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The Pew Charitable Trusts



TO SAVE THE HIGH SEAS

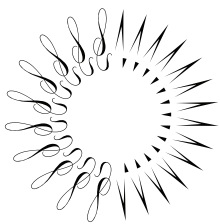
The U.N. approves a new treaty for the future of the ocean

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Tom Mihale/AP Images

TIME CAPSULE



In 2008, The Pew Charitable Trusts created the Philadelphia research and policy initiative to study the trends and issues affecting its hometown. Over the last 15 years, the initiative has delved into operations of the school system, polled city residents on key issues, and studied a range of services. Recently, the initiative has turned its focus to four key areas that affect the quality of life in Philadelphia: easing the affordable housing problem, contending with the opioid epidemic, modernizing the civil court system, and improving the city's fiscal health. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 public health emergency, Pew's staff is providing research and convening local leaders seeking to bolster the city's economic future.

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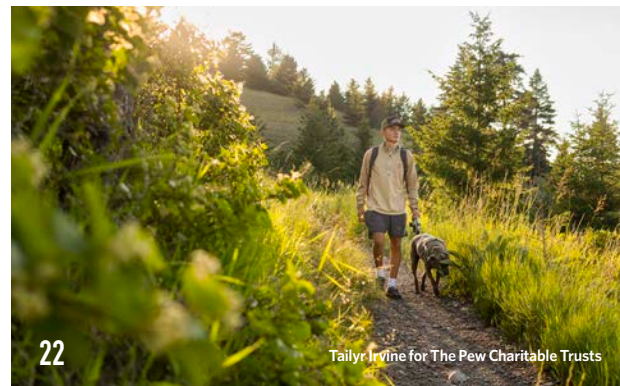
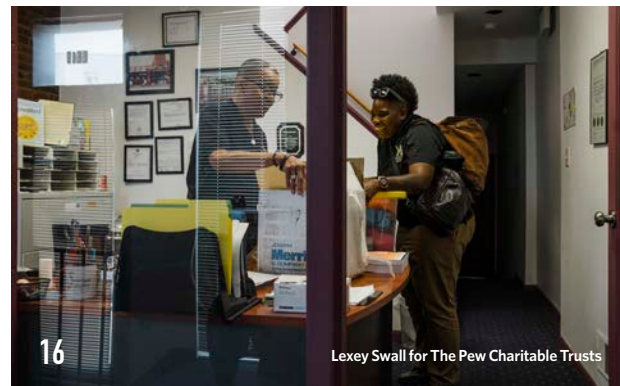
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Cover: piola666/Getty Images

To Strengthen Democracy and Create a Better World



“Rebuilding trust—and strengthening democracy—begins with gathering facts that can provide a common language for people to discuss their differences, allowing a diversity of voices and contrary viewpoints to be heard and respected.”

In 1958, 10 years after the founding of The Pew Charitable Trusts, about 75% of Americans thought the federal government would do the right thing most of the time. But since then, that number has steadily declined. According to a Pew Research Center analysis, today just 2 in 10 people trust the government in Washington—a sentiment that has changed little in the past 15 years. And a Center survey last year found that only 8% of adults believe the government is responsive to the needs of ordinary Americans. This declining trust in government could spell trouble for democracy. But it doesn't have to.

Rebuilding trust—and strengthening democracy—begins with gathering facts that can provide a common language for people to discuss their differences, allowing a diversity of voices and contrary viewpoints to be heard and respected. Few organizations deliver that sort of information better than the Pew Research Center. For almost 20 years, the Center has helped people better understand themselves and one another—an especially important undertaking in the pluralist United States. Its recent survey of Asian Americans, for example—the most extensive of its kind—broke stereotypes and revealed key nuances. It showed that Asian Americans are not a monolith but a mosaic.

“Asian adults see more cultural differences than commonalities across their group,” the survey found, with only 9% of Asians living in the U.S. agreeing that they share a common culture. The survey also found that this diverse group shares many values that contribute to a thriving democracy, agreeing with much of the general U.S. population on the traits that make one “truly American.” Nearly all Asian adults (94%) and U.S. adults (91%) say this includes accepting people of diverse racial and religious backgrounds, with similar percentages in both groups saying this also includes believing in individual freedoms and respecting U.S. political institutions and laws.

The public's declining views of democracy are understandable given the overwhelming number of challenges that the citizens of the world face today. But there are solutions. Many U.S. states and cities are realizing, for example, that they need stronger civic infrastructure—more streamlined health care, a more accessible court system, expanded broadband for everyone—that can take us on the journey to a better life. That's why Pew is encouraging regulatory changes that would help patients with substance use disorders continue receiving access to lifesaving medications via telehealth, as they were temporarily allowed to do during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic—giving them more time to work and live their lives instead of

spending hours each day at in-person clinics. And it's why we're also looking for ways to reduce the rise in suicides. Half of all people who take their lives have contact with the health care system in the month before their death. So we're supporting a program that makes suicide screening part of the questions patients are asked when they're at the doctor's office or in a hospital—and connects those who may be thinking of harming themselves to the care they need. As you'll read in this issue of *Trust*, these forward-looking steps can help people and communities flourish.

On a global scale, there are no larger challenges than biodiversity loss and climate change, which affect both public health and the health of our planet. That's why the United Nations has made those issues a priority. We've seen some great success this year, with the 196 member countries of the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity adopting the crucial goal of protecting 30% of the Earth's land, freshwater, and ocean by 2030.

Pew played a role in achieving that milestone—and also contributed to the latest success story for the environment: A U.N. treaty adopted in June that will conserve the high seas. This vast swath of waters accounts for two-thirds of the ocean and plays an essential role in protecting species and absorbing carbon.

The treaty can't go into effect until it's ratified by at least 60 countries. So, we still have a lot of work in front of us. But as we celebrate 75 years of Pew's nonpartisan research and public service, we're looking ahead to many more years of working to protect our planet, reinforce our civic infrastructure, and strengthen democracy—three pillars of progress that will help people lead safer, healthier, and more prosperous lives.



Susan K. Urahn, *President and CEO*

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THE BIG PICTURE

Staff from Pew's Washington office raised their hands to volunteer, and on a sunny day in April, they helped park rangers clean up the National Mall. The same week, employees in Philadelphia cleaned FDR Park, London staff worked at Spitalfields City Farm, and those in Portland, Oregon, donated their time at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. In all, more than 250 employees—fanned out among these and other locations—spent time picking up trash, painting, mulching, gardening, and more, working toward the goal of contributing 7,500 volunteer hours to communities this year—one of the ways we are commemorating Pew's 75th anniversary.







A Galápagos sea lion dives beside the volcanic formations of Guy Fawkes Islands, observed by a snorkeler. *Andrew Peacock/Getty Images*

A Major Deal for Galápagos Marine Protection

BY JOHN BRILEY

Amid a surge over the past two decades, large-scale conservation has often been the province of richer countries able to shoulder the significant costs of designing, monitoring, and—crucially—enforcing protected areas. While nations around the world have recently agreed to protect and conserve at least 30% of the planet by 2030 (a target known as “30 by 30”), many countries struggle to secure the funding needed to invest in such large-scale conservation efforts.

However, in May, Ecuador converted \$1.6 billion in existing commercial debt into a new \$656 million loan, which will save more than \$1 billion and generate hundreds of millions more for conservation efforts around the Galápagos Islands. The so-called debt-for-nature swap, which Ecuador achieved with technical support from the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project and other partners, provides one of the world’s most financially challenged countries with the money needed to protect a highly biodiverse and fragile marine ecosystem.

“Our country is as rich as any in the world, with the difference being that our currency is biodiversity,” said Ecuadorian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gustavo Manrique. “The debt swap has shown that biodiversity

can be valued by the world and generate the necessary resources to preserve it, without exploiting it.”

In essence, debt-for-nature swaps allow a country that has borrowed money from another nation or foreign investors to generate resources to fund conservation through a new restructured loan—much like refinancing a home. The notion is not new—Barbados and Belize as well as Ecuador are among countries that have secured them in the past—but in financial terms, Ecuador’s is the biggest ever. The conservation funding will help the country sustain the Galápagos’ unique biodiversity and rich fisheries, along with the local economy and communities that depend on the continued abundance of wildlife. The conservation and endowment funding will be directed by the nonprofit Galápagos Life Fund. Those funds may be used only to support the Galápagos Marine Reserve and local efforts to strengthen the economy; improve management, monitoring, and enforcement in the marine reserves; advance sustainable fishing; and build climate resilience for the community.

“Galápagos is already renowned globally for its natural wonders, and now, benefiting from the world’s largest debt-for-nature swap, it can also be known for

an innovative finance solution that provides a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable future,” said Tom Dillon, a senior vice president at The Pew Charitable Trusts leading the organization’s work on conservation and environment initiatives in the United States and around the world.

The debt conversion—structured through Credit Suisse—will generate more than \$450 million in conservation resources over the next 20 years (and far more beyond that) to help preserve waters that host some of the world’s highest levels of endemism—that is, species found nowhere else on Earth.

Sitting along the equator and at the confluence of three major ocean currents, the Galápagos Islands are home to 3,000 species, including giant tortoises, marine iguanas, blue-footed boobies, and hammerhead sharks, along with whales, dolphins, and a wide variety of tropical fish. It should come as little surprise then that the islands’ waters have long been home to vibrant fisheries.

Unfortunately, climate change, overfishing, and illegal fishing—including in the Galápagos Marine Reserve—have threatened those fisheries in recent years, which led the Ecuadorian government to expand the reserve in 2021, create the adjacent Hermandad Marine Reserve in 2022, and seek more conservation, which the new debt conversion will make possible.

And in cooperation with the fishing industry, the government will require electronic monitoring devices on all industrial purse seine and longline fishing vessels, plus onboard observers on at least 70% of purse seine vessels by the end of 2024, and 20% of longline vessels by the end of 2025. These provisions will greatly aid the government in ensuring compliance with fishing rules in its waters.

Additionally, for the first time, Ecuador will limit the use of fish aggregating devices—raftlike objects that fishers commonly use to attract tuna, which make it easier for purse seine nets to scoop up fish but can result in significant bycatch and marine debris.

All told, these efforts show that Ecuador recognizes the long-term value of preserving nature instead of exploiting it for short-term gain.

“The ocean urgently needs our protection, and that requires large-scale conservation projects, which in turn need large amounts of sustainable financing,” said Dona Bertarelli, a philanthropist, ocean advocate, and patron of nature for the International Union for Conservation of Nature. “By delivering the world’s largest debt-for-nature swap, Ecuador has shown that it’s possible to create inclusive economic growth while protecting biodiversity.”

Affordable Small Loans, Now at a Bank Near You

Each year, millions of Americans borrow small amounts of money to help pay the bills. These consumers, many of whom have low credit scores, historically had few options beyond payday and similar high-cost loans, often with excessive interest rates of 300% or more and unaffordable lump-sum payments. But today, more banks and credit unions are offering new alternatives to small-dollar borrowers.

Six of the nation’s largest banks (by branch count), plus many credit unions and community banks, now offer small loans of up to \$1,000 that feature fair prices—fees are just a small fraction of the principal—and affordable installment payments. These products, which were made possible by critical federal regulatory changes in 2020 that were informed by research from The Pew Charitable Trusts, have the potential to save millions of vulnerable consumers billions of dollars annually.

These bank loans meet the distinctive needs of small-dollar loan borrowers—who are often in financial distress—as well as or better than payday loans. They are available fast via online or mobile banking and have high approval rates so that customers can quickly get cash to pay for everyday expenses such as rent and food. They also allow borrowers to repay over time,

rather than in lump sums like payday loans, giving strapped customers, including people with little or no credit history, time to recover financially.

“For too long, struggling consumers used payday loans when they couldn’t make ends meet,” said Alex Horowitz, who directs Pew’s consumer finance project. “But we know that those borrowers were already bank customers, because you need a checking account to get a payday loan. So it was a logical solution to have banks offer affordable small-dollar loans.”

Pew has played a key role in changing the small-loan marketplace for more than a decade, beginning with pioneering surveys of payday loan borrowers to understand the risks and identify solutions. Given all the progress in recent years, Pew updated its standards to help even more banks and credit unions develop small-credit products that work for their most in-need customers—and make good business sense.

“Banks should be offering fairly priced financial products that meet their customers’ needs to promote people’s financial well-being,” said Horowitz. “And now far more of them are.”

—Jennifer Doctors

Philadelphia's 2023 State of the City

As COVID-19 concerns largely faded last year, an increasing number of Philadelphians re-engaged with activities around the city—commuting to workplaces, resuming indoor dining at restaurants, and attending concerts around town, according to The Pew Charitable Trusts' annual "State of the City" report, created from data gathered by its Philadelphia research and policy initiative.

The city's annual unemployment rate—which had been over 12% in 2020 and around 9% in 2021—fell to 5.9%, and total jobs surpassed their pre-pandemic level as of June 2022. Also, median household income rose to \$52,899 in 2021, the last year for which figures were available. This was an increase of 11% from 2019, but with significant disparities by race and ethnicity.

Philadelphia's finances were in an unexpectedly strong position as well, as the city ended fiscal year 2022 with a \$775 million fund balance driven by higher-than-expected revenue and several thousand unfilled city government jobs. And for the first time, the percentage of city residents age 25 or older with a college degree matched the national rate of 35%, promising a workforce with more schooling.

Nonetheless, Philadelphians had any number of worries on their minds, including a slowing economy, increasing housing costs, lingering inflation, and a stubbornly high poverty rate. Most of all, they worried

about gun violence and a high level of crime. A January 2023 poll by The Lenfest Institute for Journalism found that 89% of residents said crime is the top issue facing Philadelphia. And 65% of residents thought the city was going in the wrong direction.

More broadly, Pew's report found that the city's count of major crimes, which include both violent crimes and property crimes, rose to the highest level since 2006. In a single year, auto thefts increased by 30%, commercial burglaries by 40%, and retail thefts by 52%.

Many residents throughout Philadelphia also struggled to find suitable housing at an affordable price. Nearly 49% of the city's households were spending at least 30% of their income on rent, making them "cost burdened," according to the standard set by the U.S. Census Bureau. Households in parts of West and North Philadelphia had the highest share of cost-burdened renters as well as some of the greatest increases in median residential home sale prices over the past 10 years.

