

# Promising Strategies to Address Health Disparities Across the Reproductive Life Cycle. A Webinar

*July 24, 2024 | 12:00-1:15pm ET*

**SPEAKER BIOSKETCHES** *(in alphabetical order)*

Event webpage: [https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/43065\\_07-2024\\_promising-strategies-to-address-health-disparities-across-the-reproductive-life-cycle-a-webinar](https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/43065_07-2024_promising-strategies-to-address-health-disparities-across-the-reproductive-life-cycle-a-webinar)



**CLAIRE D. BRINDIS**, DrPH, MPH, Distinguished Professor of Health Policy and Pediatrics, University of California, San Francisco, is Emerita Director of the Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies. Incorporating a variety of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, as well as community participatory research, Dr. Brindis' research focuses on program evaluation and the translation of research into policy at the local, state, and national levels. As a bilingual, bi-cultural researcher, Dr. Brindis' research and personal commitment focuses on ameliorating the impact of social, health, and economic disparities among ethnic/racial populations, with a particular focus on

women, young adults, and adolescents and reproductive health. For example, Dr. Brindis co-led a multidisciplinary team evaluating California's Office of Family Planning's Family PACT program, a Federal 1115 Medicaid waiver. Evaluation findings indicated that this program successfully served nearly 1.3 million women and men annually, helping to avert approximately 300,000 pregnancies each year. For every dollar spent on the program, an estimated savings of \$5.83 in medical and social costs was realized through the prevention of unintended pregnancies up to five years after birth. Dr. Brindis' policy research focuses on how disparities impact health outcomes, with a special lens on women's health. Throughout these and other projects, Dr. Brindis is committed to the translation of research into action, including strategies for closing the gap between evidence-based innovation and its application to policy and programs. As a result, Dr. Brindis is often called upon to help a variety of community groups, international entities, and local, state, and the federal governments to help translate research findings into policy planning and program intervention development, including helping create the mandate for essential health benefits for women's preventive care at the federal level.



**RACHEL R. HARDEMAN**, PhD, MPH, is a tenured Professor in the Division of Health Policy & Management at the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health, the Blue Cross Endowed Professor in Health and Racial Equity, and the Founding Director of the Center for Antiracism Research for Health Equity (CARHE, pronounced "care"). She serves as a member of the Advisory Committee to the Director of the CDC, and she was named one of TIME's 2024 TIME100 most influential people in the world. A racial health equity researcher, she studies a critical and complex determinant of health inequity—racism. Her work contributes to a body of

knowledge that links structural racism to health in tangible ways, identifies opportunities for intervention, and dismantles the systems, structures, and institutions that allow inequities to persist. Dr. Hardeман leverages the frameworks of critical race theory and Reproductive Justice to inform her equity-centered work, which aims to build the empirical evidence of racism's impact on health. Her published work has elicited important conversations on the topics of culturally-centered care, police brutality and structural racism as a fundamental cause of health inequities. Since founding CARHE in 2021, Dr. Hardeман has built upon a foundation of authentic community and academic partnerships, deepening her work with Reproductive Justice and expanding into new areas. CARHE's research projects encompass maternal and infant health, adolescent and child health, older adult health, innovative measurements of structural racism, economy and labor, and criminal justice. Narrative change is also a core mission at CARHE, and the team actively engages in serving as trusted resources for journalists, policy makers, and community members in Minnesota and across the U.S.



**WILLI HORNER-JOHNSON**, PhD, is a Professor in the collaborative Oregon Health & Science University - Portland State University School of Public Health and in OHSU's Institute on Development and Disability. She received a PhD in Community Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago, with a minor in Statistics, Methods, and Measurement. Her research interests include disability-related disparities in health and access to care; pregnancy, contraceptive use, and other aspects of reproductive health of adolescents and adults with disabilities; and the potentially compounded disparities that may occur as disability intersects

with other sociodemographic characteristics. Dr. Horner-Johnson directs the Oregon Office on Disability and Health and co-directs the National Center for Disability and Pregnancy Research.

She is also co-Principal Investigator of NIH-funded studies on perinatal disparities at the intersection of race, ethnicity, and disability; and reproductive health care barriers and disparities among adolescents and young adults with disabilities; and she is Principal Investigator of an NIH-funded project on reproductive decision-making among women with developmental disabilities. She is a past chair of the American Public Health Association's Disability Section and an editorial board member for *Disability and Health Journal*.



**GUNISHA KAUR**, MD, MA, is an anesthesiologist specializing in global health and human rights. She serves as Director of the Global Health Initiative and Program Director of the Global Health Fellowship in the Department of Anesthesiology at Weill Cornell Medicine. She is also Co-Medical Director of the Weill Cornell Medicine Center for Human Rights. A graduate of Cornell University and Weill Cornell Medical College, Dr. Kaur completed her anesthesiology residency training at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center in 2014. She earned an MA in medical anthropology from Harvard University in 2015. Dr. Kaur's research interests focus on displaced populations such as migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. She has conducted several studies on chronic pain in refugee torture survivors, violence

against women and girls in refugee camps, and persistent trauma after human rights violations. In 2008, she published the book, *Lost in History: 1984 Reconstructed*, which documents human rights violations in South Asia, and in 2018 published an interactive, digital textbook, *Essentials of Global Health and Human Rights for Physicians*. Her research has been supported by the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research, the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, the Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs at Cornell University, the Office of the President at Cornell University, and through an NIH KL2 award from the Weill Cornell Medicine Clinical and Translational Science Center.



**CAROLYN SUFRIN**, MD, PhD, is a medical anthropologist and an obstetrician-gynecologist specializing in Complex Family Planning at Johns Hopkins University, where she is Associate Professor in the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics and Associate Director of the Center for Medical Humanities and Social Medicine at the School of Medicine; she also holds an appointment in Health, Behavior and Society at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She has worked extensively on reproductive health issues affecting incarcerated

women, from providing clinical care in jail, to research, policy, and advocacy. Her work is

situated at the intersection of reproductive justice, health care, and mass incarceration, which she examines in her book, [Jailcare: Finding the Safety Net for Women Behind Bars](#). Dr. Sufrin obtained her undergraduate degree in anthropology and chemistry from Amherst College, a master's degree in social anthropology from Harvard University, and her MD from Johns Hopkins University. After her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Pittsburgh, she completed a fellowship in family planning at University of California, San Francisco, where she also obtained a PhD in medical anthropology. As director of [Advocacy and Research on Reproductive Wellness of Incarcerated People](#) at Johns Hopkins, Dr. Sufrin continues to do research and advocacy dedicated to improving reproductive health care for incarcerated women and to contributing to broader conversations of criminal legal system reform.