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EDUCATION

University of Connecticut

Ph.D. Candidate, Human Development and Family Sciences (expected) 2023
Specialization in Adulthood, Aging, and Gerontology

Dissertation: “*The role of chronic disease self-management and psychological resources on rural Medicare beneficiaries’ health-related quality of life and healthcare service utilization*”

Dr. Keith Bellizzi, Major Advisor
Dr. Edna Brown, Associate Advisor
Dr. Julie Robison, Associate Advisor

Graduate Certificate, Interdisciplinary Disability Studies in Public Health 2022

Graduate Certificate, Quantitative Research Methods 2021

M.A., Human Development and Family Sciences 2019
Specialization in Gerontology

Thesis: “*Community Living in Context: Rural, Suburban, and Urban Differences Among Older Money Follows the Person Participants*”

Dr. Laura Donorfio, Major Advisor
Dr. Keith Bellizzi, Associate Advisor
Dr. Julie Robison, Associate Advisor

University of Saint Joseph

B.S., Public Health 2015
Minor in Biology

RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant 2019 - Present
Multilevel Resilience Trajectories in the Transition to Cancer Survivorship, UCONN
Principal Investigators, Drs. Keith Bellizzi and Crystal Park

- National Institute of Health Grant: 5UH3CA220642-04
- Responsible for the recruitment of participants in a longitudinal study of breast, colorectal, or prostate cancer survivors
- Extensive experience in data collection and data management using the REDCap survey database
- Extensive experience in data analysis using SPSS including Hayes PROCESS Macro

- Experience in the management of cortisol (nail and hair) samples and accelerometer data (Actigraph GTX3)
- Project lead or co-author on seven sub-analyses leading to publications and conference presentations
- Experience in Institutional Review Board submissions, updates, and communications
- Mentor for 6-10 undergraduate research assistants

Health Policy Fellow

2022

Advocacy and Communications, AcademyHealth

- Worked directly with Director of Advocacy and Communications, Josh Caplan
- Sole and co-author of six research memos, one-pagers, and blog posts
- Responsible for tracking relevant legislation and policy issues, such as federal appropriations or authorizing bills related to health services research
- Participant and lead in congressional staff meetings regarding health services research advocacy

Style Guide Expansion Assistant

2021 - 2022

Reframing Aging, Gerontology Society of America

- Worked directly with Vice President of Policy and Professional Affairs, Patricia D'Antonio, and Laurie Lindberg of the Reframing Aging Initiative
- Responsible for researching the process for submitting the style guide request, including identification of appropriate personnel, and required submission materials
- Compiled the initial outreach letter and follow-up communication with the organization

Greg O'Neill Policy Intern

2021

Gerontology Society of America

- Worked directly with Vice President of Policy and Professional Affairs, Patricia D'Antonio
- Participated in the evaluation and communication of policies related to older adults to society members
- Attendance in congressional hearings and aging coalition meetings
- Project lead for several internal reports and summaries used to advocate for gerontology in public policy

Co-Investigator

2020 - 2021

BeWell Study, UCONN

Principal Investigators, Drs. Saras Bellur, Emily Hennessy, and Rebecca Abachuck

- UConn InCHIP Seed Grant, \$2000
- Extensive experience in data collection and data management using the REDCap survey database
- Responsible for data analysis for participants in a longitudinal well-being study among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Project lead on four sub-analyses leading to publications and conference presentations

Co-Managing Editor, *Journal of Applied Gerontology*

2020 – 2021

- Worked directly with Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Julie Robison and alongside Co-Managing Editor, Christine Bailey

Managing Editor, *Journal of Applied Gerontology* 2017 – 2020

- Worked directly with Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Julie Robison
- Responsible for identifying reviewers of submitted manuscripts using ScholarOne
- Participated in initiatives to boost journal visibility

Clinical Research Assistant 2015 - 2021

Center on Aging, UCONN Health

Principal Investigator, Dr. Julie Robison

- Experience with Medicaid-funded grant research and federal evaluation programs in the State of Connecticut (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) Experience of Care survey, Money Follows the Person Quality of Life survey and National Family Caregiver Survey Program)
- Participated in the testing of the Medicaid Universal Assessment eligibility determination for the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services
- Experience in data collection using proprietary software and analysis using SPSS for participants in the Money Follows the Person program in the State of Connecticut
- Lead or co-author in six publications, presentations, and reports

