



2026 Program

September 24 and 25
UVM Davis Center
Burlington, VT



University of
Vermont **Health**



University of Vermont

Larner College of Medicine

College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Presented by:



Sponsored by:



Summit Overview

We are honored to welcome you to the Fifth Annual Health Equity Summit, where leaders, practitioners, researchers, educators, advocates, policymakers, and community organizations come together in a shared commitment to advancing health equity and improving outcomes for all.

We gather at a time when many of the supports people depend on for health, safety, stability, and connection are under growing strain. These pressures are not felt equally. For many, it is becoming increasingly difficult to live with dignity and to access the resources, support, and care they need to thrive. In this moment, health equity cannot be something we hope to achieve someday. It must drive the decisions we make now.

That responsibility can feel heavy, but none of us carries it alone.

This Summit is a space for courage, curiosity, and commitment. It is a place to listen to lived experiences, learn from one another, ask difficult questions, and recognize the power we have, to influence what comes next. Every policy, practice, partnership, and everyday decision can either widen inequities or help close them.

Over these two days, we invite you to move beyond naming what is wrong and toward imagining what is possible, strengthening what is working, and identifying where each of us can act. The progress we need will come through what we build together.

As we begin, consider:

- ▶ What are we noticing about health equity in our communities and systems today?
- ▶ Who is most affected when resources are limited and systems are under strain?
- ▶ Where do we have the power to make a difference?
- ▶ What will each of us carry forward from this Summit into action?

Let this be a place where difficult realities can be named without losing sight of hope, where lived experience and community knowledge are valued alongside research and professional expertise, and where relationships become a source of strength and possibility.

We each have a role to play, and we are stronger when those efforts are connected. Together, we can make fairer choices, strengthen the systems people rely on, and build communities where everyone has a real opportunity to be healthy and thrive.

Welcome. We are so glad you are here.

2026 Health Equity Summit Co Chairs

Taylor Small, Director of Health Equity

Hajar Anvar, Health Equity & Patient Experience Program 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, September 24 | 10 am – 7 pm

Opening, concurrent, and poster sessions

Friday, September 25 | 7:30 am – 5 pm

Keynote and concurrent sessions

Registration and Check-in

The Scarlet Oak Lounge on the third floor

**Real-time schedule updates will be posted in
Whova app.**

Tracks

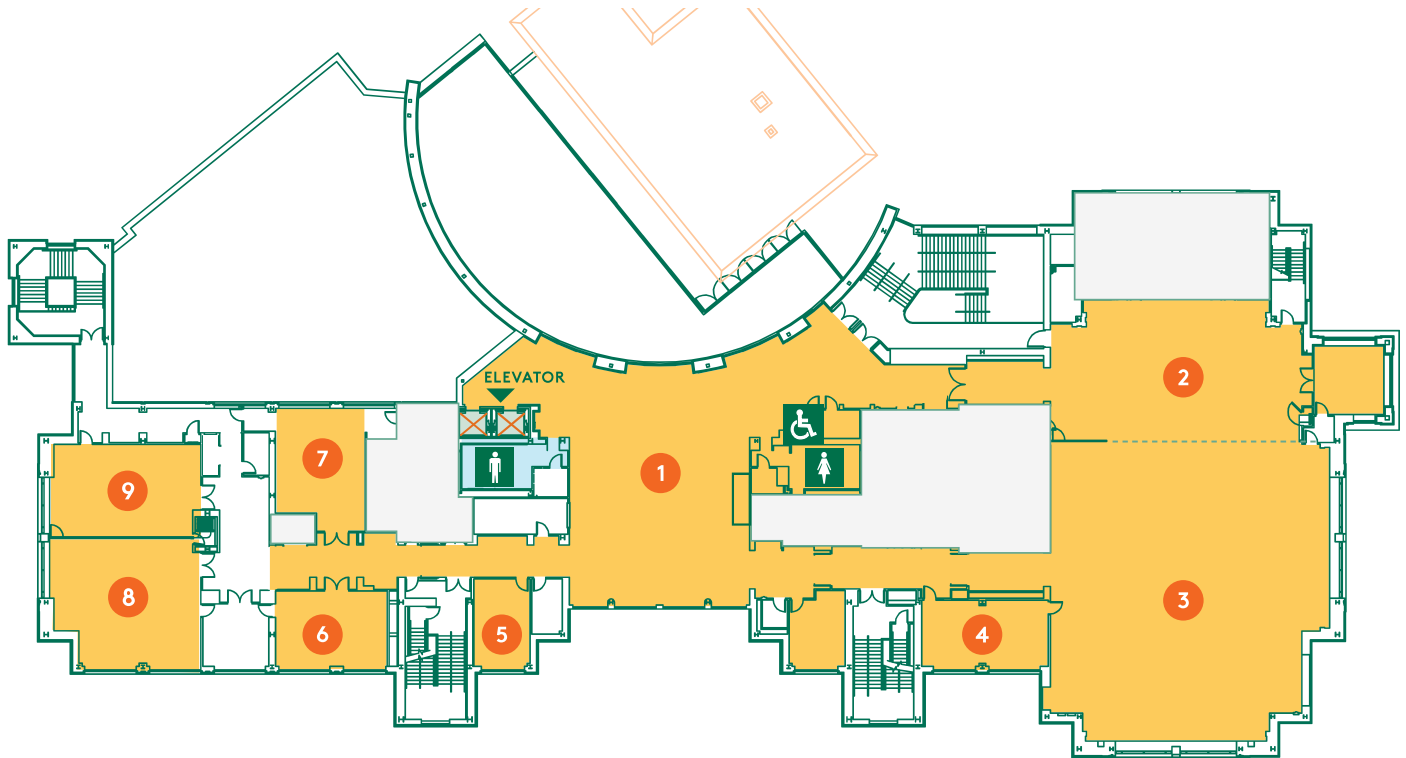
- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices
- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Rural Health Equity
- Health-related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs
- Policy and Advocacy
- Health Education
- Data and Measurement
- Cultural Humility
- Intersectionality in Health Equity
- Stewardship and Ethical 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. Grand Maple Ballroom: Silver (hybrid)
4. Williams Family Room
5. Boulder Society Centennial Room
6. Chittenden Bank Room
7. Jost Foundation Room (hybrid)
8. Livak Ballroom: Frank
9. Livak Ballroom: Mildred

