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# 2025 Healthy Communities Symposium

## Speaker Bios

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**Linda Rae Murray, MD, MPH, F.A.C.P.**  
**Visiting Clinical Associate Professor**  
**Division of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences**  
**University of Illinois School of Public Health**

Dr. Murray has spent her career serving the medically underserved. She has worked in a variety of settings including practicing Occupational Medicine at a Workers Clinic in Canada, Residency Director for Occupational Medicine at Meharry Medical College, and Bureau Chief for the Chicago Department of Health under Mayor Harold Washington. Dr. Murray worked as Medical Director of the federally funded health center, Winfield Moody, serving Cabrini Green Public Housing Project in Chicago. Dr. Murray has been an active member of a wide range of local and national organizations including serving as a member of the Board of Scientific Counselors for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Board of Directors of Trinity Health (a large Catholic Health system).

In 1997 Dr. Murray returned to the Cook County Health System where she served as Chief Medical Officer - Primary Care for the twenty three primary care and community health centers comprising the Ambulatory & Community Health Network of the Cook County Bureau of Health Services; and as an attending physician in the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Cook County Hospital. Dr. Murray has worked in leadership roles in many public health organizations including NACCHO's (National Association of City & County Health Officers) Health Equity and Social Justice Team, the national executive board of APHA. During 2011 she served as President of the American Public Health Association. In December 2014, she retired from her position as the Chief Medical officer for the Cook County Department of Public Health of the Cook County Health & Hospital System, the PHAB accredited and state certified public health department for suburban Cook County. In December 2018 Dr. Murray stopped seeing patients as a voluntary attending in Internal Medicine ending over forty years of clinical practice.

Today she serves as an Honorary Attending of Cook County Health and is the Interim Director of Undergraduate Programs in the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She serves on many local and national boards including the Chicago based Health and Medicine Policy Research Group; and chairs the board for the National Collaborative for Health Equity. She remains passionate about increasing the number of Black and Latinx health professionals and serves on the Urban Health Program Community Advisory Committee at the University of Illinois.

Dr. Murray is devoting the rest of her career to being an enthusiastic full time trouble maker. She has been a voice for social justice and health as a basic human right for over fifty years.

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**Faven Araya, DrPH(c), MPH**

**Director of Community Engagement & Health Equity Research at the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health**

Faven Araya currently serves as the Director of Community Engagement and Health Equity Research at the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health, where she directs and oversees 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, healthcare 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.

**Linda Lee**

Council Member  
New York City Council

Council Member Linda Lee represents the 23rd Council District in Eastern Queens. She was elected to the Council in November 2021, becoming the first Korean-American ever elected to the City Council, and the first woman to hold the seat. Prior to taking office, Linda was the President/CEO of Korean Community Services (KCS) of Metropolitan New York, Inc., New York's first community-based social service organization focused on the Korean community. On the City Council, Council Member Lee serves as the Chair of the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction.

**Aasma Nuzzi, LMHC-D, PhD**

Chief Operating Officer  
Council of Peoples Organization

Dr. Aasma Nuzzi is the Chief Operating Officer and Clinical Director at the Council of Peoples Organization (COPO), where she leads initiatives addressing mental health, domestic violence, and immigrant support across South Asian, Muslim, and Arab communities in New York City. Fluent in Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi, she provides culturally sensitive counseling and has extensive experience across clinical, school, and community-based settings. Dr. Nuzzi also maintains a private practice, offering individualized therapy and consultation to clients from diverse backgrounds. She is a certified trauma and clinical specialist, a recognized leader in disaster case management, and an active collaborator on research with institutions including NYU Langone, Temple University, and Rutgers University.

**Kara Smith, LMSW**

Red Hook Community Health Network Manager  
Red Hook Initiative

Kara (she/her) leads the Red Hook Community Health Network, a partnership of community-based organizations, residents, and health partners in Red Hook who are committed to seeing equitable health outcomes, at the Red Hook Initiative (RHI). Before joining the team at RHI, she supported data analysis and policy development for collective impact initiatives in West Michigan and the South Bronx. Kara holds a Bachelor of Science in Social Work and Sociology from Calvin University and a Master of Social Work from Case Western Reserve University.

