Community Engaged Research to Improve Diet, Nutrition, and Health: A Workshop

Committee

Susan C. Scrimshaw

Chair

Susan C. Scrimshaw, PhD, is past President of Russell Sage College, Troy and Albany, NY. Previous positions include President of Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts, Dean of the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Associate Dean of Public Health and Professor of Public Health and Anthropology at the University of California at Los Angeles. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of Speare Memorial Hospital in Plymouth, N.H. She recently co-chaired the National Academies of Science Committee on Women's Empowerment, Population Dynamics, and Socioeconomic Development and co-edited the committee report (2025). Earlier, she chaired the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Birth Settings and co-edited the report Birth Settings in America: Outcomes, Quality, Access and Choice (National Academies Press 2020). She was lead editor for the second edition of The Handbook of Social Studies in Health and Medicine, (2021, Sage Publications, London). Her research includes community participatory research methods, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, health disparities, pregnancy outcomes, health communication, and culturally appropriate delivery of health care. When she was elected to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) in 1993, she and her father, Dr. Nevin S. Scrimshaw became the first father/daughter members of the NAM. She is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Anthropological Association. She served on the Chicago and Illinois State Boards of Health and the New York State Minority Health Council. She is past president of the Society for Medical Anthropology, and former chair of the Association of Schools of Public Health. She was a member of the board of governors of the US-Mexico Foundation for Science (FUMEC) for 10 years and served as board president for 3 of those years. Her honors include the Yarmolinsky Medal, given by the National Academy of Medicine for distinguished service, the Margaret Mead Award from the American Anthropological Association, and a Hero of Public Health gold medal awarded by President Vicente Fox of Mexico. Dr. Scrimshaw lived in Guatemala until age 16. She speaks Spanish, French and Portuguese. She obtained a PhD in anthropology from Columbia University.

Uriyoán Colón-Ramos

Member

Uriyoán Colón Ramos, ScD, MPA, is a public health nutrition scientist with expertise in the use of community-participatory mixed methods approaches. She directs the Diet Disparities Co-Lab, where she studies what people eat, why they make those choices, and how policies and programs can best facilitate health promoting diet behaviors. She has worked extensively across the Americas to examine how policies and nutritional guidance align with the lived experiences of the communities that she works with. Colón Ramos is currently an Associate Professor at the Bursky School of Public Health in Washington University (WashU), MO. Before joining WashU she was an associate professor with the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University (GW) and was an affiliated faculty member of the Global Food Institute at GW. Her research program has been supported by private foundations and federal agencies and is often published in diet and nutrition-related journals including the Journal of Nutrition, the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Public Health Nutrition. Dr. Colón Ramos earned a Doctor of Science (ScD) in Nutrition from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Public Administration (MPA) from Cornell University.

Melanie Hall

Member

Melanie Hall, MS, RD, is the Chief Health, Research, and Evaluation Officer at Feeding America, where she leads national teams responsible for population research on the causes and consequences of food insecurity, evaluation capacity building for community-based organizations, and the development of Food Is Medicine implementation strategies for food insecure communities. With a 20-year career as a programmatic innovator, Ms. Hall has used rigorous research to design, test, and scale solutions that improve nutrition access and program performance. At the California Department of Public Health, she conducted community nutrition and physical activity research and helped lead statewide fruit and vegetable campaigns for SNAP households. At Kellogg, she directed a research team that built a multimethod learning strategy to understand the needs of WIC clients—work that informed new WICeligible cereals, merchandising approaches, and WIC staff resources that improved engagement and supported healthier eating patterns. Ms. Hall holds an MS in Nutrition Communications from Tufts University, completed her dietetic internship at the Frances Stern Nutrition Center, and earned her BS in Nutrition Science from the University of California, Berkeley.

David E. Hayes-Bautista

Member

David E. Hayes-Bautista, PhD, is Distinguished Professor of Medicine and Director of the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. He graduated from U.C. Berkeley and completed his doctoral work in Basic Sciences at the University of California Medical Center, San Francisco. He served on the faculty at the School of Public Health at U.C. Berkeley until 1987, when he took his current position at UCLA. His research on the Latino Epidemiological Paradox led him to find links between culture, behavior, history and health. His recent books include La Nueva California: Latinos from Pioneers to Post-Millennials (University of California Press, 2017) and The Latino Big Bang in California: The Diary of Justo Veytia, a Mexican Forty-Niner (University of New Mexico Press, 2023). In 2012, he received the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Herbert W. Nickens Award for his lifelong concerns about the educational, societal, and health care needs of underrepresented groups, and received in 2016 the Ohtli Award from the Mexican Government for his work in transnational health.

