

**Alexis R. Morris, M.S.**  
Health Psychology Doctoral Student  
Clinical Program Coordinator  
Virginia State University  
[amorris@vsu.edu](mailto:amorris@vsu.edu) | 804-714-5476

## **Education**

Expected Spring 2028	Virginia State University <i>Health Psychology, Ph.D, GPA: 4.00</i>
2021-2024	Virginia State University <i>Master of Science, Biology, GPA: 3.89</i>
2018-2020	Old Dominion University <i>Bachelor of Science, Biology, Science GPA: 3.20</i>

## COURSEWORK:

**Doctorate:** Health Psychology, Methods & Interventions, Diagnosis/ Treatment of Substance Use, Ethics/Professional Standards of Practice, Teaching in Psychology.

**Master's:** Advanced Biochemistry, Introduction to Neuroscience, Techniques in Molecular Biology, Statistics & Measures in Health Sciences

**Undergraduate:** Cell Biology, Microbiology, Genetics, Organic Chemistry Part I and II, Anatomy and Physiology Part I & Part II, Physiological Psychology, Physics Part I & II.

#### **Professional Honors and Awards**

- Center for Outreach & Treatment Through Education & Research (Ce. OTTER) Scholar since 2023 (**awarded \$60,000 annually**).
  - President Makola Abdullah Graduate Research Award, Virginia State University 16th Annual Scientific Conference (VGRI), March 26, 2024 (**\$500 award**).
  - President Makola Abdullah Graduate Research Award, Virginia State University 15th Annual Scientific Conference (VGRI), April 6, 2023 (**\$250 award**).
  - Member, Beta Beta Beta Biology Graduate Student Honors Society, Virginia State University | Since 2022.
  - Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certification — Biomedical Responsible Conduct of Research and Social & Behavioral Research (Basic/Refresher), 2022.
  - Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certification — Conflict of Interest, 2021

#### **Relevant Experience**

### **Relevant Experience**

#### **Graduate Clinical Research Assistant**

2021-current

Psychoneuroimmunology of Risk and Disease Laboratory (PNIRD Lab), Virginia State University Petersburg VA

- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certification.
  - Utilize Qualtrics to Create Surveys.
  - Participant Recruitment.

- Data Collection and Analysis.
- Manuscript and Grant Writing.
- Administer Computer-Based Surveys.
- Conduct cognitive and behavioral assessments using tools such as the Repeatable Battery for the Assessment of Neuropsychological Status (RBANS).
- Administer the HDI PulseWave device to measure arterial stiffness and cardiovascular health indicators as part of neuropsychological research examining the physiological impacts of substance use compared to non-use.
- Operate the Human NIBP Nano System to collect continuous, non-invasive blood pressure data during cognitive and behavioral assessments, supporting psychophysiological and substance use research.
- Assist in the collection and interpretation of oral drug screens to corroborate self-reported substance use data and monitor participant compliance.
- Collaborate with faculty and research staff to present findings at numerous academic conferences (United States, Canada, and Europe).
- Receive ongoing training in science communication, research ethics, and advanced statistical techniques for use in substance use research.
- Develop professional skills in project coordination, problem-solving, and interdisciplinary collaboration with peers and faculty mentors.
- Mentored and trained fellow laboratory members.
- Thesis Preparation and Completion (8/2024).
- Dissertation Preparation, *Expected Completion (5/2028)*.

### **Active Studies**

#### **Cannabis Nexus Initiative (CNI) Project (Cannabis Nexus Initiative II: Cannabis and Heart Rate Variability Study in HBCU Students, Grant # 2R15DA052886-02)**

- Facilitated the **CNI Project**, gaining hands-on experience with medical-grade cardiovascular and psychological equipment (e.g., blood pressure devices, heart rate variability monitors).
- Strengthened skills in **participant engagement**, addressing health concerns such as cannabis use and cardiovascular risk in the African American community.
- Collected cardiovascular data:
- Heart rate variability via wristbands and disposable electrodes.  
Blood pressure is measured using a cuff on the dominant index finger and a wrist monitor.
- Guided participants through **questionnaires and cognitive tasks**, including:  
Repeatable Battery for the Assessment of Neuropsychological Status (RBANS)  
Mini International Psychiatric Inventory (MINI)  
Alcohol, Smoking, and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST)

#### **Pregnant Women and Cannabis Use Survey**

- Gained experience in **recruitment, data quality assurance, and qualitative data analysis**.
- Recruited participants via:  
Website intercepts  
Member referrals

- Targeted email lists (Qualtrics recruitment office)
- Social media
- Ensured data quality:
  - Qualtrics removed fraudulent entries.
  - Verified participants received survey links.
- Conducted interviews using **Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)**:
  - Standardized digital script
  - Responses were recorded directly with pre-coded options for accuracy and consistency.

