



University of
Vermont **Health**



University of Vermont
Larner College of Medicine
College of Nursing and Health Sciences



**HEALTH
EQUITY
SUMMIT**

2025

Program

October 23 and 24 | UVM Davis Center | Burlington, VT

Presented by:



Sponsored by:



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Summit Overview

We are honored to welcome you to the Fourth Annual Health Equity Summit—a space intentionally designed to bring together health care professionals, community leaders, researchers, educators, advocates, and change-makers in pursuit of a more just and equitable future.

This Summit is more than a gathering; it is a collaborative movement. It is built to spark bold conversations, uplift underrepresented voices, and drive actionable strategies that transform how we understand and achieve health equity across our communities. Through interactive sessions, expert panels, and storytelling, we will examine the root causes of health disparities and explore collaborative solutions that advance equity - the fair and just opportunity for everyone to achieve their highest level of health - across clinical care, policy, education, and community systems.

As we open this year's Summit, we invite you to reflect deeply on the moment we are in and the possibilities ahead. We ask you to consider:

- What stands out to you about how health equity is experienced across our communities, institutions, and systems today?
- How will you help unlock our collective potential and enable the shifts needed to realize health equity?
- Where should we turn our attention to make the most meaningful progress?
- How can we ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential for health and well-being within the ecosystem we are part of?

Let this Summit be a space of courage, curiosity, and commitment. Together, we can illuminate pathways toward equity and justice, and build a future where health is not a privilege, but a shared right.

Welcome—we are so glad you're here.

2025 Health Equity Summit Co-Chairs

Taylor Small, UVM Medical Center Director of Health Equity

Hajar Anvar, Continuing Care Services Integration, Inclusion, and Experience Manager

Summit At a Glance

The Venue

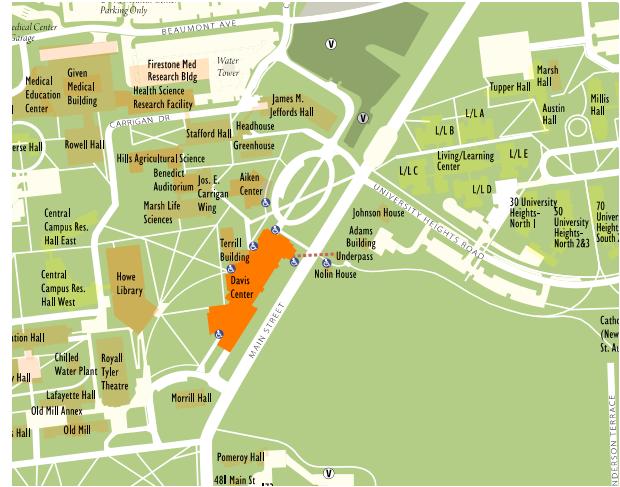
The Dudley H. Davis Center

590 Main Street (4th Floor)
Burlington VT 05405

Directions:

Driving: Take I-89 Exit 14W to Burlington. Limited parking available in Jeffords and Gutterson lots.

Bus Routes: #1 and #11 stop at University Terrace and University Heights, near the venue.



The Schedule

Thursday, October 23 | 4 - 6 pm

Opening session and poster presentations

Friday, October 24 | 8 am - 5 pm

Keynote and concurrent sessions

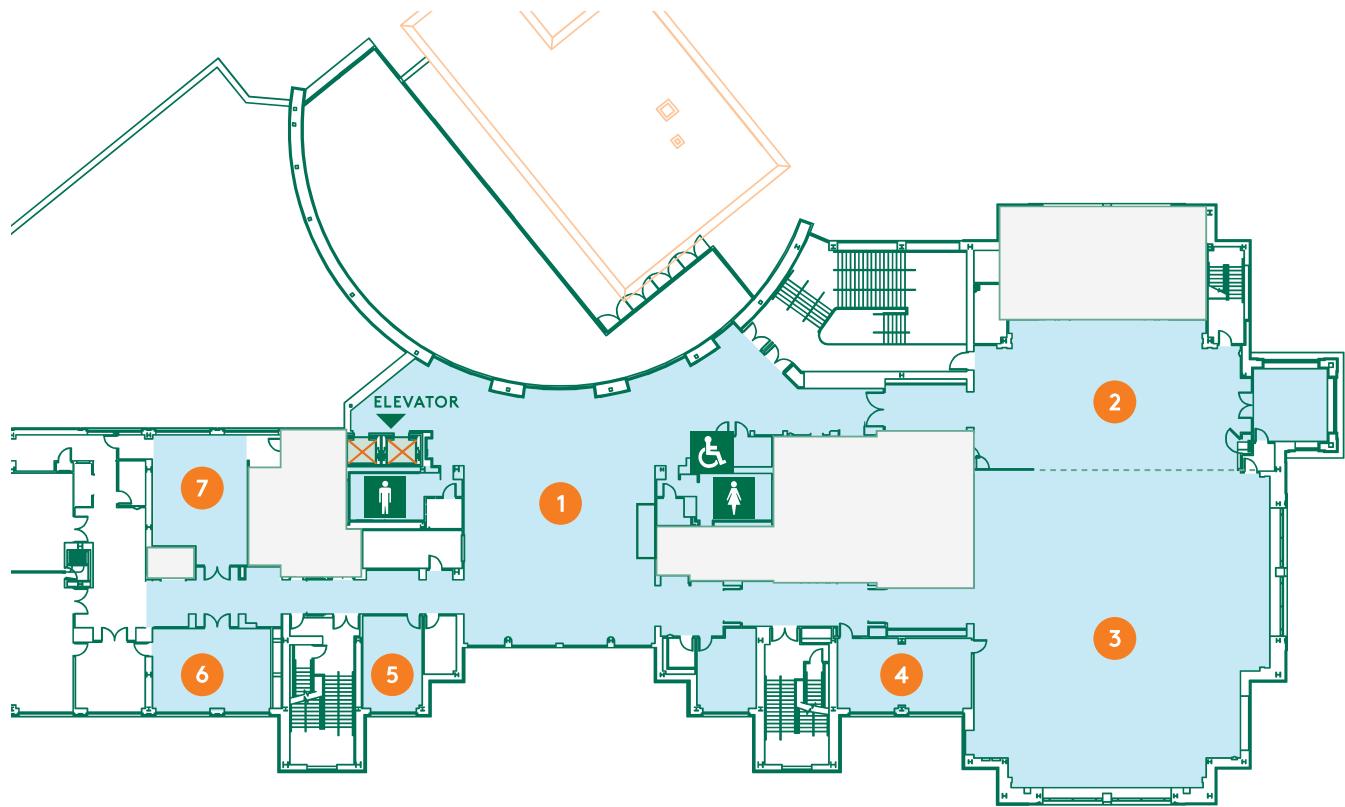
Key Themes

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Policy and Advocacy
- Health Education
- Cultural Humility
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Rural Health Equity
- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Health-Related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs
- Intersectionality in Health Equity
- Climate Change and Health Equity
- Stewardship and Ethical Practices
- Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices

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The Venue



Health Equity Summit - Floor 4

Access this floor via elevators or stairs. All building entrances are wheelchair accessible and equipped with push-button automatic door openers on every level. The summit will be held in the following rooms:

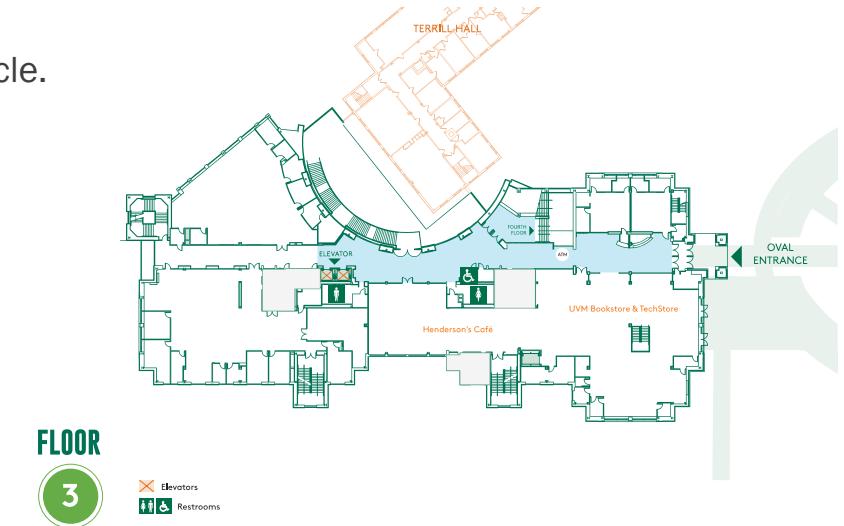
1. Livak Fireplace Lounge and Gallery
2. Grand Maple Ballroom: Sugar (hybrid)
3. Grant Maple Ballroom: Silver (hybrid)
4. Williams Family Room
5. Boulder Society Centennial Room
6. Chittenden Bank Room
7. Jost Foundation Room (hybrid)

✖ Elevators

♿ Restrooms

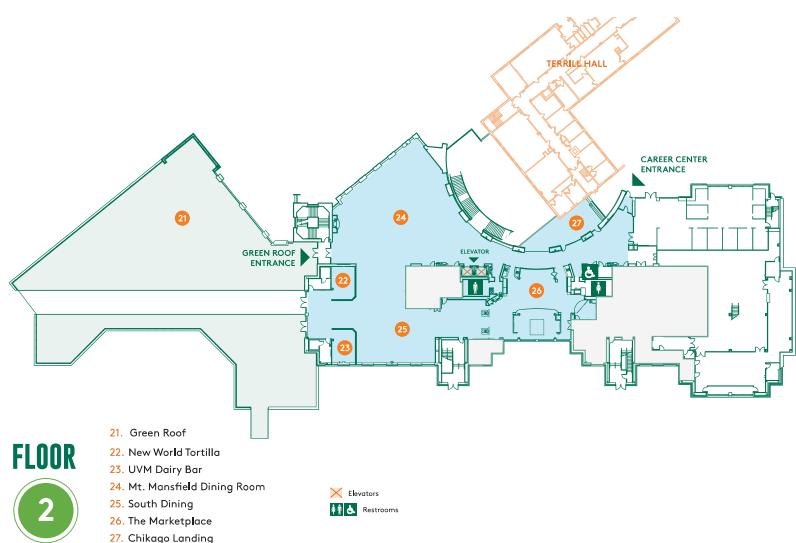
Davis Center - Floor 3

This is the entrance level from the circle.



