

# 13th National Conference on Health Disparities & 2021 National Environmental Justice Conference & Training Program

*Addressing Health Disparities, Environmental Justice, and Shaping the Future of Healthcare*

**October 27-29, 2021**

## VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

### DAY 1, OCTOBER 27TH

9:30 AM

Welcome

**Ms. Carolyn Sawyer**

Conference Facilitator

*Communications Strategist, Tom Sawyer Company,  
Columbia, SC*

Welcome Remarks

**Dr. David E. Rivers**

*Board Chairman, National Conference on Health Disparities,  
Professor, PICO, Academic Affairs Faculty, Medical University  
of South Carolina, Charleston, SC*

**Dr. Melinda Downing**

*Environmental Justice Program Manager, U.S. Department of  
Energy, Washington, DC*

10:00 AM

Opening Remarks from

**The Honorable David Turk**

*U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy, U.S. Department of Energy,  
Washington, DC*

Special Remarks from

**The Honorable James E. Clyburn**

Majority Whip

US House of Representatives, District 6 (SC)

Immediately Following Special Remarks

BREAK

10:45AM-11:45 AM

### PANEL 1

*Understanding the relationship between Health Disparities  
and Environmental Justice especially during the COVID-19  
Pandemic.*

This discussion will focus on the response to the COVID-19  
Pandemic and the reveal of the great health disparities therein  
based on race, income and location; and the widening of those  
disparities in the COVID-19 response, treatment and vaccine  
rollout.

Moderator

**Ms. Karen Dale**

*Market President/CEO, AmeriHealth Caritas District of  
Columbia, Washington, DC*

Panelists

**Dr. Kim Lambert**

*Environmental Justice Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Washington, DC*

**Dr. Tom Ellison**

*Medical Services Director and Principal Investigator, PROJECT  
H.E.L.P. USA, Birmingham, AL*

**Ms. Lathran J. Woodard**

*Chief Executive Officer, S.C. Primary Health Care Association,  
Columbia, SC*

11:45 AM - 12:00 PM

BREAK

12:00 PM-1:00 PM

**PANEL 2**

*Addressing Health Disparities and Environmental Justice as part of the infrastructure rebuild.*

This discussion will look at the efforts to rebuild our nation's failing infrastructure and the impact it will have on all citizens with a keen focus on low income, disadvantaged, minority and Native American communities.

Moderator

**Dr. LaVerne E. Ragster**

*Retired Professor and President Emerita, University of the Virgin Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands*

Panelists

**Hon. Harold Mitchell, Jr.**

*Former Member of the S.C. House of Representatives, Executive Director, ReGenesis, Spartanburg, SC*

**Mr. Milton Bluehouse, Jr.**

*Deputy Chief of Staff, Navajo Nation, Office of the President and Vice President, Ganado, AZ*

**Mr. Derrick Watchman**

*President, Sagebrush Hill Group, Window Rock, AZ*

**DAY 2, OCTOBER 28TH**

9:30 AM-10:30 AM

**PANEL 3**

*The evolving crisis of disparities in the recognition of and access to treatment of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.*

This discussion will provide an overview of the causes, impacts and means of addressing substance abuse, particularly the Opioid crisis, and the correlating and/or underlying mental illnesses.

Moderator

**Ms. Audrey Whetsell**

*CEO, Resource Partners, LLC, and MHDG Mgt. Services, Charleston, SC*

Panelists

**Dr. Elvin T. Price**

*Victor A. Yanchick Associate Professor and Director of the Geriatric Pharmacotherapy, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy, Co-Director of the Institute for Inclusion, Inquiry and Innovation (iCubed) Health and Wellness, Aging Core, Richmond, VA*

**Dr. Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon**

*Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Administrator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Rockville, MD*

**Mrs. Toni Smallwood**

*President, National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI) Charleston Area, Charleston, SC*

10:30 AM-10:45 AM

BREAK

10:45 AM-11:45 AM

**PANEL 4**

***Climate Change and Climate Justice***

Climate change can and will have differing social, economic, public health and other adverse impacts on underprivileged and underserved communities. This discussion will address these inequities and how to bring race, gender, income, and location to the center of the climate change discussion. It will also continue the dialogue on enhancing the relationships between human health, Environmental Justice and economic development and how to improve the quality of life in challenged communities.

