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W. MONTAGUE NMA HEALTH  
Cobb Institute



UCONN  
THE CATO T. LAURENCIN  
INSTITUTE FOR  
REGENERATIVE ENGINEERING



# The Second World Congress on Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

A Luminary Series Event

January 27-31, 2026

Harbor Club Saint Lucia,  
Curio Collection by HILTON

Presented by: Springer Nature's The Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities and The Connecticut National Medical Association (CTNMA) in conjunction with:

- The National Medical Association (NMA)
- St. Lucia Medical and Dental Association
- W. Montague Cobb /NMA Health Institute
- The Cato T. Laurencin Institute for Regenerative Engineering at UConn
- The Government of Saint Lucia

**The intent of this hybrid event is to encourage professionals to come together, discuss racial and ethnic health disparities and how to overcome them.**



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## EVENT OVERVIEW

Springer Nature's The Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities reports on the scholarly progress of work to understand, address, and ultimately eliminate health disparities based on race and ethnicity. Efforts to explore underlying causes of health disparities and to describe interventions that have been undertaken to address racial and ethnic health disparities are featured.

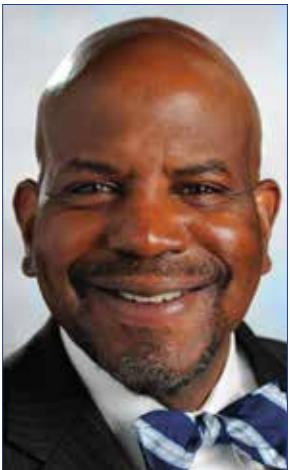
The Imhotep Connecticut National Medical Association Society (CTNMA) is an affiliate of the National Medical Association which represents "a collective voice of African American physicians and the leading force for parity and justice in medicine and the elimination of disparities in health."

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# INVITED SPEAKERS

## Chair



**PROFESSOR SIR CATO T. LAURENCIN, MD, PhD, KCSL**  
**President Connecticut National Medical Association (CTNMA);**  
**CEO of The Cato T. Laurencin Institute for Regenerative**  
**Engineering, University of Connecticut**

Professor Sir Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D., K.C.S.L., is the Chief Executive Officer of The Cato T. Laurencin Institute for Regenerative Engineering at the University of Connecticut, an Institute named and created in his honor. He is the University Professor and Albert and Wilda Van Dusen Distinguished Endowed Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Dr. Laurencin earned a B.S.E. in Chemical Engineering from Princeton University. He earned his M.D., Magna Cum Laude, from the Harvard Medical School and received the Robinson Award for Surgery. He earned his Ph.D. in Biochemical Engineering/Biotechnology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was named a Hugh Hampton Young Fellow .

Dr. Laurencin is the founder and pioneer of the field of Regenerative Engineering. In receiving the Spingarn Medal, the highest honor from the NAACP, he was named the world's foremost engineer-physician-scientist. Dr. Laurencin is the first surgeon in history elected to all the major national academies in America: the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Engineering, the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Inventors. A noted inventor, he received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation in ceremonies at the White House and was named Inventor of the Year by the Intellectual Property Owners Education Foundation.

Sir Cato T. Laurencin received Knighthood under the auspices of King Charles III of England through the Government of St. Lucia. Internationally, he is an elected Fellow and Member of Academic Societies throughout the world including the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Chinese Academy of Engineering, and the Indian National Academy of Engineering.

Dr. Laurencin is also renowned internationally for his work in Health Disparities and Health Equity. He is the founding Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, the leading Journal of the field. He is the co-founder of the W. Montague Cobb/National Medical Association Health Institute and served as its Founding Chair of the Board for over a decade. He is the recipient of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Mentor Award, the Beckman Award for Mentoring, and the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Math and Engineering Mentoring, from President Barack Obama. He received the Herbert W. Nickens Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges for his work in creating a fairer, more just world.

# Co-Chairs



## **KENNETH ALLEYNE, MD, FAAOS**

### **Orthopedic Surgeon in sports medicine, Eastern Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, New York Orthopedics and Sports Medicine**

Kenneth Alleyne, MD, FAAOS, is a board-certified sports medicine orthopedic surgeon practicing in Connecticut and Manhattan. Dr. Alleyne is vice chairman of the board of Connecticut Health Foundation. He is a member of the board of the University of Connecticut Health Center and founder of SATO, Student Achievement Through Opportunity. Dr. Alleyne is also a member of the Louis Armstrong Educational Foundation and serves as a clinical associate professor of Orthopedics at the University of Connecticut and an attending physician at many hospitals in Connecticut and New York City.



## **RAJA STAGGERS-HAKIM, PhD**

### **Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology at the University of Connecticut**

Dr. Staggers-Hakim is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Connecticut. Her scholarship focuses on the intersections of race, racism, oppression, and health. Dr. Staggers-Hakim examines the impacts of social stratification/inequality, environmental injustice, and more recently police brutality on health outcomes in racial ethnic, low income, and marginalized populations. Her research has considered state sanctioned and community violence on health outcomes in African American/Black and Latino communities.

# St. Lucia Dignitaries



## THE HONOURABLE PHILIP J. PIERRE Prime Minister of Saint Lucia

Prime Minister, Honourable Philip J Pierre was re-elected as the Parliamentary Representative for Castries East on July 26, 2021. He also serves as Minister for Finance, Economic Development, and the Youth Economy.

