

DAY 2: Health Equity

The discussion focused on the intersection of health equity and climate change, emphasizing the disproportionate impact of climate-related disasters on vulnerable populations. Panelists highlighted the challenges of access and equity, such as limited resources and information barriers. They advocated for partnerships between governments, healthcare professionals, and community-based organizations to enhance resilience and promote health equity. The importance of integrating indigenous knowledge and cultural practices was underscored as crucial for holistic health. Future directions include co-production of solutions, health adaptation plans, and creating resilience hubs. The conversation also touched on the need for equitable representation in decision-making and the role of community collaborations in education and health improvement.

Action Items

- Explore partnership opportunities between the Navy, community organizations, and cultural practitioners to restore and revitalize ancient sites like the fish pond in Ewa.
- Incorporate indigenous knowledge and holistic approaches to health into the medical curriculum to better prepare future healthcare professionals.
- Develop climate health indices and enable health adaptation plans at the state and local levels.
- Promote equitable representation of Pacific Islander and indigenous people in decision-making spaces to address climate change and health equity.
- Build relationships and engage in conversations with the community to understand their needs and priorities in the context of climate change and health equity.

Outline

Introduction and Purpose of the Meeting

- Dr. Kealoha Fox expresses excitement about the collaborative conversation focused on health equity and climate justice.
- Emphasizes the importance of situating climate change within the context of climate justice.
- Mentions the admiration for the work of the panelists and the opportunity to learn from their experiences.
- Introduces the purpose of the meeting, which is to discuss the intersection of cultural equity, social and environmental justice, and climate change.

Panelist Introductions

- Dr. Fox introduces the panelists and outlines the structure of the meeting, including rapid-fire questions and audience interaction.
- Dr. Martina Kamaka, introduces herself as a physician and faculty at the Department of Native Hawaiian Health.
- Dr. Frances Wiese, an ecologist from Alaska, discusses her work on climate change, ocean health, and environmental justice.
- Dr. Mahealani Lum, a medical director, shares her background in primary care and her participation in the Climate and Health Equity fellowship program.
- Katia Worley currently supporting the Office of Health Equity, provides a brief introduction.

Impact of Lack of Access and Equity on Island Populations

- Dr. Fox asks the panelists about the impact of lack of access and equity on island populations during climate-related disasters.
- Katia shares personal experiences of growing up by the ocean and the challenges faced by vulnerable populations in preparing for and recovering from disasters.
- Dr. Wiese emphasizes the importance of accessible information in different languages to mitigate the impact of climate disasters on marginalized communities.
- Dr. Kamaka highlights the ongoing health disparities among communities affected by wildfires, including lack of insurance and access to healthcare.
- Dr. Lum provides a case study of a patient affected by a collapsed bridge due to climate change, illustrating the broader impact on communities with limited access to resources.

Partnership Opportunities to Enhance Health Equity

- Dr. Fox asks how partnerships between various sectors can enhance efforts to promote health equity in the face of climate change.
- Dr. Wiese discusses the complexity of climate change impacts and the need for cross-sectoral collaboration to address these challenges.
- Emphasizes the importance of serious gaming and tabletop exercises to build relationships and identify effective partnerships.
- Dr. Lum shares an example of collaboration between cultural practitioners, community-based organizations, and the Navy to restore a fish pond, highlighting the potential for climate resilience solutions.
- Dr. Fox encourages the audience to engage in community work days and similar initiatives to learn and contribute to environmental and health equity efforts.

Role of Native Hawaiian Knowledge in Health Equity

- Dr. Fox asks the panelists about the critical role of Native Hawaiian knowledge in promoting equity and justice within the environmental and climate context.

- Katia emphasizes the interconnectedness of health, land, and culture for Native Hawaiians and the responsibility to uphold cultural practices for health and well-being.
- Dr. Kamaka discusses the importance of a holistic vision of health that includes the health of the land, community, and family, and the role of indigenous knowledge in medical education.
- Dr. Kamaka highlights the positive impact of community collaborations in teaching medical students about health disparities and resilience.
- Dr. Fox reflects on the importance of embedding indigenous knowledge in healthcare education to build a stronger and more resilient healthcare system.

Future Directions and Actions for Health Equity

- Dr. Weise discusses the need for co-production and co-design of solutions that combine indigenous knowledge, scientific knowledge, and decision-maker knowledge.
- Emphasizes the importance of including climate health indices in health profiles and developing health adaptation plans.
- Suggests creating resilience hubs to enhance community preparedness and response to climate disasters.
- Dr. Lum looks back to traditional practices and the importance of reconnecting with the land for health and well-being.
- Highlights the role of youth in climate action and the need for equitable representation in decision-making spaces.

Audience Questions and Responses

- Audience member asks about the challenge of convenience and how to overcome it to maintain sustainability in the Pacific Islands.
- Katia responds by emphasizing the importance of community engagement and learning from cultural practices.
- Audience Member inquires about the impact of youth-focused interventions on measures such as suicide rates among Micronesian youth.
- Katia shares personal experiences and the challenges of measuring the impact of interventions on health disparities.
- Dr. Lum discusses the broader impact of climate change on health and the need for more comprehensive studies to measure the effectiveness of interventions.