

MATTHEW B.H. ONG

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Public health professional trained in epidemiology, health policy, and investigative journalism/strategic communications. Award-winning investigations have shaped cancer policy, triggered Congressional inquiries, and saved lives. Committed to data-driven policymaking, evidence-based medicine, and equitable access to health services.

EDUCATION

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Boston, MA, USA **06/2022 – 05/2024**

Master of Public Health, Epidemiology GPA 3.97

- Advanced quantitative methods degree for clinicians and established health professionals focused on clinical and population health research, policy, and programs. Analytic methods electives completed include machine learning, predictive modeling, decision science, propensity scoring, and systematic review and meta-analysis.

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, Washington, D.C., USA **01/2015 – 04/2015**

Certificate in Business Administration

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY, Milwaukee, WI, USA **01/2010 – 12/2012**

Bachelor of Arts, Triple Majors in Journalism, Psychology, Women's & Gender Studies

WORK EXPERIENCE

THE CANCER LETTER

Senior Editor & Senior Writer **01/2019 – present**

- Spearheaded investigations in collaboration with >250 leading academic institutions, government agencies, and industry partners, driving lifesaving changes in public policy and standards of care, and contributing to federal action by FDA, CDC, NIH, NCI, FBI, GAO, and Congressional committees
- Acknowledged as a thought leader by >25 journalism awards, 6 fellowships, and >15 organizations
- Recognized as a subject-matter expert in healthcare communications and cancer journalism, with teaching engagements/instructorships at D.C.-area universities, research institutions, and policy and advocacy organizations
- Mobilized strategic partnerships in catalyzing systems-level change in public health, clinical practice, biomedical research, and regulatory policy; interdisciplinary focus on patient outcomes and fit-for-purpose clinical endpoints
- Publications cited by the White House President's Cancer Panel; in *Science*, *Nature*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, *The British Medical Journal*, *The American Journal of Managed Care*; by mainstream legacy news publications including *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*, as well as featured in books, documentaries, on podcasts and public radio programs, including NPR

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION & HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Program Evaluation Consultant **01/2024 – present**

- Selected and trained by CDC and HSPH in a competitive Program Evaluation Practicum designed to produce real-world evaluations that are implemented by 11 government agencies and public health organizations
- Matched with the Help Me Grow LA program serving 360,000 children/youth with special health care needs, administered by the LA County Department of Public Health's Division of Maternal, Child, & Adolescent Health
- Designed an evaluation plan on-site in Atlanta, GA as well as Los Angeles, CA that relies on quantitative data and qualitative interviews to inform creation of a logic model, measurable endpoints, and a statistical analysis plan
- Optimized evaluation plan with iterative feedback from HMG LA staff, CDC, and Harvard faculty to assess the significance and effectiveness of HMG LA's novel, community-based intervention model in providing culturally competent and responsive services to the nation's most populous county

THE CANCER LETTER

Assistant Managing Editor & Reporter **03/2013 – 12/2018**

- Quadrupled revenue and tripled readership in 10 years with team implementation of business and editorial vision
- First-year impact: Increased usage statistics by 50-75%, developed strategic audience engagement plan utilizing web analytics and Google News, and doubled publication's Twitter followers

- Designed inaugural web advertising program based on market research, raising over \$20,000 in new revenue within six months in 2013; and created the first-ever searchable 40-year archive of all TCL past issues
- Led overhaul of publication's branding, advertising, GUI optimization, and social media engagement
- Redesigned publication's branding and website within the first year, and launched a responsive user interface optimized for tablets and mobile devices; provided oversight for two subsequent phases 2017-2020
- Investigative journalist focusing on medical oncology, cancer research, informatics, drug/device development and regulation, health policy, health disparities, government funding, and the politics of cancer

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS (full annotation available on LinkedIn)

Selected awards:

