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Katherine Y. Tossas, Ph.D., M.S, is a cancer epidemiologist and assistant professor in the Department of Health Behavior and Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Population Health. She is also a member of the VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center (Cancer Prevention and Control research program)

where she is the founding director for the Office of Catchment Area Data Access Analytics, and interim co-assistant director for Community Outreach and Engagement. With over 25 publications, Dr. Tossas' research is grounded in health equity, and centers on elucidating the role of the microbiome on disparate progression of precancerous lesions, specifically in the cervix and lung. This work was recently funded through an NCI K01 and a V Scholar Award, and has earned her both a Minority Faculty Scholar Award (2021) and a NextGen Star award from the American Association of Cancer Research (2022). She is also a Principal Investigator for multiple foundation-funded, community-engaged research projects: Project COALESCE (Pfizer Foundation), the Chickahominy TRUTH project (Jeffress Trust) and Project H2O (RWJF), each addressing systemic or structural inequities in cancer outcomes across Virginia. Dr. Tossas also provides mentorship opportunities to several students through her COQUI Lab (Cancer Outcomes Queries to Understand Inequities).

Prior to joining VCU, Dr. Tossas was a research assistant professor in the division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and founding director for the Offices of Global Assets and Innovative Approaches (GAIA), and Catchment Area Research and Data Sciences (CARDS), at the UIC Cancer Center. She also served as co-director for the Office of Community Engaged Research and Implementation Science (OCERIS), within the Community Outreach and Engagement program at the cancer center.

Before re-entering academia, Dr. Tossas held leadership positions at various local, state, and national non-profits including the American Cancer Society, and the American Hospital Association. She also worked nearly 10 years in the Molecular Diagnostics Division of Abbott Laboratories. Dr. Tossas earned a B.S. in Biology from the University of Puerto Rico (MARC and Howard Hughes scholar), an M.S. in Microbiology and Immunology from the University of Michigan (Rackham Merit fellow) and a Ph.D. in Cancer Epidemiology from the University of Illinois at Chicago (Susan G. Komen scholar).