✕ Elevators

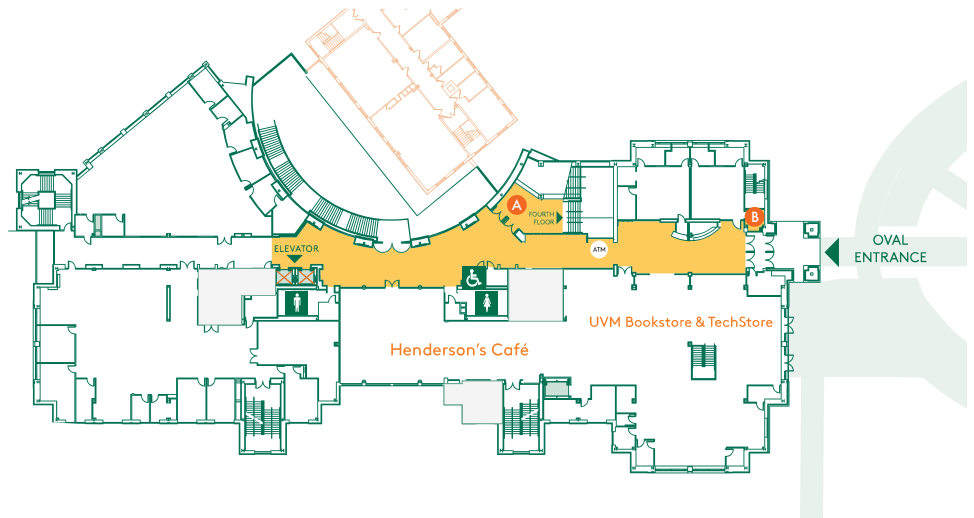
♂ ♀ ♿ Restrooms

Davis Center: Floor 3

This is the entrance level from the circle.

Registration and Check-in: Scarlet Oak Lounge

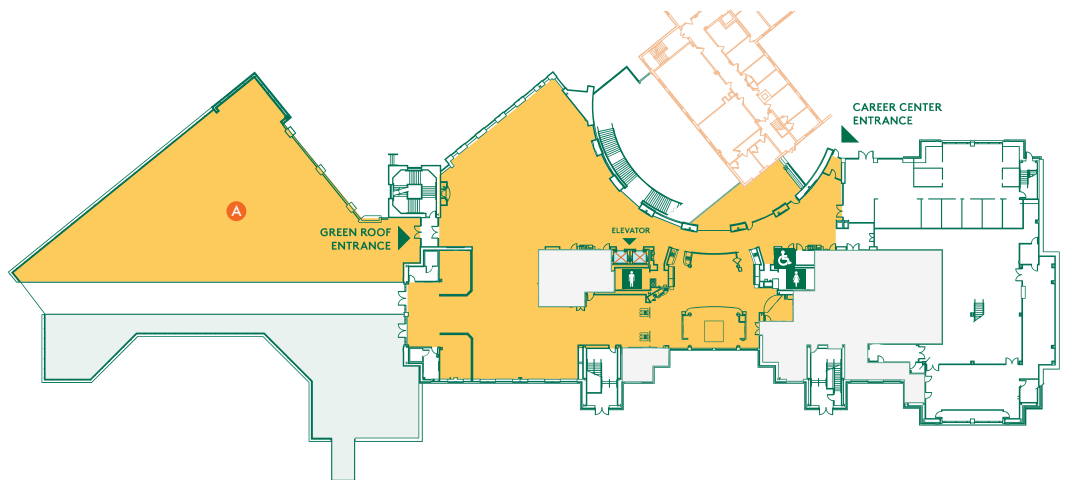
- A.** Scarlet Oak Lounge
- B.** Meditation and Prayer Room



Davis Center: Floor 2

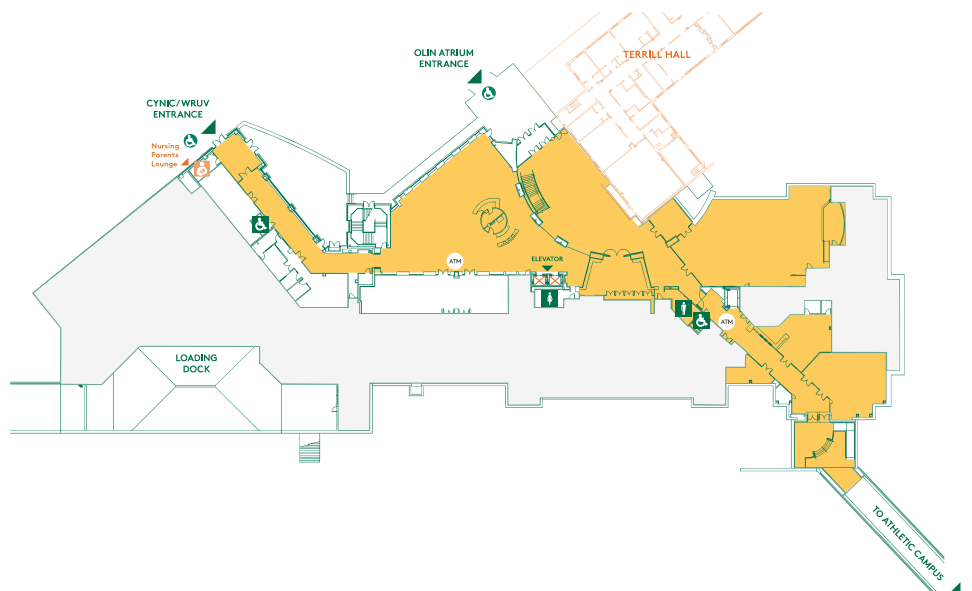
Resting areas, and food and beverage services are available on this floor for your comfort and convenience.

