

The National Academies of
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**COVID-19, Health Equity, and the Asian American,
Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian Communities:
A Virtual Workshop**

Presenter Biosketch

**Tuesday, December 7
Day 1: The Myth Constructed**

Victor J. Dzau, M.D.

Dr. Dzau is the President of the US National Academy of Medicine (NAM). In addition, he serves as Vice Chair of the US National Research Council. He is Chancellor Emeritus and James B. Duke Professor of Medicine at Duke University and the past President and CEO of the Duke University Health System. Previously, Dr. Dzau was the Hersey Professor of Medicine and Chairman of Medicine at Harvard Medical School's Brigham and Women's Hospital, as well as Bloomfield Professor and Chairman of Medicine at Stanford University. He is an internationally acclaimed leader and scientist has made a significant impact through his seminal research in cardiovascular medicine and genetics. His important work on the renin angiotensin system paved the way for the contemporary understanding of cardiovascular disease. He pioneered gene therapy for vascular disease and was the first to introduce DNA decoy molecules to block transcription as gene therapy in humans. His pioneering research in cardiovascular regeneration led to the Paracrine Hypothesis of stem cell action and the therapeutic strategy of direct cardiac reprogramming. At the National Academies, Dr Dzau has designed and led important initiatives such as the Commission on a Global Health Risk Framework for the Future; the Human Genome Editing Initiative; the Vital Directions for Health and Health Care, and the Action Collaborative on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic.

Howard K. Koh, M.D.

Dr. Koh is the Harvey V. Fineberg Professor of the Practice of Public Health Leadership at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health and the Harvard Kennedy School as well as Faculty Co-Chair of the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative. He is also the inaugural Chair of the Harvard Chan School of Public Health Initiative on Health and Homelessness. Previously at Harvard School of Public Health (2003-2009), he was Associate Dean for Public Health Practice. From 2009-2014, Dr. Koh was the 14th Assistant Secretary for Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), after being nominated by President Barack Obama and being confirmed by the U.S. Senate. During that time, he oversaw 12 core public health offices, including the Office of the Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, 10 Regional Health Offices across the nation, and 10 Presidential and Secretarial advisory committees. He served as senior public health advisor to the HHS Secretary and oversaw Healthy People 2020, the nation's public health agenda, promoted

the disease prevention and public health dimensions of the Affordable Care Act, advanced outreach to enroll underserved and minority populations into health insurance coverage, helped to coordinate federal response during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic and was the primary architect of landmark HHS strategic plans for tobacco control, health disparities (including Asian American and Pacific Islander health) and chronic hepatitis.

Nadia Islam, Ph.D., M.A., M.Phil.

Dr. Islam is an Associate Professor in the Department of Population Health at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine and the Associate Director for NYU Langone's Institute for Excellence in Health Equity. Her rigorous research program, marked by a collaborative approach involving multiple clinical and community stakeholders, focuses on developing culturally relevant community-clinical linkage models to promote health equity in disadvantaged communities. Dr. Islam co-directs the NYU-CUNY Prevention Research Center (PRC) and the Community Engagement and Population Health Research core of NYU's Clinical Translational Science Institute. She is also a lead investigator in the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health, the nation's only NIH-funded research center of excellence dedicated to eliminating disparities in Asian communities. Dr. Islam is the principal investigator on several NIH- and CDC-funded initiatives evaluating the impact of community health worker (CHW) interventions on chronic disease management and prevention in diverse populations. Dr. Islam is a medical sociologist with a doctorate in Sociomedical Sciences from Columbia University. Her work has been featured in the New England Journal of Medicine, JAMA, American Journal of Public Health, and numerous other peer-reviewed journals.