Ronald E. Kleinman

Member

Ronald E. Kleinman, MD, is Physician in Chief Emeritus of the Massachusetts General for Children (MGfC), and the Charles Wilder Distinguished Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Kleinman’s major areas of research interest include gastrointestinal immunology, nutrition support of infants and children, and nutrition and public health policy. Dr. Kleinman’s professional affiliations include the American Gastroenterological Association, North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN), and American Pediatric Society/Society for Pediatric Research. He is the author of more than 150 peer-reviewed publications, chapters, monographs and the editor of 4 textbooks. Dr. Kleinman was a founder and past president of the International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity. He has been a member of the Medical Advisory Group on Diet and Nutrition Guidelines in Cancer for the American Cancer Society, the National Cholesterol Advisory Committee of the National Heart Lung, Blood Institute, a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine committees on Standards for School Meals, the Science of Adolescent Health and Medicine, the Impact of Pregnancy Weight on Maternal and Child Health, and Obesity Prevention for young Children, and is currently a member of the Standing Committee on Evidence Synthesis, and Communications in Diet and Chronic Disease Relationships. He serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the David Ortiz Childrens' Fund, Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Global Child Nutrition Foundation, member of the Advisory Board of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF New England Region, member of the Board of Trustees for the Science Literacy Project, member of the Board of Trustees for the European Biomedical Research Institute, Salerno, Italy and is a past Chair of the Board for Project Bread, Boston and a past member of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital Physicians Organization. He was the Chair of the NIH/NICHD Workshop Planning Committee for the Dietary Guidelines: Birth to 24 Months, and served as Vice Chair for the USDA/HHS Dietary Guidelines 2020-25 Advisory Committee. Dr. Kleinman has served as Chair of the Committee on Nutrition for the American Academy of Pediatrics and is the editor of the 4th-8th editions of the Academy’s textbook, Pediatric Nutrition, and served as the founding Editor-in-Chief for Current Pediatrics Reports. He is the recipient of the Murray Davidson Award and the Samuel J Fomon Nutrition Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Shiriki K. Kumanyika

Member

Shiriki Kumanyika, PhD, is Professor Emerita of Epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine. For the first 10 years post-retirement from Penn in 2015, she was a part-time Research Professor in Community Health & Prevention at the Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health. Dr. Kumanyika has engaged extensively in research and policy guidance related to nutrition and obesity, health disparities, and healthy equity. While active at Penn, she led an NIH-funded EXPORT Center for Inner City Health, which included development of an academic-community partnership in West Philadelphia. She also founded the Council on Black Health, Inc., a national research and action network that advances black health equity. Dr. Kumanyika is a NAM member, past president of the American Public Health Association, and has received numerous honors and awards. She holds a BA in psychology from Syracuse University, MS in social work from Columbia University, PhD in human nutrition from Cornell University, and Master of Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins. Relevant prior NRC service includes 6 years as chair of the Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), 5 years as FNB Standing Committee on Childhood Obesity Prevention Chair, and 10 years on the FNB Roundtable on Obesity Solutions.

Melissa N. Laska

Member

Melissa N. Laska, PhD, RD is a Distinguished McKnight University Professor in the Division of Epidemiology & Community Health at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, where she has been a faculty member since 2005. She currently co-leads the University of Minnesota Prevention Research Center, Healthy Weight Research Center and Program in Public Health Nutrition. Dr. Laska’s research focuses on population-level approaches to improving nutrition and health, with emphasis on food environments, food security and nutrition policies and systems to promote healthy eating and prevent diet-related diseases. Through partnerships with community organizations, public health agencies, and other interest groups, her work aims to generate actionable evidence that supports community uptake of evidence-based strategies for health. She received her BS with Honors in Nutritional Sciences from Cornell University, completed her RD training and supervised practice at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and received her PhD in Nutrition from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health.

Jennifer G. Reynolds

Member

Jennifer Reynolds, MPH, is Senior Manager of Health Communications and Marketing at Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU), where she specializes in formative research, community-engaged design, message testing, and campaign evaluation. She leads a team executing federal health communication contracts for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and partners with universities, professional associations, and community-based organizations nationwide. Ms. Reynolds has 20 years of experience translating public health evidence into actionable, tailored messages and campaigns for diverse audiences, including communities experiencing health inequities due to social and structural barriers. In 2020, she led collaborative messaging workshops with people experiencing homelessness to develop culturally appropriate COVID-19 materials and a strategic communications plan for CDC. She led content development for CDC MessageWorks, a behavioral science tool that helps communicators apply message tactics across audience variables to increase the likelihood of behavior change. Ms. Reynolds and her team supported the four universities participating in the NIH/SAMHSA HEALing Communities Study, partnering with 64 communities across four states to design and disseminate more than 8,000 audience-tailored materials. Ms. Reynolds authored a book chapter on health misinformation on social media (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). She holds an MPH from San Diego State University and a BS in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.