

9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL TRANSPORT SYMPOSIUM

# From Dialogue to Action: Brooklyn Organization- Led Solutions

Sponsored by:



# Welcome to the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual TRANSPORT Symposium

Good morning,

On behalf of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University and our esteemed community partners, it is our pleasure to welcome each of you to the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual TRANSPORT Symposium. Today, we gather under the theme “Addressing Social Determinants of Health: Building Healthier Communities Together,” a call to action that resonates deeply within our communities.

As we open this symposium, we are driven by a shared commitment to tackle three of the most pressing challenges faced by our community—mental health, housing, and food insecurity. These areas stand out as critical barriers to health equity and well-being in our neighborhoods.

Our agenda today is structured to not only discuss these critical issues but to foster a dynamic exchange of ideas and cultivate actionable strategies that will lead to tangible improvements in the lives of our community members. We are here to bridge gaps, to learn from each other, and to ignite a collaborative effort that spans disciplines, sectors, and perspectives.

The work we embark on today is vital. It demands our best thinking, our most innovative approaches, and our sincerest cooperation. By focusing our efforts on mental health, ensuring stable and affordable housing, and addressing the scourge of food insecurity, we are taking essential steps toward nurturing a healthier, more resilient Brooklyn.

Let us use today not just as a forum for discussion, but as a platform for action. Together, let's explore the challenges, highlight effective strategies, uncover gaps, and most importantly, forge actionable solutions through collaboration. Thank you for your commitment to building healthier communities. Your participation today is not just appreciated; it is foundational to the success of our collective endeavors.

Let's make this a productive and transformative day.

**Best,  
The TRANSPORT PI's**

# TRANSPORT Symposium Planning Committee

## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

### **Wayne J. Riley, M.D., MPH, MBA, MACP**

*President, SUNY Downstate Health  
Sciences University*

### **Moro Salifu, M.D., MPH, MBA, MACP**

*Professor & Chair, Department of Medicine  
Director, Brooklyn Health Disparities Center  
Downstate Health Sciences University*

### **Carla Boutin-Foster, M.D., MS**

*Associate Vice President, Office For Institutional  
Equity  
Associate Dean, Office of Diversity Education and  
Research  
Professor of Medicine, Department of Medicine  
Downstate Health Sciences University*

### **Marcus Lambert, PhD**

*Associate Vice President for Research Strategy  
and Operations  
Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology  
and Biostatistics  
School of Public Health  
Downstate Health Sciences University*

## BROOKLYN HEALTH PROMOTION CENTER (BHPC) MEMBERS

### **Pamela D. Straker, PhD**

*Research Assistant Professor  
BHPC Director of Operations  
Department of Medicine/College of Medicine  
Downstate Health Sciences University*

### **Lakia Maxwell, MSCH, DHSc<sup>®</sup>**

*Research Education Coordinator  
Project Staff Assistant  
Brooklyn Health Promotion Center (BHPC)  
Downstate Health Sciences University*

## SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH MEMBERS

### **Marlene Camacho-Rivera, ScD, MS, MPH**

*Assistant Dean for Student Engagement  
and Success  
Assistant Professor of Community Health Sciences  
Downstate Health Sciences University*

### **Aimee Afable, PhD, MPH**

*Associate Dean for Community Engagement  
Associate Professor of Community Health Sciences  
Downstate Health Sciences University*

## CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

### **Edeline Mitton, MEd, MPH**

*Director of Continuing Medical Education  
Secretary, Downstate Assembly of Faculty &  
Professional Staff  
Downstate Health Sciences University*

## 8:30 – 8:45AM | WELCOME BREAKFAST AND PROGRAM OPENING AND INTRODUCTION OF TRANSPORT PI'S

### MODERATORS

#### **Pamela Straker, PhD**

*Research Assistant Professor, TRANSPORT  
Director of Operations, Brooklyn Health Promotion Center*

#### **Lakia Maxwell, MSCH, DHSc<sup>®</sup>**

*TRANSPORT Program Manager and Project Administrative Officer, TRANSPORT*

### SPEAKERS

#### **Wayne J. Riley, M.D., MPH, MBA, MACP**

*President, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University  
TRANSPORT Principal Investigator*

#### **Alishia Goodridge, MLS, MBA**

*Assistant Vice President, Government & Community Relations, Downstate Health Sciences University*

#### **Kimberly Council, MS**

*Deputy Brooklyn Borough President*

### ELECTED OFFICIAL REMARKS

#### **Moro Salifu, M.D., MBA, MPH, MACP**

*Chair, Department of Medicine  
Tenured Professor of Medicine, Department of Medicine, Division of Nephrology  
TRANSPORT Principal Investigator*

## 8:45 – 9:00AM | SETTING THE STAGE – UNDERSTANDING THE STATE OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH TODAY

Reflecting on past 2025 themes, actions taken, and “What our concerns look like one year later.”