Prime Minister Pierre is a dedicated politician and a committed district representative with over thirty (30) years of experience in government and opposition. He has held many portfolios over the years including Deputy Prime Minister as well as Minister with responsibility for Tourism, Civil Aviation, Commerce, Investment, Consumer Affairs, International Financial Services, Infrastructure, Ports Services, and Transport.

Hon. Pierre is a management professional with a broad range of skills and extensive public and private sector experience that he utilized in his private practice to assist state agencies and private sector enterprises to achieve their goals. His areas of proven expertise include: Programme and project planning, implementation and evaluation, Design of hotel development incentive packages, Economic analysis and economic forecasting, Financial policy, financial management and budgeting, Organization management and development, Business Plans, Feasibility Studies, Business Re-organization Advice, Sourcing Business Financing, Tourism policy development, policy advice, facilitation and implementation, and Training in Capacity Development for SME in St Lucia and region.

Hon. Pierre holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of the West Indies. Prime Minister Pierre continues to be a very strong advocate for the promotion and advancement of entrepreneurship, and the small business sector as a critical engine for economic growth.



**HIS EXCELLENCY JULIAN DUBOIS**  
**Ambassador for Diaspora Affairs, Saint Lucia Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs**

H.E. Julian DuBois has served as Saint Lucia's Ambassador for Diaspora Affairs since 2021. He is also Saint Lucia's focal point to the International Organization on Migration (IOM). From 2012 to 2016 he served as Saint Lucia's Consul General to New York. H.E. DuBois currently serves on the Boards and Executive Committees of many Community Organizations including the Laborie Fishers & Consumers Co-op, the Laborie Development Foundation, the Laborie Economic and Employment Forum (organizers of the community festival, Festen Labowi) and the Laborie Co-operative Credit Union.



**HONOURABLE ALVA ROMANUS BAPTISTE**  
**Minister, Saint Lucia Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs**

Minister Honorable Alva Romanus Baptiste is a Saint Lucian politician who represents Laborie constituency in the House of Assembly for the Saint Lucia Labour Party. He is a former Cabinet Minister. He holds a BSc in Aviation Business Administration from the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, Florida. He also holds a Masters of Science in Air Transport Management from the Cranfield University, United Kingdom. Alva Baptise is an Aviation and Air Transport expert with more than 20 years experience. Baptiste has been the Parliamentary Representative for Laborie for the Saint Lucia Labour Party (SLP) since 2006. He was Minister of External Affairs, International Trade & Civil Aviation in the 2011-2016 Kenny Anthony Administration.



**MINERVA R. KING MD, MSC, AAHIVS**  
**HIV Specialist in the Infectious Disease Unit in the Ministry of Health**  
**St. Lucia Backup Peace Corps Medical Officer to the**  
**Eastern Caribbean**

Dr. Minerva King is an HIV specialist providing HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) clinical management at the Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinic and the Owen King European Hospital in St. Lucia. She holds a Master of Science in Infectious Disease from the University of Buckingham, England. Dr. King is a member of the American Academy of HIV Medicine (AAHIVM), the British HIV Association (BHIVA), and the St. Lucia Medical and Dental Association (SLMDA). Her interests include inclusive and patient-centered models of care, evidence-based clinical practice, and the impact of social determinants of health on HIV outcomes. Her focus is on addressing sexual and gender-based violence, stigma, and discrimination, and advancing awareness of HIV as a chronic, manageable disease in the era of antiretroviral therapy (ART) in St. Lucia.

# Invited Speakers



## ROBERT H. ASELTINE, PhD

**Professor and Chair, Division of Behavioral Sciences and Community Health, UConn School of Dental Medicine; Director, Center for Population Health**

Dr. Aseltine is a medical sociologist whose work is broadly focused on the utilization of healthcare claims, electronic health records (EHR), and patient-reported outcome data for health surveillance, monitoring, and clinical decision support. His most recent awards from the National Institute of Mental Health are focused on developing predictive algorithms and creating EHR based tools to assist clinicians in identifying patient suicide risk. He chairs the advisory board for CTHealthLink, serves on the advisory board for Connecticut's All Payer Claims Database, and is a panel member and former chair of the New England Comparative Effectiveness Public Advisory Council



## TIHEBA BAIN

**Founder, Executive Director, Women Against Mass Incarceration,**

Tiheba Bain is the founder and executive director of Women Against Mass Incarceration, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering women affected by the criminal legal system. A frequent speaker, she sits on the African American Sub-Commission of the Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors, and previously served on Connecticut Governor Lamont's Transition Policy committee. Tiheba is an educational consultant to Yale School of Medicine where she leads an annual medical education event for every first-year MD, MSN, and PA student where 20 formerly incarcerated people lead these 250 students in an experiential learning event.”



