

Speaker, Moderator, and Planning Committee Biographical Sketches

Engaging Communities in Addressing Structural Drivers of Obesity: A Second Workshop in the Series



Ihuoma Eneli, M.D., M.S., FAAP

Planning Committee Co-Chair and Roundtable Vice-Chair

Ihuoma Eneli is an Associate Director for the American Academy of Pediatrics Institute for the Healthy Childhood Weight. She is a board certified general pediatrician and Professor of Pediatrics at The Ohio State University and Director, Nationwide Children's Hospital Center for Healthy Weight and Nutrition, Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Eneli has developed an internationally-recognized tertiary care pediatric obesity center with activities that include advocacy, prevention, medical weight management, bariatric surgery, and research. She is co-Director of the Childhood Obesity and Bariatric Surgery Fellowship, the only pediatric fellowship which trains both bariatric surgeons and pediatricians. Dr. Eneli also directs the Primary Care Obesity Network (PCON) which provides Project-ECHO-based obesity training, resources, and community integration for primary care practices. Dr. Eneli is a leader in pediatric obesity, serving in leadership and advisory roles for several organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), Children's Hospital Association (CHA), The Obesity Society (TOS), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), Academic Pediatric Association (APA), Local Matters. Dr. Eneli is Vice Chair of the NASEM Roundtable on Obesity Solutions. Dr. Eneli's research interest is on interventions for pediatric obesity, for which she has received funding from several sources including National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). She has more than 80 peer-reviewed publications. In 2021, she was awarded the prestigious National Academic Pediatric Association (APA) Healthcare Delivery Award in recognition of her work on childhood obesity. Dr. Eneli received a M.S. from Michigan State University in epidemiology and her M.D. from University of Nigeria. She completed her pediatric residency and an NIH-K30 institutional clinical research fellowship at Michigan State University.



Bruce Y. Lee, M.D., M.B.A.

Planning Committee Co-Chair

Bruce Y. Lee is a Professor of Health Policy and Management at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy where he is the Executive Director of the Center for Advanced Technology and Communication in Health (CATCH). Dr. Lee is also the Executive Director of PHICOR (Public Health Informatics, Computational and Operations Research), which he founded in 2007, and the founder and CEO of Symsilico, which develops and uses computational methods, models, and tools to help decision-making. His previous positions include serving as Professor by Courtesy at the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, Associate Professor of International Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Executive Director of the Global Obesity Prevention Center (GOPC), Director of Operations Research at the International Vaccine Access Center (IVAC), Associate Professor at the University of Pittsburgh, Senior Manager at Quintiles Transnational, working in biotechnology equity research at Montgomery Securities, and co-founding Integrigen. Dr. Lee is a systems modeler, computational and digital health expert, writer, and health journalist. He has over two decades of experience in industry and academia developing mathematical and computational models to assist a wide range of decision makers in health and public health. He has been the Principal Investigator for projects supported by a variety of organizations and agencies and has served as a systems science and modeling expert for numerous advisory boards and committees for the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), World Health Organization (WHO), National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other organizations. Dr. Lee has written extensively for the general media. He is a Senior Contributor for *Forbes*, covering a wide range of health-related topics including medicine, wellness, digital health and the business of health and having written over 1,590 articles. His writing has also appeared in a number of other media outlets including *The New York Times*, *Time*, *The Guardian*, the *HuffPost*, and the *MIT Technology Review*. Dr. Lee received his B.A. from Harvard University, M.D. from Harvard Medical School, and M.B.A. from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. He completed his internal medicine residency training at the University of California, San Diego.



Curtis L. Archer, Ph.D.