To the mark the release of its 15th annual "State of the City" report and the organization's 75th anniversary, Pew co-hosted a public conversation in April with The Lenfest Institute for Journalism that focused on critical issues facing the city, the need for greater equity, and visions for the future.

—Demetra Aposporos

Pew 75th Anniversary Event Highlights Democracy

For much of its history—this spring marked 75 years of operation—The Pew Charitable Trusts has sought to bolster democracy and ensure that the public's voice is heard. So as part of its anniversary celebrations, Pew held panel discussions with keen observers of democracy in its Washington, D.C., office.

In opening remarks for the event, titled "Strengthening Democracy in America," Pew's president and CEO, Susan K. Urahn, explained why the organization's fact-based work is so important in today's fractured political landscape.

"I have seen how facts can become a common language that helps people with disparate viewpoints communicate with each other," Urahn said. "That's why nonpartisanship is the cornerstone of everything that we do."

Urahn then sat down with Carla Hayden, the 14th librarian of Congress, to discuss the importance of informed citizens and the role of libraries in American

society. Hayden, the first woman and first African American to lead the national library, has called libraries "bastions of equal opportunity."

Hayden explained that she is a believer in the power of storytelling to bring people together, and that libraries offer a special place for that. "History is storytelling," she said. "You get to see what someone else might have felt or feels."

Hayden and Urahn also discussed how libraries are an important and open place for discussion about different ideas. "When libraries are challenged, when there is a move to close libraries, you are closing access," Hayden said. "And in many communities, that's the only access point."

A second panel discussed the challenges facing democracy via a conversation between filmmaker Ken Burns and Pew Research Center President Michael Dimock that was moderated by Beverly Kirk, professor of practice and director of Washington programs

at Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications.

Dimock shared new findings from the Center showing that 77% of Americans expect the nation to be more politically divided at the century's midpoint than it is today.

"Since the mid-1990s, pretty much every American election has been about the balance of power, and that makes every election feel existential when you think the other side not only disagrees with you on issues but will actually damage the country if they can hold the levers of power," Dimock said.

Given those findings, Kirk suggested that local news sources could be a place to build common ground. "People do trust their local news sources much more than they trust other media outlets," she said. "And I think that's a great place to talk about rebuilding trust."

Dimock noted that although technology can sometimes be a tool in spreading misinformation, it can be "deeply empowering for people to find their own communities" and is helping people build community.

Burns agreed, saying that individuals can build community through sharing their experiences. "The novelist Richard Powers says the best arguments in the world won't change a single person's point of view," he said. "The only thing that can do that is a good story." He went on to say he thinks the U.S. is in a "fourth crisis" on par with the Civil War, Great Depression, and World War II—but stressed that "we can learn from those times of consequential challenges and come together again."

In closing, the panel discussed some signs of optimism for the future of democracy. "We're looking at civic participation at levels that are just unbelievable—the last election, the midterm election, and who's voting," Burns said. "In some ways, that might be a silver lining."

The event had an in-person and online audience of more than 1,000 leaders in government, business, and nonprofits, as well as other community members throughout the nation.

—*Demetra Aposporos*



From left, Susan K. Urahn, Beverly Kirk, Michael Dimock, and Ken Burns (on screen) discuss the challenges to and future of democracy during an event marking Pew's 75th anniversary. *Lexey Swall for The Pew Charitable Trusts*





A Global Agreement to

SAVE THE HIGH SEAS

With Pew's help, the U.N. approved a treaty to conserve the vast ocean outside nations' jurisdictions—a critical step for the health of the planet.

By John Briley



They glide through crystalline blue seas—sea turtles, whales, dolphins, sharks, manta rays, and a dazzling array of other marine life—often traveling thousands of miles on ancient migratory routes to gather, feed, and breed. Much of their travel is across the high seas, the world’s vast ocean beyond the jurisdiction of any government, an area that also faces growing threats from overfishing, illegal fishing, pollution, marine debris, warming waters, noise disturbances, and more.

But soon the international community should have better tools for addressing those threats: On June 19, United Nations member countries adopted a treaty to safeguard the high seas, in large part by establishing a mechanism for the creation of marine protected areas (MPAs) to limit or prohibit destructive activities beyond the blue horizon.

The agreement is a historic step forward for ocean protection. The high seas harbor a stunning range of biodiversity, from marine mammals to deep-sea corals, hydrothermal vents, phytoplankton, and immense schools of fish. And because the high seas cover two-thirds of the ocean, establishing safeguards there is necessary to achieving the global goal of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030, a target known as “30 by 30,” which the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity adopted last December. Currently, less than 1% of high seas waters are highly protected.

To achieve this desperately needed deal, delegates went into overtime on the last night of the final two-week negotiating session earlier this year—working 36 hours straight to finalize the treaty text in preparation for the June vote.

Delegates, hungry and exhausted from the slog, were determined to achieve a deal rather than walk away from the table. And on March 4 at 9:25 p.m., Rena Lee of Singapore—the president of the negotiations—announced that delegates had finally found agreement, saying, “The ship has reached the shore.”

Lee’s announcement sent the delegates into applause and showcased the value of unwavering focus and persistence to take action for the ocean.

“Ocean scientists have long cautioned us about threats to the bounty of life in the high seas, and now, finally, the U.N. has responded with a once-in-a-generation treaty to protect these areas from harmful human activities,” says Elizabeth Wilson, senior director of environmental policy at Pew.

Some form of the treaty has been under discussion for two decades, and Pew has been at the forefront of the effort for much of that time.

That history starts in 2013, when Pew led the creation of the Global Ocean Commission, a body that included heads of state, business and political leaders, and nongovernmental organization representatives. The commission focused on how to restore the ocean to its pre-industrial age health, ensuring its resilience, and promoting fair and equitable governance of the global marine environment.

The commission issued a report in 2014 that highlighted the factors—from climate change and biodiversity and habitat loss to declining fish stocks—driving the decline of the ocean’s health and proposed ways to address them, including through a treaty to safeguard the underprotected high seas. Because those waters are part of the global commons, governments and international institutions had scant legal mechanisms to increase conservation.

The research also showed that the high seas help to regulate global air temperatures and slow the impact of climate change—including on land—by absorbing and storing excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

The commission report estimated the economic value of removing this carbon from the atmosphere at between \$74 billion and \$222 billion per year. In comparison, a 2018 U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization report estimated the gross value of the catch in high seas fisheries at \$7 billion to \$16 billion a year. Industrial fishing fleets work in more than half of these ocean areas, and over one-third of the fish stocks they target are overexploited—up from 10% in 1974.

The high seas have an average depth of more than 2.5 miles, but even species that live in those inky depths face threats from human activity. Fishing technology now enables fleets to drop lines or drag nets thousands of feet below the surface, threatening animals such as deep-sea sharks, which are slow to reach sexual maturity and produce young only sporadically, making them especially vulnerable to overfishing.

In its December 2022 assessment of biodiversity, the International Union for Conservation of Nature found



Activists unfurl a banner in support of ocean protections before the United Nations headquarters in New York in February, while treaty negotiations were being deliberated. On June 19, the treaty to safeguard the high seas, largely through the creation of marine protected areas, was formally adopted by U.N. member countries. *Ed Jones/AFP via Getty Images* Opening pages: Fishing with a purse seine net on the high seas. *piola 666/Getty Images*



Workers unload a haul of fish that will be transported to a market in Vietnam; the new treaty aims to limit or prohibit industrial fishing on the high seas, areas beyond the jurisdiction of any government. Although the high seas cover two-thirds of the ocean, to date just 1% of these waters have been highly protected, leaving the rest vulnerable to overfishing, illegal fishing, pollution, and more. *Linh Pham/Getty Images*



A newly hatched leatherback sea turtle makes its way toward the ocean on a beach in Costa Rica; the population of this endangered species fell some 95% over a decade, leading to empty beaches where they traditionally nest. The new treaty will protect these and other creatures that make their home in the far-reaching waters of the high seas and strives to also help safeguard the ocean's delicate ecological balance. *Jason Bradley/Nature's Best Photography*

that human activity is having a devastating impact on the ocean and that 10% of all marine species are at risk of extinction.

All of this leaves the ocean with very few truly wild places completely free of the influence of humankind. Of equal importance, the human impact on the high seas threatens to disrupt the ecological balance of the ocean, a scenario that could not only imperil marine life but also irrevocably alter the climate and food security worldwide.



In 2014, Gina Guillen-Grillo, then Costa Rica's legal adviser to the U.N., led a group of United Nations delegates and ocean advocates to Playa Langosta along her home country's rugged west coast to watch rare leatherback sea turtles come ashore to nest, as the creatures have done since time immemorial.

Many of the delegates, who had gathered in the town to refine a strategy for advancing high seas protections, were eager to witness a remarkable wildlife event. Instead, they found a quiet, empty beach, with no turtles in sight.

Leatherback turtles spend most of their lives on the high seas and travel to coastal areas to lay their eggs. Despite efforts to conserve this endangered species, Pacific leatherback turtle populations fell by more than

95% from 1989 to 2019, a decline scientists attribute largely to deaths as bycatch in the pelagic longline fishery. Although protecting nesting areas on coastal beaches is vital to leatherback turtles' recovery, it is equally critical that these creatures be protected from harmful fishing practices in their high seas habitat.

And while scientists can't say for sure why the turtles didn't come ashore in Playa Langosta that night in 2014, the experience nonetheless drove home the importance—and urgency—of the delegates' work.

"Back then a lot of people at the U.N. were saying, 'There are no gaps [in ocean governance], so why do we need a treaty?'" says Guillen-Grillo, who is now Costa Rica's director general of foreign policy. "But many of us knew the science. Leatherback turtles have to overcome a lot to survive, and we were up against a lot of opposition at the U.N., so by the end of the four-day meeting, we decided to call ourselves the Leatherbacks, and to support each other in negotiations for a treaty."

The experience redoubled the delegates'—and Pew's—commitment to a treaty that enabled the creation of MPAs in international waters.



At the time, MPAs were gaining traction as a reliable way to protect existing biodiversity and help even

heavily degraded areas recover. Research on protected areas in domestic waters showed that MPAs yield the greatest conservation benefits when they are large, highly protected, isolated, well enforced, and long-standing. Benefits increase exponentially when all five features are in place.

One 2018 analysis found that the average biomass of fish within these marine reserves is 670% greater than in adjacent unprotected areas and 343% greater than in partially protected MPAs. Well-designed marine reserves can lead to larger fish populations beyond the boundaries of the protected area, either from “spillover”—the migration of adult fish from the MPA—or the dispersal of larvae spawned within it. This means, somewhat counterintuitively, that closing large areas to fishing can, and often does, result in much more productive fisheries.

In the high seas, networks of MPAs that create meaningful links across habitats would benefit not only highly migratory species but, by extension, the health of the entire ocean, including coastal areas—and the species like leatherback turtles that depend on access to shore.

As formal negotiations got underway at the U.N. in 2018, Pew worked hard to highlight the importance of the treaty, which included an advertising campaign in New York City during the first negotiating session as well as a sustained campaign to keep disparate governments informed and motivated to support the effort.

Pew engaged in a multiyear collaboration with scientists from around the world to help identify which high seas areas would benefit most from protection once the treaty is in place.

Pew’s contributions to the treaty negotiation process expanded far beyond analyzing and supporting critical scientific research. The team also organized or presented at hundreds of workshops to help fill knowledge gaps and address important unresolved issues; engaged with high-level political leaders around the world to secure commitment for an ambitious treaty; and worked to make and maintain relationships with the government delegates engaged in the technical detail of negotiations, many of whom regularly consulted Pew for advice.

“While the impact of our work is sometimes intangible, there were definite moments where we knew our efforts paid off—like when delegates used our suggested language verbatim on the U.N. floor during negotiations,” says Pew’s Nichola Clark, who has been heavily involved in the treaty development since 2016.

Pew was also instrumental within the High Seas Alliance, a coalition of more than 50 nongovernmental organizations working toward an ambitious treaty. In addition to serving on its steering committee, Pew leads the alliance’s high seas MPA working group, which identified the coalition’s key priorities and strategies for the MPA chapter of the negotiations.

These years of effort culminated in a March 2020 report that highlighted 10 such high seas areas. These include the Salas y Gómez and Nazca Ridges, submarine mountain ranges in the southeastern Pacific Ocean off the coast of Chile that contain some 110 seamounts. Also on the list are the Lord Howe Rise, a deep-sea plateau east of Brisbane, Australia, that serves as a feeding ground for numerous endangered species, and the South Tasman Sea off New Zealand, which is among the most productive areas of the high seas and a way station for humpback and southern right whales. Most recently, Pew has turned that March 2020 report into an interactive web tool that allows users to create their own high seas protection hot spot map, tailored to their individual conservation goals.

All of Pew’s and the alliance’s key priorities for the MPA chapter were successfully achieved in the final treaty, including a provision that allows MPAs to be adopted by a three-fourths majority vote when consensus can’t be reached. It now will require 60 nations to ratify the agreement. It’s unclear if the U.S. Senate will ratify the treaty—a two-thirds majority vote is required within that body to do so. If that vote failed, the U.S. would give up its right to propose or vote on high seas MPAs and participate in other particulars of the treaty.

“This treaty is needed now both because of all the stressors our ocean is facing and because U.N. members have committed to 30 by 30,” says Liz Karan, who has led Pew’s work on the high seas treaty since 2014. “And it would be really hard to hit that goal without high seas protections.”

As with any international agreement, hard work lies ahead on the high seas treaty. Before ratifying it, many governments must first amend their national laws to ensure that they can meet all of the requirements set out in the new treaty. But for the first time a framework is now in place to achieve what many would have thought implausible: safeguarding an immense portion of the planet that most people will never see, but one that influences the lives of virtually everyone on Earth.

