

Global Health Collaboration Towards Creating The Healthiest Nation

For Health. For Science. For Action.

On May 3, 2018, the Wayne State University Global Health Alliance (WSUGHA) held their inaugural conference titled *“Collaboration & Innovation in Global and Local Health”* at Wayne State University School of Medicine, Detroit.

The Wayne State University Global Health Alliance (WSUGHA) was co-founded by two exemplary physicians and leaders in global health education – Dr. Kristiana Kaufmann, MD, MPH (Director, Global Health Section and International Emergency Medicine Fellowship) and Dr. Ijeoma Nnodim, MD (Assistant Professor and Associate Program Director, Internal Medicine/Pediatrics Residency). Their passion attracted other leaders in global health from the institute with the likes of Dr. Vijaya Arun Kumar, MD, MPH, DPH (Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine), Dr. Jamey Snell, MD (Director, Sedation Services Children’s Hospital of Michigan), Dr. Amy Cortis, MD (Director, Children’s Hospital of Michigan Troy Emergency Department & Assistant Professor of Pediatrics) and Dr. Lisa Allenspach, MD (Medical Director, Henry Ford Hospital Lung Transplant Program) joining hands to form an interdisciplinary consortium of leaders in global health education, research, and practice. The mission of WSUGHA is to strategically collaborate to develop, implement, and evaluate innovative, structured, ethical, culturally humble, evidence-based global health educational, advocacy, & research programs for all learners, professionals, and community members that will better impact health outcomes, education, and equity locally and internationally. This mission is aligned with Wayne State University’s institutional mission to create and advance knowledge, prepare a diverse student body to thrive, and positively impact local and global communities.

In 2017, the team embarked on a journey to lead collaborative transformational and innovative solutions to international and domestic problems. The aim was to set national and international standards of best practice in global & urban health education, service, research, policy, and advocacy and to unify the various global health silos throughout the university. With over ten local and international partners in the first year of its existence, 57 students at the Global Urban Health Equity Curriculum (GLUE) seminar series and certification course, 6 abstracts and poster presentations at regional and national levels, WSUGHA was very well received in the world of global health advocacy and education. This encouraging growth motivated the team to take their vision a step forward and conceptualize the “first” Global Health Innovations Week between April 30th and May 4th, 2018. The weeklong celebrations kicked off with a poetry slam and book reading session where literature enthusiasts shared some of their personal and published pieces of literary brilliance. Day two focused on the topic of “Disaster and Humanitarian Emergency” at the monthly GLUE lecture session.

The headlining event of this week was the inaugural conference titled *“Collaboration & Innovation in Global and Local Health”*. With an attendance of 90 from across professions and specialties, the event was an amalgamation of scientific innovations, enriching presentations and fascinating panel discussions spanning global health education, research and capacity building. Dr. Jack Sobel, Dean, Wayne State University School of Medicine, opened the conference with his vote of support and a quote underlining the mission of “global health” that said, *“Healthcare is a human right and all humans deserve quality healthcare”*. The keynote speaker, Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Executive director of Detroit Health Department, an emergency medicine physician and a Detroit local, touched on the importance of *“listening to the community”* to improve healthcare delivery, in the presence of broken systems and rising disparities across the globe.

The inaugural CME-accredited event witnessed 23 outstanding healthcare innovations participate at the “*Ignite to innovate – Global Health Shark tank*” competition. Participants included medical and engineering students, physicians, researchers, entrepreneurs and volunteers from NGOs; who were judged by a panel of 8 “sharks” including venture capitalists, businessmen, physicians, and academic leaders. The competition kick-started with a poster night on the conference eve, that offered participants an opportunity to present their solutions for global and local health problems, and a networking platform. Top six entries presented their innovations on the platform during the first session of the conference day. These included a smart artificial urinary sphincter targeted at the management of urinary incontinence in women, a non-invasive glucose monitoring device, a manually powered device for management of post-partum hemorrhage called HysTone, a non-electric solution for non-invasive ventilation in neonates called Neovent, cardio-sound blood pressure meter and an emergency response drone. Winners received prizes worth a total of \$42000 in the form of cash and/or mentorship, sponsored by Dr. Dinesh Shah (American College of Digital Health), James and Patricia Anderson Engineering Ventures Institute (Wayne State University) and Integration Systems Management.



Top: “*Ignite to innovate, Global Health Shark tank*” competition winners; Bottom: Participants and panelists with team WSUGHA.

