The GEMMA Mission includes teaching, mentoring, and the fund to support students' research and presentations at national meetings.
**Mission**

The GEMMA Mission includes teaching, mentoring, and the fund to support Emory University students’ research and their collaboration with public health organizations to contribute to the prevention of maternal deaths from abortion.

**Background**

Worldwide, about 56 million women obtained abortions annually between 2010 and 2014. Women in developing regions are more likely to have abortions performed in unsafe conditions. Although nearly half of abortions worldwide are unsafe, 98% of these unsafe abortions take place in resource poor regions, chiefly in tropical areas. Complications from these unsafe abortions lead to about 47,000 deaths per year. Thus, the World Health Organization and other international organizations have established a goal of eliminating maternal deaths from abortion. This requires advocacy for promoting women’s rights including access to contraception and to safe abortion.

To encourage public health scholarship in preventing maternal deaths from abortion, the Rollins School of Public Health (RSPH) with initial support from Dr. Roger and Susan Rochat, established an endowed fund, the Global Elimination of Maternal Mortality due to Abortion (GEMMA) Fund.

The funds are used to support student research on the surveillance of maternal deaths, the complications associated with abortion, and the monitoring and evaluation of appropriate interventions, including contraception. In addition, the funds are used to support students’ research presentations at national conferences.
The Rollins School of Public Health has courageously kept up with changing priorities in sexual and reproductive health as well. In 1991, the APHA passed a policy resolution that urged health programs to integrate materials “on the medical need, procedures, technology...and public health aspects of abortion into current curricula.” In 2010, Rollins became the first public health school to respond to the policy resolution by establishing the class “GH 530: The Global Elimination of Maternal Mortality from Abortion.”, which has so far enrolled over 200 students.

This year the GEMMA Fund is celebrating its fourteenth anniversary and nine years of funding student-driven research. Over these years the GEMMA Fund has grown in student participation, donor support, and continued work by alumni.

This report presents the highlights of GEMMA-related activities from the 2015 – 2016 academic year.
Donor Support

The GEMMA Fund was supported by more than 75 donors for the 2015–2016 academic year. The Emory Reproductive Health Association (ERHA) and GEMMA co-chairs also contributed to the Fund through fundraising by offering “Health Dignity Justice – Choice” shirts for donations at events hosted around Emory University.

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Danielle Bulinski
Hadlea Eubanks
Helen Baker
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Alana Garvin
Andrea Catalano
Sarah Gelbard
Olivia Paige
Talya Nakash

Organizations:
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GEMMA at a Glance

GEMMA Seminar

Each year for the past seven years, Drs. Eva Lathrop and Roger Rochat have taught the GEMMA seminar. The overall objective of the course is for the participating student to understand the role of unsafe abortion in global maternal mortality, to develop a well-informed project that will have the potential to make substantive progress toward GEMMA, and to become an informed advocate for eliminating maternal mortality from abortion. Guest speakers included Drs. Diane Morof and Tara Jetlaoui to speak about methods of measurement and surveillance, and Dr. Willie Parker, to speak about abortion in the southeastern United States.

One of the most popular activities in the course is the Papaya Exercise — on this day, Dr. Lathrop’s fellows from the School of Medicine demonstrate how to perform a manual vacuum aspiration procedure on a papaya. Then, interested students may attempt to do so. A couple of photos are included below.
For the spring 2017 session of the GEMMA seminar, students wrote briefing papers on GEMMA-related topics varying from the impact of the Mexico City Policy to the need to reduce maternal mortality due to unsafe abortion through contraception use. These papers explained the context of the policy, analysis of its impact, and targeted policy recommendations. This assignment helped prepare students to analyze data in order to create policy recommendations related to GEMMA. Students focused on a number of geographic areas, including Malawi, Russia, the United States, Ghana, Togo, and many other locations throughout the world. Notable titles included “Discordance in Policy and Practice: Abortion in Nigeria” and “Halting the Assault on Women’s Rights by TRAP Laws: Exhibit A, Bill SB 21.”

