

The National Academies of SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Food and Nutrition Board

Integrating Systems and Sectors Toward Obesity Solutions: A Virtual Workshop

Speaker and Moderator Biographical Sketches



Christina (Chris) Economos, Ph.D., M.S.

Tufts University

Planning Committee Co-Chair and Vice Chair, Roundtable on Obesity Solutions

Chris Economos is a Professor, the New Balance Chair in Childhood Nutrition, and Chair of the Division of Nutrition Interventions, Communication, & Behavior Change at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy and Medical School at Tufts University. She leads a research team studying behavioral interventions, strategic communications, and promotion of physical activity using a systems approach to reduce childhood obesity. She has authored more than 150 scientific publications and is also the co-Founder and Director of ChildObesity180, a unique organization that brings together leaders from diverse disciplines to generate urgency and find solutions to the childhood obesity epidemic. Dr. Economos is involved in national obesity and public health activities and has served on four National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine committees including the Roundtable on Obesity Solutions and the Committee on an Evidence Framework for Obesity Prevention Decision-Making. She received a Bachelor of Science from Boston University, a Master of Science in Applied Physiology and Nutrition from Columbia University and a Doctorate in Nutritional Biochemistry from Tufts University.



Sandro Galea, M.D., Dr.P.H., M.P.H.

Boston University

Invited Speaker

Sandro Galea, a physician, epidemiologist, and author, is dean and Robert A. Knox Professor at Boston University School of Public Health. He previously held academic and leadership positions at Columbia University, the University of Michigan, and the New York Academy of Medicine. He has published extensively in the peer-reviewed literature, and is a regular contributor to a range of public media, about the social causes of health, mental health, and the consequences of trauma. He has been listed as one of the most widely cited scholars in the social sciences. He is chair of the board of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health and past president of the Society for Epidemiologic Research and of the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Galea has received several lifetime achievement awards. Dr. Galea holds a medical degree from the University of Toronto, graduate degrees from Harvard University and Columbia University, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Glasgow.

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Food and Nutrition Board



Ross Hammond, Ph.D.

Washington University in St. Louis

Invited Speaker

Ross Hammond is the Betty Bofinger Brown Associate Professor at Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Hammond's research applies complex systems tools to generate new insights into the social dynamics that drive many difficult policy problems, as well as to identify potential leverage points or windows for intervention. He is a senior fellow in economic studies at the Brookings Institution, where he is director of the Center on Social Dynamics and Policy. He also holds academic appointments at Harvard School of Public Health and the Santa Fe Institute. Dr. Hammond is a Health and Human Services-appointed member of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities advisory council. He also serves as a public health advisor for the National Cancer Institute, is an advisory special government employee for the FDA Center for Tobacco Products, a commissioner for the Lancet Commission on Obesity, and a member of the National Academy of Sciences' Food and Nutrition Board. Dr. Hammond earned his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.



Douglas Luke, Ph.D.

Washington University in St. Louis

Invited Speaker

Douglas Luke is Professor and Director of the Ph.D. Program in Public Health Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Luke is a leading researcher in the areas of public health policy, systems science and tobacco control. He directs work focused primarily on the evaluation, dissemination and implementation of evidence-based public health policies. Over the past decade, Luke has used systems science methods, especially social network analysis and agent-based modeling, to address important public health problems. He published the first review papers on network analysis in public health in 2007, and on systems science methods in public health in 2012. He has written books on multilevel modeling and network analysis. Under Dr. Luke's leadership, the Center for Public Health Systems Science has used network analysis to study diffusion of scientific innovations, to model the formation of organizational collaborations, and to study the relationship of mentoring to future scientific collaboration. In addition to his appointment at the Brown School, Dr. Luke is a member of the Institute for Public Health, the director of evaluation for the Institute of Clinical and Translational Science and a founding member of the Washington University Network of Dissemination and Implementation Researchers. In addition, he served on an Institute of Medicine panel that produced a national report on the use of agent-based modeling for tobacco regulatory science. Dr. Luke holds a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois.

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Food and Nutrition Board



Nicolaas (Nico) P. Pronk, Ph.D., M.A., FACSM, FAWHP

HealthPartners Institute and HealthPartners, Inc.

Planning Committee Co-Chair and Chair, Roundtable on Obesity Solutions

Nico Pronk is President of the HealthPartners Institute and Chief Science Officer at HealthPartners, Inc. and holds a faculty appointment as Adjunct Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, Massachusetts. HealthPartners Institute is one of the largest medical research and education centers in the Midwest, the Institute has about 450 studies underway each year, trains more than 500 medical residents and fellows and more than 500 students, and provides continuing medical education for 25,000 clinicians as well as patient education and clinical quality improvement. HealthPartners, founded in 1957 as a cooperative, is an integrated, non-profit, member-governed health system providing health care services and health plan financing and administration. It's the largest consumer governed nonprofit health care organization in the United States. Dr. Pronk's work is focused on connecting evidence of effectiveness with the practical application of programs and practices, policies and systems that measurably improve population health and well-being. His work applies to the workplace, the care delivery setting, and the community and involves development of new models to improve health and well-being at the research, practice and policy levels. His research interests include workplace health and safety, obesity, physical activity, and systems approaches to population health and well-being. Currently, Dr. Pronk serves as co-chair of the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services' Advisory Committee on National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives for 2030 (aka Healthy People 2030) and is a member of the Community Preventive Services Task Force. He was the founding and past president of the International Association for Worksite Health Promotion and has served on boards and committees at the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, the American Heart Association, the Health Enhancement Research Organization, among others. He is widely published in both the scientific and practice literatures with more than 400 articles, books, and book chapters and is an international speaker on population health and health promotion. Dr. Pronk received his doctorate degree in exercise physiology at Texas A&M University and completed his post-doctoral studies in behavioral medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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Food and Nutrition Board



Daniel Rivera, Ph.D.

Arizona State University

Planning Committee Member and Moderator

Daniel Rivera is Professor of Chemical Engineering and Program Director of the Control Systems Engineering Laboratory at Arizona State University. He became part of the faculty in the Department of Chemical, Bio, and Materials Engineering (now the School for Engineering of Matter, Transport, and Energy) at Arizona State University in the fall of 1990. Prior to joining ASU he was an Associate Research Engineer in the Control Systems Section of Shell Development Company. He has been a visiting researcher with the Division of Automatic Control at Linköping University, Sweden, Honeywell Technology Center, the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje, Macedonia, the National Distance Learning University (UNED) in Madrid, Spain, and the University of Almería in Andalucía, Spain. His research interests include the topics of robust process control, system identification, and the application of control engineering principles to problems in process systems, supply chain management, and prevention and treatment interventions in behavioral medicine. Dr. Rivera was chosen as 1994-1995 Outstanding Undergraduate Educator by the ASU student chapter of AIChE, and was a recipient of 1997-1998 Teaching Excellence Award awarded by the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences at ASU. In 2007, Dr. Rivera was awarded a K25 Mentored Quantitative Research Career Development Award from the National Institutes of Health to study control systems approaches for fighting drug abuse. He received his Ph.D. in chemical engineering from the California Institute of Technology in 1987, and holds M.S. and B.S. degrees from the University of Rochester and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, respectively.