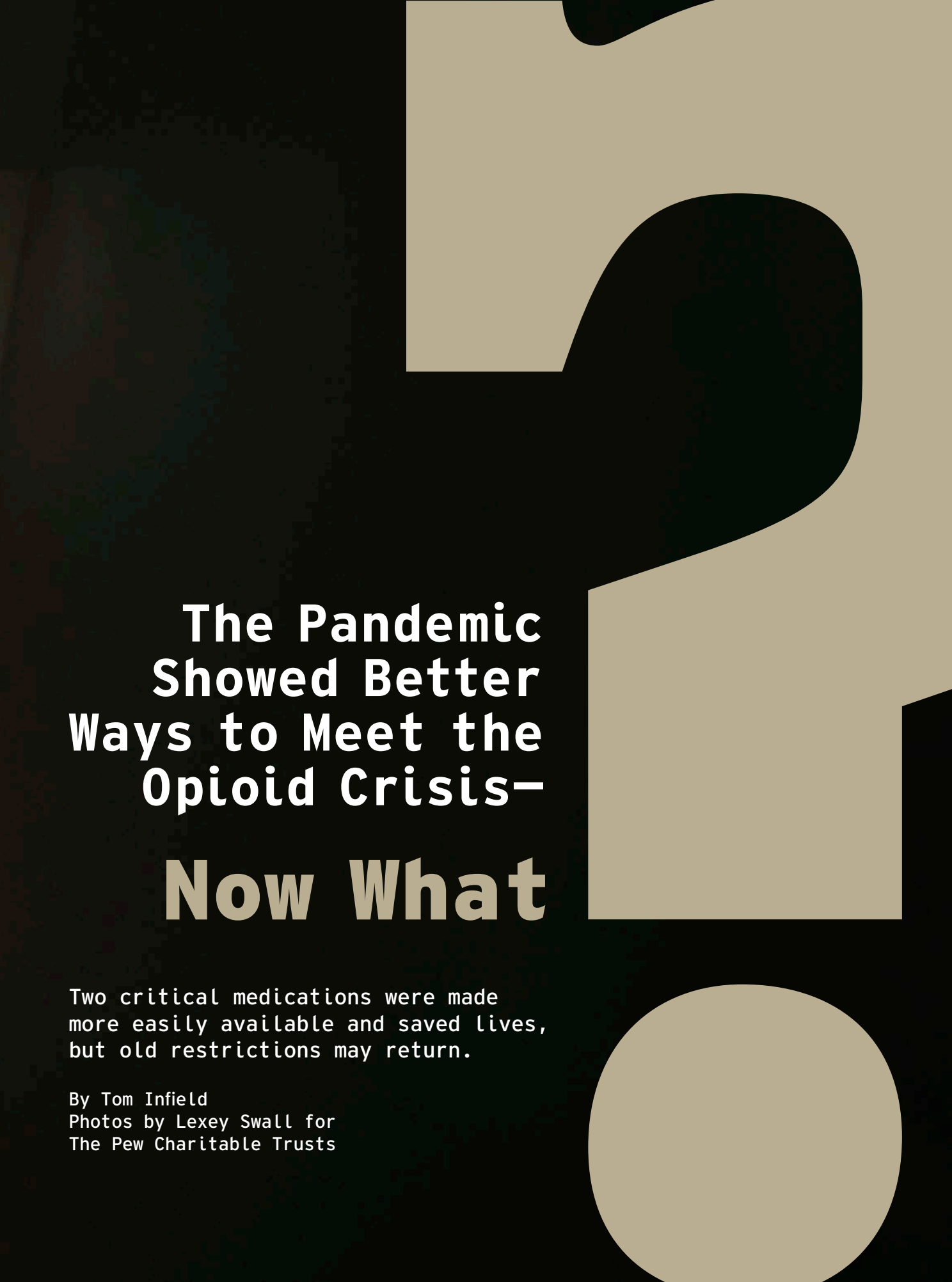
“We think of the ocean and the high seas as limitless—that they can take whatever we throw at them,” Karan says. “But as we’re seeing with plastics pollution and overfishing and climate change, the ocean has limits, and this is the only mechanism to help recover this ecosystem. Most other ocean governance rules are about managing what’s being taken out of our seas. This treaty is about protecting what’s already there.”

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John Briley is a Trust staff writer.



Tiffinee Scott, a peer recovery specialist, descends stairs at Baltimore's Light of Truth Center Inc., which provides housing and resources for women in recovery. While the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the opioid crisis, it has also—out of necessity—helped loosen long-standing restrictions around medications used to treat opioid use disorder and allowed them to be prescribed via telehealth. But now that the public health emergency is officially over, efforts to roll back these flexibilities are underway.

The background features a large, abstract graphic design. It consists of several overlapping shapes in black and a muted beige color. A large black shape on the right side resembles a stylized letter 'R' or a similar form. Other black shapes are scattered throughout, some overlapping the beige areas. The overall composition is minimalist and modern.

The Pandemic Showed Better Ways to Meet the Opioid Crisis— Now What

Two critical medications were made more easily available and saved lives, but old restrictions may return.

By Tom Infield
Photos by Lexey Swall for
The Pew Charitable Trusts

America's opioid crisis spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic disruption, social isolation, and despair all helped drive fatal overdoses to one record number after another from 2020 to 2022.

However, one good thing happened during the pandemic in the battle against opioid deaths: Federal policymakers who regulate two Food and Drug Administration-approved medications used to treat opioid use disorder (OUD)—buprenorphine and methadone—came up with innovative ways of providing access to this evidence-based care. This proved critical in helping people obtain lifesaving treatment during a time of social distancing and other pandemic-related obstacles.

Access to these drugs has traditionally been tightly regulated. For example, doctors were required to have a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) waiver to prescribe buprenorphine to patients, who had to be seen in person (doctors were also limited in the number of patients they could see and were subject to random DEA audits), and methadone patients had to pick up their medication in person each day and be observed taking it.

But during the federal COVID-19 public health emergency declaration, doctors were permitted to prescribe buprenorphine via telehealth appointments for the first time, and Congress passed legislation eliminating the DEA waiver rule. Another flexibility installed during the pandemic allowed opioid treatment programs (OTPs)—facilities that provide OUD medications and the only ones allowed to dispense methadone—to provide up to 28 days of take-home medication for patients, instead of making people go to the facility every day to collect single doses.

Now that the health emergency has officially been declared over as of May 11, some of the pandemic innovations will remain in place—but there are efforts at both the state and federal levels to roll back others, which worries Dr. Brandee Izquierdo, the director of Pew's behavioral health programs.

"These policies undoubtedly saved lives," Izquierdo says. "We've made progress; now is not the time to go back."

Izquierdo leads Pew's substance use prevention and treatment initiative, which focuses on increasing access to evidence-based treatment for people with OUD. Pew's initiative employs more than 20 staff members based in Washington, D.C., and provides research and technical assistance to regulators in efforts to address the opioid crisis.

"COVID exacerbated the opioid crisis exponentially," Izquierdo says.

Izquierdo, herself a person in long-term recovery, points out that many people with OUD often have to remain on medication for life.

She grew up in a family with drug and alcohol issues, she says. Her first encounter with alcohol at age 11 "unleashed a beast." Before she reached adulthood, she was addicted to multiple substances. At one point, she found herself in a jail cell.

"I was just lucky enough to have access to treatment," Izquierdo says. She has been in recovery for over 12 years, during which time she has earned bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the University of Baltimore and forged a career focused on expanding access to behavioral health and recovery services.

Izquierdo knows the cruelty of addiction and the importance of clearing away obstacles to medical treatment when a person who uses drugs is experiencing withdrawal and trying to enter recovery. Opioid sickness is quick and painful, and "if people cannot get access to lifesaving medication, they are going to go to the street to find it or something else," she says.

Illicit drugs have always been hazardous, but today they are more dangerous than ever before—often contaminated with illicit fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that can be deadly even in small doses. To make things worse, that drug is now often combined in the street market with xylazine, an animal tranquilizer, with disastrous results.

Preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that about 109,000 people died of drug overdoses in the United States in 2022, and opioids were far and away the No. 1 cause.

Overdose deaths have been increasing for many years, according to the CDC WONDER online database. Deaths rose from under 20,000 in 2000 to almost

Long-standing stigma around who is treated for OUD can often prevent patients from getting help, and doctors from wanting to offer this life-saving care.

On a couch surrounded by images of family members, Scott is embraced by her mom, Loria Stewart, who has been in recovery for some 20 years. Behind them, at bottom right, is a portrait of Scott's daughter, Tiarra, who was lost to the impact of prescription opioids and sickle cell disease in 2020.



71,000 in 2019, the last year before the pandemic. In 2020, as the pandemic hit, drug-involved overdose deaths increased dramatically to more than 106,000. While the number also went up in 2022, the rate of increase slowed down.

The effects of the pandemic hit hard in inner cities, where OTPs are a principal source of medications for people with OUD. Patients in treatment found that getting to their OTPs every day became more difficult because of disruptions in public transportation, reduced availability of child care, and the health effects of COVID-19 itself, as well as a fear of catching it.

Racial disparities also became more apparent. The CDC reports that Black Americans die from overdoses at a far higher rate than White or Hispanic Americans, and fewer Blacks than Whites have access to treatment—especially buprenorphine, which is most often prescribed in private doctor's offices and obtained at pharmacies.

"Buprenorphine is widely used—I'll just say it—in

White communities," says Philip Rutherford, chief operating officer at Faces & Voices of Recovery in Minnesota. "Buprenorphine does not have the same adoption rate in Black and Brown communities, and there is a lack of equity in prescribing buprenorphine."

Which is why the pandemic-era flexibilities around buprenorphine—including telehealth access—were so important. Telehealth increased access to this medication across a broader pool of patients. Racial and ethnic minorities, veterans, people experiencing homelessness, individuals involved in the criminal justice system, and those living in rural areas were all found to have greater access to buprenorphine via telehealth.

Researchers found that remote visits rapidly increased for patients either beginning or continuing buprenorphine treatment. Patients also noted greater satisfaction with remote care, saying that with telehealth, geography or transportation issues no longer limited their ability to receive treatment, and that virtual

visits felt less stigmatizing than in-person care. They also said that having a choice in how they received care was important.

In December, President Joe Biden signed an omnibus bill from Congress that included the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act, which permanently removed the requirement that doctors obtain a special waiver from the DEA to prescribe buprenorphine. And in January, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) followed up with regulatory guidance on the medication, saying that any physician with a standard DEA registration number can now prescribe buprenorphine, making it more widely available.

The new law also seeks to reduce the stigma associated with addiction treatment by calling for a national campaign to encourage health care providers to incorporate medication treatment for addiction into their practices. Long-standing stigma around who is treated

for OUD, sometimes even from medical professionals, can often prevent patients from getting help, and doctors from wanting to offer this lifesaving care.

In other changes to care access, as the pandemic hit full force in March 2020, SAMHSA loosened methadone restrictions to permit take-home supplies of either 14 days or 28 days for patients considered stable.

There were fears—still shared by some in the field of addiction prevention and treatment—that patients would overdose on take-home medication or sell it on the street.

But SAMHSA cites research showing relatively few incidents of misuse or diversion, meaning distributing the drug to another person. The agency also reports that take-home medication has led to greater patient engagement with treatment and higher patient satisfaction.

And a Pew study in collaboration with George Washington University and New York University found



Dr. Brandee Izquierdo sits in her home office, where the walls are adorned with inspirational quotes. She leads Pew’s substance use prevention and treatment initiative, which focuses on increasing access to evidence-based treatment for people with opioid use disorder. Izquierdo is worried about efforts to remove flexibilities related to medication access. “These policies undoubtedly saved lives,” she says. “We’ve made progress; now is not the time to go back.”

that take-home medication has eased burdens on patients, given them an improved sense of self-esteem and autonomy, and also helped them stay in recovery longer.

To Rutherford, this makes sense. “People are going to do what they need to do to not get ill from opioid withdrawal,” he says. “They are going to use their medication correctly because they don’t want to get sick.”

Tiffinee Scott, a peer recovery specialist who has lost family members to overdose, is an advocate and organizer who chairs the Maryland Peer Advisory Council. She says that allowing take-home medication has lessened—but hardly eliminated—the stigma of going to an OTP and being observed by a staff member taking medication. Such observed dosing, as well as requirements for urine screenings, are viewed by many in the recovery field as punitive rules that reflect a distrust of patients and add to the stigma of OUD.

“A person with diabetes requires their medication; what is the difference for a person who is sick with opioid use disorder?” Scott asks. “If I can get heart disease medication that lasts for 30 days, why shouldn’t I be able to get medication to prevent opioid sickness? I think it’s just stigma. We choose to label people instead of supporting people.”

The loosening of methadone rules started as a COVID-emergency measure, but the federal agency has now moved to make it permanent: In December, SAMHSA proposed rules to codify the changes.

Some states, however, are still convinced that letting patients get up to 28 days of methadone will lead to more overdoses and street sales, Izquierdo says. And because states can install their own layer of regulations on these medications, there is sometimes a disconnect between federal regulations and those at the state level.

Many states have rules governing OTPs that are not based in evidence and in turn limit access to care or worsen patient experience.

Nineteen states and the District of Columbia impose barriers on the opening of new OTPs. West Virginia is the most restrictive; no new OTPs are allowed there. And throughout the country, OTPs are not available in many communities, especially in rural areas, with not a single OTP in the state of Wyoming.

Twenty-three states impose regimented, one-size-fits-all counseling schedules for patients on methadone treatment, rather than allow individualized care. However, established research shows that medication alone can be effective without counseling.

Twenty-six states require methadone patients to undergo more frequent urine screenings for illicit drug use than what is required by federal regulation. Izquierdo believes that also is not necessary—and adds to the hurdles facing patients trying to stay in recovery.

Even some OTPs, Izquierdo says, are unsure about the benefit of loosening regulations.

“We have a lot of opioid treatment programs saying there are negative issues with providing methadone on a take-home basis,” she says. “They say, ‘We need to be able to see the patients to make sure they are taking their dosage correctly.’”

Pew sees the waiver removal, now made permanent through the MAT Act; broadening of the number of physicians eligible to prescribe buprenorphine and allowing access to the medication through telehealth appointments; and reform of methadone restrictions as victories for reducing addiction harm. But progress has been “two steps forward and one step back,” Izquierdo says.

