



2021 National Environmental Justice Conference & Training Program

Enhancing Communities Through Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

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



October 27-29, 2021
thenejc.org

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Due to chemical sensitivities of many people, we are requesting that attendees wear unscented toiletry items.

Images of NEJC participants may be captured by conference photographers and published or distributed.



2021 National Environmental Justice Conference & Training Program

Message from the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Environmental Justice Conference, Inc.

Dear Friends and Attendees:

We are so pleased you have chosen to join with us at the 2021 National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program and the 13th National Conference on Health Disparities. Because of COVID-19, the conference and program will again be virtual this year. However, we look forward to seeing you face-to-face in Washington, D.C., in March 2022.

It is an honor and privilege to participate in this national gathering of leaders who have come together to engage communities as full partners in collaborative solutions to the many major issues and challenges affecting the nation today. This is the second joining of these two important national conferences. The relationship between health disparities and environmental justice is increasingly more important as we continue to deal with the devastating effects the COVID-19 pandemic, as well, and federal, state, and local government actions related thereto, has had on our communities. Those environmental justice communities, low-income communities, and American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native communities that are the most vulnerable and have long been decimated by health disparities.

We have filled these three days with thought-provoking panels and workshops, and numerous opportunities to hear from young people, activists, and others from all over the country who are engaged and committed to the principles of reducing health disparities and environmental justice. These two conferences have done much over the past 15 years to highlight the issues of environmental justice and health disparities, but we have more to do in our efforts to prepare our youth and future leaders to take the mantle in developing capacity-building techniques, education, training, outreach, research, policies, collaborations, and projects and activities for today and tomorrow.

Thus, as we engage and share knowledge with one another over these three days, I again challenge us all to leave this virtual conference with a renewed commitment to continue cooperating, forging partnerships, and taking advantage of all appropriate opportunities to build and sustain viable safe and healthy communities.

Sincerely,

Benjamin F. Wilson, Esq.
Chairman, Board of Directors
National Environmental Justice Conference, Inc.

National Environmental Justice Conference & Training Program Sponsors

Kim Lambert

Environmental Justice
Coordinator, U.S. Fish
and Wildlife Service



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Powering a cleaner and brighter future for our customers and communities is a vital part of our everyday work. We are proud to support the National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program and join in their commitment of promoting environmental stewardship and conservation to our local communities.

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Enhancing Communities Through Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

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

AGENDA

DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. **WELCOME**

Conference Facilitator/Producer

Ms. Carolyn Sawyer

Communications Strategist
Tom Sawyer Company

Dr. Melinda Downing

Environmental Justice Program Manager
U.S. Department of Energy

Dr. David Rivers

Professor, Medical University of South Carolina
Director, Public Information and Community Outreach (PICO)
Chairman, National Conference on Health Disparities

Dr. Sabra C. Slaughter

Senior Advisor to the President
Interim Director, Center for Health Disparities Research
Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **REMARKS**

The Honorable David Turk

Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
Washington, D.C.

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **REMARKS**

The Honorable James E. Clyburn

Majority Whip (Democrat, 6th District, South Carolina)

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. **BREAK**

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. **PANEL**

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.*

Ms. Karen Dale

Market President/CEO
AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia
Washington, D.C.

Dr. Tom Ellison

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

Dr. Kim Lambert

Environmental Justice Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Washington, D.C.

Ms. Lathran J. Woodard

Chief Executive Officer
South Carolina Primary Health Care Association
Columbia, SC

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **BREAK**

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. **PANEL**

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.*

Dr. LaVerne Ragster

Retired Professor and President Emerita
University of the Virgin Islands
St. Thomas, USVI

The Honorable Harold Mitchell, Jr.

Former Member of the South Carolina 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



OUR MISSION STARTS WITH THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

The National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program is a unique opportunity to imagine a better, more just world - and what we can do together to achieve it. It is an honor to support this dialogue.

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DAY 2 – THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2021

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **PANEL**

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.*

Ms. Audrey Whetsell

CEO, Resource Partners, LLC, and Medical Home
Development Group Mgt. Services
Charleston, SC

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
Rockville, MD

Mrs. Toni Smallwood

President, National Association of Mental Illness
Charleston Area
Charleston, SC

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **BREAK**

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. **PANEL:**

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.*

Mr. Albert A. George, II

Director of Conservation
South Carolina Aquarium
Charleston, SC

Ms. Dana Johnson

Director of the Federal Policy Office
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
Washington, D.C.

Dr. Kirstin Dow,

Carolina Trustees Professor
Lead Investigator, Carolinas Integrated Sciences
and Assessments, University of South Carolina
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Science Advisory Board Member
Columbia, SC

Mrs. Nina Martinez-Burger, MPA, JD

Managing Member, Althin, LLC
Albuquerque, NM

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **BREAK**

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. **PANEL**

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 programs receiving federal financial assistance. Agency representatives will share updates and current priorities. Panel discussion will include remarks from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, followed by a discussion with attendees.*

Ms. Daria Neal, JD

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

Ms. Lilian Dorka

Director
External Civil Rights and Compliance Office
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D.C.

Ms. Carla Carter

Associate Deputy Director
Civil Rights Division
Office for Civil Rights
United States Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, D.C.

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Actions Speak Louder

Ms. Amy Vance

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

Ms. Lynn Grosso

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

Ms. Yvette Rivera

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

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DAY 3 – FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **PANEL**

The Role of Social Justice in Addressing Health Disparities and Environmental Justice. *This discussion will address gun violence, human trafficking, the plight of migrant children, and other topics including police reform.*

The Honorable Shirley Franklin

Barbara Jordan, Visiting Professor
Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs
University of Texas
Austin, TX

The Honorable Donna Christensen

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

Dr. Britt Rios-Ellis

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

Chief Reginald L. Burgess

Chief of Police
City of North Charleston, SC

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. **BREAK**

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. **OVERVIEW**

Educate, Motivate, Innovate: Building the Next Generation of Environmental Justice Leaders (the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice's "Educate, Motivate and Innovate (EMI) Environmental Justice Initiative")

Joanna Mounce Stancil

EMI Chair
U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service
Washington, D.C.

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 Historically Black Colleges and Universities 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).

Sade Shofidiya

Founder and CEO of BEEnevolent
Graduate Student (Masters of Public Administration)
Savannah State University
Savannah, GA

OVERVIEW:

Educate, Motivate, Innovate and College/Underserved Community
Partnership Program (CUPP) Collaboration

Jeannie Williamson

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4 CUPP Coordinator. *(CUPP is a unique program that coordinates partnerships between local colleges and 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 and 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 to promote commuting alternatives and idle reduction in Raleigh. 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.

Eva Simo

Senior (Biology)
Shaw University
Raleigh, NC

11:15 a.m.—11:30 a.m. CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Melinda Downing

Environmental Justice Program Manager
U.S. Department of Energy

Mr. Benjamin F. Wilson, Esq.

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

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