### SPEAKER

#### **Marlene Camacho-Rivera, ScD, MS, MPH**

*Assistant Dean, Office of Student Affairs  
Assistant Professor, Department of Community Health Sciences  
TRANSPORT Co-Investigator*

## 9:00 – 9:15AM | UPDATES ON COMMUNITY CONNECT

### **Amanda Carbajal, PhD**

*Post Doctoral Research Scientist, SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, School of Public Health, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics*

## 9:15 – 9:25AM | INTRODUCTION TO BROOKLYN-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (BBOS)

MODERATOR

### **Faven Araya, MPH, DrPH<sup>®</sup>**

*Director of Community Engagement and Health Equity Research, Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health*

## 9:25 – 10:25AM | BBO LIGHTNING TALKS

MODERATOR

### **Faven Araya, MPH, DrPH<sup>®</sup>**

*Director of Community Engagement and Health Equity Research, Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health*

Brooklyn organizations share brief talks on:

- Current Climate
- What's Working
- What We Still Need
- How Policy Can Help
- Housing  
Facilitator: Grace Ruiz, CAMBA
- Food Insecurity  
Facilitator: Dorella Walters, MPA, Gods Love We Deliver
- Mental Health  
Facilitator: Melissa Elliot, LCSW-R, CPC, SIFI, AGAPE Family Therapy & Coaching
- Maternal and Child Health  
Facilitator: Dr. Christina Pardo, MD, MPH, F.A.C.O.G., Medical Director, Women's Health Practice, NewYork-Presbyterian - Ambulatory Care Network, Assistant Professor, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Weill Cornell Medicine, Community First Equity
- Transportation  
Facilitator: Kevin Garcia, Senior Transportation Planner

## 10:25 – 10:35AM | EXPLANATION OF BREAKOUT SESSIONS

MODERATOR

**Lakia Maxwell, MSCH, DHSc<sup>®</sup>**

*TRANSPORT Program Manager and Project Administrative Officer, TRANSPORT*

## 10:35 – 10:45AM | COFFEE/TEA BREAK

## 10:45 – 12:45PM | INTERACTIVE BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS

(Located upstairs, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor PHAB)

Working groups organized around key priorities:

- Mental Health Access & Stigma – “Healing in the Community”
- Food Security & Cultural Relevance – “Nourishing Brooklyn’s Future”
- Safe, Equitable Housing – “Stability is Health”
- Transportation – “Bridging the Gaps”
- Maternal & Child Health – “Supporting Families, Strengthening Futures”

## 12:45 – 1:45PM | NETWORKING LUNCH

## 1:45 – 2:45PM | REPORT BACK

MODERATOR

### **CBO Leads**

Each group will report feedback from Breakout sessions highlighting community-driven strategies across:

- Mental Health
- Food Insecurity
- Housing
- Transportation
- Maternal & Child Health

## 2:45 – 4:00PM | COLLECTIVE ACTION DESIGN SPRINT

(Located upstairs, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor PHAB)

Participants will identify priority actions, partners, and next steps for 2026–2027.

Small groups turn themes and ideas into concrete next steps, identifying:

- Key strategies
- Lead organizations
- 3-month and 12-month milestones

## 4:00 – 4:15PM | CLOSING: “WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?”

Final reflections, shared commitments, and a reaffirmation that Brooklyn communities lead the work—and institutions commit to supporting, scaling, and sustaining their solutions.

MODERATOR

### **Marcus Lambert, PhD**

*Associate Vice President for Research Strategy and Operations*

*Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics*

*TRANSPORT Principal Investigator*

## Symposium Program Committee and Faculty

(ALPHABETICAL LISTING BY LAST NAME)



### **Aimee Afable, PhD, MPH**

Dr. Aimee Afable is Associate Professor of Community Health Sciences, SUNY Downstate School of Public Health. She received her B.A. with Honors in International Relations from Brown University (1995). She received her M.P.H. and Ph.D. in public health from Tulane University (2003). Following her doctoral studies, Dr. Afable was a Post-Doctoral Scholar at the Institute for Health Policy Studies (2005–2007), University of California, San Francisco. For over 14 years, Dr. Afable's research has critically examined conceptual frameworks used to understand health disparities and health inequities. Her work has documented the declining health advantage with increasing stay among US immigrants and has questioned the validity of the Healthy Immigrant Paradox. More recently, she is studying the causal role of physiologic stress response in race/ethnic disparities in poor metabolic and perinatal outcomes. Dr. Afable is also dedicated to serving Downstate and our local Brooklyn community. She is an investigator member of the Research Core of the Brooklyn Health Disparities Center. She is a board member of Live Light Live Right, the only tertiary-care childhood obesity program serving Brooklyn. She is an evaluation consultant to Kings Against Violence Initiative (KAVI), a youth violence intervention program in Central Brooklyn.



### **Faven Araya, MPH, DrPH<sup>®</sup>**

Dr. Faven Araya currently serves as the Director of Community Engagement and Health Equity Research at the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health where she manages the Institute's community engagement and research initiatives on mental health, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS and the social determinants of health (SDOH) among others. She also leads Communities Together for Health Equity (CTHE), a city network of over 70 community-based organizations working to address the SDOH by bridging gaps between the community and the healthcare system. Through strategic partnerships, she collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders, sectors and institutions to ensure equitable strategies and solutions that leverage community experience and expertise are integrated into research, health care planning, and inform policies and practices. She received her Master of Public Health in Epidemiology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and is currently pursuing her Doctor of Public Health at the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University.