Emory Reproductive Health Association and GEMMA Events
Alongside the Emory Reproductive Health Association (ERHA) Board, GEMMA co-chairs helped to organize 2015 - 2016 events including:

- *No Más Bebés* Documentary Screening and Discussion
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Practicum Panel
- Visit Emory Tabling
- Visit Emory Research Fair
- Zika Virus in Brazil: Where reproductive rights and disability rights collide
- Sex and Pleasure Night
- Valentine’s Day Week Chocolate Genitalia Sale (proceeds were given to the Feminist Women’s Health Center)

Health Equity in Sexual and Reproductive Health Conference
On November 12, 2016 ERHA presented its second annual sexual and reproductive health conference. Its mission for this conference was to “create a space to allow for an open and honest discussion about the root causes of health inequities and disparities in SRH and how historic and socioeconomic injustices have led to current health inequities”. The day began with a keynote address by Michelle Allen, the Director of the Maternal and Child Health Division of the Georgia Department of Public Health, on the integration and impact of maternal and child health and STD programs. Participants then attended one of four workshops during the early afternoon:
- Trapped and Unhealthy: Implications of Incarceration in Relation to Women’s Reproductive Health,
- Addressing Abortion Inequities and Upholding Girls’ and Women’s Rights Around the World,
- Improving Transgender Sexual and Reproductive Health Care, or
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Equity and Public Health Policy.

After lunch, Kim Nolte, MPH, MCHES, of the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential, gave a lecture entitled, “Harnessing Collective Impact for Reproductive Health Equity”. A panel composed of three public health professionals then presented on meeting the needs of the medically underserved. Drs. Kelli Hall and Roger Rochat of the Rollins School of Public Health closed out the conference before an hour-long reception.

**Annual GEMMA Evening 2016**

Ten students presented their summer research at the fall GEMMA evening on October 7, 2016. Presentations ranged from a study of the National Midwifery Association of Togo to policy around reproductive care in Mississippi. At this event, faculty, students, and friends learned about how students at Emory are advancing reproductive health and justice around the world. Summaries of some of the research projects are included in the next few pages.
Rachel Shapiro, Brianna Poovey, and Helen Baker worked on a mixed methods project which was comprised of two parts: a qualitative analysis of organizational strengths and weaknesses in the National Midwifery Association (ASSAFETO) and a mixed-methods study examining barriers to clinic use for women seeking reproductive health services. The project was completed in partnership with EngenderHealth and AgirPF as well as ASSEFETO. They were a part of a three-person multidisciplinary team, primarily funded through the Emory Global Health Institute. Rachel and Brianna conducted the research alongside a Togolese intern and under the supervision of Emory Nursing PhD candidate Helen Baker. This project examined the ability of midwives to provide family planning and other essential reproductive health services to women in Lomé, Togo. Main findings from part one included the need for better organizational delegation, the
importance of integrating new midwives within the organizational structure, and the need for more effective communication between members. Main findings from the second section included financial barriers, the importance of midwives’/providers’ attitudes towards patient care, and fear of side effects from family planning methods.

“GEMMA funds were instrumental in our ability to carry out our project! While our project did not focus specifically on abortion, in our focus groups, many women alluded to the impact unsafe abortions had in their communities. We hope that this project will help strengthen the provision of essential reproductive health services for women in Lomé.” – Rachel Shapiro

“Getting to work and meet in person the women, families, and midwives we were hoping to most impact with our research results was an incredibly rewarding experience that motivated me every day to work hard and continue remembering the individual lives that can be positively impacted by greater access to maternal health care and safe abortion services.” – Brianna Poovey

2016 GEMMA Conference Support

Erin Files Dumas, Jennifer Swanson, Katie Michel, Timothy Nielsen, Ruvani Jayaweera, and Adriana Bracho received GEMMA funds to present on various topics at reproductive health conferences across the country.
Kayley Scruggs  