PUBLICATIONS

1. Kellett, K., **Ligus, K.**, & Robison, J. (2021). "So glad to be home": Money Follows the Person participants' experiences after transitioning out of an institution. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, doi: 10.1177/10442073211043519
2. Park, C., Fritzson, E., Gnall, K., Salafia, C., **Ligus, K.**, Sinnott, S., & Bellizzi, K. (2021). *Resilience across the Transition to Cancer Survivorship*. *Research in Human Development*. doi:10.1080/15427609.2021.1960771
3. **Ligus, K.**, Fritzson, E., Hennessy, E. A., Acabchuk, R. L., & Bellizzi, K. (2021). *Disruptions in the management and care of university students with preexisting mental health conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic*. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibab020

PUBLICATIONS UNDER PEER REVIEW

1. Bellizzi, K., **Ligus, K.**, Fritzson, E., Salafia, C., Sanft, T., & Park, C. (2022). *Disruption in Cancer Care During Early Survivorship due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Patient Satisfaction with Telemedicine*.

REPORTS & COMMENTARIES

Ligus, K. (2022). The present and future of rural America's hospitals.

<https://academyhealth.org/blog/2022-09/present-and-future-rural-americas-hospitals>

Ligus, K. (2022). Medicare Advantage improves patient-centered care efficiency for older beneficiaries. <https://academyhealth.org/blog/2022-08/medicare-advantage-improves-patient-centered-care-efficiency-older-beneficiaries>

- Ligus, K.** (2022). Medicaid expansion increased total physician visits but failed to bring in new physicians in early expansion states. <https://academyhealth.org/blog/2022-08/medicaid-expansion-increased-total-physician-visits-failed-bring-new-physicians-early-expansion-states>
- Ligus, K.** (2022). Strategies for maximizing policy impact. <https://academyhealth.org/blog/2022-07/strategies-maximizing-policy-impact>
- Ligus, K.** & Caplan, J. (2022). Policymakers need to hear from experts. Do you know how to reach them? <https://academyhealth.org/blog/2022-07/policymakers-need-hear-experts-do-you-know-how-reach-them>
- Ligus, K.** (2022). AHRQ advances the mission for relevant, effective population data. <https://academyhealth.org/blog/2022-07/ahrq-advances-mission-relevant-effective-population-data>
- Kellett, K., **Ligus, K.**, & Robison, J. (2018). The final word: Connecticut MFP participants' qualitative feedback on program experiences. https://health.uconn.edu/aging/wp-content/uploads/sites/102/2018/04/QOL_Final-Word-Report_FINAL.pdf
- Baker, K., Santiago, A., **Ligus, K.**, Porter, M., Shugrue, N., & Robison, J. (2016). Money Follows the Person rebalancing demonstration closed cases report for 2015. <https://health.uconn.edu/dev-aging/wp-content/uploads/sites/102/2017/03/Closed-cases-report-2015.pdf>

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

- Ligus, K.**, Fritzon, E., Salafia, C., Park, C. L. & Bellizzi, K., (2022, November). Older cancer survivors' post-traumatic growth during the COVID-19 pandemic. Poster presentation at the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) Annual Scientific Meeting, Indianapolis, IN.
- Bellizzi, K., **Ligus, K.**, Fritzon, E., Salafia, C., & Park, C. (2022). Disruption in Cancer Care due to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Patient Satisfaction with the Transition to Telemedicine. Poster presentation at the Society for Behavioral Medicine conference, Baltimore, MD.
- Ligus, K.**, Fritzon, E., Salafia, C., Dibble, K., Sanft, T., Park, C., & Bellizzi, K. (2022). Predictors of sleep disturbance among newly diagnosed cancer survivors. Poster presentation at the Annual American Psychosocial Oncology Society Conference, Portland, OR.
- Ligus, K.**, Rhee, G., & Bellizzi, K. (2021). Roles of Social Isolation and Rurality on Functional Limitations in Older Adults Living in the US. Poster presentation at the Gerontological Society of America virtual conference, online.
- Fritzon, E., **Ligus, K.**, Salafia, C., Levin, J., Anselmo, H., Hu, Q., Nowak, M., & Bellizzi, K. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 news on psychological distress in college students with pre-existing mental health conditions. Poster presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Conference, online.
- Ligus, K.**, Park, C., Sanft, T., & Bellizzi, K. (2021). Social Connectedness, Pain, Emotion Regulation and Wellbeing in Older Adults in Active Treatment for Cancer. Research spotlight presentation at the Society for Behavioral Medicine Virtual Conference, online.
- Acabchuk, R., Hennessy, E., Bellur, S., Fritzon, E., **Ligus, K.**, ... Meunier, S. Investigating Anti-Racist Attitudes and Behavior with the Compassionate-Accountability Model. Research poster presentation at the Society for Prevention Research virtual conference, online.

