

The Public Health Infodemic and Trust in Public Health as a National Security Threat: A Workshop

Committee

Howard K. Koh

Chair

Howard 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. He previously served as the 14th Assistant Secretary for Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2009-2014) after being nominated by President Barack Obama, and as Commissioner of Public Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1997-2003) after being appointed by Governor William Weld. A graduate of Yale College and the Yale University School of Medicine, he trained at Boston City Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital, earned board certifications in four medical fields, has been Principal Investigator of research grants totaling \$27M, published more than 300 articles in the medical and public health literature and has received over 70 awards, including six honorary doctorate degrees.

Susan Abbott

Member

Bio forthcoming

Allison Arwady

Member

Allison Arwady is the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH). Dr. Arwady started at CDPH in 2015 and served as Chief Medical Officer before being confirmed by the City Council as Commissioner in January, 2020. As Chief Medical Officer she oversaw the disease control, environmental health, emergency preparedness, and behavioral health divisions. She has worked on disease outbreaks, immunization promotion, tuberculosis response, lead poisoning prevention, substance misuse, and more. Prior to CDPH, she worked for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as an Epidemic Intelligence Service officer. In that role, she focused on outbreak response, including international work on Ebola and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome. While based at the Illinois Department of Public Health, she responded to disease outbreaks across the state. She has a bachelor's degree from Harvard University, a master's degree in public health from Columbia University, and completed medical school and clinical training at Yale University. She is a board-certified internal medicine physician and pediatrician, and continues to see primary care patients weekly.

Jessica Baggett

Member

Jessica Baggett is the Senior Advisor for Public Health Response at the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). In this role, Jessica leads ASTHO's public health emergency response and recovery efforts, serves as a liaison with federal agencies, and provides technical assistance to public health officials across the country. With over ten years of state and local governmental public health experience, Jessica has served in various roles in emergency preparedness and response, communications, and external affairs. Jessica previously worked for the Washington State Department of Health where she was a member of the team who responded to the nation's first known case of COVID-19. In this role she developed communications and media strategy, public health guidance, and established relationships with partners and the community to build trust in public health science. Jessica received a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Washington and is currently pursuing her doctorate in public health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health.

Timothy Collins

Member

Tim Collins is an epidemiologist with more than 20 years of international experience in crisis management, risk communication, and policy analysis. As adviser to governments in Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa, Mr. Collins led national-level survey research and developed messaging and public outreach strategies in response to highly sensitive national security issues. From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Alaska, Mr. Collins supported the Situation Unit of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium with surveillance and analytics, including the introduction of a syndromic surveillance platform. Currently he works with physicians in Alaska to improve how behavioral health information is communicated to patients. Mr. Collins holds an MPH in biostatistics and epidemiology from the Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, an MS in psychology, and an MA in diplomacy. He is a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Lee A. Fleisher

Member

Lee Fleisher is currently Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. His research includes perioperative risk assessment, perioperative quality metrics, and he has worked with Dr. Silber's group on grants related to template matching. He has been involved as a member and chair of Professional Society Guidelines and funded by both AHRQ and societies to perform evidence-based reviews. As a member of the IOM, he has worked with a committee to develop priorities for comparative effectiveness. He has been involved in developing performance metrics for both the American Society of Anesthesiologists and American College of Cardiology. He is Chair of the Consensus Standards Advisory Committee and co-chair of the Surgery Standing Committee of the National Quality Forum, and a member of the Administrative Board of the Council of Faculty and Academic Specialties of the Association of American Medical Colleges. He is also a member of the Medical Advisory Panel of the Technology Evaluation Center of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Association.

Kathleen H. Jamieson

Member

Kathleen Hall Jamieson is the Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor at the Annenberg School for Communication of the University of Pennsylvania, Program Director of the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands, and the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Director of the university's Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC). She has authored or co-authored 17 books, including *Creating Conspiracy Beliefs: How Our Thoughts Are Shaped* (2022) and *Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President*, which won the Association of American Publishers' 2019 R.R. Hawkins Award. Jamieson is the recipient of the 2022 Warren J. Mitofsky Award for Excellence in Public Opinion Research and the 2020 National Academy of Sciences' Public Welfare Medal. She is a member of the American Philosophical Society and the National Academy of Sciences and a Distinguished Scholar of the National Communication Association. She also is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and the International Communication Association, and a past president of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Jamieson is the co-founder of FactCheck.org and its SciCheck project. In 2016, her paper "Implications of the Demise of 'Fact' in Political Discourse" received the American Philosophical Society's Henry Allen Moe Prize.