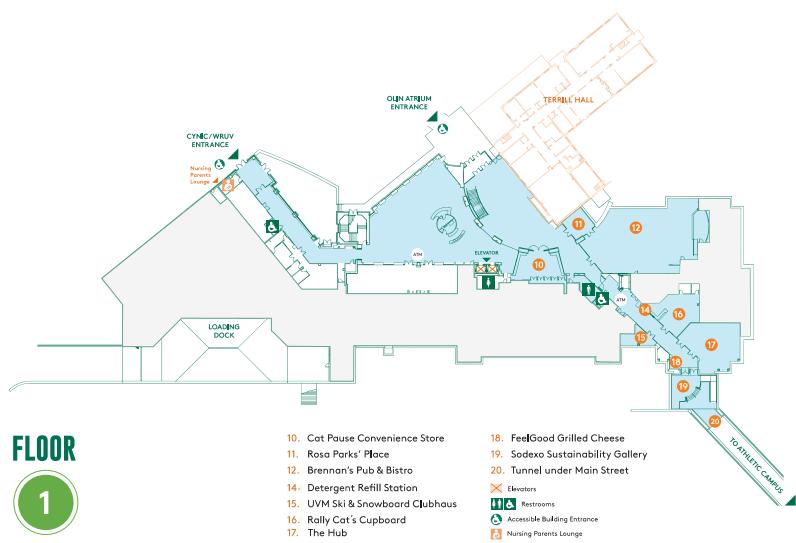
Davis Center - Floor 2

Resting areas, and food and beverage services are available on this floor for your comfort and convenience.



Davis Center - Floor 1

Nursing parents' lounge, additional resting areas, and food and beverage services are available on this floor for your comfort and convenience.



Poster Presentation

October 23, 4-6 pm, Grand Maple Ballroom

Gender Identity

- 1 A Pharmacist's Role in Gender Affirming Care: UVMHN Specialty Pharmacy Perspective
- 2 Organizational Change for Trans Inclusion in Patient Data, Communication, and Care

Health Care in the Community

- 3 Building Trust Through Foot Care: Supporting Unhoused Community Members in Burlington
- 4 Community-Centered Wound Care as Harm Reduction for Unhoused Vermonters Affected by Injection Drug Use
- 5 Food Skills for Life: Empowering Incarcerated Women with Food Knowledge

Rural Health

- 6 Advancing Health Equity for Rural and Under-Represented Artists Through Participatory Action-Research, Policy, and Cross-Sector Collaboration
- 7 Bridging the Gap: Launching a Rural Emergency APP Fellowship to Advance Workforce Readiness and Retention
- 8 "I'm Here:" Cases of Volunteer Impact on Patient Well-Being in a Critical Access Setting
- 9 Clinicians' Health Information Access Across Vermont: A Clinical Librarianship Perspective on Inequities and Impact
- 10 VITAL VT: Building Telehealth Capacity in Rural Vermont Libraries to Improve Health Care Access **(WITHDRAWN)**

Cultural Humility

- 11 Addressing Health Care Disparities Through Culturally Competent Care: Strategies to Reduce Bias and Improve Patient Outcomes
- 12 Breaking Stigma Through Dialogue: Lived experience of substance use disorders and medical education
- 13 Growing Together: A Longitudinal Medical Student Partnership with CVHS and AHEC Sustainable Community Engagement
- 14 Memoir: I'm Able: A Woman's Advice for Disability Change Agents

Mental Health

- 15 Assessing the Power of Adult Day Programs to Alleviate Loneliness in Older Adults
- 16 Painting Through PTSD: Healing from Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Through Art

Pediatric Health

- 17 Every Day Counts: Improving School Attendance and Health Equity in Rural Vermont
- 18 Improving Health Literacy in Champlain Valley Head Start Families via Culturally Sensitive Pediatric Vision and Hearing Screening Material
- 19 Incorporating Consumer Voice to Improve Notification about Medicaid Benefits for Children
- 20 Investigating the Effects of Changes in Perceived Discrimination on Cognition during Adolescence
- 21 VTCPAP Data Analysis of Coordinated Psychiatry Services for Minority Youth Groups

Global and Population Health

- 22 Anesthesia's Global Impact- Finding Pathways to Success
- 23 Integrating Occupational Therapy into Population Health: A Pilot to Advance Health Equity in Primary Care

Immigrant Health

- 24 iFY. A game changer for accessing information for refugees and im/migrants
- 25 Healing Begins with Belonging: Immigrant Voices in Health

Reproductive/Maternal Health

- 26 Development and Implementation of a Community-Informed Maternal Sepsis Bundle to Reduce Pregnancy-Associated Morbidity and Mortality
- 27 Empowering Patient Care: Enhancing IUD Procedure Education and Satisfaction

Food & Mood: A Culinary Medicine Experience

October 23, 5-6 pm, Grand Maple Ballroom

Why Food & Mood?

What we eat shapes how we feel - our mood, our energy, and even how well we can think.

Food is more than fuel. It brings us together, connects us to our communities, and ties us to the land. Food & Mood invites participants to explore simple, joyful ways to bring nourishment into daily routines that may help ease symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Health equity means making sure everyone has fair access to food that is healthy, culturally meaningful, and grown in ways that care for people and the planet. When we slow down and pay attention—to ourselves, to each other, and to the earth—we can imagine food systems that create health, belonging, and hope for future generations.

What to Expect

This 90-minute sensory-rich experience begins with a simple truth: food connects us.

Together, we will explore the deep ties between nature, nourishment, and community. Through hands-on practices, tasting, and reflection, participants will learn small but powerful ways to bring food and mood together in daily life.

Participants will engage in:

- A nature-based mindfulness practice: creating sachets with aromatherapy;
- A live cooking experience with the Chef Educator and Registered Dietitian: Pear Spiced Chia Pudding, complete with tasting and a take-home recipe card;
- A shred meal with a guided sensory journey centered on the chia pudding; and
- Group discussions on food, mood, and mental wellness.

For the first time, this program is being offered at the Health Equity Summit as a Shared Medical Appointment, following its success across UVM Health. Food is a great equalizer—it helps break down barriers, build trust, and remind us of the basics of human connection. This experience is more than a meal. It is a step toward creating safe, inclusive spaces in health care and beyond. Through food, we reconnect with ourselves, with one another, and with the healing power of community.

At this year's Health Equity Summit, we're spotlighting the brilliance, resilience, and creativity driving real change in our communities. Now it's your turn to help recognize the standout solutions that are shaping a healthier, more equitable future.

Poster Award Categories

Cast your vote for the poster that moves you most in one (or more!) of these categories:

- Best Community-Driven Solution
Grounded in lived experience and powered by local voices.
- Most Innovative Approach
Bold ideas that challenge norms and spark new possibilities.
- Best Long-Term Sustainability Plan
Built to last, grow, and adapt for future impact.
- Wild Card
Something unexpected, brilliant, and impossible to ignore.

How to Vote

- Visit the Poster Gallery during the Summit.
- Scan the QR code or use the voting link provided.
- Select your favorite(s) and submit your vote!

Winners will be announced during the Closing Session.

Let's lift up the changemakers who are driving health equity forward!