## CARMEN BLACK, MD, MHS-MED. ED

**Assistant Professor Adjunct in Psychiatry, Yale University**

**Vice Chair of Education, Institute of Living at Hartford Hospital**

Dr. Carmen Black is an Assistant Professor Adjunct in Psychiatry at Yale University and the Vice Chair of Education for the Institute of Living at Hartford Hospital, one of the country's oldest psychiatric hospitals. Dr. Black's research interests focus on promoting historically-informed racial justice within academic medicine and addressing iatrogenic influences of poor patient care, specifically racism and mental health discrimination within daily clinical practice. Her work in iatrogenesis has led her to become a national advocate for patient and provider safety through promoting the equitable treatment of behavioral emergencies by removing police- and security-based interventions from general hospital medicine. She is a strong supporter of sociohistorical racial representation in medicine.



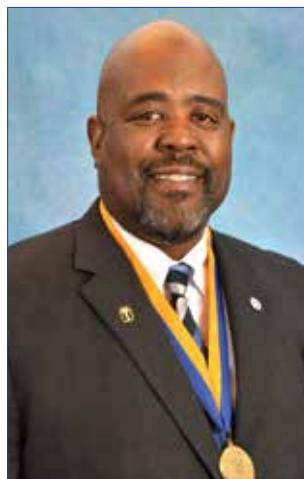
**AMY R. BILLIZON, DHSc, MPH, MEd**  
**Visiting Assistant Professor, Public Health Sciences**  
**Biological & Applied Health Sciences, DHSc., A.T. Still University**

Dr. Amy R. Billizon is a Visiting Faculty Mentor-Scholar and doula whose work bridges mentorship, research, and teaching in public health. Her work focuses on maternal health, prenatal oral health and the impact of physical activity and nutrition on improving outcomes and advancing equity, particularly for Black women and underserved populations. She recently published prenatal oral health in the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*. With over 20 years of experience in higher education, she brings a unique combination of hands-on mentoring and a doula perspective that focuses on translating evidence into practical, everyday practices supporting the well-being of families and communities.



**STAJA BOOKER, PhD, RN, FAAN**  
**Associate Professor, Biobehavioral Nursing Science**  
**University of Florida, College of Nursing**

Dr. Staja "Star" Booker, PhD, RN, FAAN is a tenured Associate Professor at the University of Florida, College of Nursing. Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, she has authored over 100 peer-reviewed publications and editorials, eleven book chapters, and delivered 140 scientific presentations. She received the University of Florida Excellence Award for Assistant Professors, the Southern Nursing Research Society's Early Science Investigator Award, the IASP Pain in Older Persons SIG Junior Investigator Award, and the American Society for Pain Management Nursing® Excellence in Nursing Award for Pain Management of the Older Adult



**CEDRIC M. BRIGHT, MD, FACP**  
**Primary Care Physician, Agape Health Services; Steering Core**  
**Member, Roundtable of Black Men and Women in STEM National**  
**Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine**

Dr. Cedric M. Bright is a primary care physician at Agape Health Services in Washington North Carolina. He was the Senior Associate Dean for Admissions, Professor of Internal Medicine, at the Brody School of Medicine in Greenville NC. He served as President of the National Medical Association from 2011 to 2012, advocating in the White House for health equity, increased diversity in clinical trials, and increasing the pipeline of students of color into health careers. He is a steering core member of the roundtable of Black Men and Women in STEM for the National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine. He is also a steering committee member for the Association of American Medical Colleges and National Medical Association Action Collaborative on Black men in medicine.



### **L. D. BRITT FACS, FCCM**

### **Brickhouse Professor of Surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical School**

Dr. LD Britt, the Henry Ford Professor and Edward Brickhouse Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical School at Old Dominion University, is the first African American in the country to have an endowed chair in surgery. He is the author of more than 245 peer-reviewed scientific publications and 75 non-peer-reviewed articles/book chapters. Dr. Britt has been president, chair, or director of every major surgical organization, including the American Association of Surgery for Trauma (AAST), American College of Surgeons, the American Surgical Association, ACGME Residency Review Committee for Surgery, the American Board of Surgery. He was recently honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the American College of Surgeons (only the fifth recipient for such recognition since the inception of the College in 1913).



### **VIRGINIA CAINE, MD**

### **Associate Professor of Medicine, Infectious Disease Division, Indiana University; Director of Marion County Public Health Department**

Virginia A. Caine, M.D., is the Director and Chief Medical Officer of the Marion County Public Health Department. She is an Associate Professor of Medicine for the Infectious Disease Division of the Indiana University School of Medicine and an Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Public Health. Dr. Caine is the Past President of American Public Health Association, Past President of the National Medical Association (NMA), Chair of the Infectious Diseases Section, and member of the NMA and Indiana COVID-19 Task Forces.



### **ERIC W. CARSON, MD**

### **Chief of Orthopaedic Surgery, Harlem Hospital**

### **Attending Orthopaedic Surgeon, Hospital for Special Surgery**

Eric Ward Carson, MD is the Chief of Orthopaedic Surgery at Harlem Hospital and a professor and orthopaedic attending surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery/Weill Cornell Medical in New York City. He completed his orthopaedic surgery training at the Harvard University Combined Orthopaedic Program (HCOP) in Boston Massachusetts followed by a sports medicine/shoulder fellowship at Cornell Weill Medical/Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, NY. He is an accomplished clinical scientist with more than 50 peer review articles and presentations both nationally and internationally. He was a past president and currently served on the board of the J Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society. He served proudly in the US Army Reserves Medical Corps as a leader of a medical unit with three deployments.