Hilary N. Karasz

Member

Hilary Karasz is the Deputy Communications Director at Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC), which is the local health department serving the 2.3 million residents of King County, Washington. Over a 20 year career at PHSKC her public health communications experience includes health promotion, crisis and emergency communications, media management, employee and policy communications, community outreach related to communications and health inequities, and other topic areas related to public health practice. Since the start of the COVID pandemic she has led an expanded team of 25 health and risk communicators. She is also an affiliate Assistant Professor at the University of Washington in the School of Public Health where she teaches graduate level health promotion and health communication classes. Her research interests are related to public health applications of mobile (SMS text messaging) technology, and she was a principal investigator for a CDC funded grant on SMS and emergency communications at the University of Washington Preparedness and Emergency Response Research Center.

Bruce Y. Lee

Member

Bruce Y. 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 modeling, artificial intelligence (AI), and other computer-aided approaches to assist a wide range of decision makers in health, medicine, and public health. Currently, he is a Professor of Health Policy and Management at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate School of Public Health where he is the Executive Director of the Center for Advanced Technology and Communication in Health (CATCH) at CUNY, which aims to develop and implement new technologies and approaches to help decision making and communication in health and public health, and Executive Director of the Artificial Intelligence, Modeling, and Informatics for Nutrition Guidance and Systems (AIMINGS) Center. Dr. Lee is also the founder (in 2007) and Executive Director of PHICOR (Public Health Informatics, Computational, and Operations Research, Twitter handle @PHICORTeam) and founder and CEO of Symsilico, which develops and uses computational methods, models, and tools to help decision-making. Dr. Lee has written extensively for the general media. He is a Senior Contributor for Forbes, covering a wide range of health-related topics. His writing has also appeared in many media outlets including The New York Times, Time, The Guardian, STAT, the HuffPost, and the MIT Technology Review. Dr. Lee received his BA from Harvard University, MD from Harvard Medical School, and MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. His Twitter handle is @bruce_y_lee.

Gretchen Michael

Member

Gretchen Michael serves as the Director of Communications for the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) within the Office of External Affairs. She leads a professional team that provides overall strategic communications for ASPR including media relations, internal communications, web, digital, video communications and graphic design. Gretchen was the lead for External Affairs in the Countermeasure Acceleration Group, (the HHS successor to Operation Warp Speed) during the COVID-19 vaccine/therapeutics rollout beginning in September 2021. She served as the senior communications and legislative affairs advisor to the CAG COO and senior staff. She led interagency coordination for strategic communications planning for the CAG, maintained on-going coordination across the interagency including with DOD, the White House Covid-19 Task Force communications teams, HHS, and the agency legislative affairs offices. She continued in this role as the CAG transitioned to the HHS Coordination Operations and Response Element, or H-CORE, in December 2021 through April 2022. Since joining ASPR in 2008, Gretchen has served as ASPR's communications lead for numerous disasters and National Special Security Events including the Covid-19 pandemic and the mpox outbreak. In 2020 she led an HHS intra-agency team to support public affairs for the repatriation of over 2,000 Americans to military bases around the country from cruise ships. Other events she has supported include: the 2017 Hurricane season, Super storm Sandy, the January 2010 Haiti earthquake response, the Deepwater Horizon Oil spill, the 2009 H1N1 Pandemic, Presidential inaugurations, party nominating conventions and Joint Sessions of Congress. In 2016, she was the U.S. Government's ESF-15 lead for the Flint water crisis. Prior to joining ASPR, Gretchen worked for Booz Allen Hamilton where she supported a project for the Veterans Health Administration for Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans. Gretchen served as Communications Director for the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) for three years where she directed all communications, media relations, marketing and public awareness activities for the state health department. Gretchen earned her J.D. from University of Denver and B.S from American University.