<https://forms.office.com/r/zFQFj9cs1t>

Keynote and Concurrent Sessions

October 24, 8 am-5 pm, Davis Center 4th Floor

 Rooms with hybrid access

7:30 am - 8:10 am

Livak Fireplace Registration and Refreshments

8:15 am - 10:00 am

Grand Maple Ballroom	Opening Remarks	
Grand Maple Ballroom	Calling In: Navigating Challenging Conversations and Cultivating Compassionate Connections	Keynote

10:15 am - 11:10 am, Concurrent Sessions, Block 1

Silver Maple Ballroom	The Community Doula Project - A Pilot Program in Burlington, VT	Panel
Sugar Maple Ballroom	Click with Confidence: Equipping Communities with Health Literacy Skills for More Informed Choices	Workshop
Williams Family Room	Dissecting the Black Diaspora: The Impact of Intra-Racial Bias on Trust, Communication, and Care	Workshop
Chittenden Bank Room	Healing Together: Transformative Strategies Empowering Clinical and Community Allies in Perinatal Substance Use	Panel
Jost Foundation Room	Take Care Project: Building Menstrual Equity in Schools & Communities	Workshop
Boulder Society Room	Toward Safer Child Protective Services Reporting Using the BEST Model	Oral Presentation
Boulder Society Room	Today, We Choose Self-love: A Child's Book with a Lifelong Message	Oral Presentation
Virtual Only	Centering Neurodivergent Voices: Participatory Research as a Pathway to Health Equity	Lecture

11:20 am-12:15 pm, Concurrent Sessions, Block 2

Silver Maple Ballroom	Centering Black Mamas - Stories of Insight and Power for Health Equity	Panel
Sugar Maple Ballroom	HIV Then and Now: Patient Stories and Perspectives	Panel
Williams Family Room	Valuing Lived Expertise: Elevating and Engaging Youth and Family Voice in Health Care	Panel
Chittenden Bank Room	How '2STGBLQIA+' Vermonters are Doing!: A Report of our 2024 Health Survey Data	Oral Presentation
Chittenden Bank Room	Zooming Out on Gender Equity in Medicine: Seeing the System, Not Just the Symptoms	Oral Presentation
Jost Foundation Room	Addressing Health Disparities and Barriers to Health Care for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)	Workshop
Boulder Society Room	Moonwise: Reintegrating the Nurturing Power of the Feminine in Health Care	Workshop
Virtual Only	"Not the Kase": When 'Life of the Mother' Isn't Enough to Protect Medically Necessary Abortions (CANCELED)	Oral Presentation
Virtual Only	Trans and Gender Diverse Aging and Palliative Care: A Case Based Approach	Oral Presentation

12:20 pm-1:20 pm

Livak Fireplace	Book Signing and Lunch
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1:30 pm - 2:25 pm, Concurrent Sessions, Block 3

Silver Maple Ballroom	What It Takes: Navigating Complex Care for Youth in Vermont	Panel
Sugar Maple Ballroom	Breaking Barriers: A Pilot of Inclusive Medical Respite and Housing Access in Vermont	Panel
Williams Family Room	Suffering in Solitude: Understanding the Juxtaposition of Health Equity and Belonging in Higher Education	Lecture
Chittenden Bank Room	Partnering Together to Break Cultural and Language Barriers, Advance Immigrant and Refugee Health in Vermont	Oral Presentation
Chittenden Bank Room	Elevating the Role of Immigrants and Refugees in Equitable Health Care Delivery at UVMMC	Oral Presentation
Jost Foundation Room	Meeting the Moment: Supporting Providers and Our Community in an Increasingly Challenging Health Care Context	Workshop
Boulder Society Room	Bridging the Digital Divide: Empowering Older Vermonters for Equitable Health Care Access	Workshop
Virtual Only	Cross Cultural Clinical Social Work & Care Coordination in Chittenden County, Vermont	Workshop

2:35 pm - 3:30 pm, Concurrent Sessions, Block 4

Silver Maple Ballroom	The Power of Partnerships in Rural Communities: Innovative Strategies for Regional Emergency and Crisis Response	Panel
Sugar Maple Ballroom	Reclaiming Home: Empowering BIPOC Youth through Affinity Mentoring	Oral Presentation
Sugar Maple Ballroom	From Acute to Preventive Medicine: Navigating Literacy and Access Among African Immigrants in the U.S.	Oral Presentation
Williams Family Room	Increasing Inclusion through Targeted Research Recruitment Efforts	Oral Presentation
Williams Family Room	Neuro-Affirming Care for Adults: Promoting Safety and Self-Alignment in Clinical Practice	Oral Presentation
Chittenden Bank Room	Bridging the Gap: Integrating Internationally Trained Medical Professionals into Vermont's Health Care Workforce	Lecture
Jost Foundation Room	Guiding Trans/Gender Diverse Youth and Their Caregivers through Authoritarian Attack	Lecture
Boulder Society Room	Empowering Sustainable Health Equity Through Creative Community Programming: A Dual-Model Approach to Engagement and Adherence	Workshop
Virtual Only	Children's Environmental Health: The Role of the Physician in Advancing Equity	Lecture
Grand Maple Ballroom	Stories as Medicine: A Storyteller's Call to Health Equity	Keynote
Grand Maple Ballroom	Closing Remarks	



Keynote Speaker

Loretta Ross

Activist, Public Intellectual, Professor

Loretta J. Ross is an activist, public intellectual, scholar, the 2022 recipient of the MacArthur Foundation “Genius” award and an Associate Professor at Smith College. She has a passion for innovating creative imagining about global human rights and social justice issues and started her career in activism and social change in the 1970s. In 1978, she was the third executive director for DC Rape Crisis Center, the first rape crisis center in the country. This was her entry point into the women’s movement where she learned about women’s human rights, reproductive justice, white supremacy, and women of color organizing. Through her organizing she helped launch the movement to end violence against women that has evolved into today’s #MeToo movement.

Throughout her 50-year career, she has worked with the National Football League Players’ Association, the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Black Women’s Health Project, the Center for Democratic Renewal (National Anti-Klan Network), the National Center for Human Rights Education, and SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective. Loretta retired as an organizer in 2012 to teach and follow her passion to educate. In 1996, she founded the first center in the U.S. to innovate creative human rights education for all students transforming social justice issues to be more collaborative and less divisive.

In her work *Calling In the Calling Out Culture*, she transforms how people can overcome political differences to use empathy and respect to guide difficult conversations. In 2023, Loretta was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame.



Keynote Speaker

Ferene Paris

Founder of All Heart Inspiration and Artist

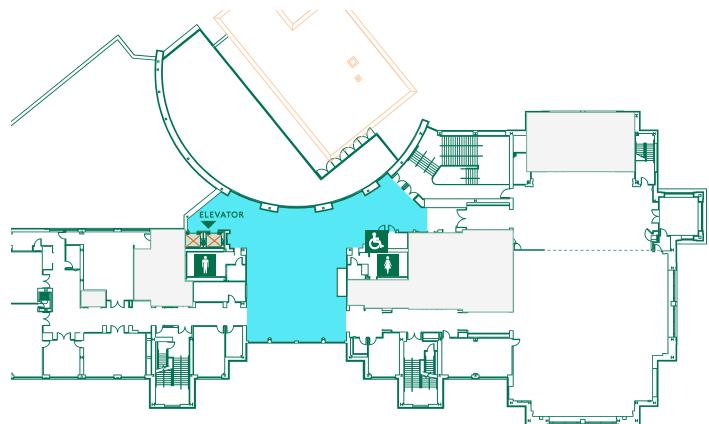
Ferene Paris is a storyteller who creates heart-centered spaces through live performances, interactive workshops, and community engagements. Known for living out loud as a Black Haitian femme artist, she leads with courageous truth-telling and vulnerable vibes, inspiring stories with heart, anchored by purpose, and rooted in love - making meaningful impact within Vermont and beyond, one story at a time.

For Ferene, this work is more than a calling - it's an honor. Each invitation to hold space feels like being welcomed into the community as the "cool, queer Black Auntie" who simply comes to love on your people. She believes we all carry stories worthy of sharing - and her invitation is always the same: What's yours?

That spirit led her to establish **All Heart Inspirations** in 2020, her vessel for cultivating storytelling-centered spaces that honor culture, people, and connection. Since then, she has curated over 200 offerings - including emceeing story slams, artist residencies, campus workshops, and heartfelt keynotes. Her artistry has also been featured on Vermont Public programs such as *Brave Little State*, *Homegoings*, and *Vermont Edition*, as well as Seven Days' *Stuck in Vermont*. Notably, her feature on *Homegoings* was nominated for a New England Emmy in the Best Interview/Discussion category.

Before creating All Heart Inspirations, Ferene spent 15 years in Student Affairs, shaping experiences in new student orientation and residential learning communities. Today, she continues to connect with higher education and communities nationwide through performances, conference talks, and workshops that center storytelling as a practice of belonging, equity, and transformation.

1 Livak Fireplace Tabling and Exhibitions



1 Working Toward Equity and Understanding

Abenaki Health and Heritage is actively addressing historical and intergenerational trauma within the Abenaki community through culturally grounded healing tools. These include: an illustrated book series celebrating Abenaki family life; resources to identify and address lateral violence; trainings for health care providers to improve culturally responsive care; and a community drumming circle to support emotional healing. These initiatives aim to foster resilience, cultural pride, and improved health outcomes. Information and materials related to these resources will be available at our table, offering insight into our holistic approach to community wellness and cultural restoration.

2 Special Olympics Vermont Health Programming

Special Olympics Vermont is part of the world's largest public health organization serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Visit our table to learn about inclusive health programming designed for individuals with IDD, their families, caregivers, and health care professionals. We offer free training and volunteer opportunities that help providers build skills and confidence in working with this population. Our programs promote equitable access to care, improve health outcomes, and foster inclusive communities. Whether you're a provider, advocate, or ally, discover how you can get involved and make a meaningful impact in the lives of people with IDD.

3 Green Mountain Mobile Therapy-Accessible Mental Health Care Model

Explore the development of a mobile health care model designed to expand access and improve outcomes in underserved communities. Our table will feature detailed insights into the financial planning, operational logistics, mobile unit design, and functional usage of this innovative approach. Through data, images, and real-world examples, we'll demonstrate the measurable impact mobile health care can have on specific populations. Whether you're a provider, policymaker, or community advocate, learn how mobile care delivery can bridge gaps in access, reduce barriers, and bring essential services directly to those who need them most.

4 Sexual Assault Services & Planned Parenthood of the North Country NY

Sexual Assault Services (SAS) of Planned Parenthood of the North Country New York provides compassionate, confidential support for survivors of sexual violence in Clinton, Essex, and Franklin Counties. Whether the assault occurred minutes or years ago, SAS offers free counseling, 24/7 hotline services, hospital and law enforcement advocacy, educational programming, and referrals to additional resources. Our goal is to empower survivors, raise awareness, and promote healing through trauma-informed care and community education. Visit our table to learn more about available services, how to access support, and ways to get involved in creating safer, more informed communities.