**TIFFANY DONELSON**  
**President & CEO, CT Health Foundation**

Tiffany Donelson is president and CEO of the Connecticut Health Foundation, overseeing the independent health philanthropy's work in grantmaking, policy advancement, strategic communications, and leadership development. She brings to the role a deep knowledge of health care systems and policy, extensive experience in grantmaking, and a commitment to equity. Tiffany is a member of several boards and advisory committees, including the boards of Grantmakers In Health and The Connecticut Project. She is also a member of the state's Healthcare Benchmark Initiative Steering Committee, the Commission on Racial Equity in Public Health, and the Health Care Cabinet. In 2021, she was named to the Hartford Business Journal's Power 25 Health Care list of leaders with significant impact on industry and public health.



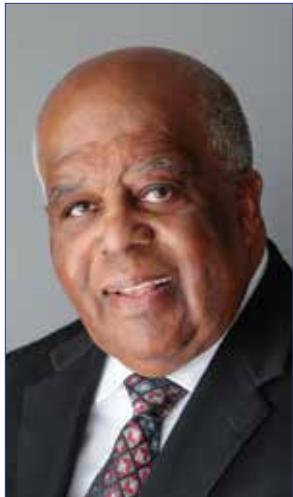
**TYRA TOTSON GROSS, PHD, MPH**  
**Associate Professor and Head, Public Health Sciences**  
**Department of Public Health Sciences, Xavier University**

Dr. Tyra Toston Gross is an Associate Professor and Department Chair of Public Health at Xavier University of Louisiana, where she has worked as a public health instructor, researcher and mentor since August 2015. Her research expertise is in maternal & child health disparities. In 2024, Dr. Gross launched the Maternal and Child Health Equity Research and Engagement (MA CHERE) Lab at Xavier. Her current research projects explore the health of Black postpartum women in Louisiana, and maternal and child health during natural disasters and climate crises. Dr. Gross is a member of the American Public Health Association (APHA), Academy Health and Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM).



**RODNEY G. HOOD, MD, FACP**  
**President and Founder, Multicultural Health Foundation**  
**Vice Chair, W. Montague Cobb/NMA Health Institute**

Dr. Rodney Hood is a Diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine and is a Fellow in the American College of Physicians (FACP). After 40 years in medical practice in Southeast San Diego as a primary care physician and administrator at Careview Medical Group, in 2019 he merged his medical practice with San Ysidro Health, one of the largest FQHCs in San Diego. He co-founded and became president of an Independent Physician Association (IPA), the Multicultural Medical Group. Dr. Hood has been an active member in organized medicine, including the CMA, AMA, AMA-MAC, and American College of Physicians being honored as a Fellow (FACP)



**RANDALL C. MORGAN, JR., MD**  
**President and CEO, W. Montague Cobb/NMA Health Institute**

Randall C. Morgan Jr., M.D., M.B.A. is an orthopedic surgeon achieving a career of excellence through service to his patients as a visionary leader in group medical practice, as an avid participant in community involvement, in youth mentorship, and in national medical leadership. He currently serves as the President and CEO of the W. Montague Cobb/NMA Health Institute, the research arm of the National Medical Association. He also serves as Senior Executive of the J. Robert Gladden Orthopedic Society. Dr. Morgan is a Clinical Associate Professor of Orthopedic Surgery at Florida State School of Medicine and a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Community Medicine at the University of Connecticut.



**ROGER A. MITCHELL, JR., MD**  
**President, National Medical Association;**  
**President, Howard University Hospital**

Dr. Roger A. Mitchell Jr. is a board-certified forensic pathologist and is President of the National Medical Association, the oldest and largest group representing Black physicians in the country. He recently served as the President of Howard University Hospital one of the most historic hospitals in the nation. Dr. Mitchell was a tenured Professor of Pathology and Chief Medical Officer for the Faculty Practice at Howard University. Dr. Mitchell served as Chief Medical Examiner for Washington, DC performing and managing thousands of autopsies and death scenes. At the end of his tenure as chief in DC, he was appointed as Interim Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice where he developed programs and policies for violence prevention. He is the co-author of the book entitled *Death in Custody: How America Ignores the Truth and What We Can Do About It*, published by John Hopkins Press.



**ELIZABETH OFILI, MD, MPH, FACC**  
**Professor of Medicine, Morehouse School of Medicine;**  
**Director & Senior Associate Dean, Clinical Research Center**  
**& Clinical and Translational Research**

Dr. Elizabeth Ofili is a nationally and internationally recognized cardiologist practicing at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, GA. Dr. Ofili currently serves on the Advisory Board of the National Clinical Center (NIH), and on the AAMC advisory panel on research. She is the senior co-PI of the Atlanta Clinical and Translational Science Institute (ACTSI), a citywide collaborative CTSA at Emory University, Morehouse School of Medicine and Georgia Institute of Technology, Dr. Ofili is an elected member of the Association of University Cardiologists, and is on the board of directors of the National Space Biomedical Research Institute.