- Ligus K.**, Fritzon, E., & Bellizzi, K. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Management of Mental Health Conditions among College Students. Research spotlight presentation at the Society of Behavioral Medicine Annual Research Meeting, online.
- Fritzon, E., **Ligus, K.**, Gnall, K., Sinnott, S. M., Salafia, C., Park, C. Sanft, T., & Bellizzi, K. (2021). Demographic Differences in COVID-Related Stress Among Cancer Survivors. Poster presented at the Annual American Psychosocial Oncology Society Virtual Conference, online.
- Kellett, K., **Ligus, K.**, Baker, K., & Robison, J. (2020). Social Determinants of Health for People with Serious Mental Illness After Transitioning to the Community. Paper presented at the Gerontological Society of America Annual Research Meeting, online.
- Fritzon, E., **Ligus, K.**, Gnall, K., Dibble, K.E., Sinnott, S., Bellizzi, K., Harel O., Sanft, T., Mehta, R., Behlman, L., & Park, C. (2020). Differences in Psychological Well-Being Based on Cancer Type during Cancer Diagnosis. Poster accepted for presentation at the Society of Behavioral Medicine Annual Research Meeting, San Francisco, CA. Presentation was canceled due to COVID-19.
- Ligus, K.**, Fritzon, E., Gnall, K., Dibble, K.E., Sinnott, S., Park, C., Harel O., Sanft, T., Mehta, R., Behlman, L., & Bellizzi, K. (2020). Demographic Differences in Cancer Patients on Psychosocial Outcomes. Poster accepted for presentation at the American Psychosocial Oncology Society Annual Research Meeting, Portland, OR. Presentation was canceled due to COVID-19.
- Ligus, K.**, Grimaldi, A. & Robison, J. (2019). Exploring the Effects of Rural and Urban Living on Loneliness and Reinstitutionalization. Poster presented at the Gerontological Society of America Annual Research Meeting, Austin, TX.
- Ligus, K.** & Robison, J. (2019). Does Rural-Urban Living Affect Health Service Utilization after Transitioning out of a Nursing Home? Poster presented at the AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, Washington, DC.
- Kellett, K., **Ligus, K.**, & Robison, J. (2018). Connecticut MFP Program Participants' Experiences: A Qualitative Study. Poster presented at the Gerontological Society of America annual meeting, Boston, MA.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS & INTERVIEWS

- Bellizzi, K., Salafia, C., **Ligus, K.**, Fritzon, E., & Park, C. L. (*forthcoming* 2023, March) Symptom burden, anxiety, and depression in older cancer survivors: The protective role of social support. Invited symposium to be presented at the American Psychosocial Oncology Society Annual Conference, Portland, OR.
- D'Antonio, P., Gallo, H., Chen, L. & **Ligus, K.** (2022, January). Invited Panelist: Getting to Know the GSA Summer Policy Internship Program: Application and Conversation with Previous Policy Intern. Gerontological Society of America.
- Ligus K.** & Bascu, J-D. (2021, October). Invited Co-Host: *Career Conversation—75 Years of Building the Field of Gerontology: Where We Were, Where We're Going*. Gerontological Society of America.
- Fabius, C., & **Ligus, K.** (2021, October). Invited Co-Presenter: *Engaging Interest Group Members through Monthly Newsletters*. AcademyHealth-led Monthly Interest Group Call.