5 Northwest Vermont Medical Reserve Corps

The Northwest Vermont Medical Reserve Corps (NWVT MRC) is a volunteer unit of the Vermont Department of Health serving Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle Counties. With over 200 trained medical and non-medical volunteers, NWVT MRC supports public health emergency response and community resilience. Activities include distributing water test kits, flood recovery support, vaccination assistance, and staffing health clinics and events. Volunteers receive free training in CPR, First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, equity, and more. Recent initiatives include emergency kits for families with children with disabilities and reflective gear distribution for pedestrian safety. Visit our table to learn more and get involved!

6 **Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, DeafBlind individuals, and ASL Interpreter access**
Learn about the services and resources offered by our organization to support individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind (DHHDB). We will provide information tailored to medical and health care settings, helping professionals better understand and meet the needs of DHHDB patients. Our table will feature take-home materials, including communication tools, accessibility guidelines, and referral resources. Whether you're a provider, caregiver, or community member, stop by to explore how inclusive practices can improve care and outcomes for DHHDB individuals across all fields of medicine.

7 **Health & Medicine Institute for Vermont High School Students**
Connect with us to learn about the Health & Medicine Institute, a transformative summer program hosted by the Governor's Institutes of Vermont. Each year, nearly 200 Vermont high school students gain hands-on experience, credentials, and mentorship to explore careers in medicine and health sciences through an immersive residential experience. We're seeking to engage health care professionals and advocates to strengthen our programming, build partnerships, and inspire the next generation of medical leaders. Stop by our table to learn more, share ideas, and explore how you can support or get involved in shaping future health care professionals.

8 **Queer and Trans Resources**
Pride Center of Vermont offers vital resources, support, and advocacy for queer and trans communities across the state. Visit our table to learn about our health and wellness programs, peer support groups, HIV prevention services, and initiatives focused on racial justice, youth, elders, and rural LGBTQ+ Vermonters. We provide inclusive materials, referrals, and opportunities to connect with affirming care and community. Whether you're a health care professional, advocate, or ally, stop by to explore how we're working to build a safer, healthier, and more empowered Vermont for all queer and trans people.

9 **Vermont's home for public health professionals, students, and community champions**
The Vermont Public Health Association (VtPHA) is the state's only public health membership organization, serving as a vital hub—both virtual and physical—for advocates dedicated to the health and resilience of all Vermonters. We believe health starts long before clinical care, rooted in community, equity, and prevention. VtPHA connects, mentors, and empowers public health professionals and champions across sectors. Visit our table to learn how we support collaboration, elevate public health voices, and drive policy and practice that keep Vermonters healthy. Join us in building a stronger, more connected public health community.

10 **All Heart Inspirations**
A dynamic Black Haitian femme storyteller and artist, cultivates heart-centered spaces that awaken truth, connection, and transformation. Through powerful performances, immersive workshops, and intentional community engagement, she invites audiences to lean into courageous vulnerability and radical love. Her work - anchored in purpose and rooted in cultural pride - sparks meaningful dialogue and inspires others to live their stories out loud.
All Heart Inspirations invites you to reflect: As the author of your own story, how are you choosing to live boldly, unapologetically, and with heart?

11 **Redesigning Prefilled Syringes - A Way to Increase Equitable Access, Decrease Costs, and Reduce Environmental Impact**
This exhibition presents a compact, collapsible prefilled syringe designed to enhance healthcare access, reduce costs, and minimize environmental impact—especially in rural and low-resource settings. Unlike conventional syringes with bulky plungers, this innovation cuts packaging volume by 40%, streamlining sterilization, shipping, and storage. Inspired by firsthand experience managing medical logistics during public health crises in Africa, the Middle East, and beyond, the design addresses real-world challenges in emergency response. By improving efficiency and sustainability, this syringe aims to make high-quality healthcare delivery more equitable and accessible.

12 **Phoenix Books**
Phoenix Books is proud to offer a curated selection of powerful, thought-provoking titles centered on racial justice, reproductive rights, mental health, queer and trans liberation, and social change. Our table features books that invite reflection, dialogue, and action across movements and identities. Stop by to browse, purchase, and connect with literature that challenges systems, uplifts marginalized voices, and inspires collective liberation.

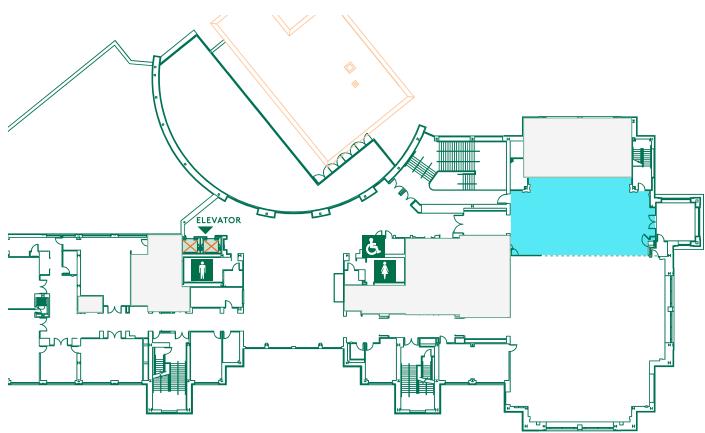
13 **Health Equity Summit Information Desk and Merchandise**

2 Sugar Maple Ballroom

Capacity: 104

Hybrid Sessions

All virtual sessions are equipped with interpretation and closed captioning services via the Zoom platform, ensuring inclusive participation for both in-person and remote attendees.



Click with Confidence: Equipping Communities with Health Literacy Skills for More Informed Choices	10:15-11:10	Workshop
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Health Education, ■ Cultural Humility.</p> <p>In an age of information overload, accessing trustworthy health information online is more important than ever. This interactive session, led by the University of Vermont Libraries' Outreach Team, equips participants with practical tools to critically evaluate digital health resources. Originally developed for public libraries across Vermont, the workshop is designed to make health information more approachable and actionable for everyday users.</p> <p>Facilitated by the Community Outreach Manager and Health Literacy Specialist, the session will walk attendees through a sample workshop that introduces reliable sources and strategies for identifying misinformation. Participants will gain hands-on experience using tools from the National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health to assess the credibility of health websites. The Director of Outreach and Process will also share insights into how this initiative is evolving within the Libraries.</p> <p>No medical background is required. This session is ideal for individuals seeking to improve their own health literacy or support others in doing so. Internet-compatible devices are recommended for full participation; loaner devices will be available.</p>		
HIV Then and Now: Patient Stories and Perspectives	11:20 - 12:15	Panel
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Health Education, ■ Mental Health and Well-Being.</p> <p>This panel discussion will examine the transformative journey of HIV treatment from the early days of the epidemic to the present, highlighting both medical advancements and the persistent challenges that remain. In light of proposed funding cuts, panelists will underscore the urgency of sustaining awareness and support for individuals living with HIV.</p> <p>Through personal reflections and professional insights, the panel will explore the evolving needs, fears, and hopes of those affected, while celebrating the resilience and joy found within HIV-positive communities. The session will also address the ongoing impact of stigma and the importance of inclusive, community-centered care.</p> <p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand how HIV treatment has evolved since the 1980s and early 1990s.2. Analyze the potential effects of funding and program reductions on people living with HIV.3. Explore the role of stigma in shaping individual and community experiences, regardless of HIV status.		

Breaking Barriers: A Pilot of Inclusive Medical Respite and Housing Access in Vermont	1:30-2:25	Oral Presentation
Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Rural Health Equity, ■ Health-Related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs.		
<p>Vermont has one of the highest per capita rates of homelessness in the U.S., with the unhoused population tripling since 2019. Systemic inequities—racism, ableism, and structural urbanism—create barriers to health care, especially in post-acute care settings, resulting in avoidable hospitalizations and emergency visits.</p> <p>This session introduces a pilot project implementing an equity-centered medical respite care model tailored for rural communities. It provides short-term, home- and community-based care for unhoused individuals post-hospitalization or during health crises, integrating medical, housing, legal, and social services to reduce discrimination and improve outcomes. Additional supports include case management, housing navigation, employment assistance, and trauma-informed care. Long-term goals include expanding access to permanent supportive housing and community-based health care.</p> <p>An interprofessional team from the University of Vermont, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Lamoille Community House, Porter Medical Center, Home Health & Hospice will share background data, design, implementation, and early findings. Research includes both quantitative metrics and qualitative storytelling to assess feasibility and impact, with the aim of inspiring similar equity-driven models across health systems.</p>		
<p>From Acute to Preventive Medicine: Navigating Literacy and Access Among African Immigrants in the U.S.</p>	2:35-3:00	Oral Presentation
<p>Tracks: ■ Policy and Advocacy, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities, ■ Intersectionality in Health Equity.</p> <p>This presentation examines how cultural expectations, economic barriers, and systemic design contribute to health disparities among African immigrants in the U.S. Drawing on comparisons between Central African medical systems and the U.S. health care model, it highlights the challenges of transitioning from acute, event-driven care to a preventive, wellness-based approach.</p> <p>Many African newcomers are unfamiliar with routine screenings and early intervention practices, and face additional barriers such as limited health literacy, high out-of-pocket costs, and mistrust of unfamiliar systems—often resulting in delayed care with serious consequences.</p> <p>The session will explore how culturally responsive health education and system-level adaptations can improve access and outcomes. Attendees will gain practical insights into how providers, advocates, and policymakers can support equitable care by addressing the cultural and economic realities of African-born patients.</p> <p>This session will be conducted in French, with live English interpretation available to ensure accessibility for all participants.</p>		
Reclaiming Home: Empowering BIPOC Youth through Affinity Mentoring	3:05-3:30	Oral Presentation
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Mental Health and Well-Being, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.</p> <p>This session explores the impact of BIPOC-focused mentorship programming on the mental health and well-being of refugee high school students in the Winooski School District. Centered on a strengths-based approach, the project equips mentors with a culturally responsive toolkit designed to foster pride, build trust, and facilitate conversations around health literacy, nutrition, and stress management.</p> <p>By promoting cultural identity and self-efficacy, the program aims to help BIPOC youth build confidence, strengthen their sense of belonging, and develop the skills needed to manage their mental, physical, and social health as they transition into adulthood.</p>		

We value your feedback!