Brittany N. Morey, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Morey is an Assistant Professor of Public Health at University of California, Irvine. Dr. Morey's research focuses on how structural inequity shapes racial and ethnic health inequities. Much of this work focuses on how neighborhood social and physical environments contribute to health disparities, especially for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Her work also studies how U.S. immigration policies and anti-immigrant sentiments contribute to health disparities among broad populations of color. Overall, the goal of her research is to understand how society creates health inequities along the lines of race, ethnicity, nativity, and immigration status. With this understanding, we can create better policies and programs to address and undo the patterns of poor health we see today.

Currently, Dr. Morey is working as a co-investigator on a grant funded by the National Cancer Institute to examine how ethnic enclaves and neighborhood sociocultural institutions affect health outcomes for Asian American and Hispanic women with breast cancer. She also received funding to conduct research on how neighborhood social environments and environmental air toxicants affect respiratory health for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander sub-populations. An additional project is examining how anti-immigration policies and rhetoric are affecting mental health in the U.S.

Sheri Daniels, Ed.D., M.S.C.P.

Dr. Sheri-Ann Daniels joined Papa Ola Lōkahi as Executive Director in April 2016. She is a graduate of the Kamehameha Schools - Kapālama campus. She holds degrees in the field of counseling psychology and has several license certifications. She has more than 20 years of experience in social services programs across Hawai'i in both the non-profit and government sectors. She was recognized in 2014 with the Maui County Women of Excellence award.

Other awards include the Pacific Business News - 40 under 40 (2010) and Ka Ipu Kukui Fellow (2008). She is actively involved in various community organizations on Maui, including Hawaiian Language education.

Karthick Ramakrishnan, Ph.D.

Dr. Ramakrishnan is professor of public policy at the University of California, Riverside, and serves as the executive director of California 100, a transformative statewide initiative focused on building a shared vision and strategy for California's next century that is innovative, sustainable, and equitable. Ramakrishnan also founded the Center for Social Innovation at UC Riverside, and AAPI Data, a national publisher of demographic data and policy research on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). He has published many articles and 7 books, including most recently, *Citizenship Reimagined* (Cambridge, 2020) and *Framing Immigrants* (Russell Sage, 2016), and has written dozens of opeds and has appeared in nearly 3,000 news stories. Ramakrishnan was named to the Frederick Douglass 200 and is currently working on projects related to racial equity in philanthropy and regional development. He holds a BA in international relations from Brown University and a PhD in politics from Princeton.

Karla Thomas, M.P.H.

Ms. Thomas is the policy director and co-founder of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Data Policy Lab. As the policy director, she leads the activities for the Policy Platform, which is a community-driven effort focusing on best practices in data to achieve health equity for NHPIs. Prior to joining the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, Thomas worked with Pacific Islander-based organizations in the Inland Empire to advocate for disaggregated NHPI COVID-19 data, leading to collaborations with local departments of public health (DPH) in an effort to address the disproportionate impact of the virus on Pacific Islander communities. Thomas has co-led COVID-19 response projects contracted by Riverside County DPH that provided NHPIs and other under-resourced communities with culturally and linguistically relevant services including access to free testing sites, health education, and basic needs items such as food and PPE.

Dr. XinQi Dong, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Dong is director of the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, and the inaugural Henry Rutgers Distinguished Professor of Population Health Sciences. Dr. Dong is a population health epidemiologist and geriatrician, and has published extensively on violence prevention, elder justice and healthy aging, with more than 300 peer-reviewed publications. Dr. Dong has led multiple longitudinal epidemiological studies, including the New Jersey Population Health Cohort Study, a population-based cohort of 10,000 NJ persons with emphasis of 8 different immigrant groups, and The PINE Study of 3,300 Chinese older adults to quantify relationships among trauma, resilience and health outcomes. Dr. Dong is the principal investigator of numerous federally-funded grants, and has mentored many trainees and faculty researchers to success. He leads the National Institute on Aging (NIA)-funded P30 Asian Resource Center for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR) and National Institute on Minority Health and Disparity (NIMHD) – funded P50 Rutgers NYU Center for Asian Health Promotion and Equity. Dr. Dong served as a senior advisor for the Department of Health and Human Services under the Obama administration. His policy and advocacy work with the Department of Justice and Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention have also shaped the national agenda on the surveillance and preventive strategies combating issues of violence.