Henning-Smith, C., **Ligus K.**, Bascu, J-D., & Hu, R. (2021, October). Co-Host: *Rural Aging episode*. GSA Science and Storytelling: A GSA 75th Anniversary Podcast on Aging, Gerontological Society of America.

Ligus K., Fritzson, E., Bellizzi, K. (2020, October). Invited presenter: *Disruptions in the medical management and care of university students with pre-existing mental health conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic*. InCHIP: Becoming an Adult During a Public Health Crisis: COVID-19's Impact on Emerging Adults.

GRANTS

- InCHIP Seed Grant 2020
 - “Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Management of Mental Health Conditions among UConn Undergraduate Students.” Keith Bellizzi (PI), Emily Fritzson & Kaleigh Ligus (Co-I's), \$2000.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & TRAINING

- Attendee, AcademyHealth Health Policy Orientation 2022
- Graduate Student Representative, UConn HDFS Strategic Planning Committee 2022
- Graduate Student Representative, UConn HDFS Faculty Search Committee 2022
- Member, ESPO Awards Review Panel, Gerontological Society of America 2022
- Member, ESPO Annual Scientific Meeting Working Group, Gerontological Society of America 2022
- Senior Student Representative, Long-Term Services and Supports Interest Group Advisory Committee, Academy Health 2020 - 2022
- Invited Book Reviewer, Rowman and Littlefield 2021
- Workgroup Member, GSA Science, and Storytelling: A GSA 75th Anniversary Podcast on Aging, Gerontological Society of America 2021
- Invited Manuscript Reviewer, The Gerontologist 2021
- Junior Student Representative, Long-Term Services and Supports Interest Group Advisory Committee, Academy Health 2019 - 2020
- Volunteer, Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting 2019
- Volunteer, Southern Gerontological Society Annual Meeting 2019
- Volunteer, Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting 2018
- Manuscript Reviewer-in-Training, The Gerontologist 2018
- Volunteer, International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics World Congress 2017

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

- Instructor of Record, HDFS 2200 - Adulthood and Aging Fall 2021
- Instructor of Record, HDFS 2200 - Adulthood and Aging, online Spring 2021
- Instructor of Record, HDFS 2200 - Adulthood and Aging, online Fall 2020
- Teaching Assistant, HDFS 2004W - Research Methods Spring 2020

- Teaching Assistant, HDFS 2004W - Research Methods Fall 2019
- Instructor of Record, HDFS 2004W - Research Methods Spring 2019
- Teaching Assistant, HDFS 2004W - Research Methods Fall 2018
- Teaching Assistant, HDFS 2200 - Adulthood and Aging Spring 2018
- Teaching Assistant, HDFS 1070 - Individual and Family Development Fall 2017

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

- GSA ESPO Carol Schutz Travel Award 2022
- UCONN Graduate School Pre-Doctoral Summer Fellowship 2022
- UCONN Graduate School Conference Participation Award 2022
- GSA Social Research Policy and Practice Travel Stipend 2021
- GSA Social Research Policy and Practice Travel Stipend 2020
- Mattoon-Kline Endowed Scholarship Award 2019
- Dr. Howard A. Rosencranz Memorial Scholarship Award 2019
- Human Development and Family Sciences Departmental Award 2019
- Southern Gerontological Society Student Scholarship Award 2018
- Michael Ego Travel Fund Monetary Award 2017
- GSA Social Research Policy and Practice Travel Stipend 2017

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Gerontological Society of America, Current student member
- AcademyHealth, Current student member
- American Psychosocial Oncology Society, Current student member
- *New England Rural Health Association, Past student member*
- *Society for Behavioral Medicine, Past student member*
- *Southern Gerontological Society, Past student member*
- *American Public Health Association, Past student member*
- *American Psychological Association, Division 20, Past student member*

SKILLS

Software, proficient: Atlas.ti, Stata, SPSS, Microsoft Office suite, Google suite, RedCAP survey system

Software, familiar: R, SAS, ArcGIS