In February, the DEA proposed a new rule that would reinstate many pre-pandemic requirements and disallow telehealth appointments for buprenorphine treatment. It was concerned that buprenorphine would be sold on the streets.

“The idea was, OK, we’re over the hurdle; the COVID emergency is lifting,” Izquierdo says. “The impulse was to go back to the nonemergency policies. But you can’t ignore evidence that some of these public health emergency measures worked.”

Recent research shows that the pandemic telehealth rules have helped patients initiate—and stay in—buprenorphine treatment, and that patients abstained from illicit opioids at rates comparable to those who received care in person. Notably, research has also shown that greater buprenorphine access has not led to more buprenorphine-related overdoses.

“Telehealth prescribing of buprenorphine has been critical to creating more equitable access to this medication across communities,” Izquierdo says. “It really solved a lot of issues, but we’re in a holding pattern right now on telehealth rules.”

Negative reaction to the DEA’s rollback plan from patients and health care advocates was strong and immediate: The agency received 38,000 comments, most imploring it not to return to tighter pre-COVID restrictions.

The DEA agreed to pause and give the issue greater consideration. On May 9, it extended the telehealth policy until Nov. 11 while it reviews what to do next.

What should be next, says Scott, the Maryland reform advocate, is that regulators and health care providers work even harder on practices that keep people alive.

“Access to health care should be universal,” Scott says. “I, as a person, should be able to get the resources I need, no matter where I live or what bus line I am on, or what doctors or clinics are in my community. It’s about justice.”

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Tom Infield is a longtime Philadelphia journalist and frequent contributor to Trust.

QUESTIONS THAT HELP

SAVE LIVES

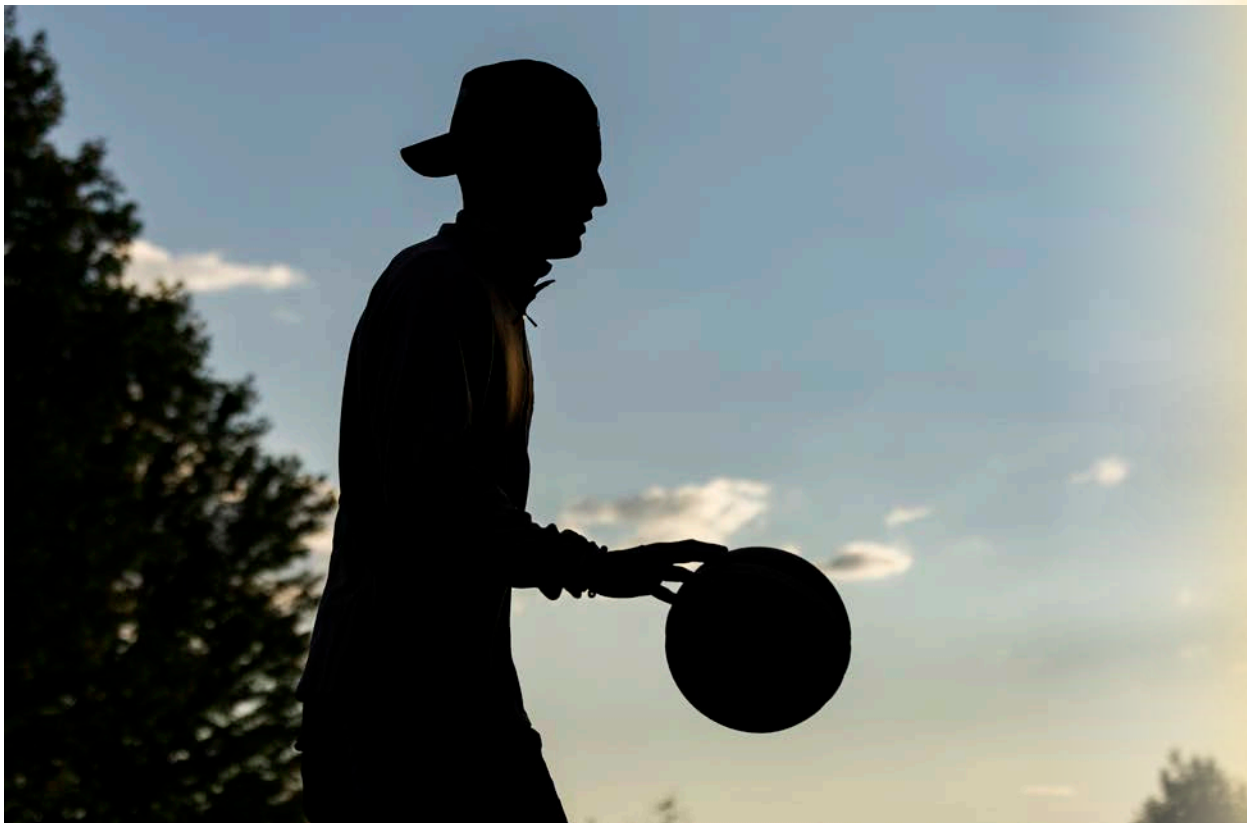
Some health providers conduct suicide screening for all patients—and it's beginning to make a difference. Pew is launching an effort to help make suicide prevention and care more routine.



By Carol Kaufmann

Greg Whitesell walks his dog, Thor, as the sun sets in Pattee Canyon, Montana. In high school, he wanted to end his life, but after receiving proper care, Whitesell now looks forward. *Tailyr Irvine for The Pew Charitable Trusts*





At a park in Missoula, Montana, Whitesell shoots hoops, exercising a long-held passion. He has many more passions these days, including connecting with others who are struggling, and doesn't shy away from talking about his experience. "We've come a long way," he says. "With my generation, it's OK to talk about your feelings." *Tailyr Irvine for The Pew Charitable Trusts*

When Greg Whitesell was a junior at Arlee High School on the Flathead Indian Reservation in western Montana, he was a star basketball player. But he loved to play football as well. Against his parents' wishes, he went to practice nearly every day and sustained concussions almost as frequently. One of them was particularly nasty.

"It sent me to a really dark place," Whitesell, now 22, says about his head injury. "I wasn't allowed to do anything and had to stay at home with the lights off. I was in a pretty bad spot."

Whitesell became depressed, his outlook plummeting so low that he was ready to end his life. He texted two friends that he didn't "want to be alive anymore."

Before he could act, his friends came pounding on his front door. They talked to his mom, and the family went to the local hospital's emergency department, where Whitesell answered many questions from the staff. The hospital team also talked to

his parents and connected him with a therapist, one that helped him for the next few years.

Questions and connections saved his life. He received the help he needed at a critical point.

But many Americans do not.

From 1999 to 2019, the suicide rate in the United States increased 33% across all sexes, races, and ethnicities, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 2021, suicide was the nation's 11th leading cause of death. That same year, more than 48,000 people died by suicide, which is one death every 11 minutes. A total of 1.7 million people made a suicide attempt in 2021, and 12 million adults had serious thoughts about suicide.

"Developed countries have seen a decline in the rates, but the U.S. is an outlier. Suicide rates have skyrocketed over the past 30 years," says Kristen Mizzi Angelone, who directs Pew's suicide risk reduction project. Research also shows that nearly half of people who die by suicide interact with the health care system in some way in the month before their death. "This gives us a prime opportunity to intervene," she says.

Simple screening tools are available to gauge whether any hospital patient may be in danger of self-harm—a practice called universal screening—but they are not used at every hospital across the country. Currently, hospitals are required to screen only patients who are being evaluated or treated for psychiatric or behavioral health conditions.

Research shows that nearly half of people who die by suicide interact with the health care system in some way in the month before their death.

That’s why Pew partnered with the Education Development Center’s Zero Suicide Institute (ZSI) on a new initiative, the Suicide Care Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (CoIIN). This network will link a diverse group of hospitals and health centers around the country in metropolitan and rural areas.

Over the next year, the nine health care systems will adopt more comprehensive practices of screening and assessing patients for suicidal thoughts and implement interventions for those experiencing suicide risk—all based on a model that’s designed to help health workers make rapid improvements in the way they care for patients. As part of the program, they will share with one another what protocols and tools are most effective at reducing suicide risk and connecting people to treatment.

Unfortunately, not all health care providers are trained in suicide prevention. Depending on state law, such training may not be a requirement for medical licenses of health care workers in many departments—pediatrics or emergency, for example. Evidence-based suicide screening tools that have shown to effectively identify suicide risk exist, but health care providers need instruction on how to use them.

“The questions have to be asked the right way, and the workers must know why they’re asking,” says Julie Goldstein Grumet, ZSI’s director. “For example, if a nurse says, ‘I have to ask this question: You don’t think about hurting yourself, do you?’ a patient may not be inclined to share dark thoughts. It’s a tremendous burden to provide care for something you received no training in, don’t really understand, and don’t feel prepared to handle.”



The health care systems that Pew has convened have a few examples to follow. Parkland Health & Hospital System in Dallas, one

of the nation’s biggest health care systems, began universal screening in 2015. The system was the first in the country to do so, and providers had some trepidation, worried that patients would react negatively.

Despite those initial concerns, Kimberly Roaten, a clinical psychologist who leads Parkland’s universal suicide screening program, says data indicates that screening does not lead to an increase in suicidal thoughts or plans.

Nurses typically complete screenings during triage in the emergency department or during check-in, asking questions such as “In the past few weeks, have you wished you were dead?” and “In the past week, have you been having thoughts about killing yourself?” Roaten says that once providers at Parkland became familiar with the questionnaire and learned they could use it to identify patients experiencing suicide risk and connect them to care, support among the staff grew.

Parkland has identified suicide risk in approximately 2.3% of pediatric and adult patients seeking nonpsychiatric care, a group that would have previously gone unrecognized. The staff was able to discharge most of the patients who screened positive after providing additional assessment and connecting them with outpatient help.

At Hennepin Medical Center in Minneapolis, Dr. Laura Schrag, an emergency room physician, had similar doubts about requiring staff in the ER to screen every patient who came in. “It seemed like it might be off-putting,” she says. “A person comes in and says, ‘I cut my finger and you asked if I hurt myself?’”

When the medical center decided that it would also provide universal screening, Schrag was concerned about the extra workload on an already overtaxed department. “It just seemed like one more thing to do. We weren’t in our lane,” she says. “But it is in our lane. It’s everyone in medicine’s lane, whether in primary care, ER, or psychiatry.”

Schrag quickly realized that patients did not mind being asked questions about self-harm, along with questions about other standard topics, such as potential COVID exposure, smoking habits, and alcohol and drug consumption.

The staff at Hennepin asks the suicide screening questions in a structured way, starting with a question such as “Do you ever feel like you need to talk with someone?” and then progressing to others, such as “Have you ever thought of hurting yourself?” This approach opens the door for someone who is struggling to say so and helps the providers make connections for those who need them, Schrag says. “Like the warning signs of chest pain before a heart attack, you miss warning signs of suicide if you don’t ask.”

Schrag now views suicide screening as part of a day’s work, and the standard protocol is not seen by the staff as “extra.” Schrag says that it’s much easier for health care providers—and better for patients—to ask questions about mental health, detect suicide risk, and connect patients to care before a person attempts self-harm.

“One of the realizations for me is that working in a Level 1 trauma center and using the screening is that it’s not the sexy, grandiose part of medicine,” Schrag says. “But we’re here for the patients. It’s our jobs and privilege to ask the questions and let patients tell us what they’re struggling with.”

Schrag now counts herself as a big supporter of suicide screenings. “I definitely was a naysayer and I’m 100% flipped,” she says.



Edwin Boudreaux, who is vice chair of emergency medicine at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, has led suicide intervention work with hospitals across the country. “If you use universal screening, regardless of why the patient is there, you will increase detection for suicide risk,” he says. But perhaps as important as asking the questions is the approach that a health care provider takes with the patient—something that hospitals participating in the pilot program will also be monitoring.

“Even if it’s a 30-second conversation... ‘You have a lot going on, would you like to talk to someone?’ Give them a list of books, websites, consumer-oriented products,” says Boudreaux. “If you turn the encounter

into a one-minute compassionate reaction, the person feels heard, connected, and more satisfied.”

For some, this sort of compassionate approach is life-changing—and can be lifesaving.

Ten years ago, Erin Goodman, a wife and mother of two, had been in various forms of psychiatric care and counseling but nothing seemed to work. She had gone for a month without sleeping, was experiencing psychosis, and was losing hope.

“My brain wasn’t functioning, and I couldn’t coherently explain what was wrong,” she says. During a visit to her psychiatrist to discuss her medications, the doctor asked her how she was, and she began to cry. “I’m not OK,” she told him. But he put up his hand to signal her to stop talking. “No. That’s for your therapist,” he said.