- A.** Quiet open space



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

September 24, 4 pm – 7 pm, Grand Maple Ballroom

1. Belonging, Flourishing, and Academic Success for Sexual and Gender Minority College Students with Cancer Diagnoses
PRESENTERS: Emma Lowry, Maija Reblin
TRACKS:   
-

2. Operational Pause, Strategic Progress: Community Mapping for a Better Tomorrow
PRESENTERS: Laura McNamara, Austin Grant
TRACKS:   
-

3. Improving Provider Cohesion through Interdisciplinary, Cross-Institutional Collaboration: A Model in Gender-Affirming Care
PRESENTERS: Anja Jokela, Eileen Kelly
TRACKS:   
-

4. Rheumatologic Disease Among Transgender, Nonbinary, and Genderqueer Patients within the University of Vermont Health Network
PRESENTER: Tess Morrison
TRACKS:  
-

5. Cancer Care Disparities Demonstrated by Area Deprivation Index Across Medical, Radiation, Gynecological, and Surgical Oncology
PRESENTERS: Veer Shah, Michael Li, Darshi Shah, Srivatsan Swaminathan, Payton Utzman, Sri Guttikonda, Maisha Savani
TRACKS:   

6. Area Deprivation Index and Opioid Prescribing Patterns Among Oncology Providers in the United States
PRESENTERS: Maisha Savani, Veer Shah, Darshi Shah, Srivatsan Swaminathan, Payton Utzman
TRACKS:   
-

7. Improving Access to Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm screening through Point of Care Ultrasound in Primary Care
PRESENTERS: Ben Clements, Meghan Lane, Jake Reigle, Connor Nowak
TRACKS:   
-

8. Bridging Health Equity Gaps: Disparities in Autoimmune Disease Utilization, Outcomes, and Access
PRESENTER: Krati Chauhan
TRACKS:   
-

9. Advancing Health Equity in Inpatient Psychiatry Through Multilingual Admission Materials
PRESENTERS: Islane Louis, Rosmaria Cirelli
TRACKS:   
-

10. Cultural Competence in Nursing Education: A New Approach
PRESENTERS: Jill Folsom, Shannon Hanshaw, Mallory Mattison
TRACKS:   

11. Representation Matters: Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Medical Illustration

PRESENTERS: Zoe Rosenfelt, Nate Jebbet, Michael Li

TRACKS:   

12. Direct Nurse Billing and Reimbursement: The Future of Nursing Structural Empowerment

PRESENTER: Jennifer Long

TRACKS:   

13. Community-Based Hypertension Screening and Education: A Health Equity Approach in Central Vermont

PRESENTERS: Emily Byrne, Rachel Lorek, Guadalupe Martinez

TRACKS:   

14. Self-service Public Health Technology: Assessing Community Need, Acceptability, and Feasibility in Rural Vermont

PRESENTERS: Curtis Plante, Benjamin Koren, Matthew Mullen, Benjamin Rubin

TRACKS:   

15. Menstrual Equity: Utilization of Hospital and Clinic Spaces to Increase Access to Menstrual Products

PRESENTERS: Nicki Nikkhoy, Lajla Badnjevic

TRACKS:   

16. From Hidden Need to Visible Care: Lactation Infrastructure as a Health Equity Strategy

PRESENTERS: Sascha Mayer, Phyllis Stambolian

TRACKS:   

17. Increasing Access to Dermatology Through the Burlington Free Access Health Clinic

PRESENTERS: Taylor Pong, Mark Derbyshire, Umair Malik, Keith Morley, Santana VanDyke, Waqar Waheed

TRACKS:   

18. Standardizing Interprofessional Communication to Reduce Absenteeism Rates in Northern Vermont Elementary Schools

PRESENTER: Kate Goodwin

TRACKS:   

19. Setting the Community School Lunch Table for Intergenerational Community Engagement & Nourishing Flourishing Connections

PRESENTERS: Cynthia Jane Herbert, Shelly Lanou

TRACKS:   

20. Finding Synergy: Combining Lived + Clinical Experience to Implement Suicide Risk Screening in Pediatric Psychiatry

PRESENTERS: Andrew Rosenfeld, Korinne Harvey, Moonshine Mari, Blair Yant

TRACKS:   

Poster Presentation (continued)

September 24, 4 pm – 7 pm, Grand Maple Ballroom

21. The Multifaceted Benefits That Home and Wild Food Procurement Provide to Food-Insecure Practitioners

PRESENTERS: Janica Anderzén, Sam Bliss, Meredith Niles, Rachel Schattman, Stevens Azima, Rebecca Mitchell, Scott Merrill, Kathryn Yerxa, Sarah Nowak, Jennifer Laurent

TRACKS:   

22. Plant-based Diets: A Forced Choice for Socially Disadvantaged Rural Adults

PRESENTER: Saadatu Abdul-Rahaman

TRACKS:   