Speaker

Curtis L. Archer has served as President of the Harlem Community Development Corporation since January 2006. He sees his role as essential in enhancing the economic climate for both businesses and residents in the Greater Harlem community. He is a native New Yorker and was born in the Morrisania section of the Bronx. His family eventually moved to what was known as the “Middle Class Experiment”, Co-op City, where he lived throughout his formative years. In 1989, Dr. Archer began his career in community development in the NYC Office of Business Development under Mayor David Dinkins, as a Development Manager in the Neighborhood Development and Commercial Revitalization Program. It was there that he got a real taste for a career in public service in the field of community and economic development. In 1992, Dr. Archer accepted a position with the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC), where he eventually reached the level of Senior Project Manager and was responsible for moving several retail projects ahead in his old South Bronx neighborhood, as well as Co-op City. Following this was a position as supervisor for the City Business Assistance Program (CBAP). Borough President Claire Shulman’s office recognized his hard work and hired him as their Director of Economic Development and Liaison to the African American community. Dr. Archer then became Director of Small Business Development for the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone in 1997, but shortly thereafter was hired as the Executive Director of Rockaway Development and Revitalization Corporation (RDRC), where he was successful in promoting the revitalization of the peninsula’s economic base and neighborhoods. Dr. Archer has been the recipient of many awards and citations, most recent of which was the “Distinguished Leadership and Service Award” from NYPACE (New York Professional Advisors for Community Entrepreneurs) in 2017. He went to Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, where he played varsity basketball, and graduated with a degree in sociology and criminal justice. He later attended Columbia University as a Ph.D. candidate in political science.



Michelle Cardel, Ph.D., M.S., R.D., FTOS

Speaker

Michelle Cardel is an obesity and nutrition scientist, registered dietitian, the Senior Director of Global Clinical Research & Nutrition at WW International, Inc. (formerly Weight Watchers) and a faculty member at the University of Florida (UF) College of Medicine, where she is also an Associate Director for the Center for Integrative Cardiovascular and Metabolic Diseases. Her research has focused on (1) implementing effective healthy lifestyle interventions for individuals with overweight/obesity, particularly among underserved populations, (2) characterizing psychosocial factors, including low social status and food insecurity, that contribute to the development of obesity, and (3) on improving gender and racial/ethnic equity in academia. Her specialties include nutrition, pediatric and adult obesity, psychosocial factors contributing to obesity, implementation science, and health disparities. Dr. Cardel is a member of American Society for Nutrition (ASN), and was selected as a Fellow of The Obesity Society for her contributions to the field of obesity. She has been co-I or PI on several funded obesity grants and is published more than 80 papers in high impact medicine, obesity, and nutrition journals including *JAMA*, *JAMA Pediatrics*, *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, and *Obesity*. Dr. Cardel has been presented with a variety of awards including the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Outstanding Woman Award, UAB’s President’s Diversity Award, The Obesity Society’s Ethan Sims Young Investigator Award finalist, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Excellence in Emerging Outcomes Research Award from the Weight Management Dietetic Practice Group, UAB’s National Alumni Society Young Alumni Rising Star Award, and UF’s Exemplary Teacher Award for the College of Medicine. Dr. Cardel received her bachelor’s degree in biology with a minor in Chemistry at Florida State University and is a registered dietitian. Her master’s degree in clinical nutrition and doctoral degree in nutrition sciences was awarded from University of Alabama at Birmingham.



Brian C. Castrucci, Dr. P.H.