Scan the QR code to complete the post-session evaluation and help us improve future experiences.

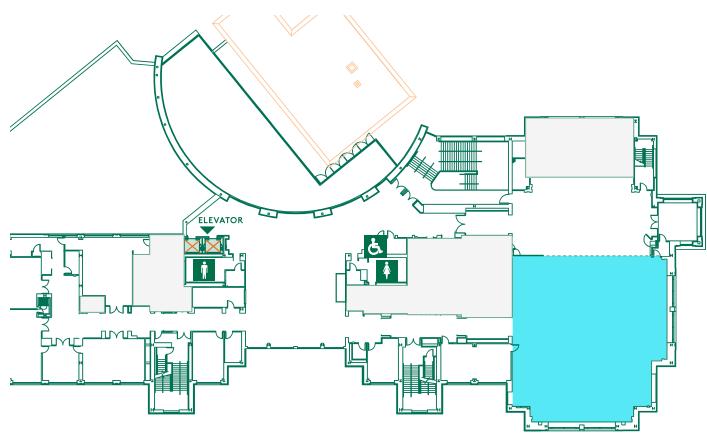


3 Silver Maple Ballroom

Capacity: 248

Hybrid Sessions

All virtual sessions are equipped with interpretation and closed captioning services via the Zoom platform, ensuring inclusive participation for both in-person and remote attendees. Additionally, this room is set up with live closed captioning services.



The Community Doula Project - A Pilot Program in Burlington, VT	10:15-11:10	Panel
Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Cultural Humility, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.		
The Somali Community Doula Project is a culturally responsive perinatal initiative designed to improve maternal and infant health outcomes through non-clinical, community-based support. Staffed by trained Somali immigrant doulas, the program offers continuous care throughout pregnancy, birth, and postpartum—aligned with the linguistic, cultural, and religious needs of Somali families.		
This session will introduce the program's structure and clinical relevance, highlighting how doulas collaborate with obstetric teams to enhance care delivery. Services include prenatal outreach, birth planning, labor support, breastfeeding assistance, and postpartum home visits. Acting as cultural liaisons, doulas help bridge communication gaps, foster trust, and support informed decision-making.		
Attendees will learn about the evidence base for doula care—including reduced cesarean rates and improved breastfeeding outcomes—and hear from OB providers, community partners, and Somali doulas involved in the pilot. The project offers a scalable model for equitable, person-centered care that strengthens outcomes for immigrant communities.		
Centering Black Mamas - Stories of Insight and Power for Health Equity	11:20 - 12:15	Panel
Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Policy and Advocacy, ■ Cultural Humility.		
This powerful panel discussion will explore the intersection of maternal health, racial justice, and health equity, with a focus on the lived experiences of Black mothers. Despite medical advancements, systemic inequities continue to disproportionately affect Black birthing individuals, resulting in significant disparities in outcomes and access to care.		
Panelists—including community advocates, health care professionals, and policy leaders—will share personal narratives and professional insights that illuminate both the challenges and the transformative power of advocacy. Presenters will highlight community-driven solutions, policy initiatives, and the importance of authentic patient-provider partnerships in creating equitable maternal care.		
Attendees will gain actionable strategies to support Black maternal health, and leave inspired to foster health care environments where Black women and birthing people feel seen, heard, respected, and empowered. The session emphasizes the value of listening to lived experience as a foundation for building a more just and responsive health care system.		

What It Takes: Navigating Complex Care for Youth in Vermont	1:30-2:25	Panel
<p>Tracks: ■ Policy and Advocacy, ■ Rural Health Equity, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.</p> <p>In Vermont, families of children with complex medical needs face a fragmented care system—marked by scarce home nursing, long travel to specialists, and overwhelming coordination demands. This panel brings together a primary care physician, pediatric care coordinator, special needs advocacy lawyer, and parent caregiver to share firsthand experiences navigating these challenges.</p> <p>Panelists will highlight the daily frictions that rarely appear in policy reports: delays in securing services, siloed systems, and the emotional toll of repeatedly advocating for a child's needs. The discussion will also address the lack of long-term and residential care options, especially as children age out of school-based supports.</p> <p>Rather than focusing on large-scale reform, this session centers the voices of those working to make the system function—one family at a time. Attendees will gain a grounded understanding of what health equity looks like in practice and reflect on how we can better share the responsibility for care that is too often carried alone by families.</p>		
<p>The Power of Partnerships in Rural Communities: Innovative Strategies for Regional Emergency and Crisis Response</p>		
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Rural Health Equity, ■ Climate Change and Health Equity.</p> <p>This panel brings together leaders from central Vermont's health care, public health, and social service sectors to share the development and impact of a collaborative, community-based model for emergency preparedness and crisis response. Rooted in addressing social determinants of health, the THRIVE network has evolved through real-world challenges—including the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023–2024 flood responses.</p> <p>Panelists will share key successes, lessons learned, and strategies for integrating this model with existing infrastructure. The session will highlight how cross-sector collaboration can strengthen community health and resilience, and offer participants a practical roadmap with actionable steps to enhance local systems.</p>		

We value your feedback!

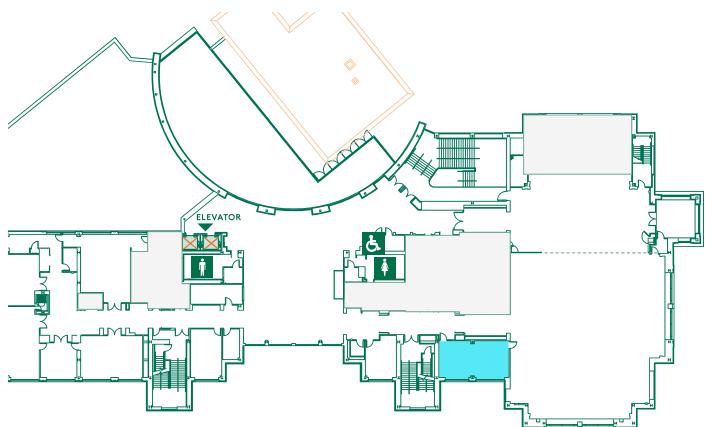
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4 Williams Room

Capacity: 55

In-person Sessions



Dissecting the Black Diaspora: The Impact of Intra-Racial Bias on Trust, Communication, and Care	10:15-11:10	Workshop
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Cultural Humility, ■ Intersectionality in Health Equity.</p> <p>The Black Diaspora is richly diverse—spanning cultures, languages, and lived experiences—yet often treated as a monolith in health care. This workshop challenges that narrative by exploring how intra-racial bias among clinicians and patients can shape health outcomes. While shared racial identity may foster trust, assumptions based on perceived sameness can lead to miscommunication, unmet needs, and inequitable care. Through storytelling, reflection, and facilitated dialogue, panelists representing African, African American, Afro-Caribbean, and other diasporic identities will share personal and professional experiences navigating the U.S. health care system.</p> <p>The session will define intra-racial bias, examine its impact on care, and offer strategies for delivering culturally responsive support. Designed to promote honest, compassionate conversation, this workshop affirms the diversity within Black communities and encourages deeper understanding across the health care workforce. Attendees will leave with practical insights to foster equity by embracing cultural complexity in care delivery.</p>		
Valuing Lived Expertise: Elevating and Engaging Youth and Family Voice in Health Care	11:20 - 12:15	Panel
<p>Track: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment.</p> <p>Engaging youth and families in health care decision-making is a powerful strategy for advancing health equity—especially in perinatal and pediatric settings. This session will explore how the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP) integrates lived expertise into project design and implementation to improve care quality and system effectiveness.</p> <p>Panelists will share examples of youth and family engagement across VCHIP initiatives, highlighting strategies that center community voice in shaping services. The session will also examine the benefits of incorporating lived experience, including stronger trust, more responsive care, and improved outcomes.</p> <p>Attendees will leave with practical tools and insights to meaningfully involve youth and families in health care planning and delivery, and to promote equity through inclusive, person-centered approaches.</p>		
Suffering in Solitude: Understanding the Juxtaposition of Health Equity and Belonging in Higher Education	1:30-2:25	Lecture
<p>Tracks: ■ Mental Health and Well-Being, ■ Rural Health Equity, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.</p> <p>This session explores the emotional toll and professional challenges faced by Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs) and professionals of color in higher education, particularly in rural settings. As public scrutiny and political pressure intensify, many CDOs are experiencing isolation, verbal attacks, and contingent allyship—while still being expected to support vulnerable communities.</p> <p>Drawing from personal experience in senior leadership at a rural state university, the presenter will examine how the intersection of health equity and belonging has created a landscape of solitude and suffering for those tasked with advancing inclusion. The session will highlight how recent mandates have amplified health disparities for CDOs, compounded by limited access to care and privacy.</p> <p>Attendees will gain insight into authentic allyship, meaningful space-making, and strategies for healing and resilience. This presentation invites reflection on how institutions can better support the well-being of those who lead equity work.</p>		

Neuro-Affirming Care for Adults: Promoting Safety and Self-Alignment in Clinical Practice	2:35-3:00	Oral Presentation
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Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Rural Health Equity, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.