The exciting shark tank contest was followed by enriching panel sessions addressing transformative innovations in global & urban health research, education, and capacity building. Guest speakers and panelists from across the country and internationally, shared their experiences and expertise. The first panel on research was moderated by Dr. Vijaya Arun Kumar where Dr. Echezona Ezeanolue, an infectious disease specialist and a leader in the field of global health research from Las Vegas, emphasized on ensuring sustainability, having integrity and building partnerships to pursue international collaborations and transformational research. Ms. Doreen Dankerlui led a panel on global health capacity building, as Ms. Claudia Thomas Riche from Haiti, Ms. Lilianna Angel Reyes from Michigan and Dr. Obi Ekwenna from Ohio shared their experiences, stressing on the importance of advocacy and outreach in culminating better healthcare education globally. Dr. Kristiana

Kaufmann, Dr. Jessica Evert and Dr. Thuy Bui from Michigan, California and Pennsylvania, respectively, chaired the final session on education, moderated by Dr. Ijeoma Nnodim. This panel suggested a focus on health-systems and peer-learning opportunities to overcome barriers and disparities. The success of this event would not have been possible without support from the partners and sponsors which included James and Patricia Anderson Engineering Ventures Institute (Wayne State University), Wayne State University School of Medicine Departments of Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Medical Alumni Association, Office of Medical Education, Office of diversity and inclusion, Wayne State University Office of International Programs, Henry Ford Health Systems Lung Transplant Services, Merrill Lynch (Bank of America Corporation), Kelechi Nnodim Law PLLC and American College of Digital Health.

Dr. Herbert Smitherman, Vice Dean, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Wayne State University School of Medicine emphasized with his concluding notes that *“Health policy is driven by social policy and bridging those gaps is critical to achieve healthcare equity”*. The event was much-appreciated by one and all with some encouraging feedback such as *“great networking event”*, *“outstanding and practice changing”* and *“incredibly helpful and practical regarding research strategies”*.



Panelists: Standing L-R: Dr. Obi Ekwenna, Ms. Claudia Thomas Riche, Ms. Doreen Dankerlui, Dr. Thuy Bui, Dr. Lisa Allenspach, Dr. Echezona Ezeanolue, Dr. Gaurav Kapur, Dr. Herbert Smitherman. Sitting L-R: Dr. Amy Cortis, Dr. Kristiana Kaufmann, Dr. Ijeoma Nnodim, Dr. Jessica Evert.

The conference was designed to translate into impactful and meaningful outcomes. The global health education panel is working on a white paper about the need to develop standards for ethical competency-based global health education programs that are grounded in a social justice and human rights framework, led by Dr. Ijeoma Nnodim. This is reflective of GHA’s effort to work with various university stakeholders in developing standards to guide global health education, research, and practice efforts. The research panel is resulting in a Global Health Research Center, led by Dr. Arun Kumar. The capacity building panel will continue to form stronger bidirectional collaborations in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and Detroit.

Building up from last year’s conference, this year, we continue to celebrate “National Global Public Health week” (April 1-4, 2019) with a variety of exciting and transforming activities. This year’s theme, “Creating the Healthiest Nation: For Science. For Action. For Health.”, is illustrative of our focus on interdisciplinary collaboration as these events are produced in partnership with Global Studies program, Center for the Study of Citizenship, program of Public Health, and Department of Criminal Justice. The week will be kicked off by Dr. Ahmed Abdalrazag from Medecins sans Frontieres talking about the Refugee story; a movie screening on Universal Healthcare, “Screwed – By The Greedy Business Of American Healthcare” by Dr. Vivek Palavali, a neurosurgeon and film maker from Flint, Michigan; and Dr. Abdul El-Sayed, Department of criminal justice and

program in public health presenting on “Unlocking the System: Systems Epidemiology and Criminal Justice.” The week will conclude with our GLUE Capstone Showcase where our graduating scholars will present their innovative projects that emphasize on an asset-based community based participatory model of service, education, and research with a focus of promoting equity in health.



Panelists at a recent GLUE session



During a GLUE lecture

Moving forward, WSUGHA is focused on translating their vision into effective action which is to be the flagship center of excellence in global & urban health equity practice, scholarship, research, education, policy, and advocacy for Wayne State University, Metropolitan Detroit, and the world, by training leaders to apply transformative real-world solutions to complex local and international problems in a comprehensive context. Working with the newly appointed Assistant dean of Global Health, Dr. Mark Zervos, we will continue to disrupt silos of practice; collaborate with local and international partners to build bi-directional global health education, research, and service initiatives; strengthen asset-based community-led programs; and, ultimately, create an integrative community of excellence in all things global health and amplify our impact on health equity. In so doing, uphold Wayne State University as an international flagship center of excellence.

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