

Strengthening Indigenous America: Building Resilience through Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery (A Workshop)

SPEAKERS BIOSKETCHES



DORE A. BIETZ

Office of Emergency Services Assistant Director
Tuolumne County Administrative Office

Dore A. Bietz (Northern and Southern Me-Wuk) is an enrolled member of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians and serves as the first ever full-time Office of Emergency Services Assistant Director for Tuolumne County. Dore understands the complexities of local, state, tribal and federal governments, and the need to foster better communication between partners and various agencies before disasters occur. Her experience working with her tribe and the local public health office during COVID and now as a local government representative in Emergency Management, allows her to share best practices in Building Resilience through Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery.



KEOLA CHAN

Kumu Lapa'au
Ka Pā o Lonopūhā
Native Hawaiian

Keola Kawai'ula'iliahī Chan has emerged as a pivotal force in Native Hawaiian healing traditions over the last 25 years. Beginning with his founding of Ka Pā o Lonopūhā, he pursued his vision of "a healer in every home," resulting in the graduation of 56 Hawaiian healers. Since 1999, he has shared critical healing practices like lomilomi, lā'au lapa'au, and ho'oponopono. His establishment of Hui Maui Ola in 2002 further empowered Native Hawaiians, underscoring his deep commitment to cultural preservation and community well-being. His educational contributions have profoundly impacted Hawaiian healing arts, culminating in his recognition as "Educator of the Year" by the Native Hawaiian Education Association in 2021. In 2022, Keola revitalized the 'ūniki (traditional graduation) process, earning the title of Kahuna Lapa'au and marking a significant resurgence in traditional practices. His role expanded nationally in 2023 through the Luce Indigenous Knowledge Fellowship, leading to the creation of Hui Ho'omalū for Lahaina's fire-affected residents, showcasing his dedication to culturally integrated community support. Keola's visionary leadership not only honors Hawaiian heritage but actively forges a path toward its flourishing future, making him a guardian of culture and an architect of community resilience.

**LANOR CUROLE, MA**

Tribal Administrator
United Houma Nation

Lanor Curole is a citizen of the United Houma Nation of southeast Louisiana and a life-long resident of Lafourche Parish (county) where she continues to live within the tribal community and is pleased to have the opportunity to work for the betterment of her people as the Tribal Administrator for the last 14 years. Ms. Curole grew up in the small community of Golden Meadow where her family lived a good life seasonally off the land. Her mother, the daughter of a fisherman, had a 7th grade education from the separate, but equal "Settlement School." Consequently, Lanor, a 1990 graduate, and her siblings were the first generation in their family to be allowed to graduate from high school. She proudly earned a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing from Nicholls State University and a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Western Washington University.

**HEATHER ERB, J.D.**

Chief Policy Advisory
American Indian Health Commission

Heather Erb owns a law practice in Bellingham, Washington and has been practicing law for the last sixteen years. She represents nonprofits, Tribes, and Tribal organizations in public health, healthcare legal policy, contract drafting and negotiation, mutual aid agreements, emergency preparedness, code/ordinance development, and nonprofit corporate governance. In her representation of the American Indian Health Commission, Heather assisted in drafting the Washington Indian Health Improvement Act and the Washington Indian Behavioral Health Act. She has previously provided training and outreach to tribal members, leaders, and Indian health program staff and administration across the State of Washington on American Indian and Alaska Native income tax exemptions, Medicaid expansion, cost-sharing, premium sponsorship, and contracting with qualified health plans. In the early years of her career, Heather served as an assistant state attorney prosecuting felony crimes.

**BRENDA GRANILLO, DBH, M.S., MEP**

Associate Research Professor
The University of Arizona

Brenda Granillo is an Associate Research Professor with the Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW) at the University of Arizona. Dr. Granillo is a public health practitioner and behavioral health socio-psychological researcher working on projects that focus on improving access to treatment of substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health disorders and systems of care targeting underserved and under resourced populations. Dr. Granillo has specialized expertise in emergency preparedness and disaster response, and working with Native American communities, promoting best practices, respecting sovereignty, and consultative approaches using culturally appropriate participatory processes for community mobilization, empowerment and capacity building.



