

**I. Media Advocacy and the Health Belief Model in the Context of COVID-19:
A Mixed Methods Study
(Cover Sheet)**

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Student Bio (177 words): Carl Arland Ciccarelli is a lecturer and scholar in the following subject areas: public relations, brand strategy, advertising psychology, crisis management/response theory, and health communication. Many of his interests are related to the impact of mediated content on the formulation of consumer actions, specifically maladaptive behaviors. Ciccarelli most recently published a textbook titled: *Branding: Generating Value That Resonates and Tracking R.O.I.* (2021). He first earned a BS in Communication Studies from The College at Brockport (SUNY). Ciccarelli went on to earn his MA in Public Relations from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. Ciccarelli then served as a full-time Lecturer in the Department of Journalism at Ball State University for the 2019–2020 academic year. Ciccarelli is now pursuing a Ph. D. in Mass Communication from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, at the University of South Carolina. Ciccarelli presently works as a graduate research assistant at the University of School Carolina in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Carl holds professional memberships to PRSA and AEJMC, and also belongs to various collaborative research groups.

Faculty Bio (196 words): Brooke W. McKeever is an Associate Professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and Associate Dean of Research in the College of Information and Communications at the University of South Carolina. She teaches and researches strategic and mass communication with a focus on public relations and health communication. She has published in academic journals such as *Health Communication*, *Journal of Communication*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Mass Communication & Society*, *Public Relations Review*, and *Science Communication*. She has received awards for her research from AEJMC and won the first-place Promising Professor award in 2015. Before earning her Ph.D. and a Certificate in Interdisciplinary Health Communication from UNC-Chapel Hill, Brooke worked for a public relations agency in Chicago and for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, among other organizations. Brooke currently serves on the Standing Committee of Research for AEJMC and served as Chair of the Association/Nonprofit Section for PRSA. She has received Page/Johnson Legacy Scholar grants from The Arthur W. Page Center for Integrity in Public Communication

and is a faculty investigator with the UofSC Prevention Research Center, which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Abstract (260 words): The COVID-19 pandemic has had tragic and disproportionate effects on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities across the United States. This study aims to apply a mixed method approach to investigate health beliefs related to COVID-19 as well as media framing and agenda-setting or agenda-building techniques used in communication about COVID-19 and related topics. The proposed study will include a survey and content analysis. The survey will gather data from a representative sample of adults within the U.S. to gather information on variables informed by the Health Belief Model (HBM) such as perceived health risk, perceived benefits and barriers to vaccines, self-efficacy, cues to action, and intention to act (or past behavior/action taken). Participants will also be asked about their media consumption and trust related to various sources of COVID-19 information. A subsequent content analysis will be based on the concept of media advocacy, which consists of three steps: 1) setting the agenda; 2) framing the issue; 3) suggesting solutions. Using mixed methods will reveal important information about health attitudes, intentions, the media advocacy process related to health information in the current media environment, and how factors like race, ethnicity, and trust intersect with these issues. The anticipated results of this research will help inform journalism and mass communication research about the role race and ethnicity play in information behaviors during a health crisis. It will also inform media, health communicators and health advocates about how to better inform and communicate with BIPOC communities related to important health issues. Theoretical as well as practical implications will be discussed.