



Jennifer D. Roberts, Dr.P.H.

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Jennifer D. Roberts is a tenured associate professor in the department of kinesiology at the University of Maryland (UMD), College Park's School of Public Health. Dr. Roberts is also the founder and director of the Public Health Outcomes and Effects of the Built Environment (PHOEBE) Laboratory at UMD and the co-founder and co-director of NatureRx@UMD, an initiative that emphasizes the benefit of green spaces and acknowledges the ancestral lands of the Piscataway people and the historical slave trade legacies of UMD campus land. In recognition of her NatureRx@UMD accomplishments, Dr. Roberts was awarded an REI Cooperative Action Fund grant to create the Wekesa Earth Center. She serves as the executive founding director of the Wekesa Earth Center and oversees the four center arms: Research, Recognition, Programs, and Dissemination. Dr. Roberts has also received grants from the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and UMD. Her research focuses on the impact of built, social, and natural environments, including the institutional and structural inequities of these environments, on the public health outcomes of marginalized communities. Much of her research has explored the dynamic relationship between environmental, social, and cultural determinants of physical activity to infer complex health outcome patterns and disparities among adults and children. Dr. Roberts was awarded a JPB Environmental Health Fellowship by Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. This three-year fellowship supports a PHOEBE Laboratory research study, which will examine the risk of transit-induced gentrification and associated health outcomes and determinants related to the new Maryland Purple Line light rail opening in 2026. Dr. Roberts was also a visiting researcher at the University of Otago's School of Physical Education, Sport, and Exercise Sciences in Dunedin, New Zealand, where she spent a month collaborating with international researchers. Dr. Roberts received her bachelor's of arts degree from Brown University, her master's of public health degree from Emory University, and her doctor of public health degree from Johns Hopkins University.