**Mississippi Improving Services and Policy Around Reproductive Care (iSPARC)**  
Kayley worked on iSPARC, a mixed-methods study through the University of Alabama at Birmingham, on Mississippian women's experiences accessing and using contraceptive methods before and after unintended pregnancy. The study's surveys assess birth control preferences and barriers among patients receiving services at the last remaining abortion clinic in the state, Jackson Women’s Health Organization. The research team hopes that the findings from the study will inform clinical practice and family planning policies in Mississippi. The study is still in progress, but they are planning to publish a paper on their findings. Last summer, Kayley would spend the first half of the day recruiting and surveying research participants for iSPARC and then spend the second half of the day volunteering as an escort. The building is painted bright pink, so they have affectionately nicknamed the clinic the Pink House and the group of the escort’s the Pink House Defenders (PHDs).

Chad Chalker  

**Evaluating the Feasibility and Acceptability of Sending Pregnancy History Surveys Through SMS Text Messaging in Kenya**  
Chad was a part of a team that explored the feasibility and acceptability of using a mobile SMS survey to assess pregnancy outcomes, including abortion, in Kenya. A random selection of 500 18-24-year-old women in Kenya who opted-in to a mobile survey network were sent an SMS asking whether they would be comfortable answering questions about pregnancy only or pregnancy and
abortion. Depending on the response, women received up to 10 open-ended and multiple choice questions about their pregnancy outcomes, including whether they had terminated a pregnancy.

Current GEMMA Research

Julia Quinn

**Evaluation of an Intervention to Increase Post-abortion LARC Uptake: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Educational and Financial Counseling prior to Clinical Presentation**

Julia is currently involved in a research project at an Atlanta abortion clinic with an interdisciplinary team including a physician, epidemiologist, and health economist, as well as a public health PhD student and Julia, a nursing student. The team hopes to increase post-abortion LARC uptake by providing education and financial counseling about LARC to the woman over the phone before her procedure. With funding assistance from GEMMA, Julia is currently working with clinic staff and financial counselors to design the educational scripts and will pilot these materials over the next several weeks before the study will be implemented. Many women use contraceptive methods that are highly user-dependent. Long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) methods such as intrauterine devices and implants do not depend on consistency of use, and they are extremely effective. They can also be inserted after an abortion with marginal, if any, additional discomfort. Women seeking abortion care typically receive education about contraceptive methods, including LARC, but this education generally only occurs when the woman arrives for her procedure, at which point it is too late for her to consider affordability and discuss her options with her partner if she would like.

"Women who are seeking abortion services need family planning counseling to happen in a way that is functional for their lives and gives them the tools they need at the right moment. As a future Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner, I appreciate the opportunity to help find out what that right moment is and help work out the kinks of LARC education so that it is most useful to patients." – Julia Quinn
**Current Related GEMMA Research**

**Sarah Gelbard & Talya Nakash**  
*Atlanta Women’s Center*

Sarah and Talya work in clinical research with Emory Family Planning at Atlanta Women’s Center, on a drug study for pain management during first trimester abortion procedures.

"Safe and compassionate abortion care is an essential part of healthcare, and I am very lucky to learn from patients and staff at Atlanta Women’s Center. I know that it will carry me well into a health advocacy career." - Sarah Gelbard

