



# Advancing Health Equity Amid Uncertainty: Challenges, Progress, and the Path Forward

## PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

### Welcome Remarks



**Moro O. Salifu, M.D., MPH, MBA, MACP**, is a Professor of Medicine and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, where he also holds the Edwin C.

and Anne K. Weiskopf Endowed Chair in Nephrology and Transplantation. Dr. Salifu is a distinguished clinician, researcher, and leader board-certified in Internal Medicine and Nephrology. His work focuses on vascular biology, chronic disease progression, and kidney transplant outcomes.

Dr. Salifu was elected Governor-elect Designee for the Brooklyn/Queens/Staten Island Region of the American College of Physicians in January 2025. He will begin his term on April 5, 2025, and assume the four-year Governorship on April 18, 2026.

Dr. Salifu earned his M.D. from Dokuz Eylul University Medical School (Turkey), completed his residency and nephrology fellowship at SUNY Downstate, an interventional nephrology fellowship at Emory University, and holds an MPH from SUNY Downstate and an MBA from George Washington University.

### Moderators

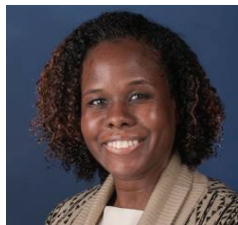


**W. Marcus Lambert, Ph.D.**, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and Associate Vice President for Research Strategy & Operations at Downstate.

In this role, Dr. Lambert spearheads initiatives to expand Downstate's extramurally funded research portfolio, mainly focusing on health disparities and public health research and training. Dr. Lambert co-leads multiple research training programs at Downstate, including TRANSPORT, a \$20M endowment grant to recruit and train underrepresented scientists in health disparities research.

Dr. Lambert received his Ph.D. in biomedical science from NYU Grossman School of Medicine and his bachelor's degree from Howard University. He also holds a Master's in Clinical Epidemiology and Health Services Research from Weill Cornell Graduate School.

## Moderators Contd.



**Teresa Y. Smith, M.D., MEd, FACEP**, Teresa Y. Smith, M.D., MEd, FACEP is the Interim Chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at SUNY Downstate and a Professor of Clinical Emergency Medicine,

who works clinically at the University Hospital of Downstate and Kings County Hospital. Previously, she was the Designated Institutional Official (DIO), overseeing approximately 1,000 house staff physicians across the campus for four years.

Dr. Smith has dedicated her career to championing diversity, equity, and inclusion in medicine. She has authored numerous articles addressing DEI and the diversification of the physician workforce and has been consulted by accreditation agencies, as well as state and national governmental bodies for her expertise.

Dr. Smith was honored as one of the National Minority Quality Forum's 40 Under 40 Minority Leaders in 2019. In 2022, she led the institution in receiving the ACGME's Barbara Ross-Lee, DO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award. In 2023, she was awarded a Josiah Macy Foundation President Grant for her efforts to create inclusive clinical learning environments. She also received the Dr. Dale Blackstock Award in Teaching and Excellence for her dedication to mentoring medical students and trainees.

Dr. Smith earned her undergraduate degree from Spelman College before pursuing her M.D. at NYU School of Medicine. She completed her residency in emergency medicine at NYU/Bellevue Hospital, where she gained extensive clinical training. To further specialize, she completed a fellowship in Emergency Ultrasound at SUNY Downstate. Later, she earned a Master in Medical Education from the University of Pennsylvania and is currently pursuing a Master in Business and Health Service Administration from SUNY Oswego.

## Panelists



**Daniel Ehlke, Ph.D., MA.**, Daniel Ehlke, Ph.D., MA, is an Associate Professor of Health Policy and Management at the SUNY Downstate School of Public Health, where he examines health system

design and the political forces driving reform. His research spans the U.S. healthcare landscape—including the impact of the Affordable Care Act—and global systems, with a particular focus on the British National Health Service. A central theme of his work is the tension between healthcare as a fundamental right and the increasing role of medical consumerism.

Since joining Downstate in 2010, Dr. Ehlke has taught health policy, health advocacy, and comparative health courses, earning the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. His research interests include significant health reform efforts and the role of market mechanisms in government-run programs like Medicare. Dr. Ehlke holds a Ph.D. and MA in Political Science from Brown University and a BA in Government and History from the College of William & Mary.



**Marilyn A. Fraser, M.D.**, is the Chief Executive Officer at the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health, a Research Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine and the School of Public Health at

Downstate, and the Brooklyn Health Disparities Center co-director. Previously, as Deputy Director and Associate Director for Research & Training, she managed the Institute's community outreach and research programs.

As co-leader of an investigative research team supported by several NIH and CDC grants, Dr. Fraser helped develop behavioral health intervention models and training curricula for

AAIUH's award-winning Black Pearls and Different Fades of Health programs.

Dr. Fraser earned her medical degree from Spartan Health Sciences University School of Medicine in St. Lucia.



**Brian McNeil, M.D., MBA, FACS**, is Vice Chair of the Department of Urology and Associate Professor of Urology at SUNY Downstate, where he works to improve patient outcomes and mentor the

next generation of medical professionals.

As a Presidential Leadership Scholar and advocate for healthcare equity, Dr. McNeil is developing Urology 205, a comprehensive initiative to address urological disparities. This effort focuses on raising awareness in underserved communities, establishing national guidelines for improved care, and expanding pipeline programs to attract underrepresented students to urology and surgical subspecialties.

Dr. McNeil obtained his Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and an MBA from NYU Stern School of Business.



**Azure Thompson, DrPH, MPH**, is an Assistant Professor of Community Health Sciences in the School of Public Health. Her areas of expertise are urban health, women's health, substance

use, and mental health. Her research centers on the social determinants of substance use and mental health, particularly among black women in urban settings.

Through this research, Dr. Thompson seeks to inform the development of programs and policies that contribute to eliminating addiction-related health disparities.

Dr. Thompson received her DrPH and MPH in sociomedical sciences from Columbia University and a B.A. in journalism from Howard University.