- 2022 3X First Place:** Dateline Awards, Society of Professional Journalists, Washington, D.C. Chapter Series, Investigative Journalism, and Commentary & Criticism
- **“Reducing Systemic Disparities & Inequities in the U.S. Cancer Workforce”**, an in-depth examination of the underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic physicians and scientists in oncology, including a partnership with the Association of American Cancer Institutes to conduct a first-ever study of the leadership pipeline at cancer centers in North America. In December 2021, NCI issued inaugural mandates aimed at ameliorating stark inequities in the diversity of the U.S. cancer workforce, particularly at academic cancer centers.
 - **“Ending Sexual Misconduct in Academic Medicine”**, an investigative series that led to a reconfiguration of policies on harassment, misconduct, and bias across biomedical research and academic medicine—and directly resulted in a congressional investigation that demands answers from NIH on policies to address misconduct. Starting July 2022, NIH-funded institutions are required to report personnel who are disciplined for misconduct.
 - **“Joe Biden: A Presidential Agenda for Cancer”**, a news analysis series on President Biden's agenda to transform federal investment in cancer research, including the creation of the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health—modeled on DARPA—that is anticipated to accelerate translational science and change the way research is funded.
- 2019 Finalist:** Health Care Journalism Award, Print Journalism
National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation
First Place: Dateline Awards, Investigative Journalism
Society of Professional Journalists, Washington, D.C. Chapter
- **“When Surgical Innovation Kills”**, a multi-year series that examines new surgical techniques, contributing to the evolution of an entire medical field's approach to minimally invasive surgery and surgical innovation. In-depth reports describe blind spots in the scientific process—a dearth of epidemiological studies to assess risk and prevalence, a drive to innovate and adopt cutting-edge technologies without prospective trials that account for cancer-related surgical outcomes, and insufficient regulation of devices at FDA based on those outcomes.
- 2016 Second Place:** Best in Business Award, Investigative Journalism
Society of American Business Editors and Writers
Finalist: Health Care Journalism Award, Print Journalism
National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation
First Place: Dateline Award, Series
Society of Professional Journalists, Washington, D.C. Chapter
- **“How Medical Devices Do Harm”**, a multi-year series on FDA regulation of medical devices that demonstrates why cancer-related outcomes should not be treated as an afterthought—and changed how gynecologists, oncologists, and surgeons think about the role of cancer in minimally invasive surgery. Reports also examine failures in reporting of adverse events and gaps in patient safety laws and regulatory science.
- 2015 First Place:** National Press Club Award, Best Analytical/Interpretive Reporting
National Press Club
Winner: Sigma Delta Chi Award, Public Service

Society of Professional Journalists
First Place: Dateline Award, Washington Reporting
Society of Professional Journalists, Washington, D.C. Chapter

- **“Power Morcellation: A Hazardous Practice”**, an investigative series on a gynecological procedure performed on an estimated 100,000 women a year in the U.S., causing deadly harm to a subset of women with undetected uterine cancers—a hazard known to and ignored by device manufacturers and some minimally invasive surgeons.

Other awards:

- 2023 2X Finalist:** Dateline Awards, Society of Professional Journalists, Washington, D.C. Chapter
- 2021 First Place & 2X Finalist:** Dateline Awards, Society of Professional Journalists, Washington, D.C. Chapter
- 2020 Winner:** American Society of Journalists and Authors Annual Writing Awards (editor)
- 2020 Finalist:** Dateline Award, Society of Professional Journalists, D.C. Professional Chapter
- 2019 Finalist:** Dateline Award, Society of Professional Journalists, D.C. Professional Chapter
- 2018 First Place & Finalist:** Dateline Awards, Society of Professional Journalists, Washington, D.C. Chapter
- 2016 Second Place:** Azbee Award of Excellence, American Society of Business Publication Editors
- 2016 Distinguished Alumni Award:** Washington Media Institute
- 2015 Finalist:** Iris Molotsky Award, Higher Education, American Association of University Professors
- 2014 First Place:** Dateline Award, Society of Professional Journalists, Washington, D.C. Chapter (contributing author)
- 2013 Winner:** George Polk Award, Medical Reporting for “Chronic Crisis” (research assistant)

FELLOWSHIPS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NIH Research Scholar, **NIH All of Us Research Program** 2022 – 2023
U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- Researcher selected for training and to study health data from diverse populations to improve understanding of health and disease, identify opportunities to reduce disparities, and enable more precise approaches to care