NICKOLAUS D. LEWIS

Chairman, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board
Secretary, National Congress of American Indians
Lummi Nation

Nickolaus D. Lewis is a member of the Lummi Nation Tribe of Washington State and the Chairman of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board. Juts-kadim' Nickolaus Dee Lewis is a tribal citizen of the Lummi Nation in Washington State, a proud veteran serving 8 honorable years in the U.S. Navy (2000 to 2008), and the father of three children. Mr. Lewis is the grandson of the late Chief Sa-hum-kun (Donald Lewis) of the Lummi Nation and believes that as his grandson he must honor his name by serving his people as his grandfather has done before him. Mr. Lewis also believes that as an elected leader of the Lummi Nation, his primary job is to serve the people. This belief has driven his work addressing homelessness on and off the reservation. Mr. Lewis currently serves as a Councilmember of the Lummi Indian Business Council. He has also been placed on multiple boards and committees, tribal and non-tribal, with a focus on judicial and health-related issues. Prior to his service on Tribal Council, Mr. Lewis worked as a juvenile and adult probation officer where he helped create the first Swift, Certain, and Fair Probation Model for a Native American Tribe, inspired by HOPE Probation in Hawaii. This model was called Lummi Chinqinst Probation, as "Chinqinst" translates to "Beginning to be on the right path."



CAROLYN A. LIEBLER, PH.D., M.S.

Professor of Sociology
University of Minnesota

Carolyn A. Liebler is a professor of sociology and a faculty affiliate of the Institute for Social Research and Data Innovation at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Her research focuses on the intersection of population studies and the social construction of race, with a special emphasis on how data on Indigenous peoples and Tribal Nations can be interpreted and used in a good way. Liebler completed the NIH-funded demography training program at the University of Wisconsin's Center for Demography and Ecology and her post-doctoral training was at the Minnesota Population Center working with census data in IPUMS USA. She has a B.A. degree in sociology with a minor in statistics from Rice University, and an M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



OREN R. LYONS

Faithkeeper
Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation
Onondaga Nation

Oren Lyons, a FaithKeeper of the Turtle Clan who serves as a Member Chief of the Onondaga Council of Chiefs and the Grand Council of the Iroquois Confederacy (i.e. the Haudenosaunee peoples), is an accomplished artist, social and environmental activist, and author; a Professor Emeritus at SUNY Buffalo; a leading voice at the UN Permanent Forum on Human Rights for Indigenous Peoples; and the recipient of many prestigious national and international prizes including The UN NGO World Peace Prize. Oren also serves on the boards of several major nonprofit organizations and social enterprises; is the founder and Principal of One Bowl Productions, a purpose-driven film and TV production company; and is an All-American Lacrosse Hall of Famer and Honorary Chairman of the Iroquois National Lacrosse Team.

**DAN MARTINEZ**

Tribal Emergency Manager
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

Born and raised by his single father in Salinas, California, Martinez is a United States Veteran who served as a Marine sergeant during the Vietnam War. After returning to the United States, he eventually settled in Warm Springs, the hometown of his late mother, Henrietta Kalama. In Warm Springs, he met his wife, raised a family and launched a career as an emergency medical technician for Warm Springs Fire & Safety. Soon he moved up in the agency, spending 17 years as fire chief. Martinez is the emergency manager for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in Jefferson County.

**JESSICA MCKEE, M.P.H.**

Tribal Foundational Public Health Services Coordinator
Emergency Response Lead
American Indian Health Commission

Jessica McKee has served as the Tribal Foundational Public Health Services Coordinator and Emergency Response Lead with the American Indian Health Commission since December 2022. Prior to that role, Jessica worked at the Washington State Department of Health serving as the Immunization Emergency Response Planning Coordinator during the height of the pandemic from September 2019 to February 2021. She transitioned into the role of COVID-19 Vaccine Assurance and Accountability Supervisor followed by IIS Data Quality and Enrollment Supervisor during the rest of her tenure at the Washington State Department of Health. Jessica earned her Master of Public Health degree in 2017 from Benedictine University and her Bachelor's degree in Biology from Pacific Lutheran University in 2014 and is a Ph.D. candidate studying epidemiology.