**SENATOR AKILAH WEBER PIERSON, MD  
39th State Senate District, California State Senate**

Dr. Akilah Weber Pierson is a board-certified obstetrician/gynecologist, and founder and past director of the Pediatric & Adolescent Gynecology Division at Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego. She also served as an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences at UCSD. In April of 2021, Dr. Akilah Weber Pierson was elected to represent California's 79th Assembly District, which includes La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley/La Presa, and parts of the cities of El Cajon and San Diego. In November 2024, Dr. Akilah Weber Pierson became the first African American south of Los Angeles County to be elected to the California State Senate. She will represent the 39th State Senate District.



**JOAN Y. REEDE, MD, MS, MPH, MBA  
Dean for the Office for Culture and Community Engagement at  
Harvard Medical School; Professor of Society, Human Development  
and Health, Harvard T.H. Chan School of  
Public Health**

Dr. Joan Y. Reede created and developed more than 20 programs at HMS that address pathways for those who are interested in careers in medicine, academic and scientific research, and the healthcare professions. Dr. Reede is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and a fellow of American Association for the Advancement of Science. She serves as a member of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Board of Directors and previously as the chair of AAMC Group on Diversity and Inclusion (GDI).



**LOIS ROCKSON, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, Department of Clinical Laboratory and Medical  
Imaging Sciences, Rutgers School of Health Professions**

Dr. Lois Rockson is the Program Director of the Rutgers School of Health Professions' Masters in Diagnostic Cytopathology Program. Dr. Rockson's research interest is in cancer health disparities among immigrant groups from the Caribbean and Central America. Dr. Rockson has published research on cancer screening among New Jersey residents with mental disorders and has several scholarly activities related to cytopathology education and practice. She is a member of the Cancer Institute of New Jersey's Center for Cancer Health Equity and various cytopathology organizations.



**ANYA E. WILLIAMS, MD**  
**Physician, Taipon Hospital, St. Lucia;**  
**Assistant Secretary, Saint Lucia Medical and Dental Association**

Dr. Anya E. Williams is a St. Lucian physician practicing at Tapion Hospital, with clinical experience in Internal Medicine and Emergency Medicine and a commitment to compassionate, evidence-based care. Dr. Williams previously served for two years in the Internal Medicine Department at the Owen King EU Hospital. She also serves as the Assistant Secretary of the Saint Lucia Medical and Dental Association (SLMDA), supporting professional development, advocacy, and physician engagement across the national healthcare system. Dr. Williams is the founder of NovaHealth, a developing healthcare access platform designed to expand home-based and community-level medical services by connecting patients with doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals across Saint Lucia



**ZHAO HELEN WU, PhD**  
**Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry University of Connecticut School of Medicine; Associate Professor, The Cato T. Laurencin Institute for Regenerative Engineering**

Dr. Helen Wu is an Associate Professor in the department of Psychiatry and the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and The Cato T. Laurencin Institute for Regenerative Engineering, University of Connecticut. As a social/clinical epidemiologist, she has been conducting research in health disparity research in mental and physical chronic diseases, particularly in hard-to-reach populations of color. She has extensive experience in teaching and mentoring as course director for multiple MPH courses and for a course in the Master's Program in Clinical and Translational Research (MCTR), a preceptor for the clinical medical course in the UConn School of Medicine.

# AGENDA

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## Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Arrive in St. Lucia, take shuttle to hotel.

12:00 to 6:00 p.m.                    On-Site Registration  
5:00 to 8:00 p.m.                    Welcome Reception

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## Wednesday January 28, 2026

7:00 to 8:00 a.m.                    Breakfast Buffet

8:00 to 10:30 a.m.                    Invited Speakers and Panel

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.                    **Sir Cato T. Laurencin, MD, PhD, KCSL**  
*The Concept of Diversity: REDUX*

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.                    **Dr. Kenneth Alleyne**

9:00 - 9:30 a.m.                    **Dr. Minerva King**  
*HIV-Related Stigma and Discrimination. Intersectional Dimensions and Structural Determinants of HIV Discrimination and Their Impact on Healthcare Access and Outcomes.*

9:30 - 10:00 a.m.                    **Dr. Roger A. Mitchell, Jr. (Virtual)**  
*Death in Custody - A New Report from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine*

10:00 - 10:30 a.m.                    Panel

10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.            Invited Speakers and Panel

10:30 - 10:50 a.m.                    **Dr. Joan Y. Reede**  
*Navigating through Uncertainty*

10:50 - 11:10 a.m.                    **Tiffany Donelson**  
*The Case for Community Health Workers: Why We Need Them More Than Ever*

11:10 - 11:30 a.m.                    **Dr. Randall C. Morgan Jr. (Virtual)**  
*The Impact of Chronic Diseases Throughout the Africa and the African Diaspora and the Implications for the Use of Artificial Intelligence as a Disease Management Tool*

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.                    Panel

12:00 to 1:00 p.m.                    Lunch and Poster Session

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## Wednesday January 28, 2026 (continued)