23. Strategies to Address Food Insecurity Among Patients Living with HIV

PRESENTERS: Nicole Clayton, Erin Longchamp

TRACKS:   

24. Bright Smiles, Stronger Futures: A School-Based Oral Health Initiative in the Upper Valley

PRESENTERS: Beth O'Donnell, Moreen Ng

TRACKS:   

25. Provider-Reported Barriers to Dental Care for Adult Medicaid Patients in Rural Southern Vermont

PRESENTERS: Jessica Kobsa, Jack Dolak, Jordan Hacker, Kiersten Lockwood, Karen Lounsbury, Jesus Mendoza, Arden Porter, Susan White

TRACKS:   

26. Rural-Urban Health Disparities Among Individuals at Risk of Medicaid Loss from Work Requirements

PRESENTER: Jordan McGuire

TRACKS:   

27. A Comprehensive Assessment of Vermont's Paid Medical and Family Leave Environment

PRESENTERS: Jarryd Rochford, Hiba Hussain, Marissa Landry, Nicole Lewis, Franklin Mao, Alison Young

TRACKS: 

28. Housing as a Platform for Health Equity in Vulnerable Populations

PRESENTERS: Gigi Montague, Isla Mitchell, Mina Rizk

TRACKS:   

29. Improving Quality Through Accessibility: The UVM Medical Center Accessibility Partner & Council

PRESENTERS: Jacqueline Kelley, Louise Barrow

TRACKS:   

30. Safety Matters: Embedding Equity and Trauma-Informed Principles in Safety Reporting to Strengthen Organizational Culture

PRESENTERS: Kristin Hendricks, Allison Burlock, Sarah Rogers-Spaulding, Hajar Anvar

TRACKS:  

31. Advancing Job Equity Through Interviewer Education, Bias Reduction, and Inclusive Recruitment Practices Across UVM Health
PRESENTERS: Alicia Sherman, Dom Breault
TRACKS: ■ ■

32. Mole Patrol: A Smart Phrase to Bridge Dermatology Access Gaps in Vermont
PRESENTERS: Amir Zafarianian, Julie Lin
TRACKS: ■ ■ ■

TRACKS:

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

Film Screening: Come See Me in the Good Light

September 24, 5 pm, Livak Ballroom: Frank

Join us on September 24, 5:00 pm, for a special screening of *Come See Me in the Good Light*, the acclaimed documentary about poet Andrea Gibson and their partner, Megan Falley, as they navigate a terminal cancer diagnosis with humor, love and an unshakable partnership.

At its heart, the film is a story about living fully, finding meaning in uncertainty and the connections that sustain us through life's most difficult moments. It offers a powerful perspective on the human experience behind health care, highlighting the importance of compassionate, person-centered care, the role of caregivers, and the ways identity, belonging and support systems shape health and well-being.



**Open to all 2026 Health Equity
Summit registrants.**

Voting

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

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

Poster award ceremony will be during the September 25 lunch hour.

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



<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/ERkV7pB9Zu>

Opening, Concurrent, and Poster Sessions

September 24, 10 am – 7 pm, Davis Center 4th Floor

QR codes at the bottom of the page allow remote access to Hybrid and Virtual sessions.

Block 1

10:00 – 11:30

Opening
Ceremony

VIRTUAL ONLY

What Are We
Carrying Into
HES '26? A Virtual
Community
Gathering
Virtual Room

12:00 – 2:00

Registration/
Check-in

Scarlet Oak Lounge

Block 2

2:00 – 2:30

Oral Presentation

HYBRID

Evaluating a Mental Health
Agency-Based Doula Program:
Client Perspectives
Grand Maple Ballroom: Silver

Oral Presentation

IN-PERSON ONLY

More than a Meal: Creating
Connections for NICU Families
Williams Family Room

Oral Presentation

IN-PERSON ONLY

The Community Health Worker
Role in Accessing Developmental
Screening and Resources in New
American Families
Chittenden Bank Room

Oral Presentation

HYBRID

Taking the Bus in Rural Vermont:
Allowing Freedom and Building
Community
Livak Ballroom: Frank

Oral Presentation

HYBRID

Centering Student Agency
and Learning in Developing a
Participatory Model of Peer
Education
Livak Ballroom: Mildred

Oral Presentation

VIRTUAL ONLY

Miles to Medicine: The Real Cost
of Rural Pharmacy Deserts
Virtual Room



Virtual
Room
Access

Detailed session descriptions
are available on **pages 22**
through 47.

Block 3

2:35 – 3:35

Lecture

IN-PERSON ONLY

Closing the Wellness Gap:
Overcoming Overweight and
Obesity Challenges Through
Health Equity Advances in
Vermont

Williams Family Room

Lecture

IN-PERSON ONLY

Comfort in Crisis: The
Wellness Power of Traditional
Food

Chittenden Bank Room

Workshop

HYBRID

Draw to Understand:
Sketchnoting for Equitable
Health Communication

Jost Foundation Room

Panel

IN-PERSON ONLY

School Based Supports for
Community Health

Livak Ballroom: Frank

Panel

HYBRID

Reimagining What's Possible:
Advancing Equitable
Healthcare for People with
Disabilities

Livak Ballroom: Mildred

Oral Presentation

VIRTUAL ONLY

Caste and Menstruation: An
Inquiry on Inclusive Menstrual
Health Policies in India

Virtual Room (2:35 – 3:05)

Block 4

3:30 – 4:30

Exhibitor Hall

Livak Fireplace Lounge

4:00 – 7:00

Poster

Presentation

Grand Maple Ballroom

4:00 – 7:00

Learning

Experience

IN-PERSON ONLY

Project for Housing
Accessibility and
Training

Boulder Society Room

5:00 – 6:45

Film Screening

IN-PERSON ONLY

Come See Me In
The Good Light

Livak Ballroom: Frank



Virtual
Room
Access

Detailed session descriptions
are available on **pages 22
through 47.**

Keynote and Concurrent Sessions

September 25, 7:30 am – 5 pm, Davis Center 4th Floor

QR codes at the bottom of the page allow remote access to Hybrid and Virtual sessions.