### **The Cannabis Experiences Project.**

- Learned to identify hyperemesis and interpret participant perceptions.
- Strengthened skills in **qualitative data analysis**.
- Participants completed: DFAQ-CU, Marijuana Craving Questionnaire, and demographic survey via Qualtrics.
- Duration: ~20 minutes; participants received **course credit**.
- Cannabis users reporting CHS symptoms or cannabis-related discomfort were invited to Phase II.
- Confirmed attendance, obtained **informed consent**, and facilitated focus groups.
- Responsibilities: reading instructions, asking six predetermined questions, and using probes as needed.
- Sessions were **audio-recorded, transcribed in NVivo, and thematically analyzed**.
- Concluded by addressing participant questions, thanking them, and distributing **\$20 Visa gift cards**.

### **Health Services Volunteer**

May 2018 – August 2018

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

- Cardiology Care Procedure Unit: stocking, nurse assistance, and discharging patients.
- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certification.
- Receive ongoing training in science communication, research ethics, and advanced statistical techniques for use in substance use research.
- Develop professional skills in project coordination, problem-solving, and interdisciplinary collaboration with peers and faculty mentors.
- Mentored and trained by hospital nursing staff.

### **Allied Health Career Exploration Intern**

June 2018

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

- A two-week program highlighting non-medical professions with hands-on practice and observation.
- Receive ongoing training in science communication, research ethics, and advanced statistical techniques for use in substance use research.
- Develop professional skills in project coordination, problem-solving, and interdisciplinary collaboration with peers and faculty mentors.

### **Undergraduate Research Assistant/ Intern**

January 2018 – May 2018

Lysosomal Rare Disease and Treatment Center, Fairfax, VA

- Non-profit research observing and participating in Western blotting, PCR, Protein Assay, and BCA Assay.
  - Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certification.
  - Utilize Qualtrics to Create Surveys.
  - Data Collection and Analysis.
  - Administer Computer-Based Surveys.
  - Receive ongoing training in science communication, research ethics, and advanced statistical techniques for use in substance use research.
  - Develop professional skills in project coordination, problem-solving, and interdisciplinary collaboration with peers and a faculty mentor.
  - Mentored and trained by post-doctoral fellows who were laboratory members.
- 

## Publications

Keen, L., Kuno, C., & **Morris, A.** (2025). Parasympathetic decreases immediately following self-reported cannabis smoking among adults living with cannabis use disorder. International Journal of Psychophysiology, 113211.

Keen, L., Wallace, C., Kuno, C. B., Reid, A., Quarles, E., **Morris, A.**, & Lawrence, K. (2025). Perceived protective factors associated with cannabis use among HBCU undergraduates. Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse, 1-19.

**Morris, A. R.** (2024). Associations Between Cannabis Use and Cardiovascular Activity Among African American Young Adults (Master's thesis, Virginia State University).

## Published Abstracts

**Morris, A.**, & Keen, L. (2025). The Positive Association Between Cannabis Use Disorder Status and Basal Metabolic Rate Among Young Adult African Americans. Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 267, 111467.

**Morris, A.**, & Keen, L. (2024). The Differences in Small Artery Elasticity from Alcohol Use Disorder Status Among Young African American Adults. In PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY (Vol. 61, pp. S292-S292). 111 RIVER ST, HOBOKEN 07030-5774, NJ USA: WILEY.

Keen, L., & **Morris, A.** (2024). Before and After Cannabis Use in Black Young Adults Living with Cannabis Use Disorder: An EMA Pilot Study. In PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY (Vol. 61, pp. S292-S292). 111 RIVER ST, HOBOKEN 07030-5774, NJ USA: WILEY.

**Morris, A., & Keen, L. (2024). Cannabis Use Frequency's Positive Associations With Blood Pressure Among Young Adult African American Students Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 260, 110350.**

---

### **Presentations & Posters**

*The Association Between Depressive Symptoms, Anxiety Symptoms, and Alcohol Use Disorder Severity in African American Young Adult Women-* CPDD Summer 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana (June 15, 2025).

*The Differences in Small Artery Elasticity from Alcohol Use Disorder Status Among Young Adult African-Americans-* Society of Psychophysiological Research Annual Conference, Prague, Czech Republic (October 25, 2024).

*The Positive Association Between Snack Consumption and HRV Among Young Adult African-Americans-* APA Annual Convention, Seattle, Washington (August 9, 2024).