**GEMMA Alumni**

**Andrea Catalano**

During the summer of 2013, Andrea designed and implemented a study related to pregnancy intention and abortion in Comayagua, Honduras, with the help of Global Field Experience (GFE) and GEMMA funds. Now, Andrea is an ORISE Fellow on the Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology team in CDC’s Division of Reproductive Health. She works on several MCH projects, including one related to data quality of the pregnancy checkbox on the U.S. standard death certificate and U.S. maternal mortality. Andrea writes that her experience in Honduras “cemented [her] desire and passion to work in reproductive health, particularly with underserved populations.” She was able to accomplish “one of [her] long time goals” of overseeing an entire research project and realized the importance of public health policy and applied public health. Andrea is “eternally indebted to Dr. Rochat for everything he has done to help [her] grow both personally and professionally.”
Danielle Finch
Danielle received GEMMA funds to travel to Siaya, Kenya in the summer of 2010 to study community gender norms and how they influenced women’s decision-making regarding birth control, family size, and abortion. Danielle is currently finishing medical school at Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine and is waiting to see where she matched for residency (where she applied OB/GYN). Danielle writes that her GEMMA project influenced her career trajectory by making her passionate about providing and advocating for safe abortion and family planning services. She completed a Medical Students for Choice Reproductive Health Externship at a Detroit clinic in her fourth year at medical school and learned how to perform abortion procedures and to counsel patients on all family-planning related issues. In applying to residencies, Danielle has matched with UC Davis in Sacramento which provides family planning training, as she hopes to provide abortion services to future patients. Danielle is now married and has a two year-old daughter named Eleanor.

Ruvani Jayaweera
After graduating from Rollins, Ruvani joined Ibis Reproductive Health as a Project Manager, where she manages a variety of quantitative and qualitative research projects focused on increasing women’s access to abortion, particularly in places where abortion is legally restricted. She currently has projects in Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Indonesia, and the United States. Ruvani writes that she is indebted to Roger and the GEMMA fund. For her practicum, she conducted an evaluation of a safe abortion hotline in Kenya, which eventually led to her current job at Ibis.
Lydia Karch
Lydia travelled to Mexico City, Mexico in 2011 with a Global Health Institute (GHI) team to develop a messaging campaign around access to legal abortion in the federal district. Currently, Lydia is a program manager at Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis, MN. She manages two grants: one supports community health workers to address chronic disease in Hennepin and another looks at developing a medical respite model for patients in the Twin Cities metro area. Lydia writes that her project in Mexico City helped her to realize how easy it is for patients to receive misinformation about their healthcare options; she uses her skills from her GEMMA project to mitigate this problem in her new job as program manager.

Kate Michel
Kate Michel was a 2015 GEMMA awardee, working on a project involving contraceptive provision at a local abortion clinic. Kate is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow with the Women’s Interagency HIV Study at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. Her research combines the reproductive immunology work of her PhD with the epidemiological methods and concepts developed during her MPH work. Her current focus is on immune mediators of cervical disease in HIV-positive women, understanding the cervico-vaginal microbiome by HIV status, and HIV infection during pregnancy. In collaboration with Tim Nielsen, Renita Woolford, and her advisors at Emory (Lisa Haddad, Kristin Wall, Eva Lathrop, and Lauren Christensen-Lindquist) Kate is working on publishing her MPH thesis on interest and uptake of long-acting reversible contraceptives during and following abortion care.

Trisha Moslin
Trisha Moslin volunteered and worked with the Feminist Women’s Health Center in Atlanta while at Rollins in 2005-2007. She designed and implemented a research study that culminated in her thesis, and published “Contraceptive Use Among Clients of the Atlanta Feminist Women’s Health
Center at Three to Five Weeks Post-Abortion” in the Maternal and Child Health Journal. After graduating, Trisha took a job with the Population Reference Bureau and has been there since. She is currently the Business Development Director and Program Finance & Operations Director. Because of her MPH, time with FWHC, practicum with CARE in Indonesia, and pre-Rollins experiences, she is able to work effectively with technical staff even though she has had non-technical roles. Her hours at FWHC gave her knowledge of the clinical aspects of safe abortion services as well as primary research experience on the connection between abortion and contraceptive use. It also allowed her to hear the voices of women who chose abortion as a method of family planning as well as those who had experienced rape. Trisha writes that her experiences at Rollins gave her “a valuable foundation of knowledge that allows [her] to add a lot of value to PRB, and hopefully to our sector’s combined efforts to improve the health and well-being of men, women, girls, and boys around the world.”