### **Carla Boutin-Foster, M.D., MSc**

Dr. Carla Boutin-Foster is the Associate Dean for the Office of Diversity Education and Research at Downstate. She is a physician, trained clinical

epidemiologist, and health equity researcher. Dr. Boutin-Foster's research focuses on elucidating mechanisms by which psychosocial determinants such as social support, stress, and depressive symptoms influence health behaviors and health outcomes in patients with cardiometabolic conditions. She leads investigator-initiated research projects addressing chronic disease management in health disparities populations. Mentorship and research development of trainees from groups that are underrepresented in biomedical science are central to her academic career. She was PI and Director of an NIMHD P60 Center for Disparities Research and Community Engagement (CEDREC). A major aspect of the P60 was training diverse junior investigators in health disparities research. She served as co-director of an AHRQ-funded T32 Fellowship Program in Health Services Research and as PI on an NHLBI T32 in Translational Cardiovascular Disease Research.

Currently, as an MPI on two NIMHD \$10 million endowment grants, Translational Program Of health disparities Research Training (TRANSPORT and TRANSPORT II), Dr. Boutin-Foster oversees the implementation and evaluation of several multitiered diversity research training programs from high school to junior faculty. She is MPI on the NIMHD funded R25 program Clinical Research Scholars Training Program (CREST) along with Dr. Marlene Camacho-Rivera and PI of HRSA Center of Excellence in Diversity in Medical Education grant. These grants have allowed me to successfully implement health equity focused research training programs that help to launch the research careers of junior investigators who are underrepresented in biomedical and public health research. As the Associate Dean, she leverages administrative and educational support to ensure the success of research trainees and junior faculty. She brings a breadth of experience in conducting independently

funded health disparities research, in securing and managing large NIH grants, in disseminating research in peer-reviewed publications, and in leading educational research programs. Dr. Boutin-Foster has a strong record of supporting and mentoring junior investigators as they transition to independent research careers. Dr. Boutin-Foster graduated from SUNY Downstate College of Medicine and trained at New York Presbyterian hospital-Cornell in internal medicine.



### **Marlene Camacho Rivera, ScD, MS, MPH**

Dr. Marlene Camacho-Rivera is Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and Success and Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences at SUNY Downstate's School of Public Health. She is a graduate of the TRANSPORT Post-Doctoral Fellow Scholar Program. A social and chronic disease epidemiologist by training, Dr. Camacho-Rivera's research focuses on the role of social, cultural, and environmental factors in explaining racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in chronic disease outcomes and chronic disease self-management in the areas of cancer, asthma, and cardiovascular diseases. Her work also explores patterns of and explanations for within group heterogeneity in chronic diseases among racial/ethnic groups, particularly Latinos, as well as community-based approaches to improving chronic disease disparities. Previously, she has served as site PI of the NCI funded Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick Cancer Health Impact Program, a collaborative project between MSKCC and CCNY examining cancer related health information seeking behaviors, as well as knowledge and attitudes towards cancer screening among

Brooklyn residents. She has also served as a PI of a P20 pilot project examining the narrative experiences of South Asian head and neck cancer survivors, as part of the CCNY/MSKCC Translational Research Education and Training to Eliminate Tobacco Disparities (TREND) program. She has also served as an investigator and faculty mentor within the CCNY/MSK Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health Equity (PACHE U54) program, as well as the health disparities cluster of the Research Center in Minority Institutions (RCMI U54) at the City College of New York. Dr. Camacho-Rivera received her bachelor's degree in biology and Society from Cornell University and her doctoral degree in Social Epidemiology from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, as a Harvard Presidential Scholar. She has additional training in maternal and child health, health policy and management, and cancer epidemiology.

As a junior faculty member, she has received numerous training fellowships and awards through NHLBI, the National Hispanic Health Foundation and PCORI, and currently serves as a fellow through the NIMHD TRANSPORT program. Collectively, Dr. Camacho-Rivera's translational research informs the development, implementation, and evaluation of patient-centered approaches to improving chronic disease self-management among urban minority communities.



### **Amanda Carbajal, PhD**

Dr. Amanda Carbajal, a Chicana, is a postdoc in the Lambert Lab at SUNY Downstate Health and Sciences University. She earned her M.S. in Physiology and Behavior at the University of California, San Francisco

and a Ph.D. in Microbiology and Environmental Toxicology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Through her time at UCSC, she did the first half of her PhD at NASA studying prion protein aberrations in cyanobacteria, the world's oldest living organisms. The second half of her PhD her work pivoted from environmental microbiology to clinical microbiology, investigating antibiotic resistance in pathogenic *E. coli* from urinary tract and kidney infections, which can lead to sepsis if untreated.