Many adults begin exploring autism, ADHD, or dyslexia later in life—often after years of misdiagnosis, masking, or internalized stigma. While self-discovery can be affirming, it also carries psychological risks. Research shows that late-identified autistic adults face elevated rates of depression and suicidality—not due to neurodivergence itself, but from years of unsupported needs and internalized ableism.

This session introduces neuro-affirming care principles, including identity-first language, collaborative framing, and trauma-informed practices. Participants will explore how these approaches foster trust, reduce shame, and improve engagement. We'll contrast deficit-based diagnostic models with affirming frameworks that emphasize autonomy and lived experience.

Special attention will be given to the ethical responsibilities of clinicians in supporting identity exploration, navigating disclosure, and creating safer clinical environments. Attendees will leave with practical tools to integrate neuro-affirming practices into everyday workflows—such as flexible communication formats, sensory accommodations, and reducing gate keeping—to better support neurodivergent adults.

Increasing Inclusion through Targeted Research Recruitment Efforts	3:05-3:30	Oral Presentation
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Tracks: ■ Cultural Humility, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities, ■ Intersectionality in Health Equity.

The Vermont Lung Center (VLC) is committed to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in clinical research across both industry-sponsored and investigator-initiated trials. This session will highlight the challenges, successes, and strategies behind building a more inclusive research program, with a focus on the NIH-funded Lung Health Cohort study.

Recruiting a diverse sample from Vermont's largely homogeneous population required targeted outreach to historically underrepresented groups, including individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds and racial/ethnic minorities. Presenters will share effective recruitment strategies, such as using EPIC's Slicer Dicer tool, multilingual consent materials, and community-based engagement, while also addressing ethical concerns and barriers rooted in historical exploitation.

The session will also explore how VLC research staff foster positive participant experiences through culturally responsive communication, retention strategies, and trust-building. Beyond individual studies, VLC's DEI Committee meets quarterly to refine recruitment practices and train staff in inclusive research methods.

Attendees will gain practical insights into integrating DEI principles into research workflows and be invited to share and learn from efforts across departments. This session aims to spark dialogue and collaboration to advance equity in research across the UVM Health Network and beyond.

We value your feedback!

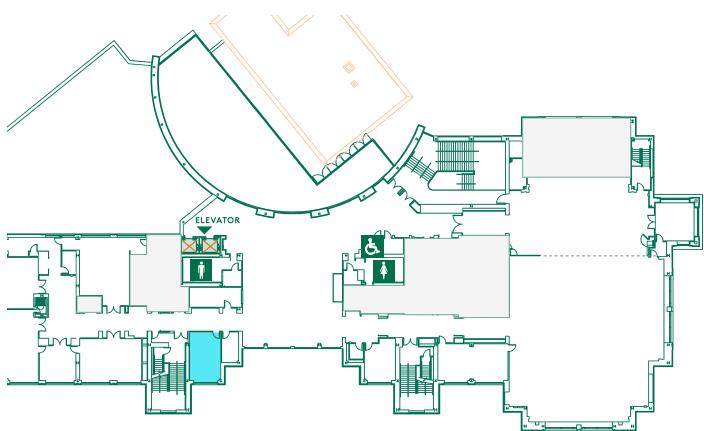
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5 Boulder Society Room

Capacity: 12

In-person Sessions



Toward Safer Child Protective Services Reporting Using the BEST Model	10:15-10:40	Oral Presentation
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Health Education, ■ Stewardship and Ethical Practices.</p> <p>Safety science principles—commonly used in procedural medicine—are equally vital in child maltreatment interventions, where reporting errors can have serious consequences. This session explores how health care professionals can adopt a more deliberate, informed approach to reporting suspected abuse, especially given racial disparities in Child Protective Services (CPS) referrals and responses.</p> <p>With over 4 million CPS reports in 2023 and more than half screened out, indiscriminate reporting strains limited resources and risks harm to families. Presenters will introduce the BEST model—Bias, Education & Support, Situational Awareness, and Transparency—as a framework for safer, more equitable decision-making.</p> <p>Using team huddles and collaborative assessments, clinicians can reduce bias, improve accuracy, and ensure reports are warranted. This session advocates moving beyond reflexive reporting toward a trauma-informed, safety-driven process that protects children while minimizing unnecessary system involvement.</p>		
Today, We Choose Self-Love: A Child's Book with a Lifelong Message	10:45 - 11:10	Oral Presentation
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Mental Health and Well-Being.</p> <p>This session explores the healing power of storytelling through the lens of personal transformation. Diagnosed with epilepsy at 16 and raised in a migrant farmworker family where emotions were rarely discussed, the presenter shares her journey from silence and shame to self-love and advocacy. Her children's book, Today, Ms. Turtlette Talks About Self-Love, emerged from adult healing and became a bridge to affirm worth and emotional resilience—especially for children from underserved communities.</p> <p>Through a short reading, reflection, and interactive discussion, participants will explore how stories can support healing, foster self-compassion, and promote health equity from the inside out. The session will offer strategies for using narrative to build emotional resilience in both children and adults, emphasizing that self-love is not a trend—but a lifelong practice of choosing not to abandon ourselves.</p>		

Moonwise: Reintegrating the Nurturing Power of the Feminine in Health Care	11:20-12:15	Workshop
Tracks: ■ Health Disparities and Inequities, ■ Intersectionality in Health Equity, ■ Climate Change and Health Equity.		
<p>This workshop offers a brave space for practitioners and providers of all genders to reconnect with feminine healing wisdom that has been historically excluded from modern medicine. Between the 12th and 17th centuries, millions—primarily women—were executed during “The Burning Times” in Europe for practicing folk healing and midwifery. These Wise Women held ancestral knowledge rooted in nature’s rhythms, reproductive sovereignty, and community care—wisdom that has since been delegitimized and erased.</p> <p>Today, this exclusion continues to impact health care, particularly for women and BIPOC individuals. Led by Katherine and Whitney—an herbalist and a midwife with decades of experience—this session will explore how unconscious perpetuation of these historical ideologies limits inclusive, affirming care.</p>		
<p>Participants will engage in guided introspection, journaling, and grounding practices with gentle herbs to begin reintegrating divine feminine qualities into their personal and professional lives. Together, we’ll reflect on how reclaiming this wisdom can enhance equity, foster healing, and create brave spaces for patients and colleagues alike.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the power of the divine feminine in health care. 2. Summarize historical events that led to its exclusion. 3. Reflect on ways to reintegrate feminine wisdom into practice. 		
Bridging the Digital Divide: Empowering Older Vermonters for Equitable Health Care Access	1:30-2:25	Workshop
Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Rural Health Equity, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.		
<p>This interactive 50-minute workshop addresses the critical impact of digital barriers on health care access for older adults in Vermont’s rural communities. Through real-life community insights and case examples, participants will explore how technology can both hinder and help care delivery. The session emphasizes patient-centered strategies that foster trust, build digital confidence, and promote equitable engagement with health technologies. Attendees will leave with actionable teaching approaches, ideas for community partnerships, and a clearer path toward inclusive digital health support for older Vermonters.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify key digital barriers affecting older adults’ health care access 2. Apply practical, trust-building strategies to support digital health literacy 3. Explore partnership opportunities and next steps for local implementation 		
Empowering Sustainable Health Equity Through Creative Community Programming: A Dual-Model Approach to Engagement and Adherence	2:35-3:30	Workshop
Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Mental Health and Well-Being, ■ Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices.		
<p>Persistent health inequities among underserved populations stem from limited access, chronic stress, and systemic barriers. This session highlights two innovative, community-based wellness models that integrate science-backed, holistic principles to foster sustainable health engagement. The first, developed in partnership with Rutgers University, used wellness coaching to improve retention in a longitudinal health study through a 12-week bio-psychosocial intervention. Components included ACSM-guided exercise, sleep hygiene, breathwork, nutrition education, and community support. The second initiative, funded by the NJ Department of Health, trained 12 faith-based fitness instructors in underserved communities to deliver ongoing wellness programming. These leaders launched weekly fitness classes, health workshops, and peer support groups—extending impact beyond the grant’s lifecycle. Attendees will gain insights into replicable strategies for building trust, capacity, and long-term wellness in marginalized communities.</p>		

We value your feedback!