Moderator

**Mr. Albert A. George, II**

*Director of Conservation, South Carolina Aquarium, Charleston, SC*

Panelists

**Ms. Dana Johnson**

*Director of the Federal Policy Office, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, Washington, DC*

**Dr. Kirstin Dow**

*Carolina Trustee Professor, Lead Investigator, Carolinas Integrated Sciences and Assessments (CISA), University of South Carolina; NOAAs Science Advisory Board Member, Columbia, SC*

**Mrs. Nina Martinez-Burger, MPA, JD**

*Managing Member, Althin, LLC, Albuquerque, NM*

11:45 AM - 12:00 PM

BREAK

12:00 PM -1:30 PM

**PANEL 5**

***Federal Title VI and Environmental Justice Priorities***

This session will be a panel discussion with Federal civil rights offices engaged in Title VI enforcement and compliance work related to environmental and health, receiving federal financial assistance. Agency representatives will share updates and current priorities. Panel discussion will include remarks from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U. S. Department of Transportation, U. S. Department of Homeland Security, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, followed by a discussion with attendees.

Moderator

**Ms. Daria Neal**

*Deputy Chief, Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC*

Panelists

**Ms. Lilian Dorka**

*Director, External Civil Rights and Compliance Office, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC*

**Ms. Carla Carter**

*Associate Deputy Director, Civil Rights Division in the Office for Civil Rights, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC*

**Ms. Amy Vance**

*Title VI Coordinator, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, U. S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC*

**Ms. Lynn Grosso**

*Director of Enforcement, Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC*

**Ms. Yvette Rivera**

*Associate Director for Equity and Access/Policy, Outreach and Education, Office of Civil Rights, U. S. Department of Transportation, Washington, DC*

**DAY 3, OCTOBER 29TH**

9:00 AM-10:00 AM

**PANEL 6**

***The role of social justice in addressing health disparities and Environmental Justice.***

The discussion will address gun violence, human trafficking, the plight of migrant children and other topics including police reform.

Moderator

**Dr. Britt Rios-Ellis**

*Executive VP of Academic Affairs and Provost, Oakland University, Rochester, MI*

Panelists

**Hon. Donna Christensen**

*Christensen Institute for Community Health and Empowerment; Former Delegate to Congress for the USVI, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands*

**Dr. Britt Rios-Ellis**

*Executive VP of Academic Affairs and Provost, Oakland University, Rochester, MI*

**Chief Reginald L. Burgess**

*Chief of Police, City of North Charleston, North Charleston, SC*

10:00 AM - 10:15 AM

BREAK

10:15 AM-11:15 AM

**PANEL 7**

*Educate, Motivate, Innovate: Building the Next Generation of Environmental Justice Leaders.*

**Ms. Joanna Mounce Stancil**

*Educate, Motivate, Innovate Chair, USDA Forest Service, Washington, DC*

**PRESENTATION**

Tech for Environmental Justice: BEEnevolent Hive and Mobile Application: Learn how the BEEnevolent Hive and the BEEnevolent App is an innovative agricultural mechanism to the beekeeping and agricultural industry. These tools will educate HBCU students and the community at large on the plight of the honeybee, the honeybee's significance for the resiliency of our environment, how changes in climate and the environment at large impact the honeybee, how to create/maintain viable habitats for honeybees, and will also provide users with access to various environmental contacts and resources (including certified beekeepers, environmental mentors, and other environmentally focused groups and organizations).

**Ms. Sade Shofidiya**

*Founder and CEO of BEEnevolent, Graduate Student, Savannah State University, Savannah, GA*

**OVERVIEW: EMI and CUPP Collaboration**

**Jeannie Williamson**

EPA Region 4 College/Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP) Coordinator (CUPP is a unique program that coordinates partnerships between local colleges/universities with communities in need throughout the southeast. College and university students provide technical assistance, free of charge, to underserved communities through planned projects. CUPP has completed over 100 projects throughout the United States, obtaining several dedicated college/university and non-profit partners.)

**PRESENTATION**

Commuting Alternatives and Idle Reduction in Raleigh, NC. Shaw University student, Eva Simo, is working with North Carolina's Division of Air Quality (NC DAQ) to promote commuting alternatives and idle reduction in Raleigh, NC. The goal of this project is to decrease air emissions from commuter traffic and idling on the Shaw University campus.

Ms. Simo is focused on gathering data on staff and faculty transportation preferences and identifying commuting alternatives to and from the campus. She is also identifying environmental justice communities of concern near the campus and developing a plan to engage with community members to effectively communicate the need for alternative forms of transportation and idle reduction. This project will act as a model for future air quality improvement projects in North Carolina.

**Ms. Eva Simo**

Senior (Biology)  
Shaw University Raleigh, NC

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11:15 AM

Closing Remarks

**Mr. Benjamin F. Wilson, Esq.**

*Chairman, Beveridge & Diamond, P.C., Chairman, Board of Directors, National Environmental Justice Conference, Inc., Washington, DC*

**Dr. Melinda Downing**

*Environmental Justice Program Manager, U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, DC*