Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System (SPARCS) Data Governance Committee Members

Phil DiMura, MS

New York State Department of Health, Office of Health Services Quality and Analytics, Research Scientist

Member Years: 2024-present

Phil joined the New York State Department of Health in 2001. He became a Research Scientist in 2009 while obtaining his master's in Epidemiology from the New York State University at Albany- School of Public Health. He joined the Office of Quality and Patient Safety in 2013 where he has overseen the Office-Based Surgery Program adverse event and practice accreditation data and has conducted various analyses using New York State Medicaid and SPARCS data to evaluate dental care utilization, Long-COVID, and breast cancer surgeries. Phil has also been a member of the Research Scientist Peer Review Committee since February 2020.

Leo Lichtig, PhD

Retired Health Economist--New Jersey Department of Health; Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield; Network Consulting; Aon Hewitt. Past faculty affiliations: SUNY-Albany; Sage Graduate School; Union Graduate College/Clarkson University

Member Years: DPRB 2003-2014; DGC 2014-present

A recognized expert in health services research and case mix systems, Dr. Lichtig has served on national and regional advisory committees, taught, served as a peer reviewer for professional journals, and served as an expert witness in legal proceedings involving inter-hospital cost comparisons. He is the author of a book on case-mix information systems and numerous articles in health services and clinical journals. Dr. Lichtig began his service to SPARCS on the Department's Data Protection Review Board (DPRB) in 2003. When DPRB was replaced by the Data Governance Committee (DGC) in 2014, he continued to serve.

Neil Muscatiello, MS

Director, Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology, Center for Environmental Health, New York State Department of Health

Member Years: 2015-present

Neil has worked at the New York State Department of Health since 2002. Neil is the Principal Investigator for the CDC-funded Environmental Public Health Tracking and Building Resilience Against Climate Effects grants. Neil has worked with SPARCS data to develop health outcome indicators at a subcounty level and to perform linkage studies to better understand associations between health outcome indicators and environmental and sociodemographic factors.

Paul Rowland, LFACHE, MSW

Retired, Chief Administrative Officer, St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center

Member Years: DPRB 1989-2014, DGC 2014-present

Paul has had a diverse career in acute care, ambulatory and human services planning, research and administration at the regional health planning, medical center, county government and state government levels. He has extensive experience in setting organizational strategic direction, improving overall efficiency and quality of operations, electronic health record (EHR) implementation and interacting with governance boards. Paul was a member of the SPARCS Data Protection Review Board (DPRB) for 25 years and was its Chairperson for 20 of those years. In 2014, Paul was appointed to the successor Data Governance Committee (DGC) as one of two community representatives. Paul presently sits on two non-profit boards involving quality health care review and a medical clinic in rural Haiti.

David Williams, MS

New York State Department of Health, Office of Health Services Quality and Analytics, Research Scientist

Member Years: 2022-present

David began working for the New York State Department of Health in 2016. He holds a master's degree in Biostatistics and a bachelor's degree in Mathematics, both obtained from the University at Albany. He routinely conducts validation of data quality within the SPARCS data set. David has directly worked with SPARCS to produce disease specific reports, public facing quality metrics, data linkages, and public facing dashboards.

Changning Xu, MPH

New York State Department of Health, Office of Public Health Practice, Research Scientist III

Member Years: 2021-present

Changning holds a Master of Public Health degree concentrated in Biostatistics and has 10+ years of experience in population health, chronic disease and perinatal health outcomes surveillance. Familiar with quality measures used in primary care, chronic disease prevention and public insurance programs. Changning specializes in data management and analysis, and works with large complex databases, such as Medicaid, SPARCS, and Vital Records.