7:30 – 8:15

Registration/
Check-in

Scarlet Oak Lounge

Morning

Refreshments

Livak Fireplace Lounge

8:15 – 8:45

Opening Session

HYBRID

Grand Maple Ballroom

8:45 – 9:45

Opening Keynote

HYBRID

A Conversation
with Dr. Mona
Hanna

Grand Maple Ballroom

9:45 – 10:25

Book Signing/
Networking

Livak Fireplace Lounge

Block 1

10:25 – 11:25

Panel

HYBRID

Inclusivity and Equity with Autism
Spectrum Disorder: Health
Services and Lifesaving Swim
Skills

Grand Maple Ballroom: Sugar

Panel

HYBRID

One Goal, Two Communities:
Advancing Health Equity by
Bridging Communication Gaps
with Older Adults and Multilingual
Allied Health Students

Grand Maple Ballroom: Silver

Lecture

IN-PERSON ONLY

Where We Belong: Integrating
Outdoor Equity and Health
Equity Through Community
Collaborative Programming

Williams Family Room

Lecture

IN-PERSON ONLY

Incarceration: The Power of
Shared Inquiry in Driving Change

Chittenden Bank Room

Workshop

HYBRID

Soteria House Vermont: A
Relationship-First Approach to
Supporting Extreme States

Jost Foundation Room

Panel

IN-PERSON ONLY

Rural Menstrual Justice and The
Plattsburgh Menstrual-Mental
Health Initiative

Livak Ballroom: Frank

Panel

HYBRID

HIV Advocacy and Support During
Disenfranchisement: Bringing Self
to the Work

Livak Ballroom: Mildred

Workshop

VIRTUAL ONLY

Centering Lived Experience to
Transform BIPOC Maternal Health
Systems

Virtual Room



Virtual
Room
Access

Detailed session descriptions
are available on **pages 22**
through 47.

Block 2

11:30 – 12:30

Panel

HYBRID

Advancing Oral Health Access
Through Medical/Dental
Integration

Grand Maple Ballroom: Sugar

Panel

HYBRID

Amplifying Voices of Lived-
Experience: Peer Support
Provider Certification in
Vermont

Grand Maple Ballroom: Silver

Lecture

IN-PERSON ONLY

Hidden in Plain Sight: Alcohol,
Culture, and Health Equity in
Rural Vermont

Williams Family Room

Workshop

IN-PERSON ONLY

Hands-On Healing:
Community Wound Care
Through Harm Reduction

Chittenden Bank Room



Virtual
Room
Access

Detailed session descriptions
are available on **pages 22
through 47.**

Lecture

HYBRID

The Invisibility of Sex
Trafficking

Jost Foundation Room

Panel

HYBRID

Practice, Power, and Place:
Clinician Ownership as a
Pathway to Rural Health Equity

Livak Ballroom: Frank

Panel

HYBRID

Her Heart, Her Voice: Patient
Advocacy and Equity in
Women's Cardiac Health

Livak Ballroom: Mildred

Block 2

12:30 – 2:00

Lunch/Networking

Livak Fireplace Lounge

Learning

Experience

IN-PERSON ONLY

Project for Housing
Accessibility and
Training

Boulder Society Room

1:20 – 1:40

Poster Award

Ceremony

Grand Maple Ballroom

Keynote and Concurrent Sessions

September 25, 7:30 am – 5 pm, Davis Center 4th Floor

QR codes at the bottom of the page allow remote access to Hybrid and Virtual sessions.

Block 3

2:00 – 3:30

Workshop

IN-PERSON ONLY

Why Does Research Matter: From Evidence to Community Health Impact

Grand Maple Ballroom: Silver

Block 3

2:00 – 2:30

Oral Presentation

HYBRID

Patient-Centered Integration of Family Wellness in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Grand Maple Ballroom: Sugar

Oral Presentation

IN-PERSON ONLY

QueerVT's Pilot Platform: A Data-Driven "Digital Lattice" for 2SLGBTQIA+ Health Equity

Williams Family Room

Oral Presentation

IN-PERSON ONLY

Lowering Barriers to Health for People Experiencing Homelessness in Burlington, VT Through Community-based Health Fairs

Chittenden Bank Room

Oral Presentation

HYBRID

Breaking Down Barriers: Embedding Mental Health Clinicians and Coaches in Affordable Senior Housing with SASH

Jost Foundation Room

Oral Presentation

HYBRID

Margins of the Medical School Curriculum: Centering Student Experience in the Pursuit of Health Equity

Livak Ballroom: Frank

Oral Presentation

HYBRID

Envisioning Inclusive Inpatient Health Systems for Young Adults with Intellectual, Developmental Disabilities and/or Autism

Livak Ballroom: Mildred

Oral Presentation

VIRTUAL ONLY

Mindfulness for All: Reimagining the Way We Cultivate Presence, Connection, and Collective Wellbeing

Virtual Room



Virtual Room Access

Detailed session descriptions are available on **pages 22 through 47.**

Block 4

2:35 – 3:35

Film Screening & Talkback

HYBRID

Best Day Ever

Grand Maple Ballroom: Sugar

Workshop

IN-PERSON ONLY

Empowering Patients:
Culturally Sensitive Education
of Cervical Cancer Screening
Through a Language Justice
Lens