Speaker

Brian C. Castrucci, is an epidemiologist, public health practitioner, and President and Chief Executive Officer of the de Beaumont Foundation. Over the past decade, Dr. Castrucci helped build de Beaumont into a leading voice in health philanthropy and public health practice by creating national projects that advocate for health and social policy change, develop cross-sector partnerships, and elevate the state and local public health agency workforce. Dr. Castrucci has formed several multi-funder collaboratives with nearly 20 business and philanthropic partners to align and expand available resources to achieve shared goals. Prior to joining de Beaumont, Dr. Castrucci worked for a decade as an applied epidemiologist and held leadership positions at the Georgia Department of Health, Texas Department of State Health Services, and Philadelphia Department of Health. Applying what he learned in his governmental public health practice, Dr. Castrucci has led the Foundation to the forefront of issues that include integrating primary care and public health, assessing the governmental public health workforce, and prioritizing partnerships and policies as critical to solving our most complex health challenges. Dr. Castrucci is a sought-after resource on public health issues contributing his expertise through interviews and editorials published in the Washington Post, the New York Times, CNBC, STAT, the Associated Press, The Atlantic, and Politico, among others. He also has appeared on CNN, MSNBC, C-SPAN, NPR, Fox News, Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien, and several local television affiliates. Dr. Castrucci has published nearly 90 peer-reviewed, scientific publications that have garnered more than 2,700 citations and has co-edited five books. Dr. Castrucci earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science with the greatest distinction from North Carolina State University. He holds a Master of Arts degree in sociomedical sciences from Columbia University and a doctorate in public health leadership from the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Sara J. Czaja, Ph.D., M.S.

Planning Committee Member and Moderator

Sara J. Czaja is a Professor of Gerontology and the Director of the Center on Aging and Behavioral Research in the Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine. She is also an Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine (UMMSM). Prior to joining the faculty at Weill Cornell, she was the Director of the Center on Aging at the UMMSM. Dr. Czaja is also the Director of the NIH multi-site Center for Research and Education on Aging and Technology Enhancement (CREATE) and Co-Director of the Center for Enhancing Neurocognitive Health, Abilities, Networks, & Community Engagement (ENHANCE), funded by NIDILRR. Her research interests include: aging and cognition, caregiving, aging and technology, aging and work, training, and functional assessment. She has received continuous funding from the National Institutes of Health and other funding agencies to support her research, and has published extensively on these topics. She is a fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA), the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, and the Gerontological Society of America. She served as the Past President of Division 20 (Adult Development and Aging) of APA, as a member of the National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences Board on Human Systems Integration, as a member of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on the Public Health Dimensions of Cognitive Aging and as a member of the IOM Committee on Family Caring for Older Adults. Dr. Czaja is the recipient of the 2020 M. Powell Lawton Award of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA), 2015 M. Powell Lawton Distinguished Contribution Award for Applied Gerontology from the APA; the 2013 Social Impact Award for the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) and the Franklin V. Taylor Award from Division 21 of APA. She is also the recipient of the Jack A. Kraft Award for Innovation from HFES, the APA Interdisciplinary Team, and the 2019 Richard Kalish Innovative Book Publication Award (GSA) with CREATE. Dr. Czaja holds an M.S. and Ph.D. in industrial engineering from the State University of New York (SUNY) University at Buffalo.



Heather D'Angelo, Ph.D., M.H.S.

Planning Committee Member

Heather D'Angelo is a Program Director at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in the Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch within the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Prior to joining NCI, Heather was an Assistant Scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. D'Angelo's research expertise focuses on reducing cancer health disparities by understanding the role of the social, built, communication, and policy environments in influencing health behaviors related to cancer risk, especially diet, physical activity, and tobacco use. Her research interests also include using multilevel communication interventions, health behavior theory, and implementation science strategies to improve the delivery of cancer preventive interventions in healthcare settings. Dr. D'Angelo completed her post-doctoral training as an NCI Cancer Prevention Fellow. Dr. D'Angelo received her B.S. in Biochemistry from Northeastern University and holds an M.H.S. in international health with a concentration in human nutrition from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She earned her doctorate in health behavior from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health.