**Melanie Jay**  
**Professor of Medicine and Population Health**  
**NYU Grossman School of Medicine**

Melanie Jay, MD, MS, is a Professor of Medicine and Population Health at the New York University Grossman School of Medicine who is an expert on obesity. She is a general internist and American Board of Obesity Medicine (ABOM) certified Obesity specialist who sees patients at the New York Harbor Veterans Health Administration in Manhattan. She serves as Director of the NYU Langone Comprehensive Program on Obesity Research and Director of Research Collaboration and Mentorship for the Division of General Internal Medicine. She runs a program through the NYU CTSI called STEPPS focused on mentoring and training the next generation of scientists and physicians. Her research focuses on improving the treatment and prevention of obesity, particularly in primary care settings. She is passionate about addressing obesity-related health disparities in vulnerable populations and mentoring trainees at all levels, especially those from groups that are underrepresented in science and medicine. With funding from the National Institutes of Health and Veterans Affairs, she is/has been PI or MPI on 4 large obesity-related behavioral clinical trials and several smaller studies. She Co-Directs the VETCARE Center for Innovation at the New York Harbor VA. She has published over 100 publications in top scientific journals. Her work and commentary have been featured on Oprah Daily, CBS News, Hill TV, New York Times, NBC Today Show, and other media outlets and publications. She recently did a TEDx talk about the future of obesity care that was featured as an Editor's Pick.

**Arthur Caplan, PhD**  
**Professor of Population Health**  
**NYU Grossman School of Medicine**

Arthur Caplan, PhD, is the Drs. William F. and Virginia Connolly Mitty Professor and founding head of the Division of Medical Ethics at NYU Grossman School of Medicine's Department of Population Health in New York City. He is the author or editor of 35 books and more than 880 papers in peer reviewed journals. He has served as the chair of the National Cancer Institute Biobanking Ethics Working Group; chair of the Advisory Committee to the United Nations on Human Cloning; and chair of the Advisory Committee to the Department of Health and Human Services on Blood Safety and Availability. He has also served on the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses, the Special Advisory committee to the International Olympic Committee on Genetics and Gene therapy, the Special Advisory Panel to the National Institutes of Mental Health on Human Experimentation on Vulnerable Subjects, the Wellcome Trust Advisory Panel on Research in Humanitarian Crises, and as the co-director of the Joint Council of Europe/United Nations Study on Trafficking in Organs and Body Parts. He is currently a member of the National Academy of Science and Medicine's expert advisory committee on hand and face transplantation and the lead ethics advisor to the Hevolution Foundation. Dr. Caplan has served since 2015 as the co-chair of the Compassionate Use Advisory Committees (CompAC), independent groups of internationally recognized medical experts, bioethicists, and patient representatives that advise Johnson & Johnson on the allocation of investigational medical products outside of clinical trials. He received his PhD from Columbia University and holds eight honorary degrees from colleges, universities, and medical schools.

**Manish Parikh, MD**  
**Professor of Surgery**  
**NYU Grossman School of Medicine**

Manish Parikh, MD is a Professor of Surgery at New York University School of Medicine and has served as Director of the Bariatric Surgery program at Bellevue Hospital, New York NY since 2008. He is also Chief of

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Perioperative Services at Bellevue Hospital. Bellevue Hospital is the oldest public hospital in the United States and the main hospital of the largest municipal hospital network in the country (Health and Hospitals Corporation). He completed his surgical residency at NYU Medical Center in 2006 and laparoscopic/bariatric fellowship at NY-Presbyterian Cornell/Columbia in 2007. He is board certified in general surgery by the American Board of Surgery. He is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons (FACS), and a member of the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) and the Society for American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES). He is on the Editorial Board of *Surgery for Obesity and Related Diseases* and is an Associate Editor of *Obesity Surgery*.

**Stephanie Albert, PhD, MPA**

Assistant Professor of Population Health  
NYU Grossman School of Medicine

Stephanie Albert, PhD, MPA, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Population Health. Her research focuses on three general areas: (1) determinants of eating behaviors, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, environmental, and policy factors; (2) adolescent health and well-being; and (3) media consumption. Within these areas, she's specifically interested in studying novel ways to mitigate weight-bias and stigma at a population level. She is currently the principal investigator of a National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities funded study of the impact of a social media campaign promoting body positivity on weight stigma and mental health among youth (5K01MD018721). She has led evaluations of a plant-based lifestyle medicine program; a faith-based, family-oriented obesity prevention program in the South Bronx and Harlem; and a co-located, integrated, multiservice model to improve positive youth development. Additionally, she has been a co-investigator on a wide range of NIH, CDC, and foundation-funded projects and currently serves on the leadership committee of the NYU Food Environment & Policy Research Coalition. Dr. Albert earned her PhD in Public Health from the Fielding School of Public Health at UCLA where she was a trainee at the UCLA Center for Population Health and Disparities training program. She also earned a master's degree in Public Administration from the New York University Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. Prior to that she served as a Legislative Aide in the California State Senate and Senior Advisor for State Affairs at Americans for Gun Safety.