While completing her Ph.D., she was one of the students that helped legitimize the first graduate student union (2020) to offer more protections for PhD student trainees in vulnerable environments and no power, which has now taken off at many other universities. As a first-generation college student, she also taught as instructor of record at several Bay Area universities to help support her financially during her PhD.

Though her training is in Microbiology, collegiate teaching and biomedical research, the history of abuse conducted in the name of science against marginalized communities has never left her and is part of why she pivoted to Public Health. She is further called to this work from her experiences growing up among marginalized communities who struggled to gain access to reliable and quality health care, even for her father who is a United State Marine Corps war veteran who struggles with the VA. She is also inspired by her work with and non-profits like the Women's Community Clinic and the Berkeley Free Clinic, where she provided healthcare and clean needles to women, homeless, low-income and intravenous drug users throughout the San Francisco Bay Area in California where she was born and raised. If she had more time, she would want to do work that helps imprisoned/formerly incarcerated individuals, as she was inspired by the work of Dr. Charles Cockell

in Scotland who developed a revolutionary program called Life Beyond: From Prison to Mars where inmates were trained to contribute to developing strategies for living in space.

She strives to be as involved as possible with community centered research and remain an accessible mentor and instructor for trainees of all backgrounds. She aspires to change the culture of biomedical STEM research to promote teamwork, holistic mentorship, and making space for trainees that are not well represented who consequently face more barriers. Her ultimate hope is to ensure that biomedical scientists never have another opportunity to abuse their positions of power, by empowering communities and their organizations with support to conduct their own research and program evaluations. She is excited to be a part of the New York Community Connect team, which specifically will help communities do just that and more. She is grateful to be a “Jack of all trades” where may contribute meaningful work and to the bench and the people.



**Melissa D. Elliott, LCSW-R, CPC, SIFI**

Melissa D. Elliott is a dynamic and accomplished professional with deep roots in Brooklyn, raised by her Barbadian parents and their supportive village. She is a dedicated wife and proud mother to a charming 2-year-old son. Melissa wears many hats as an entrepreneur, not-for-profit leader, adjunct professor, clinical supervisor, certified professional coach, and psychotherapist. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

Melissa holds a Master’s degree in Social Work from New York University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in African and Latino History from CUNY Bernard M. Baruch College. A strong advocate for community empowerment, she volunteers during tax season to provide free tax preparation services to the Brownsville community through her church. Her faith in God serves as the foundation for her purpose and guides her pursuits.

Melissa is the founder and owner of AGAPE Family Therapy & Coaching, a thriving group private practice. She also serves as a Board Director for the Association of Nonprofit Specialists and teaches in the Social Work Department at NYU.

A solution-focused and passionate leader, Melissa’s personal experiences as a Black Barbadian-American woman impacted by systemic racism have shaped her resilience and commitment to creating restorative environments that foster healing and stability for communities. She is driven to build spaces where individuals and families can recover from the pressures of racism and gain tools to navigate intersecting systems of oppression. Her leadership fosters partnerships with organizations to promote awareness, build relationships, and advocate for policy change, advancing equity and justice for all.



**Marilyn Fraser, M.D.**

Dr. Marilyn Fraser is the Chief Executive Officer at the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health (AAIUH), a Research Associate Professor in both the Department of Medicine and the School of Public

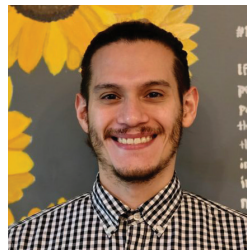
Health at the SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, and the co-Director of the Brooklyn Health Disparities Center. Previously, as Deputy Director and Associate Director for Research & Training, she managed the Institute's community outreach and research programs.

Dr. Fraser, as co-leader of an investigative research team supported by several NIH and CDC grants, helped develop behavioral health intervention models and training curricula for AAIUH's award-winning Black Pearls and Different Fades of Health programs. The Institute's community outreach programs prepare hairstylists and barbers to educate their clients about various health topics, including breast, prostate and colorectal cancer, cardiovascular disease, and HIV/AIDS risk reduction. She also served as the Co-PI in conducting the Institute's ACCESS project to increase access to health and social services for formerly incarcerated individuals in Brooklyn.

Guyanese-born Dr. Fraser is a graduate of the Spartan Health Sciences University School of Medicine in St. Lucia and did her medical training in the West Indies, Mexico, and the United States. Dr. Fraser has received numerous awards including the Health Award from the New York State Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators, and the prestigious Fulbright Research Specialist award to develop and implement a climate change and public health internship program for secondary school students in Trinidad and Tobago. She was also the recipient of the Innovator Award from the Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Center, the Community Award from the Nurses Association of the Counties of Long Island (NACLI), as well as an extraordinary woman of Downstate recognition. She was also nominated to serve on the nationally acclaimed Clinical & Translational Science Award (CTSA)'s Community Engagement Domain Task

Force. Dr. Fraser was honored as a Power Woman in Brooklyn and received the special Health Award. She was also honored as the winner of the Crain's Heritage Healthcare Leadership Award and named one of Crain's Notable Women in Healthcare. Most recently, Dr. Fraser was honored as one of the CUNY School of Medicine's 2021 Strong Women in Medicine. Dr. Fraser regularly presents her work at scientific meetings, nationally and internationally, and is a co-author on several publications and a book chapter.