Fellow, **Reporting Fellowship on Health Care Performance** 2021 – 2022

The Commonwealth Fund & Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ)

- One of five U.S. journalists selected for AHCJ’s most prestigious fellowship for intensive mentoring to develop solutions-based coverage on health inequities and cancer disparities in the pandemic era ([profile feature](#))
- Impact: See 2022 awards section for “Reducing Systemic Disparities & Inequities in the U.S. Cancer Workforce”

Member, **Leadership Academy for Diversity in Digital Media** 2020 – 2021

The Poynter Institute & The Washington Post

- Selected from over 130 journalists by the Poynter Institute and The Washington Post to join the 2020-21 class
- Trained and mentored by industry leaders in emerging technologies, effective management, and digital culture

Fellow, **Comparative Effectiveness Research Fellowship** 10/2017

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) & Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ)

- Selected and trained to evaluate healthcare interventions, from clinical evidence generation to the market—including patient data, research methodology, treatments, medical decisions, and clinical trial design

Fellow, **National Cancer Reporting Fellowship** 10/2016

U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI) & Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ)

- Selected for the inaugural 2016 class of the fellowship for training on interpreting cancer epidemiology, statistics, and guidelines, and the applications of cancer clinical trials, immunotherapy, and publicly available databases

McBeath Fellow, **Education Reporting Fellowship**, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 09/2011 – 12/2011

Faye McBeath Foundation

- Selected for one-on-one mentoring at the Pulitzer Prize-winning Journal Sentinel, the largest newspaper in WI

TEACHING & SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Speaker, **“Braidwood v. Becerra: The Impact of Losing Zero Cost-Sharing Coverage for Cancer Screening”** 05/2023
AACI Government Relations Forum, Association of American Cancer Institutes

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| Speaker/Instructor, “ Changing the Culture of Academic Oncology with Data ” National Cancer Reporting Fellowship National Cancer Institute (NCI) & Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) | 11/2022 |
| Speaker, “ Using Data Journalism to Identify Inequities and Change Policy ” Covering Cancer Policy, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) | 05/2022 |
| Moderator/Coordinator, “ COVID & Cancer: How Data Frameworks and Innovative Studies Sped Up the Global Pandemic Response ” Health Journalism 2022 Annual Conference, Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) | 04/2022 |
| Speaker/Instructor, “ Deep Dive: Immunotherapy ”, National Cancer Reporting Fellowship National Cancer Institute (NCI) & Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) | 2017 - 2021 |
| Speaker/Instructor, “ The Future of Clinical Trials ”, Comparative Effectiveness Research Fellowship Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) & Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) | 2019 - 2021 |
| Speaker/Instructor, “ Health Reporting: Unpacking Research Findings ” Health and Science Writing undergraduate course, Cathy Hughes School of Communications, Howard University | 2021 - current |
| Speaker/Instructor, “ Deciphering Medical Journals ” Howard University Multicultural Media Academy Dow Jones News Fund, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & Cathy Hughes School of Communications | 2021 - current |
| Speaker, “ Investigative Medical Journalism for Trade Publications and Newsletters ” Health and Medical Reporting undergraduate course, University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism | 11/2021 |
| Speaker, “ Outside the Clinic: Responding to Systemic Racism and Health Disparities as a Physician of Color ” APAMSA Eastern Regional Conference, Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association | 10/2021 |
| Moderator/Coordinator, “ How Immunotherapy is Redefining the Approach to Cancer Treatment ” Health Journalism 2019 Annual Conference, Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) | 05/2019 |
| Moderator/Coordinator, “ Cancer Basics: The Latest in Care, Research, and Policy ” Health Journalism 2018 Annual Conference, Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) | 04/2018 |
| Speaker/Instructor, “ The Business of Trade Publications ”, “ News Gathering 101 ”, “ Media Shark Tank ” Washington Media Institute (WMI) | 2017 - 2023 |