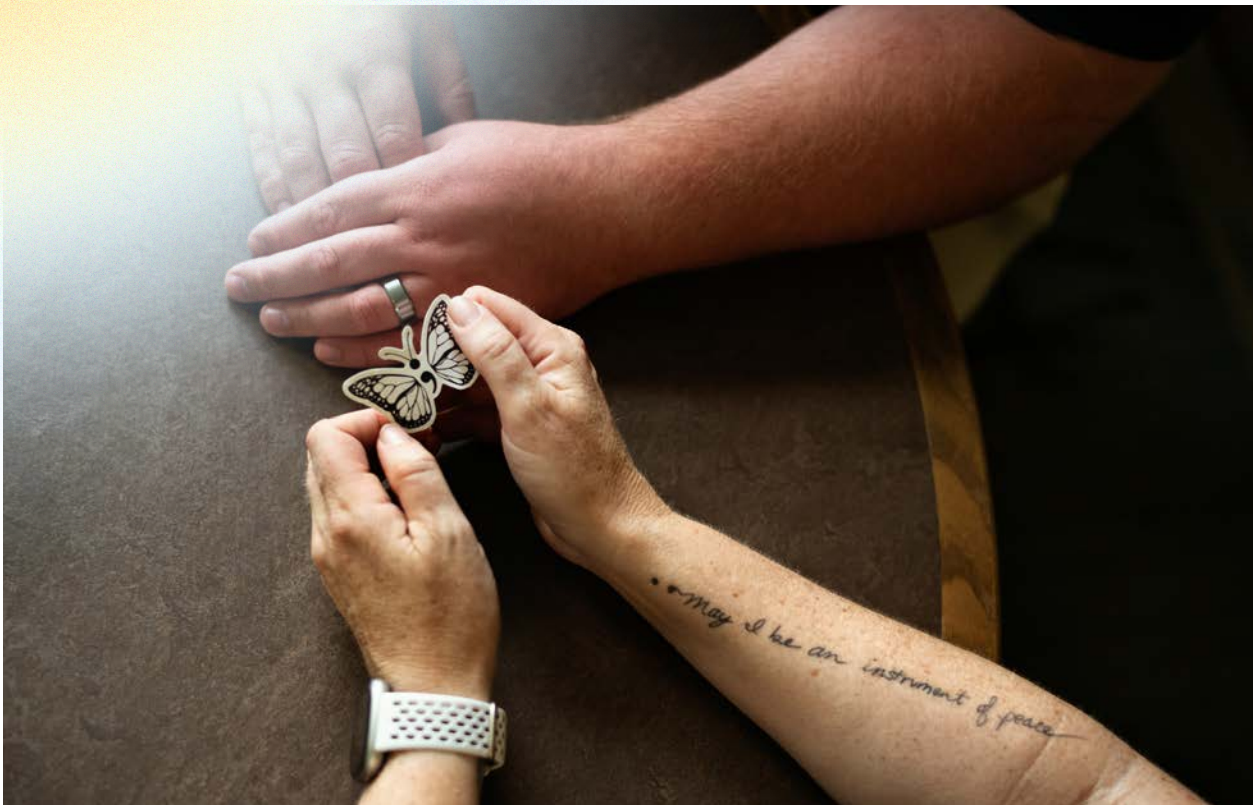
Six weeks later, she survived a suicide attempt.

Passersby saved her. She was rushed to the emergency department of the local hospital in the small Rhode Island town where she was living. After her discharge, she was still suicidal and eventually entered another hospital. There, she met a new psychiatrist. Instead of sitting across a desk from her, he sat next to her and had a conversation.



Erin Goodman (left), a survivor of suicide attempts, meets with a woman in a Rhode Island park. Goodman is now a certified peer recovery specialist, a professional who is trained to listen and offer comfort to those at their lowest points—most often in emergency rooms but also wherever clients want to meet.

Tira Khan for The Pew Charitable Trusts



"May I be an instrument of peace" is written on Goodman's forearm. "I have no judgment," she tells her clients. "I'm here to help you navigate and find the care you need and want." Tira Khan for The Pew Charitable Trusts

"If you use universal screening, regardless of why the patient is there, you will increase detection for suicide risk."

"He listened to me, talking to me as if he needed my input. He brought in my parents and sister and formed this amazing support system around me." When she was discharged from the hospital into an outpatient program, he went with her to introduce her to her future provider. "From that point on, I've had compassionate care."

Goodman is now a certified peer recovery specialist, someone who is trained to respond to behavioral health crises. When her local hospital identifies someone in crisis, she will meet the person anywhere—in the emergency department, on a rolling bed in the hallway, or on the phone.

"As painful as it is to be there, I want to provide some little sliver of hope, tell them of the big changes that can happen in your life," she says. "It's a pretty quick connection when I tell them my own experience. Then I'm quiet and I listen."

Hospitals and health care systems, in combination with empathetic providers who listen to patients and follow up with further treatments or referrals, can play a pivotal role in identifying people at risk and connecting them to the care they need, says Pew's Mizzi Angelone.

Throughout the CoIN project, the hospitals will make adjustments and measure progress as they go. Each month, initiative organizers from Pew and ZSI will meet with hospital providers, record patient outcomes, and publish the results. Mizzi Angelone expects that by next summer, the hospitals will be able to scale up how they are caring for patients at risk of suicide—and pass their knowledge about how to implement the screening to other health care organizations.

"It's a continual quality improvement project," says Mizzi Angelone, "and we'll have good information at the end of it."



Carol Kaufmann is a Trust staff writer.

Report Captures the Diverse Experiences of Asian Americans

In the most extensive survey of its kind, Pew Research Center explores the views of the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the nation.

BY DANIEL LEDUC

Numbering more than 23 million, the United States' Asian population has ancestral roots across the vast, ethnically and culturally rich Asian continent, with that diversity reflected in how Asian Americans describe their own identity, according to a comprehensive Pew Research Center survey released in May.

The report found that 52% of Asian adults living in the U.S. describe themselves most often using ethnic labels that reflect their heritage and family roots, either alone or together with "American"—such as "Chinese" or "Chinese American" or "Filipino" or "Filipino American."

And although pan-ethnic labels such as "Asian" and "Asian American" are commonly used to describe this diverse population broadly, the survey shows that when describing themselves, just 12% prefer to use the label "Asian" on its own and 16% most often use the label "Asian American."

While a relatively small share of the population, Asian Americans were the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the nation from 2000 to 2019. The Center's report, "Diverse Cultures and Shared Experiences Shape Asian American Identities," marked an effort to explore the diversity of Asian

About half of Asian adults use their ethnicity label alone or together with 'American' to describe themselves, but this varies across origin groups

% of Asian adults who use ____ most often to describe themselves, by ethnicity of respondent



Notes: The "Regional Asian" category includes those who report using labels such as East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, or some other regional Asian group label most often to describe themselves. The six largest ethnic groups and the group "Other" include those who identify with one Asian ethnicity only. Responses for those who identify with two or more Asian ethnicities not shown. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer or gave other answers not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center

American experiences and is based on the largest nationally representative survey of its kind focused on this population.

“When people talk about Asian Americans, they usually look at the group as a monolith and compare them with other racial and ethnic groups. It was important to do a deep dive to look at the diverse stories among Asian Americans based on things like their origin group, nativity, age, education level, income level, and when they immigrated to the United States,” says Neil G. Ruiz, head of the Center’s new research initiatives and associate director of race and ethnicity research. “We sought to be able to report data for as many subgroups of Asian American adults as possible.”

When asked to choose between two statements—that Asians in the U.S. share a common culture, or that Asians in the U.S. have many different cultures—nearly all (90%) say U.S. Asians have many different cultures. Just 9% say Asians living in the U.S. share a common culture. This view is widely held among Asian Americans across many demographic groups.

Despite their diverse cultural backgrounds, Asian adults also report certain shared experiences. A majority (60%) say most people would describe them as “Asian” while walking past them on the street, indicating that most Asian adults feel that others see them as a single group, despite the population’s diversity. One in 5 say they have hidden a part of their heritage (such as their ethnic food, cultural practices, ethnic clothing, or religious practices) from others who are not Asian, in some cases out of fear of embarrassment or discrimination. Asian adults ages 18 to 29 are more likely to say they have done this than Asians 65 and older (39% vs. 5%).

Asian adults in the U.S. also feel connected with other Asian Americans, according to the report. About 6 in 10 (59%) say that what happens to Asians in the U.S. affects their own lives, at least to some extent. And about two-thirds (68%) of Asian Americans say it is extremely or very important to have a national leader advocating for the concerns of the Asian community in the U.S.

The survey also explored Asian Americans’ views about traits that make one “truly American.” Overall, Asian Americans and the general U.S. population share similar views of what it means to be American. Nearly all Asian adults and U.S. adults say that accepting people of diverse racial and religious backgrounds (94% and 91%), believing in individual freedoms (92% and 94%), and respecting U.S. political institutions and laws (89% and 87%) are important to being truly American.

Similarly, Asian Americans and the U.S. general population share nearly identical views about the American Dream. Both say having freedom of choice in how to live one’s life (96% and 97% respectively),

having a good family life (96% and 94%), retiring comfortably (96% and 94%), and owning a home (both 86%) are important to their view of the American Dream. Smaller shares of Asian and U.S. adults (30% and 27%) say owning a business is important to their view of the American Dream.

The survey was conducted by mail and online from July 5, 2022, to Jan. 27, 2023, among a representative sample of 7,006 Asian adults living in the United States.

“To produce accurate and reliable estimates for subgroups of Asian American adults, we need to have a representative sample and a sufficient number of respondents in a given subgroup,” says Ashley Amaya, senior survey methodologist at the Center.

In the end, the survey allowed experts to report findings for Asian adults overall as well as the six largest origin groups—Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese—which account for 79% of all Asian Americans. The survey was offered in Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), English, Hindi, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

The survey was also informed by 66 focus groups convened in 2021 that were conducted in 18 languages and studied some less populous origin groups.

For his part, Ruiz says he found especially interesting some of the differences among origin groups.

He noted that Indian adults are more likely than the other origin groups to say they most often use their ethnic identity—Indian—without the addition of American when describing themselves. And they are also likely to be recent immigrants who came for high-skilled work in the U.S. over the past few decades.

Other findings of interest: Japanese adults are least likely among the six largest ethnic groups to say all or most of their friends are Asians. And Vietnamese registered voters are the most likely of the five largest groups to identify Republican or lean that way (with the sample of Japanese registered voters being too small to report political party affiliation).

“This gives you an idea of the level of detail we were able to report and why we worked so hard to get accurate and representative subgroups of Asian Americans, rather than reporting only on Asian Americans as a whole,” Ruiz says. “On a more personal note—from listening to our focus group participants, from managing this survey, and from my own experiences as a Filipino American who was born and raised in Southern California—I can say that these survey results speak not only to the diverse experiences among Asian Americans, but also to what is shared.”

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Daniel LeDuc is the editor of Trust.

Gender Pay Gap in U.S. Has Not Closed in Recent Years but Is Narrower Among Young Workers

BY CAROLINA ARAGÃO

The gender gap in pay has remained relatively stable in the United States over the past 20 years or so. In 2022, women earned an average of 82% of what men earned, according to an analysis, released in March by Pew Research Center, of median hourly earnings of both full- and part-time workers. These results are similar to where the pay gap stood in 2002, when women earned 80% as much as men.

As has long been the case, the wage gap is smaller for workers ages 25 to 34 than for all workers 16 and older. In 2022, women ages 25 to 34 earned an average of 92 cents for every dollar earned by a man in the same age group—an 8-cent gap. By comparison, the gender pay gap among workers of all ages that year was 18 cents.

While the gender pay gap has not changed much in the past two decades, it has narrowed considerably when looking at the longer term, both among all workers ages 16 and older and among those ages 25 to 34. The estimated 18-cent gender pay gap among all workers in 2022 was down from 35 cents in 1982. And the 8-cent gap among workers ages 25 to 34 in 2022 was down from a 26-cent gap four decades earlier.

The U.S. Census Bureau has also analyzed the gender pay gap, though its analysis looks only at full-time workers (as opposed to full- and part-time workers). In 2021, full-time, year-round working women earned 84% of what their male counterparts earned, on average, according to the bureau's most recent analysis.

Much of the gender pay gap has been explained by measurable factors such as educational attainment, occupational segregation, and work experience. The narrowing of the gap over the long term is attributable in large part to gains women have made in each of these dimensions.

Even though women have increased their presence in higher-paying jobs traditionally dominated by men, such as professional and managerial positions, women as a whole continue to be overrepresented in lower-paying occupations relative to their share of the workforce. This may contribute to gender differences in pay.

Other factors that are difficult to measure, including gender discrimination, may also contribute to the ongoing wage discrepancy.

Perceived reasons for the gender wage gap

When asked about the factors that may play a role in the gender wage gap, half of U.S. adults point to women being treated differently by employers as a major reason, according to a Pew Research Center survey conducted in October 2022. Smaller shares point to women making different choices about how to balance work and family (42%) and working in jobs that pay less (34%).

There are some notable differences between men and women in their views of what's behind the gender wage gap. Women are much more likely than men (61% vs. 37%) to say a major reason for the gap is that employers treat women differently. And while 45% of women say a major factor is that women make different choices about how to balance work and family, men are slightly less likely to hold that view (40% say this).

Parents with children younger than 18 in the household are more likely than those who don't have young kids at home (48% vs. 40%) to say a major reason for the pay gap is the choices that women make about how to balance family and work. On this question, differences by parental status are evident among both men and women.

Views about reasons for the gender wage gap also differ by party. About two-thirds of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (68%) say a major factor behind wage differences is that employers treat women differently, but far fewer Republicans and Republican leaners (30%) say the same. Conversely, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say women's choices about how to balance family and work (50% vs. 36%) and their tendency to work in jobs that pay less (39% vs. 30%) are major reasons why women earn less than men.

Democratic and Republican women are more likely than their male counterparts in the same party

to say that a major reason for the gender wage gap is that employers treat women differently. About three-quarters of Democratic women (76%) say this, compared with 59% of Democratic men. And while 43% of Republican women say unequal treatment by employers is a major reason for the gender wage gap, just 18% of GOP men share that view.

Pressures facing working women and men

Family caregiving responsibilities bring different pressures for working women and men, and research has shown that being a mother can reduce women’s earnings, while fatherhood can increase men’s earnings.

Employed women and men are about equally likely to say they feel a great deal of pressure to support their family financially and to be successful in their jobs and careers, according to the Center’s October survey. But women, and particularly working mothers, are more likely than men to say they feel a great deal of pressure to focus on responsibilities at home.

About half of employed women (48%) report feeling a great deal of pressure to focus on their responsibilities at home, compared with 35% of employed men. Among working mothers with children younger than 18 in the household, two-thirds (67%) say the same, compared with 45% of working dads.

When it comes to supporting their family financially, similar shares of working moms and dads (57% vs. 62%) report they feel a great deal of pressure, but this is driven mainly by the large share of unmarried working mothers who say they feel a great deal of pressure in this regard (77%). Among those who are married, working dads are far more likely than working moms (60% vs. 43%) to say they feel a great deal of pressure

to support their family financially. (There were not enough unmarried working fathers in the sample to analyze separately.)

About 4 out of 10 working parents say they feel a great deal of pressure to be successful at their job or career. These findings don’t differ by gender.

Gender differences in job roles, aspirations

Overall, a quarter of employed U.S. adults say they are currently the boss or one of the top managers where they work, according to the Center’s survey. Another 33% say they are not currently the boss but would like to be in the future, while 41% are not and do not aspire to be the boss or one of the top managers.