Antoinette Nguyen
Antoinette completed a practicum in 2011 working on a survey to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of family planning on the Haitian Central Plateau. After graduating in 2012 with an MD/MPH, Antoinette completed an OB/GYN residency at Northwestern. She is currently a Family Planning Fellow at UNC-Chapel Hill. Antoinette writes that the GEMMA course cemented her decision to pursue an academic and clinical career in family planning and she plans to continue to work as an advocate for women and girls in the United States, and specifically in the South.

Timothy Nielsen
Timothy graduated from Rollins in 2016 and is currently in his first year of the CSTE Applied Epidemiology Fellowship in Maternal and Child Health. He is currently working at the Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition in the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on projects related to reducing maternal morbidity and mortality, as well as substance use during pregnancy. Timothy writes that his “GEMMA project was the most important part of my MPH program. It has provided a foundation for my professional interest in maternal and child health and my personal belief that parenting, abortion, and adoption are three equally valid outcomes of pregnancy and all women should have the opportunity to choose the outcome that is best suited to their needs.”
Heidi Schroffel
Heidi partook in a summer practicum in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 2014, where she worked with other public health students, theology, and nursing students. The objective of the project was to learn more about the realities of abortion in Montevideo after its decriminalization in 2012. Heidi performed satisfaction surveys at a public hospital for abortion clients receiving legal services. Now Heidi is a Senior Program Officer in the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Department at CARE USA where her team works to reduce unsafe abortion (through family planning and advocacy) and provide post-abortion care in conflict affected settings globally. Heidi believes that her GEMMA-funded project helped her to gain an internship with CARE that led to her current job.

GEMMA Research
2016 GEMMA Theses

Bougrab, Nassira. Es el derecho de la mujer: A Qualitative Review of Abortion Care Quality in Bogotá, Colombia, MPH thesis 2016 (teammate Wendy Avila), (EGHI team, 2015).


Dumas, Erin (with Eva Lathrop) Impact of Liberalized Abortion policies in select sub-Saharan countries: a synthesis of the literature and proposals for the future [will publish].

Lewis, Patricia (Kathryn Yount, chair) What role does religion play in men’s contraceptive behavior? A secondary data analysis of 2011–2013 NSFG data [will publish].

Michel, Katherine. Facilitators and barriers to long acting reversible contraceptives within twelve weeks post-abortion in an outpatient abortion clinic in Atlanta, Georgia. (2016).

Nepiyala, John. An evaluation of maternal deaths audit activities to reduce maternal deaths in Mulanje district in rural Malawi
Jayaweera, Ruvani T. (GLEPI; Alice Ann Crandall and Kathryn M.Yount, committee). Examining the Effect of Fertility, Achievement of Ideal Family Size, Unmet Need, and Modern Contraceptive Use on Women’s Empowerment in Minya, Egypt [will publish].

Nielsen, Timothy. Predictors of Less Effective Contraceptive Method Use at Twelve Weeks Post-Outpatient Abortion, Atlanta, Georgia. (2016).

Zolowere, Davie (with Hennink) Perceptions of community towards unintended pregnancies in rural Malawi.

**GEMMA Publications**

Brack, Chelsey, Oscar Alberto Bernal Acevedo, Rochat R. "'A race against the clock": A Qualitative Analysis of Barriers to Legal Abortion Access in Bogota, Colombia', submitted to *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* (EGHI team, 2014).

Chowdhary, Pari. "No one likes an abortion provider until they need one": Examining Abortion Providers Perspectives on the Contextual Challenges and Opportunities Affecting their Recruitment and Retention to the Southern United States. (unpublished MPH thesis, 2015).


Luffy SM, Evans DP, Rochat RW. ""It is better if I kill her": Perceptions and opinions of violence against women and femicide in Ocotal, Nicaragua after Law 779" Violence and Gender. 2015;2(2):107-111.


Rao, Shreya, Perceptions of unwanted pregnancy, emergency contraception and abortion: a qualitative study of healthcare providers and community leaders in the Amazon Region of Colombia, GEMMA recipient, 2011.