1:00 to 2:30 p.m.	Invited Speakers and Panel
1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	<b>Dr. Cedric Bright</b> <i>Project 2025</i>
1:30 - 2:00 p.m.	<b>Dr. L.D. Britt</b> <i>Eliminating Workforce Shortages in Healthcare: An Ongoing Challenge</i>
2:00 - 2:30 p.m.	<b>Dr. Virginia Caine</b> <i>Mental Health and HIV/AIDS: The Need for An Integrated Response</i>
2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Panel
2:45 to 3:00 p.m.	Afternoon Break
3:00 to 4:30 p.m.	Invited Speakers and Panel
3:00 - 3:20 p.m.	<b>Dr. Tyra Gross</b> <i>Doulas on the Frontline: Promoting Perinatal Disaster Preparedness in Louisiana and Beyond</i>
3:20 - 3:40 p.m.	<b>Senator Akilah Weber Pierson</b> <i>The Impact of National, State, and Local Policies</i>
3:40 - 4:00 p.m.	<b>Dr. Robert Aseltine</b> <i>Using AI to Reduce the Risk of Suicide Among Patients in Puerto Rico</i>
4:00 - 4:30 p.m.	Panel
4:30 to 5:30 p.m.	Invited Speakers, Closing Remarks
4:30 - 4:50 p.m.	<b>Honourable Alva R. Baptiste</b>
4:50 - 5:10 p.m.	<b>Honourable Ambassador Julian DuBois</b>
5:10 - 5:30 p.m.	Closing Remarks
6:00 p.m.	Dinner

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## Thursday January 29, 2026

6:30 to 7:30 a.m.	Breakfast Buffet
7:30 to 9:00 a.m.	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b> Facilitator: Dr. Raja Staggers-Hakim
	<b>7:30 - 7:45 a.m.</b> <b>Dr. Raja Staggers-Hakim</b> <i>Slavery and the Legacy of Racism on Health Outcomes among African Descendants in the Americas and the Caribbean</i>
	<b>7:45 - 8:00 a.m.</b> <b>Dr. Kimberly D'Anna Hernandez</b> <i>The Role of Obstetric Racism in Perinatal Mental Health Disparities</i>
	<b>8:00 - 8:15 a.m.</b> <b>Dr. Ayorkor Gaba (Virtual)</b> <i>Racial and Ethnic Inequity in Carceral Medication Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder</i>
	<b>8:15 - 8:30 a.m.</b> <b>Dr. Staja Booker</b> <i>Disrupting Groupthink: Research as a Catalyst for Advancing Pain Equity in Black Americans</i>
	<b>8:30 - 9:00 a.m.</b> <b>Panel</b>
7:30 to 9:00 a.m.	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b> Facilitator: Dr. Tiheba Bain
	<b>7:30 - 7:45 a.m.</b> <b>Dr. Adaobi Anakew (Virtual)</b> <i>Occupational Demands during the Transition to Fatherhood and Black Men's Perinatal Health</i>
	<b>7:45 - 8:00 a.m.</b> <b>Danielle Anderson</b> <i>A Qualitative Study of the Superwoman Role and Quality of Life in Black Women with Breast Cancer</i>
	<b>8:00 - 8:15 a.m.</b> <b>Dr. Gladys Asiedu</b> <i>Navigating Cancer Risk: A Grounded Theory of Cultural Beliefs and Health Behaviors Among Sub-Saharan African Immigrant Men</i>
	<b>8:15 - 8:30 a.m.</b> <b>Dr. Andrea Stubbs</b> <i>Listening to Their Voices: How People Living with HIV Reframe Stigma and Health Equity</i>
	<b>8:30 - 9:00 a.m.</b> <b>Panel</b>

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## Thursday January 29, 2026 (continued)

9:00 to 10:00 a.m.	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b> Facilitator: Dr. Amy R. Billzon
9:00 - 9:15 a.m.	<b>Dr. Lois Rockson</b> <i>Pathology and Laboratory Medicine's Role in Health Equity</i>
9:15 - 9:30 a.m.	<b>Dr. Gezzer Ortega</b> <i>Improving Language-Concordant Surgical Care</i>
9:30 - 9:45 a.m.	<b>Dr. Milkese Yassin</b> <i>Successes and Challenges of Community Health Worker-Led Linkage to Care in Medically Underserved African American Communities in Kansas City, MO</i>
9:45 - 10 a.m.	<b>Dr. Lorra Garey</b> <i>Anxiety Sensitivity and Distress Tolerance in Relation to Smoking Abstinence Expectancies Among Black Individuals Who Smoke</i>
10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	<b>Panel</b>
9:00 to 10:00 a.m.	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b> Facilitator: Dr. Staja Booker
9:00 - 9:15 a.m.	<b>Dr. Aima Ahonkhai</b> <i>Cutting Out Stigma: Reducing HIV Through Barber-Led Conversations and Multimedia Outreach</i>
9:15 - 9:30 a.m.	<b>Dr. Jannette Berkley Patton</b> <i>Increasing COVID-19 Rapid Testing in African American Churches Using a Faith-Health-Academic Partnership: Outcomes of the Faithful Response to COVID-19 II Community Trial</i>
9:30 - 9:45 a.m.	<b>Dr. Latrice Pichon</b> <i>Faith, Education, and Stigma Reduction: Process and Evaluation of an HIV Intervention in Black Churches</i>
9:30 - 10:00 a.m.	<b>Dr. Carolyn Tucker (Virtual)</b> <i>A Focus Group Study to Identify the Support Behaviors that Black Women with A Breast Cancer Diagnosis Need from Their Health Care Providers</i>
10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	<b>Panel</b>
10:30 to 10:45 a.m.	Morning Break

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## Thursday January 29, 2026 (continued)

10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

### Concurrent Sessions

Facilitators: Dr. Joan Y. Reede or Dr. Kenneth Alleyne

10:45 - 11:00 a.m.