Dr. Fraser's deep interest in addressing health disparities and improving health outcomes in communities of color also allows her to serve as an expert advisory board member with the NYC Diabetes Prevention Project.



### Kevin Garcia

Kevin Garcia is the Senior Transportation Planner at NYC-EJA. Before joining NYC-EJA, Kevin was the Bus Campaign Manager with Tri-State Transportation Campaign, where he organized bus riders to raise awareness about issues facing the majority of NJ Transit riders. He helped win a bus network redesign, a commitment from the state governor to electrify NJ Transit's bus fleet, and established the Bus Riders' Bill of Rights. He earned a Master's degree in City and Regional Planning from the Pratt Institute and graduated from Williams College with a B.A. in Mathematics and Philosophy.

**Alishia Goodridge, MLS, MBA**

is Assistant Vice President for Government and Community Relations at Downstate Health Sciences University. Ms. Goodridge serves as a key representative of Downstate, working hand in hand with state and local representatives to ensure that Downstate can provide both quality education and world-class healthcare to the Brooklyn community. Ms. Goodridge brings extensive experience in government relations, intergovernmental affairs, stakeholder management, and advocacy, with comprehensive engagement across local, state, and federal government and experience in both the public and private sectors.

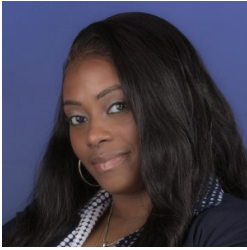
Ms. Goodridge has a long history of advocating for and serving the Brooklyn borough. Prior to joining Downstate, Ms. Goodridge served as Director of Constituent Affairs & Chief of Staff for New York State Assembly Member Diana C. Richardson, where she engaged directly with senior staff and community members, overseeing both administrative and constituent concerns, and acting as a liaison between members and key community stakeholders. She is also the President of the Brooklyn Clarendon Meadows Lions Club as well as Director of Operations of the education non-profit, Determined to Educate.

A Brooklyn native, Ms. Goodridge graduated from CUNY at Medgar Evers College with a BS in Business Administration before earning a Master of Science Degree in Information Science from Pratt Institute, and an MBA from the University of Phoenix.

**Marcus Lambert, PhD**

Dr. Marcus Lambert is the Associate Vice President for Research Strategy and Operations at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University. In this role, Dr. Lambert oversees efforts to expand the university's extramural research portfolio in areas of health equity and clinical research. Dr. Lambert also co-leads multiple research training programs at Downstate with a focus on recruiting and training underrepresented scientists in health disparities research. Dr. Lambert is one of the Principal Investigators of the TRANslational Program Of health disparities Research Training (TRANSPORT and TRANSPORT II), two \$10 million endowment grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Clinical Research Scholars Training Program (CREST), a \$2.6 million grant from the NIH to support health disparities and equity-focused research training.

Dr. Lambert was selected as one of New York's Life Sciences Power 50 and one of Cell Press' 100 Inspiring Black Scientists in America. He is also a member of national boards such as HHMI's Center for the Advancement of Science Leadership and Culture Advisory Board and a member of NIH Training, Workforce Development, and Diversity Study Section. Dr. Lambert received his Ph.D. in biomedical science from NYU Grossman School of Medicine and his B.S. from Howard University. He holds an M.S. in Clinical Epidemiology and Health Services Research from Weill Cornell Graduate School. Dr. Lambert currently resides in Brooklyn, NY with his wife and four children.



### **Lakia Maxwell, MSCH, DHSc®**

Lakia Maxwell is the TRANSPORT Program Manager and Project Administrative Officer at the Brooklyn Health Disparities Center (BHDC), at Downstate Health Sciences University. She received a Master's in Community Health at Hofstra University in 2016. Ms. Maxwell joined The Brooklyn Health Disparities Center in 2014 and served as Research Education Coordinator. In that capacity, Ms. Maxwell provides support for the Center's Executive Team in submission of NIH and other grant proposals. She manages the financial expenditures and scholar recruitment processes of the TRANSPORT Endowment Program. She has developed and maintained web based and social media communications, brochures, pamphlets among many other products. Ms. Maxwell is engaged in program planning and designing, as well as the implementation of research activities. She is also the Center's Internship coordinator for high school, undergraduates, graduate, and medical school students. Additionally, Ms. Maxwell is the CREST Program Coordinator to which she brings expertise in coordinating project activities, managing schedules, and ensuring project deliverables are completed on time and within budget. Furthermore, Ms. Maxwell provides Program Evaluation, Survey Design, Graphic Design, Logic Model Development, SMART Goal and Objective Development, as well as Budget and Timeline Development in her roles. She has also assisted with and has a passion for both Community Based Participatory Research and Community Engaged Research. Through her passion for community health, Ms. Maxwell also

served as a professor at SUNY Empire State College where she taught "Introduction To Community and Public Health". Here, she really enjoyed teaching the next generation of public health professionals.