Thursday, December 9
Day 2: Deconstructing the Myth

Helen Zia

Ms. Zia is an activist, author, and former journalist. In 2000, her first book was published: *Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People*, a finalist for the prestigious Kiriya Pacific Rim Book Prize. She also authored the story of Wen Ho Lee in *My Country Versus Me*, about the Los Alamos scientist who was falsely accused of being a spy for China in the “worst case since the Rosenbergs.” She was Executive Editor of Ms. Magazine and a founding board co-chair of the Women’s Media Center. She has been active in many non-profit organizations, including Equality Now, AAJA, and KQED. Her groundbreaking articles, essays, and reviews have appeared in many publications, books, and anthologies, receiving numerous awards. The daughter of immigrants from China, Helen has been outspoken on issues ranging from human rights and peace to women’s rights and countering hate violence and homophobia. She is featured in the Academy Award-nominated documentary, *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* and was profiled in Bill Moyers’ PBS series, *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience*. In 2008 Helen was a Torchbearer in San Francisco for the Beijing Olympics amid great controversy; in 2010, she was a witness in the federal marriage equality case decided by the US Supreme Court.

Josie Howard, M.S.W.

Ms. Howard is Chief Executive Officers at We Are Oceania. She has over 10 years of servicing the community, with 8 years in the Department of Health Waiver program, 5 years in the Department of Education, and 5 years in program development, implementation, and piloting a one stop center model. Her community involvement includes being the founder of the Young Voyagers, a youth club in Media with ‘Ōlelo, and co-founder of the Micronesian Health Advisory Council, and Micronesian Cultural Awareness Project. Recently Ms. Howard earned her Master in Social Work and is now working as a Coordinator/Facilitator at EPIC ‘Ohana Inc. and as a Social Worker at the St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church. Josie is most recognized for her contribution to the “Micronesian Voices in Hawaii Conference” where she participated as one of six steering committee members who worked with Micronesian Government leaders, community leaders, as well as Conference sponsors. She is also known for her work at Goodwill Industries of Hawaii Inc.’s “Imi Loa Program” where she worked with families and their adult children providing direct services as well as managing the programmatic and fiscal operation. She successfully managed and grew the program from a one hundred eighty thousand dollars grant to a one million dollar grant after four years in operation. Mrs. Howard is a native of Onoun Island in Micronesia and she speaks Chuukese, Onounese, and English fluently.

Tavae Samuelu

Ms. Samuelu is Executive Director at Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC). She provides strategic oversight towards realizing EPIC’s mission to promote social justice by engaging the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities through culturally-relevant

development, advocacy, and research. She's passionate about liberation work and supporting the political consciousness and growth of youth. She is a passionate advocate for Pacific Islanders and is committed to liberation for all. Tavae was born and raised on Tongva Territory, and credits her time on unceded Ohlone land for her political consciousness. Before joining EPIC, Tavae served as the Development Director for the RYSE Youth Center in Richmond and has since become a member of RYSE's Board of Directors.

Juliet K. Choi, J.D.

Ms. Choi is president and Chief Executive Officer of the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF), a national health justice organization which influences policy, mobilizes communities, and strengthens programs and organizations to improve the health of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. She is an accomplished cross-sector leader and coalition builder who specializes in change management particularly in the areas of immigration, civil rights, healthcare and disaster relief. A senior executive, she served in the Obama administration as the former chief of staff and senior advisor of two federal agencies: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Prior to her political appointments, she led disaster relief operations and strategic partnerships at the American Red Cross as a member of the disaster leadership team. The proud daughter of South Korean immigrants, she is humbled to serve on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS and the boards of the NAPABA Law Foundation and YWCA USA.

Moderators

Winston Wong, M.D., M.S.