**Dr. Yendelela Cuffee (Virtual)**

*The Development and Implementation of a Storytelling Intervention to Promote Lifestyle and Behavioral Change Among Black Adults*

11:00 - 11:15 a.m.

**Dr. Andrea Bradley-Ewing**

*Predictors of Flu Vaccination Among African American Church and Community Members*

11:15 - 11:30 a.m.

**Dr. Hassan Ashktorab**

*Saffron Adjuvant Therapy Improves Ulcerative Colitis: A Multicenter Clinical Trial Assessing Inflammatory and Clinical Outcomes*

11:30 - 11:45 a.m.

**Dr. Tingyu Zou (Virtual)**

*Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Willingness to Join Cancer Clinical Trials: Contrasting Healthcare Discrimination and Information Empowerment*

11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. **Panel**

10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

### Concurrent Sessions

Facilitator: Dr. Lois Rockson

10:45 - 11:00 a.m.

**Dr. Jennifer Allsworth**

*Food Insecurity among African American Church Populations: Who's Going Hungry and the Role of Churches*

11:00 - 11:15 a.m.

**Dr. Renaisa Anthony**

*Using Human Centered Artificial Intelligence to Co Solve the Black Maternal Mortality Crisis in the United States*

11:15 - 11:30 a.m.

**Dr. Elizabeth Armstrong Menseh (Virtual)**

*Culture, Behavior, and the Global Health Disparities: Bridging the Gap to Promote Health*

11:30 - 11:45 a.m.

**Dr. Silvia Bigatti**

*Your Life, Your Story: A Community-Based Participatory Research Project Focused on Latino Youth - 10 Years and Counting Avenue*

11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. **Panel**

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## Thursday January 29, 2026 (continued)

12:15 to 1:00 p.m.	Lunch and Poster Session
1:00 to 2:30 p.m.	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b> Facilitator: Dr. Anya E. Williams  <b>1:00 - 1:20 p.m.</b> <b>Dr. Jose Rodriguez (Virtual)</b> <i>Leadership Through Scholarship: Advancing Diverse Faculty in Family Medicine Through Structured Mentorship and Scholarly Development</i>  <b>1:20 - 1:40 p.m.</b> <b>Dr. Raquel Ramos (Virtual)</b> <i>Leveraging Large Language Models for Equitable Access to CVD Prevention Knowledge and Care in Addressing Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities</i>  <b>1:40 - 2:00 p.m.</b> <b>Dr. Ping Ying</b> <i>Persistently Higher Ratio of Gallbladder Cancer Incidence in Native American People than in Non-Hispanic Whites: Selected United States Regions, 1962-2021</i>  <b>2:00 - 2:30 p.m.</b> <b>Panel</b>
1:00 to 2:30 p.m.	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b> Facilitator: Dr. L.D. Britt  <b>1:00 - 1:15 p.m.</b> <b>Dr. Carol Bowe Thompson</b> <i>Recruiting Churches, Congregants, and Community Members In African American Focused Faith-Based Clinical Trials: Strategies That Work</i>  <b>1:15 - 1:30 p.m.</b> <b>Dr. Turquoise Templeton</b> <i>Engaging African American Faith Leaders in Monitoring Their Clinical Trial Implementation Activities: What's Really Happening in Church-Based Interventions?</i>  <b>1:30 - 1:45 p.m.</b> <b>Dr. Shondra Clay (Virtual)</b> <i>Race and Pregnancy: A Multidimensional Analysis of Race, Pregnancy Outcomes, Stress, and Systemic Barriers to Healthcare</i>

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## Thursday January 29, 2026 (continued)

1:00 to 2:30 p.m.	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b> Facilitator: Dr. L.D. Britt (continued)
	1:45 - 2:00 p.m. <b>Dr. Frank Thompson</b> <i>Post-Pandemic Health Department Collaboration to Deliver a COVID-19 Testing Intervention in Faith-Based Settings: A Faith-Health-Academic Partnership That Works</i>
	2:00 - 2:30 p.m. <b>Panel</b>
2:30 to 2:45 p.m.	Afternoon Break
2:45 to 4:15 p.m.	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b> Facilitator: Dr. Raja Hakim-Staggers
	2:45 - 3:00 p.m. <b>Dr. Monica Taylor Desir</b> <i>Bridging the Lithium Gap: Addressing Disparities in Bipolar Disorder Care</i>
	3:00 - 3:15 p.m. <b>Dr. Kristian Jones</b> <i>Systemic Gaps and Clinical Consequences: Addressing Inequity and Misdiagnosis in Psychiatry</i>
	3:15 - 3:30 p.m. <b>Dr. Jennifer Caldwell</b> <i>Genesis AI: Co-Designing a Digital Genomics Education Platform to Enhance Genetic Literacy and Engagement Among African-Descendant Communities in Louisiana</i>
	3:30 - 3:45 p.m. <b>Pu Zhao (Virtual)</b> <i>The Mediating Effect of Chronic Burden and Social Support on Racism Predicting Depression in Black Adults: Findings From the GARDIA Study</i>
	3:45 - 4:15 p.m. <b>Panel</b>

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## Thursday January 29, 2026 (continued)

2:45 to 4:15 p.m.