**RADM (RET.) KEVIN MEEKS**

Deputy Secretary of Health
Tribal Coordinating Officer
Chickasaw Nation

Rear Admiral (Ret.) Kevin Meeks is a Chickasaw Citizen and currently serves as the Deputy Secretary of Health for the Chickasaw Nation. Before coming to the Nation, RADM Meeks served as a Commissioned Officer in the US Public Health Service assigned to the Indian Health Service. In May, 2024, RADM Meeks was also appointed by Governor Anoatubby to represent the Chickasaw Nation as the Tribal Coordinating Officer in response to natural disasters in Southern Oklahoma. RADM Meeks, raised in Byng, Oklahoma, earned a bachelor's degree from East Central University and a master's degree in public health from the University of Oklahoma. During his 32-year career in the United States Public Health Service, he was instrumental in the management and improvement of Indian Health Care in Oklahoma and across the country. His career began in 1987 in South Dakota where he served as an Environmental Health Specialist. In 1989 he transferred to Claremore, Oklahoma followed by an assignment to the Alaska Area IHS. In 1995, he was transferred to the Oklahoma City Area Office. From 1995 to 2009, he fulfilled various management positions in the Oklahoma City Area Office, including Environmental Health Services Branch Chief and Director of Office of Environmental Health and Engineering. In 2007, he was selected as the Southeast Regional Commissioned Corps Liaison, providing personnel services to more than 300 commissioned officers assigned to the Oklahoma City, Nashville, and Albuquerque areas. In 2009, RADM

Meeks was selected as the Area Director of the Oklahoma City Area Indian Health Service where he served from until 2017. As the Area Director, he was the senior federal official responsible for the provision of comprehensive healthcare services to one of the largest and most diverse service populations in IHS. RADM Meeks was ultimately promoted to the IHS Deputy Director of Field Operations in 2017, where he directed 12 IHS Area Offices and was a crucial leader in providing quality health care to 2.2 million American Indians/Alaska Natives. In 2018, RADM Meeks was awarded the Surgeon General's Medallion by United States Surgeon General Jerome Adams and in 2019 he received the Surgeon General's Exemplary Service Medal and the Distinguished Service Medal. In 2020, RADM Meeks received the highest honor of his career when he was inducted into the Chickasaw Nation Hall of Fame. Shortly after being inducted, he was named as the Deputy Secretary of Health by Governor Anoatubby.



TERESA MONTOYA, PH.D.

Assistant Professor of Anthropology
The University of Chicago
Navajo (Diné) Nation

Teresa Montoya is an assistant professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. Her research and media production focuses on contemporary problems of toxic contamination in relation to historical legacies of land dispossession and resource extraction across the Indigenous Southwest. Her current manuscript project, *Permeable: Diné Politics of Extraction and Exposure*, draws upon ethnography and oral history to analyze ongoing environmental and legal impacts for Diné communities following the 1979 Church Rock uranium spill and the 2015 Gold King mine spill across the Navajo Nation. Her broader research interests include tribal jurisdiction and sovereignty around environmental issues, public health, and water governance of the Colorado River. She currently serves as an advisory board member for HWISE-RCN, the Household Water Insecurity Experiences Research Coordination Network as well as a member of the Nominations Committee for the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. She is Diné and an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation.



MEGHAN C. O'CONNELL, M.D., M.P.H.

Chief Public Health Officer
Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board
Cherokee Nation

Meghan Curry O'Connell serves as the Chief Public Health Officer at the Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board (GPTLHB), representing 18 tribal communities across Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Her work in securing tribal health data has been instrumental in advancing tribal sovereignty. Under her leadership, the Great Plains Tribal Epidemiology Center (GPTEC), an essential component of GPTLHB, has thrived as a hub of technical support and advocacy for tribal communities in the region. Dr. O'Connell's educational background from Grinnell College and the University of Washington underscores her expertise in both medical practice and public health administration. After completing her residency in family medicine at North Colorado Family Medicine Residency, Dr. O'Connell has dedicated her career to providing comprehensive healthcare in tribal and underserved areas. Her contributions not only improve individual health outcomes but also significantly contribute to advancing health equity and tribal self-governance.

**GERARD SAGASSIGE, TMP**

Traditional Ojibway Practitioner
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe Health
Ojibwe

Gerard Sagassige is from Curve Lake First Nation, being raised within Creation's realms was a thesis spirit learning from parents, grandparents, and the medicine community within North American Tribes and Nations. Honored Responsibilities include Ceremonies, Spirit Ceremonies, Healing Ceremonies, Spirit Feast, and Medicine Harvesting.