Dr. Wong is a Scholar in Residence at the UCLA Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Equity at the Fielding School of Public Health, UCLA. A fellow of the American Academy of Family Practice, Dr. Wong's professional career has encompassed leadership roles at community health centers, federal service and most recently at Kaiser Permanente, where he served as Medical Director for Community Benefit for over 17 years. His commitment to addressing health equity is anchored by his experience as a bilingual primary care community health center physician for the Asian immigrant community in Oakland Chinatown, which led him to leadership roles in the United States Public Health Service, where he served as HRSA's chief Clinical Officer for a region that spanned the Pacific and western United States. At Kaiser Permanente, he was responsible for its national philanthropic strategies to support clinical and population management initiatives with the safety net, and for its quality initiatives to address disparities within its 12 million membership. In 2016 he was appointed to the US DHHS Advisory Committee on Minority Health, and in 2019 was appointed chair. At the NASEM he chairs the Roundtable on Health Equity, and has served on the Board of Population Health and Public Health Practice. As a leader in philanthropy, he has active Board roles at the California Endowment and Grantmakers in Health. He is the current acting CEO and Chair of the National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians.

Michelle Wong, Ph.D.

Dr. Wong is a Health Science Specialist at the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System's Center for the Study of Healthcare Innovation, Implementation & Policy (CSHIIP). Her research interests are in health equity and social determinants of health, including how healthcare systems can address social determinants, including housing and community characteristics, as a means to improve health equity. Her prior research has examined the relationship between social determinants—including neighborhoods, family, and housing policies—and racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in obesity-related outcomes and behaviors. She has previously worked at the Brookings Institution and as a management consultant at IMS Health (now IQVIA). She received her PhD in public health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health from the Department of Health Policy and Management and a BS from Yale University in Molecular Biochemistry & Biophysics.

Ernest Moy, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Moy is the Executive Director of the Office of Health Equity of the VHA. This office manages and supports efforts to understand and reduce disparities in health and health care affecting Veterans. Currently, the office is coordinating analyses and messaging related to disparities in COVID-19 testing and treatment among Veterans and building tools to address structural bias, discrimination, and social determinants of health. Prior to joining VHA, he was a Medical Officer in the Office of Analysis and Epidemiology at the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). At CDC, he studied rural health disparities, analyzed linked hospital-vital statistics data to identify care patterns that placed patients at high risk for opioid poisoning death, and developed new data visualizations and partnerships for disseminating health statistics. Prior to CDC, he was Director of the Division in the Center for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) that designed and produced the National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report, submitted annually to Congress, and related web tools.

Melissa Simon, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Simon, MD MPH is the George H. Gardner Professor of Clinical Gynecology, Vice Chair of Research in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. She is also the Founder and Director of the Center for Health Equity Transformation and the Chicago Cancer Health Equity Collaborative. She has been recognized with numerous awards for her substantial contribution to excellence in health equity scholarship, women's health and mentorship, including her recent election to the National Academy of Medicine. She is also a member of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine's Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice and the Roundtable on the Promotion of Health Equity.

Karla Thomas, M.P.S.

Ms. Thomas is the policy director and co-founder of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Data Policy Lab. As the policy director, she leads the activities for the Policy Platform, which is a community-driven effort focusing on best practices in data to achieve health equity for NHPIs. Prior to joining the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, Thomas worked with Pacific Islander-based organizations in the Inland Empire to advocate for disaggregated NHPI COVID-19 data, leading to collaborations with local departments of public health (DPH) in an effort to address the disproportionate impact of the virus on Pacific Islander

communities. Thomas has co-led COVID-19 response projects contracted by Riverside County DPH that provided NHPs and other under-resourced communities with culturally and linguistically relevant services including access to free testing sites, health education, and basic needs items such as food and PPE. Thomas received a BA in anthropology from UCLA and an MPH from the University of Southern California, Keck School of Medicine.

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