Nikhil V. Dhurandhar, Ph.D., FTOS

Speaker

Nikhil V. Dhurandhar, is a Professor, Helen Devitt Jones Endowed Chair, and Chairperson of the Department of Nutritional Sciences at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX. Previously, he was the *John Henry Hernandez endowed Professor in Health Promotion* at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center of Louisiana State University, LA, and the *William Hardy Endowed Chair in Obesity Research* at Wayne State University, MI. During 2014-2015, he was president of The Obesity Society, which is the premier professional organization representing Canada, United States and Mexico. He is Editor-In-Chief of the International Journal of Obesity. As a physician and nutritional biochemist, he has been involved with obesity treatment and research for 40 years and has treated over 15,000 patients for obesity using lifestyle therapy as well as medication. Dr. Dhurandhar received the 2015 Osborne and Mendel award from the American Society for Nutrition given for "outstanding recent basic research accomplishments in nutrition", the 2017 Bluebonnet Award from the Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to recognize an individual who is not a dietitian, but who has contributed significantly to the advancement of nutrition and dietetics in Texas, a joint award from the American Society for Nutrition and the Korean Nutrition Society (2017) in recognition of outstanding research in nutrition science and practice, and from Texas Tech University, he received the 2018 Bernie Rushing Jr. Faculty Distinguished Research Award and President's Excellence in Research Commercialization Award for 2022. Dr. Dhurandhar has received over \$10 million as grants and endowments for research, plus, over \$4 million in grants as a co-investigator from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation and other non-profit or commercial funding sources. He has received 50 US and international patents that address various aspects of obesity and diabetes and has been funded for promoting drug development for diabetes. Dr. Dhurandhar has been a reviewer of grants for various funding agencies including the NIH and the American Diabetes Association, and has been a consultant to various organizations and companies. Dr. Dhurandhar has published over 170 scientific publications and given over 100 invited talks. His research focuses on molecular biological aspects of obesity and diabetes in particular, obesity due to microbes, and clinical treatment of obesity. He has conducted numerous clinical studies and has many ongoing clinical trials. Dr. Dhurandhar received his M.S. in nutrition and food science from North Dakota State University and his Ph.D. in biochemistry from University of Mumbai.



Anthony Iton M.D., J.D., M.P.H. *Speaker*

Anthony Iton is Senior Vice President for Programs & Partnerships at The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation whose mission is to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. Dr. Iton oversaw the implementation of Building Healthy Communities (BHC), the foundation's 10 year, billion dollar, 14 site, multi-sectoral, place-based initiative designed to improve the health status of 1 million low income Californians. Prior to that Dr. Iton served for seven years as the

Alameda County Health Officer and subsequently Public Health Director where he oversaw an agency with a focus on preventing communicable disease outbreaks, reducing the burden of chronic disease and obesity, and managing the county's preparedness for biological terrorism. Dr. Iton's primary interest is the health of disadvantaged populations and the contributions of race, class, wealth, education, geography, and employment to health status. He has asserted that in every public health area of endeavor, be it immunizations, chronic disease, HIV/AIDS, STDs, obesity, or even disaster preparedness, public health practitioners must recognize that they are confronted with the enduring consequences of structural poverty, institutional racism and other forms of systemic injustice. He has worked as an HIV disability rights attorney at the Berkeley Community Law Center, a health care policy analyst with *Consumer Reports*, and as a physician and advocate for the homeless at the San Francisco Public Health Department. He has served on the board of directors of Consumer Reports, Jobs For The Future, the Centers For Disease Control Directors Advisory Committee, and Grantmakers in Health. Dr. Iton received his M.D. at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and subsequently trained in internal medicine and preventive medicine at New York Hospital, Yale, and Berkeley and received board certification in both specialties. Dr. Iton also received a J.D. and a M.P.H. from the University of California, Berkeley and is a member of the California Bar.