Jewel Mullen

Member

Jewel Mullen is Associate Dean for Health Equity at University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School, as well as an associate professor in the school's population health and internal medicine departments. She also serves as Director of Health Equity at Ascension Seton to help meet health equity goals across its system. Mullen is an internist, epidemiologist, public health expert and the former principal deputy assistant secretary for health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). While at HHS, she also served as the acting assistant secretary for health and acting director of the National Vaccine Program Office. Prior to HHS, she served as commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Her career has spanned clinical, research, teaching and administrative roles focused on improving the health of all people, especially those who are underserved. She is recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in building effective community-based chronic disease prevention programs and for her commitment to improving individual and population health by strengthening coordination between community, public health and health care systems. A former President of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, Dr. Mullen is a current member of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Editorial Board, the ChangeLab Solutions Board of Directors, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Policies for Action National Advisory Committee. She was a member of the Study Committee on the Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine at the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine and is a current member of the NASEM Committee on a Fairer and More Equitable, Cost-Effective, and Transparent System of Donor Organ Procurement, Allocation, and Distribution . Dr. Mullen received her bachelor's and Master of Public Health degrees from Yale University where she also completed a post-doctoral fellowship in psychosocial epidemiology. She graduated from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and completed her residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. She also holds a Master of Public Administration from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and completed intensive and advanced bioethics courses at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics.

Elena Savoia

Member

Elena Savoia is a Principal Scientist in Biostatistics and a medical doctor by training. During the past eighteen years, Dr. Savoia has been leading research and training activities at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health focused on public health emergency preparedness. She has devoted her professional life to the use of evaluation methods to measure systems' capabilities in response to large-scale emergencies, and in recent years in evaluating government's capabilities in communicating to the public and managing information disorder. Her work has focused on the advancement of evaluation science to assess the elements of a public health system that lead to a successful response and the population-based factors and workforce training and characteristics that may improve the capacity and resiliency of public health systems and communities. Dr. Savoia's portfolio of activities has included projects sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Homeland Security, National Institute of Justice, World Health Organization, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Tara K. Sell

Member

Tara Kirk Sell is a Senior Scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and an Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental Health and Engineering at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Sell's work focuses on improving public health policy and practice in order to reduce the health impacts of disasters and terrorism. She has led work on public health communication during the Zika outbreak and misinformation during the 2014 Ebola and COVID-19 outbreaks. She is now working on research to combat health-related misinformation, improve risk communication, and advance trust in public health emergency preparedness and response. Dr. Sell completed her PhD at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the Department of Health Policy and Management, where she was a Sommer Scholar. She received a BA in human biology and an MA in anthropological sciences from Stanford University. Prior to her work in academia she was a professional athlete and won a silver medal in the 2004 Olympics.

Jennifer Shopkorn

Member

Jennifer Shopkorn is the U.S. Census Bureau's Strategy Director. In this capacity, she is responsible for driving the agency's communications strategies to ensure they are rooted in concrete goals and shaped with the audience in mind. She also runs the Census Bureau's Trust & Safety Team and serves as the organization's crisis communications lead. Jen firmly believes that an organization's success is rooted in superior customer service, strategic external relationships and messaging built from an audience's perspective. She focuses the agency's communications on timely, tangible and resonant messaging that empowers audiences to use Census Bureau data to shape their future. She has particular expertise in preparing senior leaders to effectively communicate in challenging situations including crisis scenarios, media interviews and Congressional hearings. In the lead up to the 2020 Census, Jen helmed the agency team that created the 2020 Census advertising campaign which included paid, earned and owned content across broadcast, digital, radio, print and out of home channels. The campaign was one of the first in market with COVID-19 related ads and required an enormous overhaul of media buys and campaign tactics to adapt to the pandemic circumstances while still meeting reach and frequency goals. In preparation for the 2020 Census, Jen crafted the Bureau's first actionable crisis communications plan, ran numerous exercises and tabletops, and stood up and trained a crisis communications team. She also integrated the Trust & Safety Team's work with external stakeholder work to ensure proactive and reactive strategies to fighting misinformation and disinformation were coordinated with other external efforts. Prior to joining the Census Bureau, Jen served for nearly a decade as the U.S. Secretary of Commerce's liaison to Congress on all environmental and data issues. In that role, she built support, mitigated opposition and crafted strategic messaging to advance the Department of Commerce's initiatives and policies. She specialized in natural disaster, fishery, coastal management, weather and satellite issues. Jen ran the Senate confirmation process for numerous presidentially appointed positions, getting several nominees successfully confirmed during an Administration-wide backlog. She built internal processes and procedures focused on providing superior customer service to clients inside of the Department of Commerce and to Capitol Hill. Prior to her time in the Secretary of Commerce's Office, she worked for the head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) where she focused on local fisheries issues as well as disaster preparation and recovery efforts. Jen received an undergraduate degree from Boston University and a graduate degree from the University of Delaware.