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Gill, A., Aldosoky, W., Ong, M.B.H., Mir, T., Dar, T., & Abohashem, S. (2023). **A narrative review on mental stress and cardiovascular disease: Evidence, mechanisms, and potential interventions.** *Heart and Mind*.
<https://doi.org/10.4103/2468-6476.374491>

Underway:

- Systematic review & meta-analysis: Impact of insurance status on overall survival in U.S. lung cancer patients
- Lower levels of public trust in cancer information among racial minorities after the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. and impact on cancer screening and perceptions of discrimination in medical care

UNDERGRADUATE WORK EXPERIENCE, SERVICE LEARNING, & AWARDS

- Investigative Reporter, MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL** **09/2012 – 12/2012**
- Mental health investigative reporter and research assistant covering Milwaukee County’s Behavioral Health Division under the mentorship of award-winning journalist Meg Kissinger
 - Key team member in charge of identifying concepts and strategies crucial to the development of a year-long watchdog series, based on county budgets and policy reports
 - Creative concept strategist developing infographic models and other multimedia in consultation with student colleagues and Journal Sentinel staff

- The series won a George Polk Award in 2013 and inspired a \$8.3 million donation to the Diederich College of Communication at Marquette University for the creation of a public service journalism fellowship program

Science Reporter, THE CANCER LETTER **05/2012 – 12/2012**

- Selected and fully sponsored by the Washington Media Institute and the Marquette University Diederich College of Communication to receive internship opportunity

Multimedia Journalist, MILWAUKEE NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS SERVICE **01/2011 – 12/2012**

- Writer, photographer and videographer providing objective, professional reporting on local issues in 10 Milwaukee central city communities
- Covered topics such as education, public safety, economic development, health and wellness, recreation, employment, youth development and housing
- Exclusively featured on WUWM 89.7FM's Lake Effect in first-ever collaboration with Milwaukee NNS
- Key team member in creating interactive multimedia news packages and high-profile articles contributing to increased readership

Researcher, PATHFINDERS MILWAUKEE **01/2012 – 05/2012**

- Student researcher at a non-profit serving unhoused and shelter-unstable youth, focusing on LGBTQ+ 18-24 youth
- Capstone project relies on interactions and on-site qualitative interviews with staff and stakeholders
- Final report identifies community-based research directions and research best practices for unhoused LGBTQ+ youth: person-centered care, health and wellness, discrimination/harassment, and validation of lived experiences

Reporter, MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL **11/2011 – 12/2011**

- Education and general assignment reporter, covering education policy and politics at the city and state level
- Selected by the Diederich College of Communication to receive internship opportunity funded by a grant from the Faye McBeath Foundation, a private, independent foundation invested in civic empowerment
- Published a variety of news, feature, enterprise and investigative articles, as well as self-generated photographs and videos; byline appeared regularly on the front page and on the Local Section cover

Tutor, MILWAUKEE CHRISTIAN CENTER **09/2010 – 12/2010**

- After-school tutor and volunteer at a social empowerment center that provides services for underserved communities: housing, youth development, food security, and support for seniors
- Service learning focuses on interacting and teaching African American and Hispanic children ages 7-12

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| 2011-2012 | Excellence in News/Editorial Journalism: Edward F. Papan Scholarship Award, Marquette University |
| 2010-2011 | Dean's Scholar's List: J. William and Mary Diederich College of Communication, Marquette University |
| 2010 | Academic Distinction: Marquette University Transfer & Ignatius Scholarship Awards |
| 2009 | Most Outstanding Student: Nilai University American Degree Transfer Program |
| 2007-2009 | Academic Honors: Nilai University High Achievers Scholarship Award |
| 2006 | Most Outstanding Student: P.G.M.G. PAMADASA Scholarship Award (English) |

LANGUAGE, TECHNICAL AND CREATIVE SKILLS

- Data analytics: Stata, R, SPSS
- Languages: English (native proficiency), Bahasa Malaysia (fluent), Mandarin & Hokkien (conversant)
- Digital: Mac, Windows OS, Office suite, content management systems, web tools, basic HTML coding
- Design: Adobe Creative Suite programs, Final Cut Pro etc.
- Camerawork: Still and video, lighting and sound equipment