Stanhope K, Rochat R, Fink L, Richardson K, Brack C, Comeau D, Physician opinions concerning legal abortion in Bogota, Colombia, Culture, Health and Sexuality, Vol. 0, Iss. 0,0 (EGHI team, 2014).

Woodson, Ryan, Unwanted Pregnancy and Induced Abortion among Women in the Amazon Region of Colombia, unpublished MPH thesis 2011.
Policy Spotlight
Orawee Chinthakanan

Orawee Chinthakanan obtained her MD in Bangkok, Thailand before attending Rollins and graduating in 2012 with an MPH in Global Health, Specializing in Sexual and Reproductive Health. During her time at Rollins, Orawee completed a thesis under Dr. Rochat, comparing the abortion data that states reported to the CDC and what they reported on their own state websites. Orawee has since started a position at Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University in Bangkok. She is part of the RSA, a referral system for safe abortion, and helped to coordinate a big advocacy push that culminated in the passing of a law that legalized abortion in Thailand. She is also a part of a Medabon multicenter randomized controlled trial and is working on several projects related to abortion. She is even writing a book chapter on Medabon use in Thailand.
GEMMA Supporters In Action
Women’s Marches Around the World on 21 January 2017

ATLANTA
Audrey Fals Henderson (right)
Gaëlle Sabben
Courtney Peters (right)
Rachel Shapiro

Katie Forsberg (top row, third from left)

RALEIGH
Antoinette Mai Truc (left) and Amy Bryant (second from left)
Brittany Schriver Iskarpatyoti

BOSTON
Courtney Boudreau
WASHINGTON, DC

Leah Pao (left)

Sally Zweimueler

Dani Moulia (left)

Shannon Clawson

Liz Smulian

Natalie Blackburn (left)
OAKLAND

Kellie Cork (right)

SAN DIEGO

Karen Thurston (left)

KINSHASA

Evelyn Howatt (left)

ANN ARBOR

Kristina Amukelani Countryman

CHICAGO

Carla DeSisto (left) and Olivia Sappenfield (right)
Contributions to the GEMMA Fund

GEMMA fund t-shirts are offered in exchange for a donation of $15 and may be shipped for an additional $10.

1) Donate online:

http://www.sph.emory.edu/departments/centers/gemma/contact/index.html

2) Mail a check made out to Emory University (with GEMMA Fund on the subject line):

Emory University  
MSC 0970-001-8AA  
Office of Gift Records  
1762 Clifton Rd NE Ste. 1400  
Atlanta, GA 30322
This issue of the GEMMA Report is dedicated to Ward Cates, MD, MPH, a lifelong advocate and pioneer of research in women’s reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.iii

**Notable Accomplishments:**
- Phi Beta Kappa, Yale College, 1964
- EIS Officer, 1974
- Disease Detective
- Ran Epidemic Intelligence Service, CDC, 1991-1994
- Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, 1998
- Thomas Parran Award, American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association, 2003
- Founding Member of the Triangle Global Health Consortium (TGHC), 2009
- UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, Dean’s Advisory Council
- Society of Family Planning Allan Rosenfield Award for Lifetime Achievement, 2015

**Publications:**
- Contraceptive Technology, 20 editions
- The IUD and Spontaneous Abortion Deaths, NEJM (1976)
- The Hyde Amendment in Action: How Did the Restriction of Federal Funds for Abortion Affect Low-income Women? JAMA (1981)
- D&E Procedures and Second Trimester Abortions: The Role of Physician Skill and Hospital Setting. JAMA (1982)
- The Risks Associated with Teenage Abortion. NEJM (1983)
- The Pill, Chlamydia and PID (1983)
- Epidemiology of Genital Herpes Infections in the United States: The Current Situation (1986)
- Epidemiology and Control of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (1986)
- The Challenge of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in Women and Children (1988)
- Sexual Transmission of HIV. NEJM (1997)
- The NIH Condom Report: The Glass is 90% Full (2001)
- Reproductive Choices for Women with HIV (2009)

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