**Concurrent Sessions** Facilitator: Dr. Kenneth Alleyne

**2:45 - 3:00 p.m.**

**Dr. Katrinell Davis**

*Healthcare as Trauma Intervention:  
Examining Racial Disparities  
in Continuity of Care  
Protection Against Intimate  
Partner Violence-Related  
Postpartum Depression*

**3:00 - 3:15 p.m.**

**Dr. Sonjia (Harris) Kenya**

*Training Caribbean College  
Students to Address Disparities  
and Build Healthcare Careers in  
Their Island Home*

**3:15 - 3:30 p.m.**

**Dr. Latrice Pichon**

*Project L.I.F.T.: Behavioral  
Intervention Mapping Steps*

**3:30 - 3:45 p.m.**

**Dr Sally Moyce (Virtual)**

*Mobile Primary Care Clinics to  
Reduce Health Disparities Among  
Immigrant Populations*

**3:45 - 4:15 p.m.**

**Panel**

4:15 to 4:30 p.m.

**Sessions**

**4:15 - 4:30 p.m.**

**Madeline Metcalf (Virtual)**

*A Scoping Review of Social  
Determinants of Health Screening  
and Assessment Tools Used with  
Immigrant Populations*

4:30 - 5:00 p.m.

**Closing Remarks/Schedule Updates**

**Sir Cato T. Laurencin, MD, PhD, KCSL**

6:00 p.m.

Poster Session and Gala Dinner

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## Friday January 30, 2026

7:00 to 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast Buffet
8:00 to 9:30 a.m.	Invited Speakers and Panel
8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	<b>Dr. Helen Wu</b> <i>Strengthening Nutrition Accuracy and Community Engagement Through Experiential Train-the-Trainer Education in Saint Lucia (2022-2025)</i>
8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	<b>Dr. Carmen Black</b> <i>A Quantitative Analysis of Historical Black Representation within American Medical Schools</i>
9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	<b>Dr. Tiheba Bain</b> <i>Safeguarding Formerly Incarcerated Individuals as Healthcare Consumers and Educators</i>
9:30 - 10:00 a.m.	<b>Dr. Elizabeth Ofili</b> <i>Health 360x Registry: Addressing Care Gaps and Scaling Access to Point of Care Decentralized Clinical Trials</i>
10:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Panel
10:30 to 12:00 p.m.	Invited Speakers and Panel
10:30 - 10:50 a.m.	<b>Dr. Amy R. Billzon</b> <i>Bridging Gaps in Prenatal Oral Health Through Community Advocacy and Collaboration</i>

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## Friday January 30, 2026 (continued)

10:30 to 12:00 p.m.	Invited Speakers and Panel (continued)
	<b>10:50 - 11:10 a.m.</b> <b>Dr. Eric W. Carson</b> <i>Harlem Hospital/Hospital Special Surgery Orthopaedic Surgery Health Equity Initiative: “Can You Improve Patient Access and Clinical Outcomes in an Inner City Hospital Through Such a Partnership?”</i>
	<b>11:10 - 11:30 a.m.</b> <b>Dr. Rodney G. Hood</b> <i>An American Story of a Health System Dilemma: Slave Health Deficit and Post-traumatic Slavery Stress Disorder (PTSSD)</i>
	<b>11:30 - 12:00 p.m.</b> <b>Panel</b>
12:00 to 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 to 2:30 p.m.	Invited Speakers and Panel
	<b>1:00 - 1:20 p.m.</b> <b>Dr. Anya E. Williams</b> <i>Hurricanes, Heat, and Health Inequity: Confronting Climate-Driven Disparities in the Caribbean</i>
	<b>1:20 - 1:40 p.m.</b> <b>Dignitaries of St. Lucia</b>
	<b>1:40 - 2:00 p.m.</b> <b>Dignitaries of St. Lucia</b>
	<b>2:00 - 2:30 p.m.</b> <b>Panel</b>
6:00 p.m.	Dinner on your own Visit St. Lucia Street Festival

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## Saturday, January 31, 2026

7:00 to 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast Buffet and Meeting Closing Remarks
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# POSTER PRESENTATIONS

**Wednesday January 28, Thursday, January 29, 2026**

<b><u>Presentation</u></b>	<b><u>Presenter</u></b>
Perceived Discrimination in School: A Longitudinal Look at the Impact on Expectations and Health	Emily Schafer, PhD
Your Life Your Story: A Community-Based Participatory Research Project Focused on Latino Youth - 10 Years	Silvia Bigatti, PhD
Associations Between Adherence to American Cancer Society Physical Activity Guidelines and Long-term Quality of Life Among Breast Cancer Survivors in the Black Women's Health Study	Natasha Burse, DrPH, MS
Co-Development and Engagement of Community Health Workers in Faith-Based Settings to Address Mental Health Needs of Latino Immigrants	Gabriela Nagy, PhD
Community Talks (Charlas Comunitarias): Promoting Mental Health and Wellness Through Trusted Latino Community Partnerships	Courtney Barry, DMD