### **Edeline Mitton, MEd, MPH**

Edeline Mitton is a healthcare professional who has significantly contributed to the healthcare industry. Presently, Ms. Mitton is the Director of Continuing Medical Education at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, where she has demonstrated her expertise in several areas. As Director of Continuing Medical Education, Ms. Mitton works closely with faculty throughout the Downstate system to develop and deliver educational programs. She ensures all educational activities meet relevant regulations, accreditation system criteria, policies, standards, and the AMA PRA credit system requirements. Her expertise in educational planning, evaluation, and outcomes analysis has been instrumental in the success of the Office for CME. Aside from her work at Downstate, Ms. Mitton is an active volunteer, generously giving her time to organizations such as the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and the Society for Academic Continuing Medical Education. The SACME Presidential Award recognized her contributions in 2014 and 2017, and she received Presidential Recognition in 2023.

Ms. Mitton is an ambassador and reviewer with the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, helping to share the importance of community-engaged research, and a member of the AGING Initiative Patient/Caregiver Advisory Council.

Her passion for improving healthcare outcomes and dedication to her profession make her an outstanding individual who has significantly impacted her field.



### **Onyekachi Okeke**

Onyekachi “Onye” Okeke is a third semester MPH student in the Community Health Sciences concentration. She currently serves as the Vice President for the School of Public Health (SPH) Student Council and SPH Representative for University Council. She is very interested in Black maternal and infant health, access to basic needs, immigrant health, health policy, racial equity, community outreach, and creating ways to engage stakeholders and community members to advance health equity. She volunteered at the 2025 TRANSPORT AT symposium, and eagerly is excited to volunteer again. At Downstate, Onye is an intern for the CERCA project, established between Downstate and New York Academy of Medicine and is an activity specialist for Brooklyn high school students in the Health Science Academy of the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health.



### **Christina Pardo, M.D., MPH, FACOG**

Dr. Christina Pardo is a board-certified Obstetrician and Gynecologist and serves as the Director for the Women’s Health Practice, where she will work to ensure high-quality, patient-centered care.

She graduated from Howard University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and received her Doctor of Medicine degree from Robert Wood Johnson Medical School at Rutgers University. She also completed an Master of Public Health degree with a focus in International Health at Boston University. She completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. From 2013-2018, she was an Attending Physician and Co-Director of Global Women’s Health at Stony Brook Medicine. In 2018, she returned to Downstate Health Sciences University where she has served as both the Director of the Division of Health Equity and the Vice Chair of Quality and Innovation since 2020.

Dr. Pardo is also the Founder of Community First Equity (CFE), an organization focusing on healthcare and community development. CFE works to empower impoverished and marginalized communities by fostering health equity through collaborative, community-driven solutions.

Dr. Pardo has been published in peer-reviewed journals and publications on topics such as health equity in obstetrics and gynecology, social determinants of health, and the use of quality improvement to address perinatal health disparities. Dr. Pardo is also passionate about educating the next generations of health professionals

about equity, patient centered care and quality improvement. Dr. Pardo has extensive experience in quality improvement and community-based research for which she has been awarded both NIH and foundation grants.



### **Anya Razmi**

Anya Razmi joined the Brooklyn Health Promotion Center in August 2024 and serves as the TRANSPORT Project Staff Assistant. She graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale University in May 2024, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in English alongside completing the pre-medical curriculum. Currently, she supports the TRANSPORT team in communications, social media, and program implementation. Anya is also the COO of Sprxng, a health technology startup through which she developed a patent-pending novel menstrual disk. Prior to these roles, she studied HIV-1 at the Yale School of Medicine, researched pre- and postpartum maternal mental health at Yale's Affect Regulation and Cognition Lab, and was a public health research intern at Yale's Social and Gerontology Lab. She worked as a Clinical Research Coordinator at Columbia's Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center, where she coordinated melanoma and sarcoma clinical trials. She has additional experience in digital content creation and communications as a profile writer for Nunchi Health, an editor for the *Yale Scientific Magazine*, and a writing tutor at the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning. In her free time, Anya enjoys being a hospice volunteer with VNS Health. In the future, she hopes to continue to pursue her passions for public health, science communications, and medicine.



### **Wayne J. Riley, M.D., MPH, MBA, MACP**

Dr. Wayne J. Riley is the 17<sup>th</sup> President of The State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate Health Sciences University and Professor of Medicine and Health Policy Management. He is an academic primary care general internist with more than 25 years of executive management and leadership experience in academic medicine, healthcare management, government, and advocacy. Before joining Downstate, Dr. Riley held professorships at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management. For six years, he served as the 10<sup>th</sup> president, chief executive officer, and professor of Medicine at Meharry Medical College. Dr. Riley earned a Bachelor of Arts from Yale University, the Doctor of Medicine from the Morehouse School of Medicine, a Master of Public Health from the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and a Master of Business Administration from Rice University's Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Business.