Williams Family Room

Lecture

IN-PERSON ONLY

Using Art and Storytelling for
Community Engagement on
Rural Health Equity

Chittenden Bank Room

Workshop

HYBRID

Co-Design Lab: Creating
Equity-Centered Health
Workforce Pathways with
Students as Partners

Jost Foundation Room

Panel

HYBRID

Intersections: Municipal
Planning for Health Equity and
Breaking Barriers to Outdoor
Access

Livak Ballroom: Frank

Panel

HYBRID

Beyond Silence: Real Stories
from the Hospital Room

Livak Ballroom: Mildred

Lecture

VIRTUAL ONLY

The Weight of Bias: Moving
Toward Size-Inclusive Care

Virtual Room

Block 5

3:45 – 5:00

Closing Keynote

HYBRID

Practicing Anti-Ableist
Health Care: Essential
Skills for Providers,
Advocates, and Allies

Grand Maple Ballroom



Virtual
Room
Access

Detailed session descriptions
are available on **pages 22
through 47.**

Opening Keynote Conversation

Dr. Mona Hanna



MD, MPH, FAAP, Pediatrician, Director of Rx Kids, and Associate Dean of Public Health at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine

Dr. Mona Hanna (commonly known as Dr. Mona and formerly known as Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha) is the Associate Dean for Public Health and C. S. Mott Endowed Professor of Public Health at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine. She is the founding director of the Pediatric Public Health Initiative, an innovative partnership of MSU and Hurley Children's Hospital in Flint, Michigan. She is reimagining how society can come together to eliminate infant poverty with a first-in-the-nation program, Rx Kids. A pediatrician, scientist, activist, and author, Dr. Hanna-Attisha was named one of Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World and recognized as one of USA Today's Women of the Century for her role in uncovering the Flint water crisis and leading recovery efforts. Dr. Hanna-Attisha is the author of the widely acclaimed and New York Times 100 most notable book, *What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City*.

Jenn Jarecki



In conversation with Jenn Jarecki

Jenn Jarecki is the local host and producer of NPR's Morning Edition on Vermont Public. Prior to taking on that role in 2023, she co-hosted All Things Considered. In her eight years with the station, Jenn has worked in various positions across Development, News, and Programming. She holds a degree from Tufts University and currently resides in Monkton with her husband Frank and their two cats, Puffles and Mrs. Sips

Closing Keynote Speaker

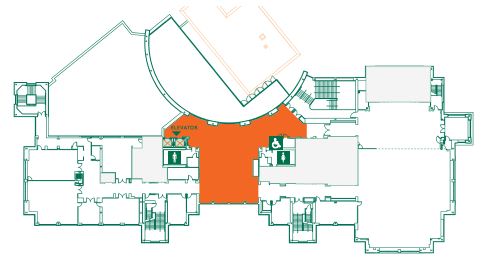
Eli Clare



White, disabled, and transgender, Eli Clare lives near Lake Champlain where he writes and proudly claims a penchant for rabble-rousing. He is the author of four books, including the award-winning *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure* that explores cure as both a medical process and a cultural ideology, as well as *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation*. Eli works as a traveling poet, storyteller, and social justice educator. Since 2008, he has spoken, taught, and trained at well over 200 conferences, community events, and colleges across the United States and Canada. He's trained hundreds of doctors, nurses, social workers, medical students, and other providers in training. He currently serves on the Community Advisory Board for the Disability Project at the Transgender Law Center. Among other pursuits, he has walked across the United States for peace, coordinated a rape prevention program, and helped organize the first ever Queer Disability Conference.

1 Livak Fireplace

Tabling and Exhibitions



1. Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative

Stop by the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) table to learn about programs in Vermont that link public health and outdoor recreation, models being implemented in other states to draw connections between the outdoors, public health and reductions in the cost of care, Vermont's Outdoor Recreation Economy, and VOREC's recent work.

2. Support and Services at Home (SASH)

This exhibit highlights the innovative programs and services offered by SASH (Support and Services at Home) to help older adults and people with disabilities live safely, independently, and successfully in their homes and communities. Learn about the impact of the SASH Embedded Mental Health Program, efforts to improve emergency department utilization and care coordination, the expansion of SASH for All to support younger individuals and families, and ongoing initiatives focused on hypertension prevention and management. Discover how SASH is advancing health, wellness, and quality of life through person-centered, community-based care.

3. Recovering Loudly: Stories of Moms in Recovery

Explore the inspiring stories behind Recovering Loudly: Stories of Moms in Recovery, a community engagement initiative dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding of substance use disorder (SUD) and recovery among pregnant and parenting individuals in Vermont. Centered on a powerful 17-minute documentary film, this project features mothers sharing their lived experiences with substance use, recovery, resilience, and hope. Learn how Lund's trauma-informed storytelling process created a supportive space for participants to reflect on their journeys, build self-confidence, find validation, and strengthen connections with others. This exhibit highlights the importance of reducing stigma, amplifying lived experience, and fostering compassionate, recovery-oriented communities for families across Vermont.

4. Ridge Residential Treatment Center

Learn about the specialized residential mental health services offered at Ridge Residential Treatment Center for adolescents and emerging adults. This exhibit features informational materials, resource guides, and opportunities to connect with staff about sub-acute residential treatment programs designed to support young people on their journey toward recovery and wellness. Explore how Ridge provides a structured, therapeutic environment that promotes mental health, personal growth, resilience, and successful transitions back to home, school, and community life. Visitors can also participate in raffles and take home helpful resources to learn more about available services and supports.