Shiriki K. Kumanyika, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.S. *FNB Liaison and Speaker*

Shiriki K. Kumanyika is Emeritus Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, and Research Professor in the Department of Community Health & Prevention at the Dornsife School of Public Health at Drexel University. Dr. Kumanyika has a unique interdisciplinary background that integrates epidemiology, nutrition, social work and public health methods and perspectives. The main themes in her research concern prevention and control of obesity and other diet-

related risk factors and chronic diseases, with a particular focus on reducing health burdens in black communities. Dr. Kumanyika is the founding chair of the Council on Black Health (formerly the African American Collaborative Obesity Research Network (AACORN)), a national network hosted by Drexel, that seeks to develop and promote solutions that achieve healthy Black communities. She is a Past President of the American Public Health Association and has served in numerous advisory roles related to public health research and policy in the U.S. and abroad. She is a member of the National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Kumanyika chaired the Standing Committee on Obesity from 2009 until its retirement in 2013. She currently chairs the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Food and Nutrition Board. Dr. Kumanyika received her M.S. in social work from Columbia University, M.P.H. from The Johns Hopkins University, and Ph.D. in human nutrition from Cornell University.



Rodney Lyn, Ph.D., M.S.

Planning Committee Member and Moderator

Rodney Lyn serves as Dean of the School of Public Health at Georgia State University. He is also Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Behavioral Sciences. His research is focused on childhood obesity prevention, school and community health, and the reduction of health disparities. He has special interest in identifying effective policy and system approaches to increasing physical activity and healthy eating in children and has published numerous peer-reviewed articles on these topics. Dr. Lyn has led or contributed to funded grants totaling over \$16M from federal and state agencies, foundations, and not-for-profit organizations. He currently co-directs the Georgia State University

Prevention Research Center in Clarkston, GA. Supported by funding from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), the Center works in partnership with community leaders and organizations to identify pressing community health needs and to intervene through applied research. Other recent projects include the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health, a CDC-supported partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine to address food deserts; the Georgia Childhood Obesity Prevention Program, a multi-county initiative to support and accelerate local policy and environmental interventions for obesity prevention through funding from Healthcare Georgia Foundation; Partnerships to Improve Community Health, a CDC-supported partnership with Fulton County Health Department focused on tobacco prevention; and a study examining mortality disparities and resilience in low-income minority communities in the South, funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Dr. Lyn previously served as Deputy Director for GSU's NIH-funded Center of Excellence on Health Disparities Research. Dr. Lyn has advised and worked closely with state and federal agencies, professional associations, not-for-profits, and the philanthropic community on a variety of public health topics. He teaches graduate courses including Public Health Policy, Analysis, and Advocacy; Public Health Leadership and Policy; and Childhood Obesity Prevention. He is an active member of the American Public Health Association. Dr. Lyn received his B.A. from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in biology and physical education. He completed his M.S. in exercise science from Georgia State University where he also earned his Ph.D. in educational policy studies/ higher education.



Michelle Moskowitz Brown

Speaker

Michelle Moskowitz Brown is Executive Director at Local Matters and has built her leadership over the past 25 years in not-for-profit management. Ms. Moskowitz Brown is driven by a commitment to healthy communities, economic development, and the belief that everyone should have the knowledge, resources, and confidence to eat well. Her personal experience with food insecurity and her family's experience with diet-related disease fuel her work. At Local Matters, she focuses on growing organizational impact and increasing education and access to healthy, delicious, and affordable foods to ensure everyone can eat well and feed their family. The organization supports diverse populations,

including preschoolers in Columbus City Schools, women in recovery, and people managing chronic diseases. Local Matters partners with dozens of organizations in Columbus and central Ohio, and collaborates with partners across the state. Local Matters reaches over 20,000 individuals a year through life-changing programs. Currently, Ms. Moskowitz Brown chairs the Ohio Food Policy Network (OFPN), a statewide coalition dedicated to developing a food system that supports and serves all Ohioans, and she is a member of the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Board, steering the work of the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Action Plan, for which she served on the leadership team with county and city staff. Prior to beginning her work with Local Matters in 2011, Ms. Moskowitz Brown managed not-for-profit organizations and programs with a focus on arts and community development from her hometown of Brooklyn, NY, including the Foundation for Jewish Culture, BRIC Arts/Media/Bklyn, and Dancing in the Streets. Ms. Moskowitz Brown's volunteer work has included serving on the board of InHealth Mutual and VSA Ohio, the state organization on arts and disability. She is an active member at Kehilat Sukkat Shalom, where she provides governance and fundraising support. Additionally, she volunteers with New Salem Baptist Church's pantry and Food Rescue US / Columbus. Ms. Brown received her B.A. in dance anthropology from Antioch College, and she studied urban planning at NYU's Wagner School of Public Service. She holds a Graduate Certificate in public management from OSU's Glenn School of Public Affairs.