Kasisomayajula Viswanath

Member

Kasisomayajula Viswanath is the Lee Kum Kee Professor of Health Communication in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH) and in the McGraw-Patterson Center for Population Sciences at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI). Dr. Viswanath's work, drawing from literatures in communication science, social epidemiology, and social and health behavior sciences, focuses on translational communication science to influence public health policy and practice. His primary research is in documenting the relationship between communication inequalities, poverty and health disparities, and knowledge translation to address health disparities. He has written more than 280 journal articles and book chapters concerning communication inequalities and health disparities, knowledge translation and public health communication with specific focus on understanding and addressing communication inequalities. He is the co-editor or author of four books and monographs. He has served and continuing to serve on several national committees including for the US Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM). In recognition of his academic and professional achievements, Dr. Viswanath received several awards and is an elected Fellow of three professional societies.

Elisabeth Wilhelm

Member

Elisabeth Wilhelm is a Visiting Fellow in the Brown University School of Public Health's Information Futures Lab and also consults for UNICEF on social listening and infodemic management for immunization demand. Previously at US CDC for 6 years on implementation science and technical assistance on vaccine hesitancy, confidence and misinformation in low and middle-income countries and led the COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence and Demand Team on the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force and responsible for vaccine confidence strategy for the agency for 11 months for COVID-19 vaccine introduction in the US, including fostering US CDC's first infodemic insights unit. Co-led the development of the new public health discipline of infodemic management with colleagues in the WHO Health Emergencies Program, including establishing a global scientific research agenda, developing a competency framework, convening a metrics and measurement of burden of infodemics conference and co-led four global trainings for WHO infodemic managers. Previously worked for several health innovation-focused organizations including PATH and the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative. Won numerous scientific, communications and technical awards at US CDC, including "Excellence in Emergency Response: Toby Merlin Award – International (International Task Force for COVID-19 Response)" and "Excellence in Emergency Response: Toby Merlin Award – Domestic (COVID-19 Emergency Response Staff" in August 2022. Co-authored 15 peer-reviewed articles across vaccine communication, community engagement, infodemiology and vaccine confidence topics. Served as a Global Health Corps Fellow 2014-2015. Received an MA in Communications from Johns Hopkins in 2013 and a BFA in Writing from Pratt Institute in 2009.

Seema Yasmin

Member

Seema Yasmin is an Emmy Award-winning journalist, medical doctor, and author. Yasmin trained in medicine at the University of Cambridge and in journalism at the University of Toronto. She worked as a hospital doctor in the U.K.'s National Health Service before serving as an officer in the U.S. government's Epidemic Intelligence Service at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention where she investigated disease outbreaks around the world and served as principal investigator for a number of epidemiologic studies. Yasmin is director of the Stanford Health Communication Initiative, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Medicine (division of primary care and population health) at Stanford University, and visiting assistant professor of health crisis management and communication at the Anderson School of Management at UCLA. She teaches advanced clinical communication skills to faculty and medical students, health and science journalism, and global health storytelling. Her research focuses on the spread of misinformation and disinformation about disease and the ways that false information can fuel epidemics and impact public health. Working at the intersection of epidemiology and communications, she is mapping health information equity across the U.S. to understand how access to information—now understood to be a determinant of health—influences health outcomes. Yasmin was selected for the John S. Knight Fellowship in Journalism Innovation at Stanford University in 2017 where she studied the spread of false news during epidemics. Previously, she was a science reporter at The Dallas Morning News, and professor of public health at the University of Texas at Dallas. Her writing on the spread of disease disinformation appears in The New York Times, WIRED, Scientific American, and other outlets. Yasmin was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in breaking news in 2017 for her team's coverage of a mass shooting. Her unique combined expertise in epidemics, science communication, and journalism has been called upon by the Aspen Institute and the Skoll World Forum. She offered expert testimony to the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues during its investigation of the role of journalism during the 2014-2016 Ebola epidemic.