Men are more likely than women to be a boss or a top manager where they work (28% vs. 21%). This is especially the case among employed fathers, 35% of whom say they are the boss or one of the top managers where they work. (The varying attitudes between fathers and men without children at least partly reflect differences in marital status and educational attainment between the two groups.)

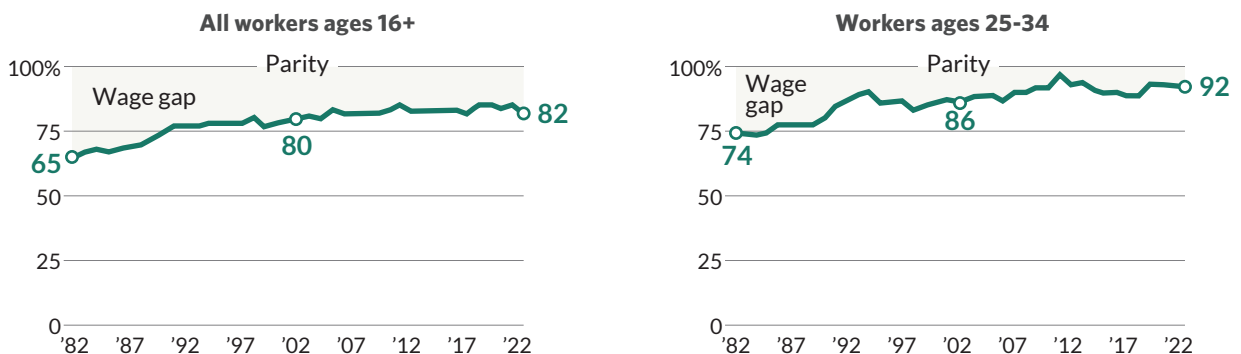
In addition to being less likely than men to say they are currently the boss or a top manager at work, women are also more likely to say they wouldn’t want to be in this type of position in the future. More than 4 out of 10 employed women (46%) say this, compared with 37% of men. Similar shares of men (35%) and women (31%) say they are not currently the boss but would like to be one day. These patterns are similar among parents.

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Carolina Aragão is a research associate focusing on social and demographic trends at Pew Research Center.

Gender pay gap in U.S. has not closed in recent years but is narrower among young workers

Median hourly earnings of U.S. women as percentage of men’s median earnings among...



Note: Estimates are for civilian, non-institutionalized, full- or part-time employed workers with positive earnings. Samples include employed workers with positive earnings, working full time or part time, excluding the self-employed.

Source: Pew Research Center

For Nearly Two Decades, Just the Facts



The Pew Charitable Trusts has long supported initiatives that seek to inform the public on the critical issues of the day and help people understand themselves and one another. In 2004, it brought these disparate efforts under one entity to create the Pew Research Center. Over nearly two decades, the Center has become a respected, nonpartisan, and nonadvocacy provider of research and analysis on key trends affecting society. As the Center looks to its 20th anniversary, Trust spoke with its president, Michael Dimock.

How does the Center decide what it studies?

That is the number one question we get asked! Our work focuses on three key themes. The first is trust, facts, and democracy. We aim to provide information about the challenges facing democracies and the ways that people become informed and engaged members of a democratic society. A second theme is science, technology, and society. Technology is changing nearly every aspect of our lives, from how we meet our partners, to how we work or go to school, to how we form community. For some, it has even changed how we worship. We're bringing the voice of the public into conversations that otherwise are driven by companies and government. Our third area of work focuses on tolerance, identity, and diversity. This research looks at how the country is becoming more diverse and explores the forces that increase divides in our racial, ethnic, social, and religious identities.

So, beyond the surveys and other research the Center pursues, there is a broader unifying purpose to the work?

Yes. It is too easy to form caricatures of each other and to emphasize the differences in our society over the commonalities. We do deep studies on different segments of society, showing the range of diversity within populations and opening ways for different types of communication and contact. From its earliest days, the Center has had this mission of connecting with people and helping them see themselves in the data, aiming to enrich understanding and civic debates. We love our work to be an entry point for people to talk with each other. Facts are vital to grounding civil conversations about religion, politics, and other important issues—especially where we disagree.

Does that strengthen democracy and is that part of the purpose of the work?

The Center's work is designed to try to create a better understanding of who we are as a society. Our job is to ask people what matters to them and get that information out there. Where do we share common views and values? Where do we differ? What are our priorities? Political, civic, and business leaders use our research as a source of reliable information on what their constituents think. Public opinion research, be it surveys or other kinds of analysis, presents a rich, nuanced perspective on people's views and values.

"The Center's work is designed to try to create a better understanding of who we are as a society. Our job is to ask people what matters to them and get that information out there. Where do we share common views and values? Where do we differ? What are our priorities?"

How has survey research changed over the two decades of the Center's existence?

The core of our approach is "random sampling"—to give everyone in the population an equal voice about the issues of the day. When I started at Pew, the best way to get a random sample was phone calls, but that has gotten harder as people screen their calls. The U.S. Postal Service has the most reliable way to understand where people are living. We use the mail to recruit people to participate in our American Trends Panel and invite them to answer questions online. The 12,000-person panel is a true cross section of the nation.

Conducting international surveys is a bit more challenging. We still do random samples, but our approach varies depending on a country's technology, society, and infrastructure. In some places, we still have people knock on doors and sit down in people's living rooms to ask them questions.

We have some great resources on our website—pewresearch.org—for people who are interested in learning more about how polling works.

The Center conducts surveys and lots of research, but it never takes a stand on an issue or offers recommendations. Why?

Public opinion research means getting inside people's heads, and it is easy to tweak questions and methods to get findings that support a position. Keeping an assiduously protected distance from advocacy is essential to the credibility of what we do. We regularly hear from our audiences—be they political leaders, journalists, or members of the public—that they trust us because we do not have a dog in the fight.

How else do you maintain credibility, especially in polarizing times like these?

We do not take stands on issues. We do not have clients. We are transparent about our methods. We make all our work available free of charge to everyone. We do not judge what our survey respondents tell us—people entrust us with their views, and we aim to report back with as much rigor and clarity as we can.

One of the key things that sets us apart is our support from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The Pew board has been remarkable in its long-term commitment to the Center. And it has delegated to us to employ our expertise to ask the right questions, employ gold standard methods, and use our skills for the greatest good. That funding has also allowed us to engage in nuanced research that may not drive headlines or go viral. And it is our organizational culture to be careful, meticulous, and transparent about what we do and how we do it. Over the years, we have gained the trust of journalists, leaders, philanthropists, and the public, and we guard that reputation carefully.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

The diverse work of The Pew Charitable Trusts requires a staff with a range of talents, skills, and experience. But what each staff member has in common is a dedication to the organization's mission of supporting policy improvements that help people and communities thrive. As the institution marks its 75th anniversary, we asked staffers what inspires them to work at Pew.

Shannon Shipman

operations senior associate



My job sits at the intersection of a lot of teams, so I get to collaborate with a lot of other folks who are incredibly intelligent and skilled at their jobs. Through that experience I've learned that Pew embraces who I am. I'm accepted, I'm encouraged, and it's a really supportive environment that I appreciate."

Richard Friend

art director



I love my job because I get to do really good work for a really good cause. Here everyone has mission-driven work, and we're all on the same page working towards the same goals, and that's very refreshing."

Alex Booker

project management and support
associate manager



I get to learn something new every single day. I get smarter every single day. I feel like I'm in a community where everyone is not just looking out for one another but is also trying to build everyone up."

Deanna Richards

antibiotic resistance project manager



I love that Pew is an organization that champions innovation. The world is facing a crisis with antibiotic resistance, and we're able to look at it in a new perspective when we have different innovative ideas."

Justin Theal

state fiscal health project researcher



F amily members and friends ask how government budgets could ever be rewarding. The truth is, budgets are where the rubber meets the road with public policy. I know that my work matters."

Yasmin Velez-Sanchez

inclusive community engagement senior officer



B eing able, at Pew, to work on DEI issues and to help bring in inclusive practices and make the workplace more equitable, it just brings me a lot of joy because it means that I am doing something to change the conditions for people like me in the world."

Humility Paves the Way for New Flood-Related Policies

BY REEMA SINGH AND MICHELE LEMPA



Land around homes in Albany, Illinois, disappears into floodwaters from the Mississippi River. Floods are the most common natural disaster in the U.S. *Scott Olson/Getty Images*

In March 2015, as the nation's eyes were opening to a rising number of historic weather events and their potential to devastate communities, properties, and lives, Pew launched its flood-prepared communities project. This work aimed to reduce the damage being caused by floods—the most common and costly natural disaster in the U.S., resulting in more than \$1 trillion in damage and losses since 2000—by improving policy and planning at the federal and state levels to help states become more flood resilient.

Last year, Pew's evaluation and learning unit, which helps the organization learn from its work, improve program effectiveness, and inform future decision-making, commissioned a group of independent experts to assess the flood project's work. This outside review showed that over the past eight years, the project's efforts had contributed to a landmark revision of the federal flood insurance program's pricing system, which today more closely aligns flood risk with property insurance rates, and to the first U.S.

Department of Transportation program dedicated to flood risk mitigation—including through the use of nature-based solutions, such as restoring wetlands, enhancing culverts, and creating green space. The review also found that the team helped establish a national standard for the planning and design of federally funded projects located in flood-prone areas that accounts for future risk and has secured over \$33 billion in federal and state funding for flood mitigation—and the team was able to accomplish this while navigating an evolving political landscape and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The key to this overall success, the evaluators noted, was one characteristic critical to the way the team operated: humility. As Pew defines it, humility is recognizing that the ability to create change is linked with the capacity and knowledge of colleagues and partners, and it involves acknowledging mistakes, listening and fostering understanding to serve the common good, and changing course when needed

to learn and grow. That trait is also one of Pew's seven core values (the other six are equity, impact, inclusion, innovation, integrity, and nonpartisanship).

Humility enabled the project team to develop deep, authentic relationships with a broad range of stakeholder groups and build Pew's reputation as a trusted leader in the field, which resulted in strong partnerships and durable policy change. The following examples of operating with humility can help other policy change initiatives learn from the flood team's approach.

A learning mindset: The team approached its work with a willingness to learn, even while contributing its own technical expertise. For example, when initiating work in a new state, team members took the time to learn about important context from state and local officials and experts working on floods, as well as their preferred collaboration style. This allowed the team to more quickly earn trust among local partners than it otherwise might have.

“Some may think humility, patience, and graciousness are niceties but not critical to outcomes. The evaluation proved that these values in fact enabled the flood-prepared communities team's work and success ... helping to open doors, build lasting relationships, and give them access to opportunities and people.”

—Sheila Leahy, lead evaluator, SAL Consulting

The project team members demonstrated their willingness to learn and adapt as they built their own capacity and expertise, pivoted when necessary, tried new strategies, and responded to emerging opportunities. For instance, after Hurricane Harvey battered Texas and other Gulf Coast states in August 2017, leaving 89 people dead and causing more than \$125 billion in damage, a Texas-based partner informed Pew that the state legislature was eager to fund disaster recovery to help the victims, and flood mitigation to ensure that Texans would be better prepared in the future. After learning more about challenges from lawmakers and local advocates, Pew saw an opportunity to share with decision-makers potential policy approaches that could work in their state. Their subsequent engagement contributed to the creation of a comprehensive statewide flood plan and an infrastructure fund to finance flood mitigation projects using nature-based strategies that absorb floodwaters—such as restored wetlands, salt marshes, and streams.

A commitment to inclusivity: Rather than project its own agenda, the team listened intently and ensured

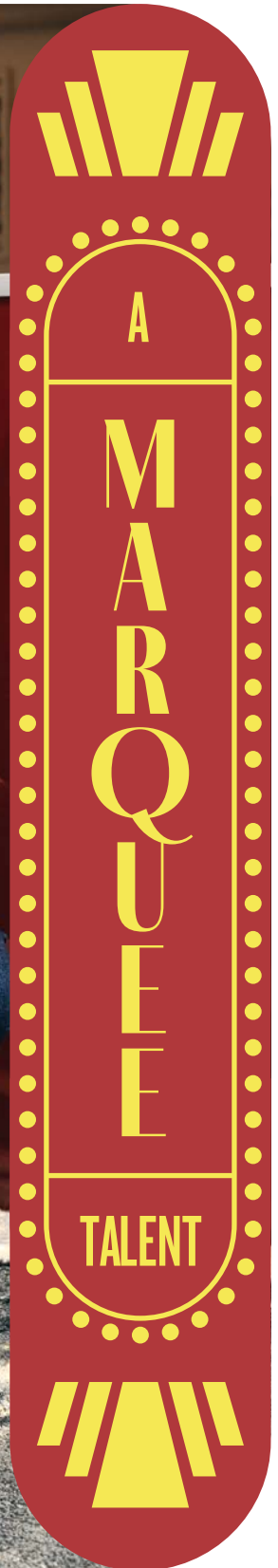
that a range of viewpoints were explored to help educate policymakers. By doing so, the team was able to garner support, help break through various political impasses, and elevate local perspectives. For example, Pew bridged a critical gap between different levels of government by organizing trips to Washington, D.C., for state and local stakeholders, giving them a chance to tell their own stories and share the need for federal flood preparedness support. One participant explained that “Pew organized national media for us, and we ended up at the White House—they saw us as influential.” This led to agencies, policymakers, and organizations at the state level expressing appreciation for the way Pew created an inclusive national learning community in which stakeholders across the political spectrum could build peer relationships and exchange lessons learned as they established new offices and planning efforts focused on climate adaptation and resilience. The knowledge sharing was particularly useful to states seeking to develop innovative and comprehensive resilience strategies.

Augmenting partner efforts: The team proactively asked partners what they needed and shared resources and expertise to bolster existing efforts. In Virginia, Pew recognized a need for high-quality messaging tools and data-driven research to build public support and educate elected state officials—particularly from inland and rural communities—about the need for funding for flood preparedness. Pew developed these resources and made them freely available to its networks, a model repeated in other states and at the national level on various flood-related issues. This helped Pew's networks expand their reach and build a broad coalition of bipartisan support. As a result, Virginia now has a well-funded program that gives flood-prone communities the ability to develop resilience plans, sponsor nature-based solutions to flooding, and boost local capacity.