Among his numerous honors, in June 2021 alongside Drs. Anthony Fauci and Eric Topol received the National Medical Humanism Medal from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, where he is Board Secretary. Dr. Riley was elected in 2020 as Board Chair of the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) making him the first black board chair in NYAM's 173-year history. He is a Commissioner of the non-partisan U.S. Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) and President Emeritus, Former Regent, and Master of the American College of Physicians (ACP).

Dr. Riley is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) and, has served as Vice-Chair, and later as Chair of NAM's Section on the Administration of Health Services, Education, and Research. Dr. Riley is past President of the Society of Medical Administrators, a member of the American Clinical and Climatological Association, the Sullivan Alliance to Diversify the Health Professions, Vice Chair and member of the Board of Directors of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities. Active in the community, Dr. Riley serves on the Boards of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, YMCA of Greater New York, Catholic Charities Brooklyn & Queens, and the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health.



**Grace Ruiz**

Grace Ruiz is a seasoned nonprofit professional with over 10 years of experience in community outreach and program management. Born and raised in New York City, Grace has dedicated her career to serving vulnerable populations, with a deep commitment to homelessness prevention, refugee and asylee services, legal assistance, and workforce development.

As Assistant Program Director at CAMBA, Grace leads several critical outreach initiatives, including HomeBase, Legal Services, Workforce Development, and Refugee & Asylee Services. She is particularly passionate about engaging and educating underserved communities about available services, ensuring they not only know about but also understand how to access the support they need. Under her leadership, CAMBA's You Can Van, a mobile outreach unit, has revolutionized the way the organization connects

with those at risk of homelessness, providing essential services and a welcoming presence in some of the most marginalized communities of Brooklyn and Staten Island.

Grace's approach is rooted in a deep understanding of the challenges these communities face and the importance of building trust through education, outreach, and empathetic engagement. Her expertise lies in fostering strong relationships with individuals and families, empowering them to make informed decisions that lead to tangible improvements in their lives. Her work exemplifies her dedication to making a lasting, positive impact in her community, advocating for those who need it most while helping to create pathways to greater stability and opportunity.



**Moro Salifu, M.D., MBA, MPH, MACP**

Dr. Moro Salifu is a tenured Professor of Medicine and Chair of the Department of Medicine at State University of New York Downstate Health Sciences University in Brooklyn. He also is the Edwin C. and Anne K. Weiskopf Endowed Chair in Nephrology and Transplantation. He has served as fellowship program director since 2003, division chief of nephrology, and director of the kidney transplant program at SUNY Downstate since 2008. He has trained and mentored many residents and fellows, across different institutions in New York and in several States. Board-certified in internal medicine and nephrology.

Dr. Salifu is known for his outstanding clinical, research and administrative skills. He is highly respected within the Downstate community, as well

as, in the national nephrology community. He is a productive investigator whose research interests include vascular biology, chronic kidney disease progression, and kidney transplant outcomes. He is the recipient of numerous grants and is Director of the Brooklyn Health Disparities Center, a partnership between SUNY Downstate Medical Center, the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health, and the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President. Dr. Salifu is also one of the Principal Investigators of the TRANSlational Program Of health disparities Research Training (TRANSPORT and TRANSPORT II), two \$10 million endowment grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to advance the work of the Brooklyn Health Disparities Center.

Dr. Salifu is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions. For his exemplary contributions in science and in leadership, Dr. Salifu was recognized as Master of the American College of Physicians (ACP) in 2018 in the Annual ACP Convocation ceremony in New Orleans. Dr. Salifu serves as Chair of the Chapter's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force and Past Councilor of the Brooklyn District. He is a long-standing, loyal supporter of the ACP, has rendered distinguished service to the chapter, and has upheld the high ideals and professional standards for which the College is known.

Most recently, Dr. Salifu received the Laureate Award at the New York American College of Physicians annual gala. The Laureate Award recognizes and honors those Fellows and Masters of the ACP who have demonstrated an enduring commitment to excellence in medical care, education, research, and service to their community, their chapter, and the American College of Physicians.

He has also been recognized as Best Doctor- US News and World Report, Castle Connelly Top Doctor, included in Worldwide Registry of Executives and

Professionals, and was honored as among Brooklyn's best by Schneps Media at its 2020 annual Kings of Kings County awards event, just to name a few. He has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals nationally and internationally. He is also a member and journal reviewer for Nephrology and Transplant societies and has served on many local and national professional committees. He is the past president of the New York Society of Nephrology for the 2013–14 academic year.