**FAWN R. SHARP, J.D.**

Immediate Past President
National Congress of American Indians
Quinault Indian Nation

Fawn R. Sharp is the President and CEO of Sharp Global Development, LLC. Previously she served as the 23rd President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native tribal government organization in the country. President Sharp was elected on October 24, 2019 at NCAI's 76th Annual Convention & Marketplace. Sharp is the third woman to hold the position of NCAI President. President Sharp also served as Vice President of the Quinault Indian Nation in Taholah, Washington, after being a five term past-President. Her past positions included managing attorney and lead counsel; and staff attorney for the Quinault Indian Nation, administrative law judge for the Washington state Department of Revenue – Tax Appeals Division, Quinault Tribal Court Associate Judge, and Counsel for Phillips, Krause & Brown. Ms. Sharp has held numerous leadership positions, including an appointment by Governor Gary Locke to serve as Trustee for Grays Harbor College, Governor of the Washington State Bar Association, Trustee of Washington State Bar Association – Indian Law Section, Vice President and Founding Member for the National Intertribal Tax Alliance, and Director/Secretary of the Quinault Nation Enterprises Board. Fawn has conducted lectures and publications all over the United States. Ms. Sharp graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Gonzaga University in Spokane Washington. She received her Juris Doctorate from the University of Washington in 1995 and has subsequently received certificates from the National Judicial College at the University of Nevada, and from the International Human Rights Law at Oxford University.

**CRISTINA TOLEDO-CORNELL, M.D.**

Attending Physician
Director of Nocturnist service
Brigham and Women's Hospital

Cristina Toledo-Cornell is originally From Brazil. She grew up in a rural community, where her parents were farmers. She holds a bachelor's degree in Biological Sciences from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. She obtained her Medical Doctorate Degree at the Weill Cornell Medical College of Cornell University in New York City. While in Medical school, she spent a year doing research on neglected tropical diseases as a scholar of the Fogarty Institute of the National Institutes of Health in Bahia, Brazil. She graduated in 2013 and completed the Doris and Howard Hiatt Residency in Global Health Equity and Internal Medicine at the Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard University in 2017. While in Residency, Dr. Toledo-Cornell completed a master's in public health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Dr. Toledo-Cornell Joined the

Lummi Nation, located in Bellingham Washington, as a Primary care Doctor and their Director of Public Health in July 2018, and held the position until June 2021, where she was an integral part of the Lummi Nation's successful response to the virus. She is a hospitalist and director of the nocturnist service, associate director of hospital Medicine at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, and an instructor of Medicine at the Harvard Medical School.



MEL TONASKET

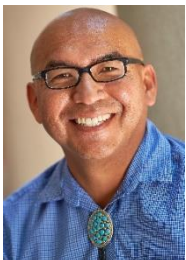
Council Member
Confederate Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Colville Tribes



DONALD WARNE, M.D., M.P.H.

Co-Director
Johns Hopkins Center for Indigenous Health
Oglala Lakota

Donald Warne serves as the Co-Director of the Center for Indigenous Health and as a tenured, Full-Professor at the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD where he also serves as the Provost Fellow for Indigenous Health Policy. Dr. Warne is also the Senior Policy Advisor to the Great Plains Tribal Leader's Health Board in Rapid City, SD. Dr. Warne is a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe from Pine Ridge, SD, and comes from a long line of traditional healers and medicine men. Donald Warne received his M.D. from Stanford University School of Medicine in 1995 and his M.P.H. from Harvard School of Public Health in 2002. His work experience includes several years as a primary care physician with the Gila River Health Care Corporation in Arizona; Staff Clinician with the National Institutes of Health; Indian Legal Program Faculty with the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University; Health Policy Research Director for Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona; Executive Director of the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board; Chair of the Department of Public Health at North Dakota State University; and Indigenous Health Department Chair and Associate Dean of the School of Medicine & Health Sciences at the University of North Dakota. Dr. Warne is also a member of the Stanford University Alumni Hall of Fame.



DEL YAZZIE, M.P.H.

Senior Epidemiologist
Navajo Epidemiology Center
Navajo (Diné) Nation

Del Yazzie works as the Director/Senior Epidemiologist for the Navajo Epidemiology Center. He received his M.P.H. degree from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He was born and raised in Cove, AZ in the Navajo Nation. His maternal clan is Red House, his paternal clan is Red Running into Water Clan, his maternal grandfather's clan is Yucca Fruit Strung Out in a Line, and his paternal grandfather's clan is Coyote Pass. His work focuses on public health disease surveillance related to infectious disease, cancer, maternal and child health, and public health policy evaluation. He also holds several key leadership roles on the Navajo Nation, including serving as a member of the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board (Tribal IRB) and public health advisor for the President of the Navajo Nation.