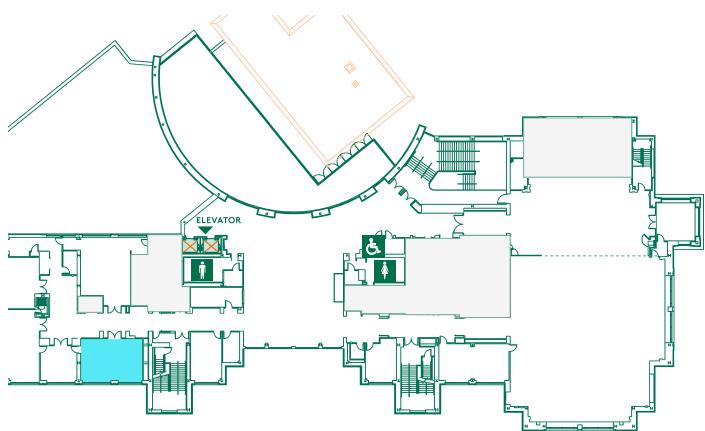
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6 Chittenden Bank Room

Capacity: 55

In-person Sessions



Healing Together: Transformative Strategies Empowering Clinical and Community Allies in Perinatal Substance Use	10:15-11:10	Panel
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices.</p> <p>Achieving health equity for perinatal individuals who use substances requires intentional collaboration across clinical systems, community organizations, and state agencies. This session brings together diverse voices—including those with lived experience—to explore how Vermont is addressing perinatal substance use through advocacy, program development, and statewide initiatives. Panelists will share personal leadership journeys and highlight how their insights have shaped responsive, person-centered care models. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the human impact of stigma and learn about innovative approaches that foster trust, dignity, and equity. The session will emphasize the importance of clinical-community linkages and the transformative role of lived experience in designing effective solutions.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Recognize the impact of stigma and explore three stigma-reduction strategies used in Vermont2. Identify two key community partners supporting perinatal individuals3. Understand how lived experience informs initiative design and implementation.		
How '2STGBLQIA+*' Vermonters are Doing!: A Report of our 2024 Health Survey Data	11:20 - 11:45	Oral Presentation
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Health Education.</p> <p>This presentation shares 2024 health data and community feedback from Vermont's 2STGBLQIA+ population, collected through the Pride Center of Vermont's Health and Wellness Survey. The findings offer an honest, uncensored look at how the community experiences health care, supports one another, and perceives providers. By presenting this data to both health care professionals and the broader public, the session aims to spark meaningful dialogue, rebuild trust, and drive improvements in care. This is a vital step toward reshaping health care systems to better reflect and respond to the needs of 2STGBLQIA+ individuals.</p>		
Zooming Out on Gender Equity in Medicine: Seeing the System, Not Just the Symptoms	11:50-12:15	Oral Presentation
<p>Tracks: ■ Policy and Advocacy, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities, ■ Intersectionality in Health Equity.</p> <p>In clinical practice, precision often means narrowing in on symptoms, labs, and scans. But when our lens becomes too focused, we risk missing the broader systemic forces at play. This session draws on over two decades of experience as a physician in male-dominated health care environments to explore how gender inequities—often invisible up close—shape everything from career advancement and compensation to research design and patient outcomes. Through compelling personal narratives and evidence-based insights, participants will be invited to “zoom out” and recognize gender inequity not as isolated incidents, but as structural flaws embedded in the design of medicine itself. Equity is reframed not as a women’s issue, but as a health care, justice, and leadership imperative.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify how bias and systemic inequities impact women physicians and patient care2. Recognize patterns of gender inequity across research, leadership, and practice3. Apply strategies to shift from performative equity to transformative change		

Partnering Together to Break Cultural and Language Barriers, Advance Immigrant and Refugee Health in Vermont.	1:30-1:55	Oral Presentation
<p>Tracks: ■ Health Education, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities, ■ Intersectionality in Health Equity.</p> <p>Immigrant and refugee communities in Vermont face significant challenges accessing health care due to language barriers, cultural disconnects, transportation limitations, and unfamiliarity with U.S. systems. These issues are especially acute for individuals with limited English proficiency, often leading to unmet needs and mistrust.</p> <p>This session offers practical strategies to improve engagement and health care access, emphasizing cultural humility, real-time interpretation services, and culturally adapted health literacy. Drawing from lived experience, case studies, and frontline advocacy, participants will explore how community-based services—such as professional interpreters, local navigators, and inclusive communication—can complement institutional efforts. The session also presents policy recommendations to advance language justice and health equity statewide. Ideal for health care professionals, administrators, students, and advocates, this presentation equips attendees with tools to address structural inequities and foster more inclusive, responsive care for Vermont's immigrant and refugee populations.</p>		
<p>Elevating the Role of Immigrants and Refugees in Equitable Health Care Delivery at UVMMC</p>		
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Health Education, ■ Cultural Humility.</p> <p>The University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMMC) has launched a Multilingual Council—14 members representing diverse linguistic and cultural communities—to embed immigrant and refugee voices into health care decision-making. This session proposes a Health Equity panel featuring Council members and community stakeholders to highlight the Council's role as a vital advisory body shaping UVMMC's programs, services, and patient engagement strategies.</p> <p>Through lived experience, advocacy, and collaborative dialogue, the panel will explore how cultural humility, language access, and community partnership can transform health care delivery. Participants will gain insight into how inclusive, participatory structures foster trust, improve access, and promote equity. Beyond addressing disparities, the Council centers joy, connection, and radical reimagining of community engagement—offering a model for institutional change rooted in belonging and shared leadership.</p>		
<p>Bridging the Gap: Integrating Internationally Trained Medical Professionals into Vermont's Health Care Workforce</p>		
<p>Tracks: ■ Health Education, ■ Cultural Humility, ■ Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices.</p> <p>Vermont is facing a critical shortage of primary care physicians, with a 13% decline between 2012 and 2022 and nearly one-third of current PCPs over age 60. Meanwhile, a largely untapped pool of internationally trained medical professionals resides in Vermont—skilled individuals who face significant barriers to practicing medicine due to complex licensure pathways, language challenges, and systemic inequities.</p> <p>This workshop explores the disconnect and presents actionable strategies to bridge it. Led by the Windham County NAACP Health Justice Committee, the session shares findings from interviews with 15 international medical graduates and outlines policy advocacy, infrastructure development, and alternative career pathways. Participants will engage in dialogue around legislative efforts, integration support, and a community-driven playbook for change. This session is ideal for health care leaders, policymakers, and advocates seeking to advance workforce equity and improve health care access across Vermont.</p>		

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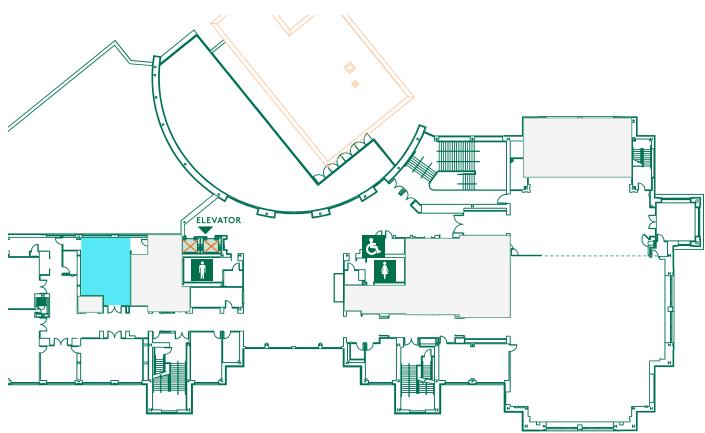


7 Jost Foundation Room

Capacity: 40

Hybrid Sessions

All virtual sessions are equipped with interpretation and closed captioning services via the Zoom platform, ensuring inclusive participation for both in-person and remote attendees.



Take Care Project: Building Menstrual Equity in Schools & Communities	10:15-11:10	Workshop
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Health Education, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.</p> <p>This session explores how the Take Care Project in Bennington, Vermont is expanding access to free period products and menstrual health education in schools and communities. Using local data and student voice, we'll examine the impact of unmet menstrual needs and how youth-led advocacy, peer education, and inclusive community events—like packing parties—are breaking stigma and fostering belonging. Participants will gain practical tools and inspiration to champion menstrual equity in their own settings, whether in schools, workplaces, or broader communities.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Define menstrual equity and explore initiatives that increase access to free period products2. Understand how youth-led education promotes empowerment, reduces stigma, and supports health literacy3. Identify actionable strategies and resources to advance menstrual equity in diverse settings		
<p>Addressing health disparities and barriers to health care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) Health Care</p>		
<p>Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Cultural Humility, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.</p> <p>Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) represent a growing and high-risk patient population, yet many health care providers lack the training and tools to deliver equitable, patient-centered care. While pediatric providers often work within developmentally informed frameworks, adult care settings frequently fall short—leading to disparities in access, autonomy, and quality of care. This session, co-led with athlete ambassadors from Special Olympics Vermont, will highlight health disparities faced by individuals with IDD and demonstrate how small, intentional changes in care delivery can have a profound impact. Through data, lived experience, and practical strategies, participants will explore how to improve clinical competency, communication, and inclusion across health care systems.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand the health disparities affecting individuals with IDD2. Apply patient-centered care strategies tailored to the IDD population3. Identify actionable steps to improve care across health care networks		

Meeting the Moment: Supporting Providers and Our Community in an Increasingly Challenging Health Care Context	1:30-2:25	Workshop
<p>Tracks: ■ Policy and Advocacy, ■ Health Education, ■ Mental Health and Well-Being.</p> <p>Health care providers committed to equity and justice are increasingly challenged by shifting legal and policy landscapes. In Vermont and New York, recent changes—including Vermont's payment reform legislation (S.126), prior authorization reforms, and New York's rollback of federal funding for its Essential Plan—have created uncertainty and distress for clinicians whose values may conflict with regulatory constraints. This workshop offers a grounding space for providers, supervisors, and trainees to explore the emotional toll of these challenges and learn tools to navigate moral distress. Led by a health care attorney, bio-ethicist, and clinical psychologist, the session will combine legal updates with psychodynamic and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) strategies. Participants will also explore advocacy pathways to align their work with personal and professional values.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify three legal actions impacting health care delivery in Vermont and New York 2. Recognize and manage internal responses to moral distress 3. Explore advocacy opportunities to support health equity and justice 		
<p>Guiding Trans/Gender Diverse Youth and Their Caregivers through Authoritarian Attack</p>		
2:35-3:30	Lecture	
<p>Tracks: ■ Policy and Advocacy, ■ Mental Health and Well-Being, ■ Stewardship and Ethical Practices.</p> <p>Authoritarian regimes—past and present—have often undermined scientific integrity and restricted health care practices, especially those rooted in equity and inclusion. This session examines how such forces continue to shape public discourse and policy, particularly in the care of trans and gender diverse youth. Drawing connections between historical suppression of science and current misinformation campaigns, the presentation will explore how providers can uphold best practices in physical, psychological, and social support despite mounting political attacks. Participants will gain tools to recognize and resist epistemological violence, counter misinformation, and advocate for evidence-based, affirming care.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define epistemological violence and its relevance to health care 2. Identify common misinformation about care for trans and gender diverse youth 3. Explore practical strategies to support and protect trans/gender diverse youth in clinical and community settings 		

We value your feedback!

