

**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Vaccination Acceptance Research Network (VARN) Fall 2021 Updates



Dear Vaccination Acceptance Research Network (VARN) Members:

We hope this email finds you well as the global community continues to grapple with a range of pandemic-related challenges.

Earlier this year, Sabin's Vaccine Acceptance and Demand (VAD) team shared with VARN members our plans for growing the reach and impact of the VARN in the context of the global response to COVID-19 and the pandemic's implications for future work. We've outlined below important updates on the progress of these efforts alongside upcoming opportunities and activities.

Firstly, the Sabin team leading our VAD work has expanded. Kate Hopkins has joined as our Director of Research (see her [attached bio](#)) and will work across Sabin's VAD programming to identify ongoing opportunities to leverage the generation and translation of new knowledge and research findings to improve vaccination policies, programs, and practices. She is working with myself and Sabin's VARN team through activities such as the annual conference and working groups.

We are also happy to announce that Dr. Ève Dubé has been elected as the inaugural VARN chair and in this role will work alongside other VARN planning committee members to aid Sabin in shaping the agenda of the VARN's first annual conference. Thanks are extended to the planning committee members: Rubina Qasim, Dr. Freddy Kitutu, Dr. Rupali Limaye, Momin Kazi, Dr. Ève Dubé, Dr. Holly Seale, and Baldeep Dhaliwal. We are especially grateful to many of our 2020 grant partners, who came forward as active volunteers.

Sabin's 2021 Social and Behavioral Research Grants Program call for proposals (CFP) closed in July, and, after a comprehensive internal and peer review process, we are excited to move forward with grant projects stemming from multiple disciplines and geographic regions. Thank you to members who circulated the call to their networks. The CFP elicited over 500 expressions of interest this year, an approximate fourfold increase in applications from last year. An additional thanks to new VARN members who served as peer reviewers on this grant call. Your expertise brought interdisciplinary rigor to the review process and made the funding process a success.

In November, we plan to launch a quarterly VARN newsletter, which will include Sabin programming updates, forthcoming activities, and news relevant to the Network. The first iteration will include the announcement of 2021 grant partners, along with details about their research projects.

Looking ahead, we anticipate hosting the inaugural annual VARN conference in Q1 2022. A draft call for conference paper abstracts will be released this fall along with additional planning details.

Over the summer, we soft launched a [Resource Hub](#), which will serve as a platform for outputs from our grant partners and VARN members, as well as house interdisciplinary scholarship and grey literature resources relevant to vaccination. The resources will be in accessible formats tailored to decisionmaker and practitioner audiences (policy briefs, blogs, etc.) and focus on key actionable insights.

The Sabin team looks forward to working with VARN members to enhance vaccination research and outcomes in a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral manner, bringing together practitioners and researchers and social/behavioral scientists and global health experts.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out with questions or comments.

Warm regards,  
Meaghan

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