As Pew celebrates its 75th year, reflects on its past, and looks to the future, it remains committed to embodying humility in its work—being attuned to its partners' knowledge, listening and fostering deep understanding, and being willing to acknowledge its own mistakes and change course when needed to learn and grow. Humility provided the foundation for the flood-prepared communities team to engage in meaningful collaboration, find common ground, and, ultimately, improve public policy. The lessons from this evaluation will be applied to future work to further support Pew's mission and live its values.

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Reema Singh is an officer and Michele Lempa is a project director for The Pew Charitable Trusts' evaluation and learning unit.



Pew fellow James Ijames is a triple-threat actor, director, and playwright who's just won a Pulitzer Prize.

BY TOM INFIELD

Linette & Kyle Kiehlinski

When actor, director, and playwright James Ijames was selected as a Pew Fellow in the Arts in 2015, a panel of experienced arts professionals saw in him the potential to become a force in American theater.

“The panelists could see, as one of them wrote, that James was a gifted storyteller, committed to challenging material, who could go from being sharply critical one moment to outrageously funny the next,” says Paula Marincola, executive director of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. “And that he also had a real knack for action, narrative momentum, and theatricality.”

Each year, the Center awards 12 fellowships of \$75,000 to support artists in the Philadelphia region. Ijames is one of 398 people across artistic disciplines—poets, filmmakers, musicians, sculptors, performance artists, and others—who have been named Pew fellows since the program began in 1992.

Today, the Center’s vision of Ijames’ potential has been abundantly realized. In 2022, Ijames won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and on April 12, his prize-winning play, *Fat Ham*, opened on Broadway for a 12-week run.

Fat Ham is a takeoff on *Hamlet*, set not in a Danish castle but at a barbecue in the backyard of a Southern family. (Ijames grew up in North Carolina.) The Hamlet-like lead character, Juicy, is described by the New York Theatre Guide as “a Black queer man ... tasked with killing his uncle to avenge his father’s death.” But unlike Hamlet, he “is questioning whether strength or softness makes him a man.” Juicy cannot bring himself to commit

violence. Rather than die by the sword, the uncle (somewhat humorously) chokes on a pork bone.

“Winning the Pulitzer as a playwright is like winning an Oscar; it is the highest award for dramatic literature,” says Morgan Green, who directed the original, Pulitzer-winning production of *Fat Ham* by Philadelphia’s Wilma Theater. Due to pandemic restrictions, that production couldn’t be performed live onstage. Instead, it was filmed in the backyard and on the porch of a rented house in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Schuyler, Virginia, and then watched online by audiences. It is this digital production that was awarded the Pulitzer, the first time a virtual premiere has won. Ijames was already a known entity in theater, Green says, but winning the Pulitzer and seeing your name on Broadway—“that’s another level of success.”

The Center is “thrilled, delighted, excited” for Ijames, Marincola says.

Also thrilled is the theater department at Villanova University, where Ijames is a tenured associate professor. “It’s the first thing on everyone’s lips, for people who know James and even people who don’t,” says Valerie Joyce, the department chair.

Ijames himself says the main impact of receiving the Pulitzer is that more doors are opening for him. It’s a calling card.

“It has made a difference in what people approach me to do and in the kind of theaters that want to present my work; it gets your work into more places,” Ijames says on



Playwright James Ijames (center, in lime green) is surrounded by producers and applause onstage during the curtain call for his play *Fat Ham* on April 12, the night it opened on Broadway at the American Airlines Theatre. Bruce Glikas/WireImage

a chilly morning at a coffee shop in South Philadelphia. He wears round glasses and a wool cap, and hugs the warmth in a paper cup.

He had no expectation of winning the Pulitzer Prize when the Wilma submitted his work, he says, and no one notified him about the progress of the submission. He didn't know he had won until the prize was announced in May 2022 at Columbia University and his phone "blew up" with congratulatory calls. He later went to New York to be presented with the prize.

Ijames credits the Pew fellowship with having allowed him to concentrate on his playwriting and cut back on his other roles in the theater. He has published and staged a half-dozen well-received plays, including *Kill Move Paradise*, in which he worked out his anguish over the killing of Tamir Rice, a Black 12-year-old shot by a White police officer in Cleveland, Ohio, in 2014. The play premiered at the National Black Theatre in Harlem in 2017 and has since been reproduced by several theaters around the country.

"I received the Pew fellowship at a moment when I was shifting from being primarily a performer to being primarily a writer and a director," Ijames says. "It gave me the confidence to start saying 'no' to some acting work."

"I also bought a house," he says. "I used a portion of the fellowship for a down payment. It gave me a home base, and I didn't have to worry about where I was going to live, which is always an insecurity for an artist."

Ijames is one of three Pew fellows to win a Pulitzer. Composer and performer Raven Chacon, currently a fellow-in-residence, received a Pulitzer in Music for *Voicemail Mass*, also in 2022. And classical composer Jennifer Higdon, one of the early fellows in 1999, received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her *Violin Concerto*. She has also won three Grammys.

Marincola has described the Pew fellowship as a wellspring for artistic creativity. Since the start of the program in 1992, Pew fellows have gone on to be MacArthur fellows and Guggenheim fellows, in addition to Pulitzer recipients.

"For us, it is really a vindication of our belief that artists need time and resources to be able to do their work," Marincola says. "In the end, it pays off."

Saheem Ali, director of *Fat Ham* at the American Airlines Theatre on Broadway, says he met Ijames when he directed another of his plays, *Moon Man Walk*, at the National Black Theatre in 2017. That play premiered in Philadelphia in 2015, the year Ijames received the Pew fellowship, and it, too, has also been widely reproduced.

The state of drama on Broadway in 2023 is "precarious," Ali says. Audiences have returned to live theater post-pandemic, but mostly to see musicals and revivals. Some new dramas have struggled and

closed earlier than expected. Original dramas such as *Fat Ham*, he says, are rare gems.

Yet Ali says it's an exciting time in the theater. New voices—young voices, diverse voices—are being heard. Ijames, he says, "is telling us about Blackness and queerness. He is shedding light on a segment of society that does not get the stage very often."

"Stories that center on those two forms of identity tend to be really tragic," Ali says. "Black stories and queer stories tend to have a lot of weight and despondency and tragedy to them. But those stories are not the only stories. James is flipping the script."

"I prefer happy endings," Ijames says of his writing. "There are plenty of sad endings. There is plenty of tragedy. I don't have to contribute to that as an artist. I am going to watch those [tragic] shows, and I am going to cry. But when I sit down at the computer, I am going to write something that is different. I'm adding to the balancing act."

Fat Ham, like *Hamlet*, is tragic. But it's also filled with warmth and affection for the complicated relationships in families. "Aren't all families dysfunctional?" Ijames seems to ask. Good drama, like stand-up comedy, can come from pain and even cruelty, he says. The humor is what distracts from pain. "When someone slips on a banana peel, it's funny, it just is—as long as it's not you."

In mid-20th century America, playwrights such as Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller were celebrities, known to the public like athletes or actors. Playwrights today might not achieve that level of notoriety, Ijames says, but some—he names Aleshea Harris, Will Arbery, and Antoinette Nwandu—are, indeed, public figures.

Many of those vintage playwrights also came to do work in Hollywood, and the same is true today, because there's so much drama on television that requires good writing.

"We are invited to join a golden age of television. Pretty much every playwright I know is doing some type of TV work," Ijames says. "We are in a moment when the writing on television is exceptional—I think in large part because there are a lot of playwrights in those TV writing rooms. You are making this popular form so that you can sit down and write the plays you really want to write."

"I think we are seeing a bit of a renaissance of the American play," Ijames says.

He sees himself as a disciplined artist. He has to be, given his responsibilities. Besides writing and sometimes directing, the Morehouse College graduate with a master's degree in fine arts from Temple University carries a full teaching load at Villanova.

Green, the *Fat Ham* director at the Wilma, has seen him hard at work. "He gets up early to write, and then



Ijames also wrote and narrated “Moving Portraits,” a digital animation exploring key moments in the history of segregated swimming and the achievements of accomplished Black swimming figures that is part of the larger exhibit “POOL: A Social History of Segregation,” currently on display for the second time at Philadelphia’s Fairmount Water Works. GreenTreks, courtesy of the Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center

he’s doing meetings and teaching all day, and then he stays up late at night to write,” she says. “It is inspiring.”

At Villanova, Ijames is a popular teacher, says Joyce, the theater department chair. “He has entirely revamped the way we teach acting. He teaches his students, ‘You are enough— whatever you bring to a character, whatever you bring to a production—you are enough.’”

This confidence-giving, she says, has “transformed the way students think about what can be a cruel and unforgiving profession.”

“I say that all the time,” Ijames adds. “I tell the kids that their life experience, their voice, their body, their gender, their sexual identity—all of them are important to play a role in the theater. You don’t need to be somebody else. You are enough if you bring your full self to it.”

Ijames is 42. He grew up in Bessemer, North Carolina, a half-hour from the South Carolina border. His early life played out in an extended Black family and the Black church. “When I was young,” he says, “I wanted to be a preacher.” *Fat Ham* is a love song about Southern barbecue culture, with detailed depiction of meats and potato salads. He doesn’t like much of what he sees in Southern politics, he says, and he hasn’t always felt welcome as a queer Black man. “But it’s where I’m from; it’s a place that means a lot to me.”

After the Wilma’s digital version, *Fat Ham* was staged at The Public Theater in New York. The whole cast from that production appeared in the Broadway production, in which Marcel Spears, co-star of the CBS comedy series “The Neighborhood,” plays the lead.

“It’s a big deal to be on Broadway,” says Ali, who also directed *Fat Ham* at The Public Theater, “It’s a first for me, and it’s a first for James. Some things get written

and produced with an eye on the commercial. This was far from that. No one who was working on this imagined it would become something that would be on Broadway. That is the magic of the theater sometimes.”

Drawing on his church experience, Ijames is working with Ali on an upcoming play about a gospel quartet set in the 1940s. He also recently worked as a writer, director, and narrator on an exhibit at the Fairmount Water Works in Philadelphia for which The Pew Arts & Heritage Center was a major funder. The exhibit, “POOL: A Social History of Segregation,” explores the history of Black swimmers being turned away from public pools through archival photographs, films, and personal stories. It began a second run at the interpretive center in March and will run through September.

“James really used the fellowship to deepen his practice,” Marincola says. “I think we have contributed in a substantial way to the growth and vitality of the Philadelphia artist community.”

It seems that Ijames would agree. “The Pew fellowship gave me a whole lot of freedom,” he says.

Ijames says he initially thought that winning a Pulitzer Prize—and the thrill of being on Broadway—would change him somehow and propel him sky high. Instead, he says, the recognition grounded him. It made him go back and reread books he had read about playwrighting. It made him work even harder. “It rooted me.”



Tom Infield is a longtime Philadelphia journalist and frequent contributor to Trust.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

*The Pew Charitable Trusts applies a rigorous, analytical approach to **improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life**, as these recent accomplishments illustrate.*

IMPROVING PUBLIC POLICY



A green sea turtle swims over coral reefs in the Caribbean Sea, whose fragile ocean habitats recently received more protection within Panama's national waters. Panama is one of the few nations to protect more than 50% of its marine areas. *Damocean/Getty Images*

Decree, treaty help protect waters in Panama and Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor

In March, during the eighth annual Our Ocean Conference, President Laurentino Cortizo of Panama signed a decree to substantially expand the size of the Banco Volcán Area of Managed Resources from approximately 5,500 square miles to 35,000 square miles. With this action, which was backed by Pew's Blue Nature Alliance partnership, Panama has protected more than 50% of its ocean waters. Also at the meeting, Panama joined Colombia, Costa Rica, and Ecuador in committing to negotiate a binding treaty that would enable coordinated management and conservation of the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor, home to some of the world's most productive, biologically diverse, and ecologically significant marine environments. In addition, a coalition of philanthropic, government, and nongovernmental organizations—including Pew's partnerships with Enduring Earth, Blue Nature Alliance, and the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project—announced nearly \$120 million in total private and public fund allocations to date that strengthen marine protections for the corridor. Securing this legally binding four-country agreement and providing funding for its implementation is an important Pew priority.

West Virginia prioritizes nature-based solutions to combat flooding

Starting in March, a West Virginia law mandated the development, by 2024, of the state's first flood resiliency plan. The legislation creates a Flood Resiliency Trust Fund that would invest in nature-based solutions to reduce flood risk. The fund will focus on low-income communities and conditions and support the existing Disaster Recovery Trust Fund to encourage local adoption of development standards that would make infrastructure more resilient to severe weather impacts. West Virginia is the fourth state for which Pew has helped secure comprehensive statewide flood resilience plans, with a total of more than \$1.7 billion in financial incentives to use nature-based solutions to address flood risks.



An officer from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources scans the water in Rainelle, WV, for debris after record flooding washed away houses, roads, and vehicles. The state will develop a flood resiliency plan by 2024 to invest in nature-based solutions that reduce flood risk. *Steve Helber/AP Images*

Australia commits to significantly expanding Macquarie Island Marine Park

In late February, the Australian government issued its draft plan for Macquarie Island Marine Park, which would nearly triple its size. The government's proposal would also significantly increase, by about 150,000 square miles, the no-take sanctuary protection in which fishing and other extractive activity would be prohibited. Macquarie Island, a World Heritage Site, provides crucial habitat for penguins, seals, whales, fish, and migratory seabirds. The new plan, which has been through a statutory public consultation and included over 14,000 submissions of support from scientists, stakeholders, and the Australian public, was developed with input from Pew and its partners. The proposal advances efforts to expand Australia's marine park and sanctuary network to the subantarctic region.

Fiscal federalism engages state, federal leaders with wildfire research

Pew's research on state spending on wildfires continues to be of interest to governmental leaders. Since January, members of Pew's fiscal federalism initiative have presented their research to officials at the U.S. Department of the Treasury and U.S. Fire Administration. Pew experts also presented their wildfire spending research at events sponsored by the National Governors Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Association of Counties. The research has also been referenced by the Council of Western State Foresters and the California State Assembly. These activities advance the project's goal of informing the ways government leaders budget for natural disasters.