Stephanie A. Navarro Silvera, Ph.D., M.S.

Planning Committee Member, Roundtable Member, and Moderator

Stephanie A. Navarro Silvera is a Professor of Public Health at Montclair State University. She then went on to work as an epidemiologist at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the department of Epidemiology and Population Health before joining the faculty at MSU. During her professorship her work has focused on racial/ethnic disparities in health outcomes and she was awarded the prestigious National Cancer Institute's K01 Career Development Award in 2009 to pursue this work. She has also

served on the boards of the American Public Health Association Cancer Caucus, on the American Society for Preventive Oncology Junior Member and Membership Committees, and is a current member of the NJ Society for Public Health Education Academic Advisory Board. She has, more recently, been called upon by the NY/NJ media to serve as an expert to interpret and explain the epidemiology of the COVID-19 pandemic. After earning her B.S. in biology from Rutgers University, Dr. Silvera went on to earn a M.S. in nutritional sciences before working as a Nutrition Educator at the Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Food Program (WIC) at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Paterson, NJ. After working in that position for two years, Dr. Silvera went on to earn her doctorate in epidemiology from Yale School of Medicine, where she focused on nutritional epidemiology and cancer outcomes.



Angela Odoms-Young, Ph.D.
Speaker

Angela Odoms-Young is an Associate Professor and Director of the Food and Nutrition Education in Communities Program in the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University. Prior to joining Cornell, Dr. Odoms-Young was on the faculty at University of Illinois at Chicago in the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition. Her research explores social and structural determinants of dietary behaviors and diet-related diseases in low-income and Black/Latinx populations and centers on identifying

culturally appropriate programs and policies that promote health equity, food justice, and community resilience. Dr. Odoms-Young has over 20 years' experience partnering with communities to improve nutrition and health and 200+ academic publications, book chapters, and presentations. She has served on numerous advisory committees and boards including the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Food and Nutrition Board, the Institute of Medicine committees to develop the nutrition standards for the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program and revise the food packages provided in the Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Council on Black Health. Dr. Odoms-Young has also been a member of the Board of the Greater Chicago Food Depository (previous), American Heart Association Chicago Metro Board (current), Grow Greater Englewood (current), and Blacks in Green (current). She also currently serves as the inaugural Equity Visiting Scholar at Feeding America. Dr. Odoms-Young received her B.S. in foods and nutrition from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and M.S./Ph.D. in community nutrition from Cornell University. Additionally, she completed a Family Research Consortium Postdoctoral Fellowship examining family processes in diverse populations at the Pennsylvania State University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Community Health Scholars Fellowship in community-based participatory research at the University of Michigan School of Public Health.



May Okihiro, M.D.
Speaker

May Okihiro is an Associate Professor and Community Researcher at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics. She is also a Senior Pediatrician and the Director of Research at the Waiānae Coast Comprehensive Health Center. Born and raised in Hawaii, she earned her medical degree from the University of Hawaii and completed her pediatric residency at the University of Washington-Children's Hospital Program. Following residency, she worked abroad for several years in the Federated

States of Micronesia and in Fiji. Dr. Okihiro returned to Hawaii in 1999 and has been actively involved in promoting health and wellness through her research, advocacy and clinical work.



Rebecca L. Pearl, Ph.D.