*The Positive Association Between Cannabis Use Disorder Status and Basal Metabolic Rate Among Young Adult African Americans-* CPDD Summer 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting, Montreal, Quebec, Canada (June 16, 2024).

*Associations Between Cannabis Use Disorder Severity and Cardiovascular Activity Among African American Young Adults-* VGRI, Virginia State University 15th Annual Scientific Conference (April 6, 2023).

*Cannabis Use Frequency's Positive Associations with Blood Pressure Among Young Adult African American Students-* CPDD Summer 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting, Denver, Colorado (June 19, 2023).

*The Differences of BSI Subscales within Cannabis Use Disorder Status Among African American Young Adults-* VGRI, Virginia State University 16th Annual Scientific Conference (March 26, 2024).

---

### **Grants**

- **Garmin Health Women's Health Research Grant- Under Review, September 20, 2025**
- 

### **Professional Associations**

**July 2024-December 2025: Society for Psychophysiological Research Graduate Student Member**

**March 28, 2024: Community-Based Participatory Research (University of Michigan) Certification**

- No CE or certificate available. Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is a partnership approach to research that equitably involves community members, organization representatives, and academic researchers in all aspects of the research process.

**January 2024-January 2025: American Psychological Association Graduate Student Member**

- I had access to career development resources, webinars, networking opportunities, and publications such as *American Psychologist* and the *APA Monitor*. I was also eligible to apply for scholarships and awards.
- Division 35- Society for the Psychology of Women.
- Division 38- Society for Health Psychology.

**January 9, 2022: Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certification**

- Biomedical Responsible Conduct of Research.
- Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher.

**December 2021-current: College on Problems of Drug Dependence Student- Member in Training**

- According to CPDD, this designation is for master's, doctoral, and postdoctoral students researching drug dependence. Student members receive professional development benefits such as mentorship, networking opportunities, discounted conference fees, access to the CPDD listserv, and the journal Drug and Alcohol Dependence. While they do not hold voting rights on the Board of Directors, they may participate in committees to build experience and connections within the interdisciplinary field of addiction research.

**December 29, 2021: Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certification**

- Conflict of Interest
- 

**Employment**

Virginia State University/ Virginia Commonwealth University, Petersburg, VA/ Richmond, VA  
Wright Regional Center for Clinical and Translational Science PTE Federal Award  
#1UM1TR004360-01 | Subaward #FP00016094\_SA003.

**Clinical Research Coordinator, Psychology** November 2023-present

- The staff member will assist the VSU site team with document management for student and faculty participation in training programs. They will provide information about training programs to VSU undergraduate students and coordinate the participation of those students in the training programs. The staff member will also assist faculty in connecting to Wright Center resources, including the different cores and research staff. The staff member will attend weekly PNIRD Lab meetings held by Dr. Keen and the bi-weekly VSU site meetings conducted by Drs. Keen and Roberts.

Virginia State University/ Virginia Commonwealth University, Petersburg, VA/ Richmond, VA  
**Graduate Clinical Research Assistant/ Trainer** August 2021-present

- A graduate student who mentors undergraduate students in the Biology and Psychology department on professional development, networking, and career engagement.
- A trainer who teaches research practices for non-clinical psychological research students.

CVS Pharmacy, Richmond, VA

**Pharmacy Technician**

June 2021- present

- CVS pharmacy technicians collaborate with pharmacists to ensure customers receive quality care and meet all health and safety standards and protocols.
- Specific job duties include sorting pills, creating labels, reviewing medication side effects, greeting customers, and ringing up purchases. CVS also contains drive-thru windows, which pharmacy technicians operate.
- Board-Recognized, Nationally Licensed Pharmacy Technician.

ScribeAmerica: VCU/MCV Bone Marrow Transplant Clinic, Richmond, VA

**Medical Scribe**

August 2020 – July 2021

- A personal assistant to the physician.
- Performing documentation in the EHR, gathering information for the patient's visit, and partnering with the physician to deliver the pinnacle of efficient patient care.

---

### **Professional References**

#### **Dr. Larry Keen II, PhD**

VSU Tenured Psychology Professor, Advisor, PNIRD Lab Director/ Mentor, Director for the Ce. OTTER

College of Health Sciences, Virginia State University  
Petersburg, Virginia, lkeen@vsu.edu

#### **Dr. M. Omar Faison, PhD**

Associate Vice Provost for Research & Economic Development at Virginia State University  
College of Health Sciences, Virginia State University  
Petersburg, Virginia, mfaison@vsu.edu

#### **Dr. Kimberly Lawrence, PhD**

VSU Tenured Psychology Professor, Health Psychology Doctoral Advisor  
College of Health Sciences, Virginia State University  
Petersburg, Virginia, klawrence@vsu.edu