### **Pamela Straker, MA, PhD**

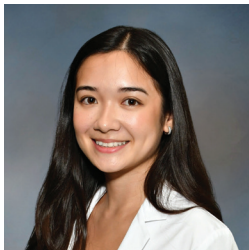
Dr. Pamela D. Straker is the Director of Operations for the Brooklyn Health Disparities Center (BHDC), TRANSPORT, and is Research Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine/College of Medicine at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. In her role with BHDC, she provides administrative coordination, project management, development, instruction, and support for the Center and its researchers. As well, she oversees all Center HR, finances, and grants administration. Dr. Straker is a licensed psychologist who has also had extensive experience in management of, and consultation to, not for profit organizations and programs serving populations in which the greatest health disparities have existed. Dr. Straker has also had significant experience with community-based organizations, private funders, policy makers, and governmental entities, has taught on the undergraduate and graduate levels, and has implemented programs across Brooklyn and in Manhattan. She is an Amazon Best Selling Author, having written in the area of management and leadership, most recently penning *Lead Like you Care*,

What Caregiving Teaches Us About Teams That Thrive. She has appeared as a guest on numerous television and radio programs. Dr. Straker holds a doctoral degree in School-Community Psychology from Hofstra University, where she also received a master's degree and has achieved alumna status at Columbia University's Executive Level Institute for Not-for-Profit Management. She earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Rochester.



### **Jephane Toussaint**

Jephane Toussaint is a Master of Public Health(MPH) student at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University and a first-generation graduate student; Her academic interests focus on community health science, maternal and child health and addressing social disparities that impact the underserved communities.



### **Bethany Thach**

Bethany Thach is a rising third-year MD/MPH student at SUNY Downstate College of Medicine. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Biochemistry and English from Bowdoin College, where she became interested in advancing treatments and improving community health outcomes through research and advocacy. She conducted research in immunobiology and therapeutic approaches for type 1 diabetes at Massachusetts General Hospital and is currently involved in research focused on understanding the needs of community-based organizations across New York City to strengthen their ability to support local populations. Bethany hopes to combine clinical medicine and public health to develop community-driven strategies that improve care and access for underserved communities.



### **Dorella Walters, MPA**

Dorella Walters is the Chief Program Development Officer and is responsible for program management, nutrition services, client outreach efforts and establishing community-based and healthcare partnerships for the agency.

Dorella is focused on supporting the organization's delivery of more than 4 million nutritious, medically tailored, high-quality meals to more than 14,600 individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, cancer and other life-altering illnesses in New York City and it's surrounding counties.

In this role, she is responsible for reaching more than 7,000 new clients a year and for helping God's Love to identify, prospect, and navigate new business opportunities and maintain community relationships. These efforts include expanding the organization's visibility regarding the impact

of medically tailored home-delivered meals on healthcare costs and health outcomes, resulting in new partnerships that build varied and sustainable revenue streams for the agency.

Dorella has held various leadership positions in her tenure at God's Love that has given her a unique insight into the clients and communities that we serve. Under her leadership, the organization has seen significant growth in our business line by establishing and maintaining healthcare contracts with managed care organizations, hospital systems, accountable care organizations and other community-based agencies. Prior to this role, Ms. Walters served as the Chief Business Development Officer and the Senior Director for Program Services where she was responsible for planning and designing the department's response to agency goals around mission expansion, client growth and client retention.

# Accreditation & Designation Statement

The State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate Health Sciences University is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University designates this learning format for a maximum of **6.50 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™**. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

## Target Audience

The symposium addresses topics important to practicing providers, provider assistants, scientists, trainees, and community groups. With this aim in mind, the following groups are invited to participate in the symposium: healthcare professionals, community-based organizations (CBOs), researchers, and public health advocates to address key social determinants of health (SDOH) and explore actionable steps to create healthier communities.

## Objectives

Upon completion of this activity, participants should be able to:

- Identify challenges in the intersectionality of SDOH factors and their cumulative impact on community health.
- Identify 1–2 actionable steps to improve collaboration and resource allocation among healthcare systems, public health advocates, and CBOs.
- Highlight effective strategies currently in place to address these challenges.
- Uncover gaps and under-addressed areas that need greater attention.
- Learn from CBOs' unique perspectives and proven practices in addressing SDOH challenges.

# CME Disclosure Summary | March 6, 2026

SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Office of CME (OCME) and its affiliates are committed to providing educational activities that are objective, balanced, and as free of bias as possible. The OCME has established policies that will identify and mitigate all conflicts of interest prior to this educational activity. All accredited providers are required to mitigate and disclose to the activity audience the relevant financial relationships of the planners, presenters, and authors involved in the development of accredited content. An individual has a relevant financial relationship if he or she has a financial relationship in any amount occurring in the past 24 months with an ineligible company whose products or services are discussed in the accredited activity content over which the individual has control. **All of the relevant financial relationships listed for these individuals have been mitigated.**

**All of the faculty reported no relevant relationships with any organization that could be perceived as a real or an apparent conflict in the context of the subject of the presentation.**

**All of the relevant financial relationships listed for the individual(s) below have been mitigated.**

## PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Aimee Afable	Lakia Maxwell
Faven Araya	Edeline Mitton
Carla Boutin-Foster	Marsha Reynolds
Marlene Camacho-Rivera	Grace Ruiz
Melissa D. Elliott	Moro Salifu
Alishia Goodridge	Pamela Straker
Marcus Lambert	Dorella Walters

## RELATIONSHIPS

**NONE**



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HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY