Platform at Penn State, Ms. Warthman leads policy outreach efforts including routine trainings of researchers who seek to translate their research for policy impact. Her technical expertise involves advising scholars on translating research and facilitating collaborative meetings between researchers and policymakers. She will support workshop

attendees in understanding how policymakers use research evidence, science policy roles, and tips for writing fact sheets.

Presenter 3 Jessica Pugel, MA: As the Associate Director of Insights and Analytics in the Research Translation Platform at Penn State, Ms. Pugel harnesses real-time data for assessing the effectiveness of engagement strategies that are subject to rapid-cycle field experiments. She has contributed to the Platform team for several years in this capacity which has provided her with unique skills, experiences, and trade secrets regarding what works for improving policymaker relationships. She will present on the science communication findings from field experiments.

Presenter 4 Beth Long, PhD: As Director of Research and Evaluation of the Research Translation Platform at Penn State, Dr. Long provides experience evaluating science communication and partnership models including the Research-to-Policy Collaboration and SciComm Optimizer for Policy Engagement. She has a training background in substance use disorders and joined the Platform team with aspirations of informing large-scale impact through preventative policies. She will share findings related to policy intervention models during the workshop.

Presenter 5 Rachel Storage, BA: As the Associate Director of Project Operations of the Research Translation Platform, Rachel develops procedures for supporting the scientific study of policy engagement and research impact. She develops infrastructure for managing a wide variety of activities essential for team science. In her role, she has overseen procedures for scheduling a staggering number of legislative meetings and Hill Days. She will provide workshop content related to strategies for congressional outreach and engagement.

Presenter 6 Victoria Stamadianou, MA: As the Associate Director of the Research Translation Platform at Penn State, Ms. Stamadianou manages the workflow and operations necessary for orchestrating team science. This involves coordinating efforts between policy and research operations. She offers extensive experience working directly in partnership with decision makers to support their use of research evidence. She will provide workshop content related to facilitating and building rapport in meetings with policymakers.

Outline:

1. What is research impact?
 - a. Develop conceptual understanding of “end-users” of evidence and the need for researchers’ policy engagement
 - b. Activity: pair and share, discuss the audience of your research and implications **(hands-on)**
 - c. Large group report out
2. Introducing why there is a gap between research knowledge and policy decisions
 - a. Science of science policy: fundamental theory about how policymakers use research evidence (URE)
 - b. Science policy roles
 - c. Encourage reflexivity about political values

- d. Summarize core principles of best practice
 - e. Discussion and Q&A (**hands-on**)
3. Review models of researcher policy engagement and the research and evaluation findings regarding their impact
 - a. The Research-to-Policy Collaboration
 - b. Family Impact Seminars
 - c. SciComm Optimizer for Policy Engagement
 - d. Results First
 - e. Core components summary
 4. How policymakers use research evidence
 - a. Scientific study about the types of URE
 - b. Review Congressional policy process and discuss state legislative process
 - c. Define lobbying, advocacy, education, and “honest brokerage”
 5. Science communication and findings from field experiments
 - a. What works to improve legislative engagement with scientific messages
 - b. Recommendations for writing fact sheets for policymakers
 - c. Creating an interactive dissemination strategy
 6. Developing relationships via interactive communication (i.e., meetings)
 - a. Identifying key decision makers
 - b. Scheduling, preparing for, and holding meetings
 - c. Rapport building strategies
 - d. Activity: pair and share, discuss goal setting, what you would want to learn from key audiences? (**hands-on**)

Relevance to Conference and TNATF-identified Themes

The learning objectives of this workshop directly align with both the conference themes and the SPR Training Needs Assessment Task Force (TNATF) recommendations. There is a great need to support prevention scientists in developing high-impact partnerships that accelerate the transfer of research knowledge and scientific findings to practical use in real world settings. This includes the goal of scaling up evidence-based programs as well as translating research regarding risk and protective factors to increase public awareness and understanding of key concepts that are critical for effective social policies. Partnerships with policymakers are essential for mobilizing research knowledge beyond the academy and into a sphere in which it can provide tangible benefit to the public. This workshop provides lessons that are relevant to the application of strategic partnership development and alignment with best practices for research translation and policymaker relationships.

This workshop’s purpose is also aligned with training needs identified by prevention scientists in a TNATF survey, in which 70% of respondents indicated an interest in communicating with government officials (Chilnski et al., 2020). This workshop will develop skills related to communicating with collaborators and non-research audiences. Since policymakers represent members of the general public, they are both influenced by the attitudes of their constituents as well as have the power to shape public discourse and understanding related to prevention science. Thus, this is a critical audience for prevention scientists to interact with if we seek to

implement effective prevention policies and improve general public awareness and attitudes toward preventative interventions.