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8 Virtual Room

All virtual sessions are equipped with interpretation and closed captioning services via the Zoom platform, ensuring inclusive participation for both in-person and remote attendees.

Centering Neurodivergent Voices: Participatory Research as a Pathway to Health Equity	10:15-11:10	Lecture
Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities, ■ Health-Related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs.		
<p>Neurodivergent individuals face significant health disparities, including premature mortality, untreated co-occurring conditions, and systemic barriers to care. Traditional health care models often overlook sensory, executive functioning, and communication needs, resulting in inaccessible and inequitable care. This session highlights All Brains Belong VT's innovative community participatory research model, which centers neurodivergent voices in health care design. By compensating patients for their lived expertise, using multimodal data collection (surveys, interviews, video clips), and designing inclusive, low-barrier participation pathways, this approach surfaces insights often missed in conventional research. Participants will learn how to apply patient-driven strategies to clinical interviewing, care planning, and system-level change. Video clips from neurodivergent patients will illustrate the transformative impact of being seen, heard, and valued in health care settings.</p>		
<p>Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Understand health disparities affecting neurodivergent individuals2. Explore inclusive research and care design strategies3. Apply patient-centered insights to improve health care delivery		
"Not the Kase": When 'Life of the Mother' Isn't Enough to Protect Medically Necessary Abortions (CANCELED)	11:20 - 11:45	Oral Presentation
Tracks: ■ Community Engagement and Empowerment, ■ Policy and Advocacy, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.		
<p>In October 2021, after receiving a fatal fetal diagnosis, I was denied medically necessary abortion care in my home state and forced to travel across state lines to receive treatment. Despite being under the care of a maternal-fetal medicine specialist, I was told intervention could only occur once my life was in greater danger.</p> <p>This presentation offers a firsthand account of the trauma caused by vague abortion laws and the dangerous gap between clinical judgment and legal restrictions. Through personal narrative and policy analysis, I will explore how political ideology continues to shape maternal health care, why the concept of "medical necessity" is often misunderstood, and how these laws fail patients in crisis. Designed for health care providers, students, and advocates, this session aims to humanize the abortion conversation, challenge misconceptions, and promote compassionate, evidence-based care rooted in autonomy and justice.</p>		
Trans and Gender Diverse Aging and Palliative Care: A Case Based Approach	11:50-12:15	Oral Presentation
Tracks: ■ Health Education, ■ Mental Health and Well-Being, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.		
<p>Older adults in transgender and gender diverse communities face distinct challenges that are often overlooked in both general geriatric care and palliative care education. These individuals may carry the weight of lifelong discrimination, compounded by systemic barriers in health care that persist into older adulthood.</p> <p>This pre-recorded oral presentation will explore the unique experiences of trans and gender diverse elders, including cohort effects, identity-related stressors, and gaps in end-of-life care. Using a case-based format, the session will highlight practical approaches to delivering affirming, person-centered care that honors identity, autonomy, and dignity. Participants will gain insight into how inclusive practices can improve outcomes and foster trust in health care settings. By centering the voices and needs of trans older adults, this session aims to shift the narrative toward compassionate, culturally responsive care at every stage of life.</p>		

Cross Cultural Clinical Social Work & Care Coordination in Chittenden County, Vermont	1:30-2:25	Workshop
Tracks: ■ Cultural Humility, ■ Mental Health and Well-Being, ■ Health Disparities and Inequities.		
<p>This interactive workshop will begin with a brief presentation highlighting key considerations in providing services to refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers in Chittenden County, Vermont. Using real case examples, we'll explore common challenges—such as miscommunication, cultural misunderstandings, and breakdowns in care coordination—that can compromise service delivery. Following the presentation, participants will engage in a case-based activity in breakout groups, identifying strengths, barriers, and strategies for delivering effective, culturally responsive care. The session will conclude with a group discussion to share insights and solutions. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how to navigate cross-cultural complexities, avoid common missteps, and collaborate across disciplines to better support clients with complex needs.</p>		
Tracks: ■ Health Disparities and Inequities, ■ Health-Related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs, ■ Climate Change and Health Equity.		
Children's Environmental Health: The Role of the Physician in Advancing Equity	2:35-3:30	Lecture
<p>Vermont's climate is changing rapidly—average temperatures have risen by 2°F since 1900, heavy precipitation events are up 67%, and days over 87°F are projected to quadruple by century's end. Wildfire smoke, flooding, and rising tick-borne illnesses pose growing threats to child health, especially for low-income and rural populations. Children are physiologically more vulnerable to environmental stressors, with nearly 10% of Vermont's children affected by asthma, and increasing rates of anxiety, trauma, and sleep disturbances linked to climate-related disasters.</p> <p>This session outlines the urgent need for pediatric clinicians to lead climate-responsive care. Participants will explore actionable strategies across three levels: integrating environmental histories and anticipatory guidance in clinical practice; promoting sustainability within health care institutions; and advocating for policies that protect children and advance environmental justice. Through a multipronged approach, clinicians can help safeguard child health and promote equity in the face of climate change.</p>		

We value your feedback!

Scan the QR code to complete the post-session evaluation and help us improve future experiences.



Parking

Paid parking is available on a first-come, first-served basis for all summit attendees in the following lots:

Lot 2 & 4: Jeffords Parking Lot – Closest to the Davis Center's 2nd floor entrance

Lot 3: Gutterson Parking Lot – Adjacent to the athletic facilities.

Lot 1: Davis Center Oval – Limited availability near the 3rd floor entrance

All accessible parking areas are clearly marked and located near entrances with automatic door openers and elevator access.



Accessibility

The Davis Center is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible environment for all visitors. Below are key accommodations and services available:

Building Access

- Entrances: All main entrances on each floor have automatic door openers.
- Elevators: Two centrally located public elevators serve all four floors.
- Areas of Refuge: Designated emergency waiting areas are available on the fourth floor.

Mobility Support

- Wheelchairs: Available on a first-come, first-served basis at the Operations Office (3rd floor). Call (802) 656-1204 to reserve.
- Accessible Parking:
- 6 spaces at the Oval (3rd floor entrance)
- 5 spaces behind the 2nd floor near Morrill Hall

Restrooms

- Accessible stalls in all public restrooms
- Gender-neutral, single-user restrooms on each floor
- Private restroom on the 1st floor

Information Centers

Located on the 1st and 3rd floors, with multi-level counters for wheelchair accessibility.



Summit Evaluation

Your presence and perspective are vital as we continue to shape this gathering with shared wisdom, purpose, and solidarity. We'd love to hear from you—please take a few moments to complete our post-event survey. Your feedback helps us grow and ensures we can better welcome and support you next year.

A Note of Gratitude from the Summit Chairs

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the incredible individuals who generously volunteered their time and shared their expertise to help bring this summit to life. Your dedication, insight, and collaboration were instrumental in shaping a meaningful and impactful experience for all involved. We are deeply grateful for your contributions and commitment to advancing this important work.

Amanda Froeschle	Kristie Grover
Brian Harwood	Kristin Fontaine
Catherine Suiter	Laisson DeSouza
Chrissy Keating	Leah Pryor
Courtney Fleisher	LeGita Scott-Williams
Deb Hinchey	Leila Amiri
Debbie Reynolds	Marcela Bardova
Erin Armstrong	Marissa Coleman
Geera Demers	Megan Jensen
Geri Amori	Michelle Bruner
Grace Delisle	MJ Stolberg
Guadalupe Martinez	Scottie Taylor
Hjonis Hanson	Sefakor G.M.A. Komabu-Pomeyie
Jess Fitzgerald	Shana Riel
Josie Leavitt	Shelby McGarry
Justin Graham	Tiffany Delaney
Kelsey Rumley	Tim Lahey
Kenneth Allen	Tommy Wondrasek
Kerry Haley	Weiwei Wang
Kim Jones	

Save the Date



September 24 and 25, 2026

The Dudley H. Davis Center

Make a Donation

Join us in shaping a healthier, more equitable future. Your donation will help power the planning and execution of next year's Health Equity Summit—an event dedicated to driving meaningful change, fostering collaboration, and amplifying voices committed to justice in health care. Together, we can build a movement that transforms lives.