Pew and The Nature Conservancy expand oyster restoration partnership

In February, Pew and The Nature Conservancy announced the second phase of the Supporting Oyster Aquaculture and Restoration (SOAR) program with a \$3 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and a \$3.3 million grant from the Builders Initiative. The expanded SOAR program will rebuild 30 acres of oyster reefs on 12 sites along the East and West coasts, making shorelines more resilient while also supporting about 100 oyster farms and 300 jobs. The project will also dedicate some of this new funding to promote opportunities for innovation, resilience, and diversity within the aquaculture and restoration sectors.



A farmer harvests his Blue Point oysters from the Great South Bay off Long Island, NY. *The Pew Charitable Trusts*

President Biden announces important measures to conserve lands and waters

In March, President Joe Biden announced a series of important environmental measures. The recently designated Avi Kwa Ame National Monument in Nevada and Castner Range National Monument in Texas will protect nearly 514,000 acres. In addition, the secretary of commerce will initiate a national marine sanctuary designation to protect all U.S. waters around the Pacific Remote Islands, which could help ensure the conservation of at least 30% of the nation's oceans by 2030. In addition, federal agencies will outline plans to restore and protect ecological corridors, such as wildlife migration routes. And the administration released a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through conservation of marine habitats that store carbon, deployment of offshore wind energy, and use of nature-based solutions to improve community resilience to a warming planet. These actions advance goals for Pew and the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project.



Masonry workers restore a home's façade in South Philadelphia. A new Pew initiative will focus on fresh approaches to helping people find affordable housing and mortgages. *Lexey Swall for The Pew Charitable Trusts*

Pew launches housing policy initiative

In April, Pew launched a housing policy initiative to help policymakers reimagine their approach to housing by illuminating how outdated regulations and statutes drive shortages of housing and small mortgages. Strict local zoning and land-use regulations have limited the availability of homes, especially lower-cost options. At the same time, compliance process requirements have made it difficult for lenders to offer small mortgages, preventing millions of creditworthy homebuyers—especially Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, and rural households—from achieving affordable homeownership. Millions are instead turning to riskier and more costly alternative financing arrangements. To address these issues, Pew is studying the ways policymakers can increase housing availability and safe home financing by revising land-use regulations, improving access to mortgages under \$150,000, and making nonmortgage financing arrangements safer for homebuyers.

Michigan jail reforms prove to be an early success

A package of 20 jail reform bills adopted in January 2021 has shown early success, the Michigan Jail Reform Advisory Council has said. The council continued the work of the Michigan Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration, which received technical assistance from Pew's public safety performance project. The new laws have most notably restored driver's licenses to over 150,000 residents whose privileges were suspended for reasons unrelated to dangerous driving (for example, failing to appear in court). In addition, the council found that judges are sentencing people convicted of minor misdemeanors to jail less frequently, and more people on probation are earning early release after meeting the conditions of their sentence. These findings support the project's goal of safely reducing jail populations and addressing the restrictive consequences of criminal legal system involvement.

Pew provides forum for collaboration among state broadband offices, Congress, and federal agencies

In February, the broadband access initiative hosted a day of events to build collaboration and information sharing among state broadband offices, Congress, and federal agencies. Senator Angus King (I-ME) hosted broadband project director Kathryn de Wit and associate manager Jake Varn for panel discussions with Hill staff and state broadband office officials. That evening, more than 200 employees from state broadband offices, federal agencies, and the Hill, plus Pew experts and officials, continued the conversation during a reception. Assistant Secretary of Commerce Alan Davidson expressed his gratitude to Pew for providing a "safe space" that enabled government officials to get to know one another without lobbyists, consultants, or potential grantees present—a sentiment many other attendees echoed.

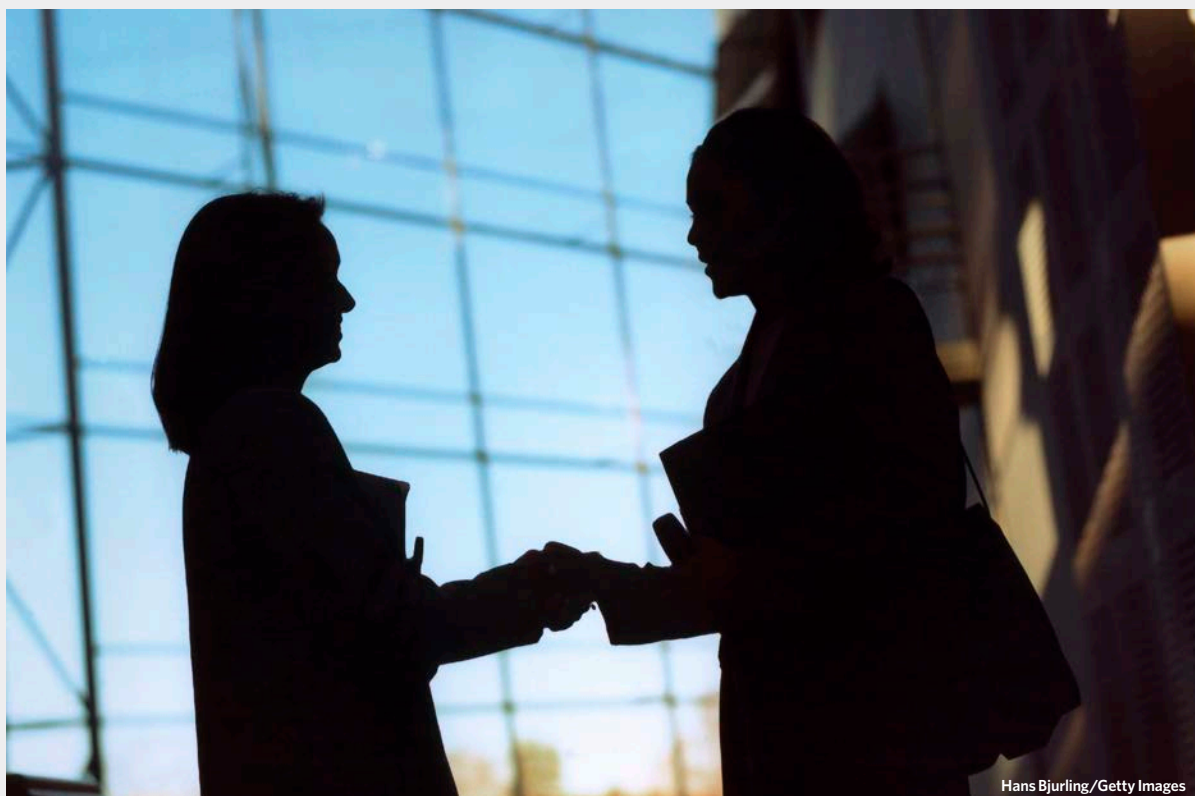
INVIGORATING CIVIC LIFE

Philadelphia artists win Grammy Awards

Pew Center for Arts & Heritage grantees The Crossing and the Philadelphia Orchestra, along with the orchestra's music and artistic director, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, were awarded 2023 Grammy Awards in February. This is the third Grammy for the professional chamber choir, which won best choral performance for its album "Born." With Pew support, the choir will present the world premiere of "Farming," a newly commissioned choral work by composer Ted Hearne, in June. Nézet-Séguin was conductor of the work that won the Grammy for best opera recording, and he was the pianist on the best classical solo vocal album, released with soprano Renée Fleming. In addition, two recordings on which the Philadelphia Orchestra performed won in the classical instrumental solo and contemporary classical composition categories. The Center awarded the orchestra a 2022 project grant to restore scores and perform music by 20th century Black composer William Grant Still.

Emerging Leaders Corps launches

In January, with grant support from the William Penn Foundation, the Philadelphia research and policy initiative kicked off the Emerging Leaders Corps, a peer-learning cohort of 17 individuals from the public and private sectors nominated by elected officials and civic, cultural, and economic development leaders. The goal of the program, which ran through April, was to build a shared understanding of the key challenges facing the city and develop and reinforce opportunities for data-driven decision-making. This program engaged a new generation of Philadelphians, expanding the audience for and gathering insights to inform the initiative's work, as well as building a peer network for collaboration and problem-solving. The participants represented the geographic, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and policy diversity of Philadelphia.



Hans Bjurling/Getty Images

INFORMING THE PUBLIC

How the pandemic has affected attendance at U.S. religious services

Since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic three years ago, observers of religious life in America have wondered whether—and how—the upheaval would affect religious worship. Would the temporary shuttering of churches and other houses of worship accelerate the longer-term decline in attendance, especially if many people who stopped attending religious services in person during the pandemic never go back? Or could the widespread introduction of virtual services extend congregations' geographic reach, increase their appeal to young people, and help them attract new audiences? A Pew Research Center report issued in March found that a stable share of Americans have been participating in religious services, either virtually or in person, during the pandemic. However, in-person attendance is slightly lower than it was before the coronavirus public health emergency.

Artificial intelligence: What Americans think

Pew Research Center issued a series of publications examining what Americans think about artificial intelligence (AI). A February report on AI in health and medicine found that 6 in 10 U.S. adults said they would feel uncomfortable if their own health care provider relied on artificial intelligence to do things such as diagnose disease and recommend treatments. Meanwhile, an April report on possible uses of AI in the workplace found that most Americans oppose AI's use in making final hiring or firing decisions. Yet there are instances where people think AI in workplaces would do better than humans. For example, 47% think AI would do better than humans at evaluating all job applicants in the same way.

Americans' views of China continue to be negative

A Pew Research Center report issued in April examined Americans' views of China. It found that 83% of U.S. adults continue to have negative views of China, and the share who have very unfavorable views (44%) has increased by 4 percentage points since last year. Around 4 in 10 Americans also now describe China as an enemy of the United States, rather than as a competitor or a partner—up 13 percentage points since last year. Meanwhile, 62% of Americans see the China-Russia partnership as a very serious problem for the U.S., up 5 percentage points since October and back to the original high levels seen in the immediate aftermath of the Ukraine invasion in 2022.



Dollar Gill/Unsplash

About half of Americans have listened to a podcast in the past year

In April, a Pew Research Center report examined how Americans use podcasts to get news and information. The survey found that about half of Americans have listened to a podcast in the past year, and 1 in 5 of those listeners say they listen to a podcast nearly every day. Listeners turn to podcasts for entertainment, learning, hearing others' opinions, and staying up to date about current events. Most podcast listeners say they hear news discussed on podcasts; however, just 1 in 5 listeners say they listen to a podcast that's connected to a news organization.

How Americans View Their Jobs

In the wake of the Great Resignation and amid reports of “quiet quitting,” only about half of U.S. workers say they are extremely or very satisfied with their job overall, according to a Pew Research Center survey released in March. Even smaller shares express high levels of satisfaction with their opportunities for training and skills development, how much they are paid, and their opportunities for promotion.



Gaby Bonilla/
The Pew Charitable Trusts

About half of workers are highly satisfied with their job overall, but views of specific aspects of their job vary considerably

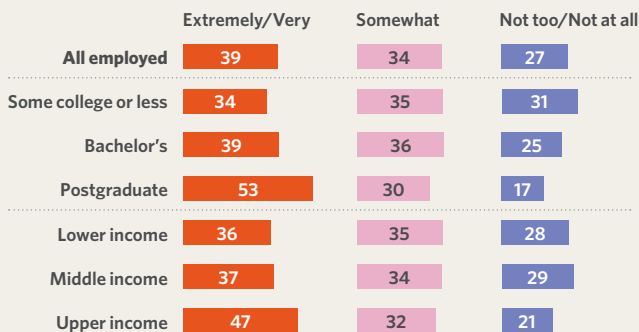
% of employed adults saying they are extremely or very satisfied with...



*Excluding those who said they don't have a commute. **Full question wording asked about receiving feedback from their manager or supervisor on how they're doing their job. ***Full question wording included "such as health insurance and paid time off." Note: Based on workers who are not self-employed.

About 4 in 10 workers see their job as central to their overall identity

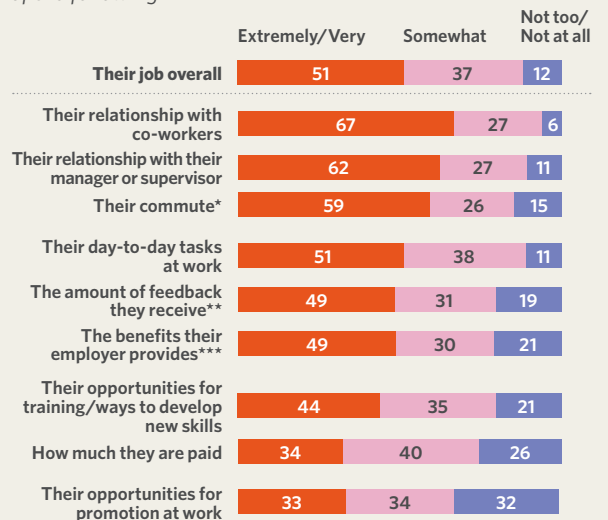
% of employed adults saying their job or career is __ important to their overall identity



Note: Based on workers who are not self-employed. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. "Some college" includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2021 earnings.

Most workers are extremely or very satisfied with their relationship with their boss and co-workers, but less so with their pay or opportunities for promotion

% of employed adults saying they are __ satisfied with each of the following



*Excluding those who say they don't have a commute. **Full question wording asked about receiving feedback from their manager or supervisor on how they're doing their job. ***Full question wording included "such as health insurance and paid time off." Note: Based on workers who are not self-employed. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

At least 7 in 10 workers say they're treated with respect, can be themselves at work all or most of time

% of employed adults saying...



*Full question wording included "that is, an experienced person who cares about your professional development." Note: Based on workers who are not self-employed.



'STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA'

Nearly 6 in 10 Americans tell the Pew Research Center that they're dissatisfied with how democracy is working in the United States. A new season of Pew's podcast, "After the Fact," explores public attitudes on why, and talks with experts trying to strengthen democracy. Listen at pewtrusts.org/afterthefact.

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AFTER
THE
FACT





Erin Goodman, a suicide survivor and certified peer recovery specialist, talks with a client.