Baystate Health | ADVANCING CARE. ENHANCING LIVES.

AnneMarie Mal



What do you do at Baystate?

As an IRB Analyst, I review research projects at Baystate to ensure they follow federal regulations that protect human subjects. When researchers submit an application to the Institutional Review Board, I review it for completeness before it goes to expert reviewers. I've been in this role for three years and love helping ensure that research is both ethical and high quality.

What led you to this career path?

I began my career at the first Native American Institutional Review Board in New Mexico, where I was passionate about protecting Native peoples from misrepresentation in research. That experience led me to the University of New Mexico as an IRB Analyst.

Later, I shifted paths to earn a Master of Divinity in Buddhist Studies at Harvard, focusing on Mindful Leadership and Chaplaincy. During that time, I co-launched an Emotional Intelligence peer-support program at MIT to address student wellbeing. For seven years, I worked as a Mindful Leadership Consultant for women entrepreneurs before returning to IRB work during the pandemic for stability—and that's how I found my way to Baystate.

What accomplishment at Baystate are you most proud of?

Many researchers view the IRB as a hurdle, so in 2023–24 our team began using emotional intelligence techniques to transform how we interact with researchers in order to create positive outcomes. A 2024 research community survey showed strong positive feedback for our initiatives. I presented these results at the PRIM&R conference in Seattle, sharing strategies IRB offices can use to strengthen teamwork and better serve researchers. It was exciting to see key leaders in the field reference my poster in their own talks.

What's the most important lesson you've learned in life?

Go with the flow. Bruce Lee's advice to "be water" inspires me daily—adaptable, persistent, and quietly powerful. Water can wear away stone not by force, but by patience. I've learned that true strength comes from resilience and flexibility, not resistance.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

The people. Our IRB team is exceptional—supportive, collaborative, and inspiring. I'm also grateful for Baystate's research community—the coordinators, PIs, EQA team, and IRB members—who are smart, resourceful, and kind. It's a joy to work alongside them.

What do you enjoy outside of work?

I love yoga, tai chi, walking in the city or in nature, visiting art galleries, and attending live music. I value quiet, reflective spaces, but also enjoy spending time with friends who recharge my energy.

What's something we may not know about you?

In 2025, I began a PhD program in Bioethics. Although I decided to step away because it wasn't the right fit, I'm excited to find the next step that will align with my background in chaplaincy, anthropology, and clinical research.