Planning Committee Member and Moderator

Rebecca L. Pearl is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Clinical and Health Psychology and Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Florida College of Public Health and Health Professions. She was previously an Assistant Professor and Director of Research at the University of Pennsylvania Center for Weight and Eating Disorders, where she maintains an Adjunct appointment. Dr. Pearl is the Director of the Body Image and Stigma Laboratory, which investigates health- and appearance-related stigma and associated health outcomes. Her work explores biosocial mechanisms by which stigma affects health, as well as structural-level processes that may perpetuate or prevent stigma. Dr. Pearl's research primarily focuses on weight stigma, with a particular interest in developing interventions to reduce internalized stigma among patients with obesity. Her work has been recognized with awards from the American Psychological Association and The Obesity Society and is currently supported by a K23 Award from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Dr. Pearl received her A.B. from Duke University and her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Yale University. She completed her pre-doctoral clinical internship at McLean Hospital/Harvard Medical School and her post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania.



Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, Ph.D.

Speaker

Rafael Pérez-Escamilla is a tenured Professor at the Yale School of Public Health where he is also Director of the Office of Public Health Practice, the Global Health Concentration, and the Maternal Child Health Promotion Program. He is also the PI of the Yale-Griffin CDC prevention center (PRC). His three-decades long research program has led to large scale global improvements in infant and young child feeding; early childhood health and development; and household food and nutrition security outcomes. His domestic and international work has been based on rigorous and elegant community engaged observational epidemiological, experimental, and quasi-experimental studies complemented with implementation science mixed research methods. He has published over 315 peer reviewed research articles and has given hundreds of invited lectures across world regions. He is an elected member of the US National Academy of Medicine (NAM) and was awarded the 2021 Philip R. Nader Lectureship by the University of Texas School of Public Health. He has served as senior scientific advisor to the US Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The National Institutes of Health (NIH), The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNICEF, The World Health Organization, The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Eating Research initiative and Newman's Own Foundation, among others. Dr. Pérez-Escamilla received his B.S. in Chemical Engineering from Universidad Iberoamericana. He received his M.S. in Food Science and his Ph.D. in Nutrition from the University of California Davis where he also earned his postdoctoral training with a focus on the link between nutrition and early childhood development.



Lesley Shiery, M.S., R.D.

Planning Committee Member

Lesley Shiery is a registered dietitian and Associate Manager with the General Mills Bell Institute of Health & Nutrition. Ms. Shiery has experience in clinical nutrition, public relations and immediately prior to joining General Mills, she worked in retail as a corporate dietitian for Target. In her role at General Mills, she currently provides nutrition & regulatory support to the General Mills North America Foodservice business. Prior to supporting the foodservice team, she served as the health and wellness platform lead for the cereal and yogurt operating units developing health and nutrition strategies to support nutrition renovation, innovation, and message opportunities. She graduated from Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Science in nutrition and dietetics and received a Master of Science degree in nutrition communication from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. Ms. Shiery completed her dietetic internship at Yale New Haven Hospital.



Leah Whigham, Ph.D., FTOS

Planning Committee Member

Leah Whigham is the founding director of the Center for Community Health Impact (CCHI) and Associate Professor with The University of Texas Health Sciences Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health in the Department of Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences in El Paso, Texas. Dr. Whigham has over 20 years of experience in basic, clinical, and community sciences. Her research has increased our understanding of metabolism as it relates to obesity, the influence of nutrients and immune function

on body composition, and the impact of the environment on nutrition and physical activity. Driven by the needs of the community and informed by the best science, the CCHI provides a bridge between research and application to effectively mobilize individuals, families, organizations, and communities to build a culture of health. Dr. Whigham also serves on the Executive Committee as Secretary/Treasurer of The Obesity Society, the leading professional society dedicated to better understanding, preventing, and treating obesity, and Editor-in-Chief of Nutrition & Diabetes. Dr. Whigham received her B.A. from Iowa State University and her Ph.D. from University of Wisconsin- Madison.