5. Hunger Free Vermont

Hunger Free Vermont is an education and policy advocacy non-profit organization based in South Burlington, VT. Our mission is to end the injustice of hunger for everyone. We prioritize the people most affected by hunger to make permanent systemic change.

6. Attune2Food

Learn how Attune2Food is transforming feeding care for children and families through a collaborative, compassionate, and evidence-based approach. This exhibit highlights specialized services for children with Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD), Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID), and complex medical or neurodivergent needs across Vermont and beyond through telehealth. Attendees will learn how Attune2Food's interdisciplinary team, including a feeding therapist, registered dietitian, and mental health clinician, works together to provide coordinated, family-centered care. Explore the signs and impacts of pediatric feeding challenges, connect with resources and support, and learn how accessible, shame-free feeding care can improve health, well-being, and quality of life for children and their families.

7. Vermont Language Justice Project (VLJP)

Discover how the Vermont Language Justice Project is helping build a more inclusive and equitable Vermont through multilingual communication. This exhibit highlights the project's efforts to ensure that individuals with language access needs can make informed decisions about their health, safety, and everyday lives. Through culturally responsive public service videos available in 22 languages spoken across Vermont, the Vermont Language Justice Project connects communities with vital information and resources. Learn how language access promotes health equity, strengthens community engagement, and empowers individuals to navigate services and opportunities with confidence.

8. Phoenix Books

Explore a thoughtfully curated collection of books that inspire learning, reflection, and action around health equity and related topics. Presented by Phoenix Books, this exhibit features a diverse selection of publications focused on health, equity, community well-being, social determinants of health, and systems change. Attendees will have the opportunity to browse titles that deepen understanding of the challenges and opportunities shaping equitable health outcomes for individuals and communities. The collection will also highlight works by conference keynote speakers Dr. Mona Hanna and Eli Clare, offering valuable insights from influential voices in healthcare, advocacy, and equity. Whether you are a healthcare professional, community leader, student, or lifelong learner, this exhibit provides resources to continue the conversation and advance positive change.

9. Charlie Health

Charlie Health is a leading provider of virtual mental health Intensive Outpatient Programming (IOP) designed for youth, young adults, and families navigating complex mental health challenges. When traditional weekly therapy is not enough and inpatient care is unnecessary. Our evidence based model bridges the gap with intensive, personalized support. We offer age curated peer cohorts for general mental health, trauma, co occurring conditions, disordered eating, and perinatal care. As your local partner, I am here to provide rapid, seamless referral handoffs to ensure complete continuity of care for your patients. Please feel free to reach out directly to connect or request referral materials for your practice.

1 Livak Fireplace (continued)

Tabling and Exhibitions

10. Iceberg Creatives

Mellisa Heather Cain is the founder of Iceberg Creatives, formerly Iceberg Consulting, LLC, where she works as a visual trainer, experiential educator, and facilitator. She designs and delivers creative, participatory workshops that center on group development, communication, engagement, and collective understanding. Mellisa brings a warm, inclusive presence to every space she facilitates, ensuring that participants of all backgrounds feel seen, heard, and empowered to contribute.

Her unique approach is shaped by a diverse background in community impact, conflict transformation, and the arts, blending structure with spontaneity and depth with play. She's particularly skilled at helping groups move through complexity—making sense of big ideas through visual tools, shared language, and meaningful dialogue.

Mellisa has worked across cultures and sectors in more than a dozen countries, supporting educators, nonprofits, community organizations, and cross-functional teams. Since 2012, she has proudly called Burlington, Vermont home, where she continues to build bridges through creativity, collaboration, and visual thinking.

11. Pacto Medical

We will showcase our research, development, and engineering work to create a compact prefilled syringe that addresses overlooked and complex medical logistics and healthcare challenges. Our work seeks to expand equitable access to high-quality healthcare, save costs, improve the well-being of communities in rural and low-resource settings, all while reducing environmental impacts of key medical procedures.

12. Unbuckled Foundation

Discover how Unbuckled is helping caregivers of children with complex medical needs navigate legal challenges with confidence and support. This exhibit highlights the critical role of legal advocacy in protecting the rights of children and families during times of uncertainty. By connecting caregivers and employers with expert legal resources, Unbuckled helps individuals better understand their rights, responsibilities, and available protections. Learn how access to trusted legal guidance can reduce barriers, promote family stability, and empower caregivers to focus on what matters most: the health and well-being of their children.

13. Empowering Independence: Vision Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology

The Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) table will explore assistive technology and adaptive tools that support independence, communication, employment, education, and daily living for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Attendees will have the opportunity to interact with demo AT devices, learn about DBVI services, and discuss strategies for improving accessibility and inclusion across community and healthcare settings.

14. Green Mountain Birth Center / Green Mountain Birth & Wellness

Learn how Green Mountain Birth Center is expanding access to personalized, community-based maternity care across Vermont. This exhibit highlights our commitment to increasing access to high-quality midwifery services and developing innovative approaches to meet the needs of individuals and families throughout the state. Learn how midwifery care supports healthy pregnancies, births, and postpartum experiences through a relationship-centered model that emphasizes choice, education, and holistic well-being. Explore how Green Mountain Birth Center is working to improve maternal health outcomes and ensure more Vermonters have access to compassionate, accessible care close to home. Join the conversation and learn how you can support the development of Vermont's first freestanding birth center.