**David Rind, MD**

Chief Medical Officer  
Institute for Clinical and Economic Review

David Rind, MD, is Chief Medical Officer of the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review. He is responsible for leading teams conducting analyses and critical appraisals of medical evidence across a wide range of clinical interventions including ICER reviews of therapies for diabetes and obesity. Dr. Rind has expertise in evidence-based medicine and is a member of the international GRADE Working Group. Dr. Rind received a B.A. in chemistry from Yale University and his M.D. from the University of Rochester. He completed his residency in internal medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and then did a joint fellowship in general internal medicine and clinical computing at Beth Israel Hospital and Harvard Medical School. He received a Master of Science in health policy and management from the Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Rind continues to see patients as an academic primary care physician working with residents at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

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**Yaa Haber, PhD, MBS**

Executive Director

Institute for Excellence in Health Equity

Grossman School of Medicine

Yaa Haber, MBS, PhD, serves as Executive Director for the Institute of Excellence in Health Equity. Dr. Haber previously served in the capacity of Associate Director for IEHE and played an instrumental role in IEHE's success since inception 5 years ago.

She is an innovator focused on inclusive culture in STEM. Currently, she develops and oversees strategy, business development and programmatic growth at IEHE. Her programs benefit a wide range of participants, from high school students to established physician-scientists.

With nearly two decades of experience in academic medicine, Dr. Haber is a trained neuroscientist who has used her experience and training to advance the careers of underrepresented scholars through mentorship, proven strategies, and program development. She is skilled at developing programs that address specific challenges and during her time at NYULH she has developed over 10 programs in collaboration with several offices and departments including Workplace Culture and Inclusion, Department of Population Health, Office of Admissions, Office of Science and Research, and Langone Academy.

Dr. Haber received training from the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER) in 2022. She has used this training and other evidence-based resources to develop one of the signature mentoring programs for the IEHE, named the Culturally Appropriate Mentoring Program. This program is aimed at creating inclusive lab cultures by giving well represented Principal Investigators the tools and resources

In addition, Dr. Haber directed a clinical trial portfolio of \$8M annually, leading a team of 25 researchers in implementation science. Her role as a director and mentor to early career physicians and scientists sparked her interest in advocating for junior researchers.

From 2020 to 2021, Dr. Haber co-chaired her department's anti-racism efforts, leading a diverse team to develop comprehensive recommendations addressing systemic racism within the department. These recommendations covered areas such as career advancement, recruitment, and equitable policies.

Outside of work, Dr. Haber resides in New Jersey with her husband and five children. She is passionate about empowering young girls to choose healthy beauty products, which inspired her and her daughters to establish Clean Kids Beauty, a beauty brand for kids. She also enjoys quality time with her family, traveling, and discovering excellent Thai cuisine.

**Kurt Pinto DNP, RN, OCN, PMHNP-BC**

System Director of Evidence Based Practice

Nursing at NYU Langone Health

Kurt Pinto is a highly experienced nursing professional with over 11 years of clinical expertise and more than 7 years in nursing leadership. Currently serving as the System Director of Evidence-Based Practice at NYU Langone Health, Kurt Pinto is dedicated to advancing healthcare through evidence-driven approaches. With a

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Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree and board-certification as psychiatric nurse practitioner, he combines advanced clinical expertise with a passion for healthcare innovation.

**Reanne Rahim, MA**

Senior Program Coordinator

Institute for Excellence in Health Equity (IEHE)

Generating Emerging Medical Scholars (GEMS) program

Reanne Rahim is the Senior Program Coordinator at the Institute for Excellence in Health Equity (IEHE), where she plays a pivotal role in the Generating Emerging Medical Scholars (GEMS) program. She leads recruitment efforts, develops program materials and evaluation metrics, and provides mentorship to GEMS students, supporting the next generation of diverse medical professionals. Reanne holds a BA in Psychology from St. John's University and an MA in Psychology in Education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

**Emily Drum, MPH**

Program Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Education

Emily Drum manages research education pathway programs for the Brooklyn Clinical Research Center. Since launching in August 2023, these programs, called the Scientific & Technical Education Pathway Programs for Students (STEPPS), have provided clinical research training opportunities for nearly 100 high school and undergraduate students and 2 high school teacher trainees. She also manages growth and development for NYU Langone's free online clinical research training for community health workers. Emily holds a BA in journalism and mass communication from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and began her career as an editor and copywriter in trade book publishing before earning her MPH in public health nutrition at NYU's School of Global Public Health. She previously served as co-director of the NIMHD P50 center, UCLA-UCI Center for Eliminating Cardiometabolic Disparities in Multi-Ethnic Populations (UC END DISPARITIES), and research manager for several large-scale community-based COVID-19 and hypertension studies in Orange County and Santa Ana, CA.

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