15. Deaf Vermonters Advocacy Services (DVAS) and VANCRO

Learn how VANCRO is advancing accountability and equity in healthcare for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals. This exhibit explores the importance of providing full and meaningful access to healthcare services by listening to the experiences of those most impacted and translating those insights into action. Discover how accountability in healthcare goes beyond compliance to include respectful communication, inclusive practices, and system-level changes that improve care and outcomes. Through education, advocacy, and collaboration, VANCRO is helping create a healthcare system where all individuals are heard, respected, and empowered to receive the care they deserve.

16. MENTOR Vermont

MENTOR Vermont, as the statewide expert on youth mentoring, is building Relationship Centered Communities. MENTOR Vermont leads, expands, and strengthens the mentoring movement, building capacity to make high-quality relationships accessible to all young people.

The organization does this by supporting structured mentoring programs statewide, and teaching adults the Mentoring Mindset. The Mentoring Mindset gives adults simple tools and ways of thinking that help young people know they matter. Coaches, camp staff, educators, neighbors - everyone can learn how to make a simple shift that makes a real difference.

17. Project for Housing Accessibility and Training

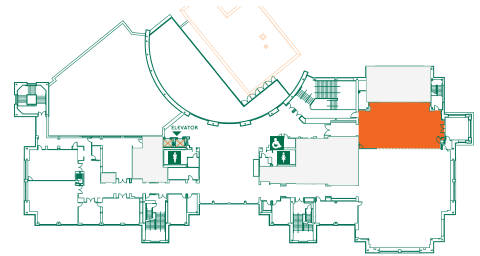
Step into an experience that brings to life the challenges many patients face when transitioning from healthcare settings back to their homes and communities. Through interactive activities and real-world examples, participants will explore barriers that can affect safety, independence, and access to essential services after discharge. Attendees will evaluate the features of an accessible home environment and gain a deeper understanding of how housing, transportation, support services, and healthcare intersect to influence health outcomes. Learn how collaboration among nonprofits, social service organizations, and healthcare providers can help remove barriers, promote independence, and reduce disparities, creating stronger systems of support for individuals and families.

18. National Alliance on Mental Illness of Vermont (NAMI Vermont)

NAMI Vermont provides valuable mental health resources statewide, including resource guides, crisis hotline information, free support groups, parenting classes, and educational presentations. Our organization is committed to raising awareness, reducing stigma, and fostering understanding of mental health challenges, brain health, and wellness. Through these resources and programs, we create safe, welcoming spaces where individuals, families, and communities can have meaningful conversations about mental health and well-being.

2 Grand Maple Ballroom: Sugar

Capacity: 104



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

Inclusivity and Equity with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Health Services and Lifesaving Swim Skills

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 10:25 – 11:25

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Policy and Advocacy



PANEL

Presenters: Ana Candelli, Holly Lafountain, Leigh Jaschke, Tracy Downey, Miriam Mukurazita, Kat Geraghty

This session is a collaboration between community actors seeking to increase access and inclusion of people on the spectrum in health services. The Autism Alliance of Northeastern New York (AANENY) is a community-based organization dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals and families in the autism community throughout Clinton, Franklin, and Essex counties in New York. AANENY provides resources, creates opportunities for connection, and advocates for an inclusive world where everyone can thrive. The Super Group is a community of parents united through a Play and Parenting group for children on the spectrum and their families at the Janet S. Munt Family Room in Burlington, VT.

In part one of this session, the AANENY team outlines how people with Autism can experience communication barriers and sensory processing that impact their interaction with health providers and service professionals. The team will explain how Autism elevates the chance of misdiagnosis or delays care, leading to health inequity. The AANENY presentation aims to educate individuals on how to be equitable to autistic individuals in a health care setting and to showcase how the alliance can be a valuable resource to autistic individuals and their families. Holly Lafountain is the Executive Director and Ana Candelli is the Program Assistant at the Autism Alliance of Northeastern New York.

Part two of this session features a panel that centers the experience of families and the supports they use to reduce barriers and increase access to swimming. In 2019/2020, the Family Room established a playgroup to support Autistic children and their parents. In 2023, The Family Room, parents, and members of the local swim community created Family Swim to remedy a lack of accessible swim programs. The panel will frame the health benefits and risk reduction linked to swimming for children on the spectrum and discuss how Family Swim has evolved into year-round monthly swim sessions that support swim and social development and enhance water safety for children and their families. Panelists Kat Geraghty and Miriam Mukurazita have participated in the swim sessions with their families for 6 months and almost three years. Leigh Jaschke is a facilitator and co-organizer of Family Swim.

Hybrid: Attend in the listed room or join online using the session link or QR code.

Virtual Only: Join online using the session link or QR code.

In-Person Only: Available only at the Davis Center.

Advancing Oral Health Access Through Medical/Dental Integration

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 11:30 – 12:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices
- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Rural Health Equity



PANEL

Presenters: Michelle Fay, John Echternach, Monica Benjamin, Katherine Siner, Behishta Rasoli

Oral health is closely connected to overall health, yet many people face barriers to dental care. This panel explores how medical and dental integration can improve access to oral healthcare, especially for rural, low-income, immigrant, and disabled populations. Presenters will discuss silver diamine fluoride (SDF), a simple treatment that can be provided in primary care settings to help manage tooth decay. Participants will learn about innovative partnerships, minimally invasive care options, and opportunities for medical providers to play a larger role in oral health. The session offers practical strategies for reducing barriers and improving oral health equity in underserved communities.

Patient-Centered Integration of Family Wellness in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Cultural Humility



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenters: Ana Lorenzo, Andrew Rosenfeld

Family wellness plays an important role in children's mental health, yet lifestyle supports are not always included in psychiatric care. This session explores efforts to integrate family wellness into child and adolescent psychiatry through a patient-centered approach. Presenters will share findings from surveys, interviews, and literature reviews that examined barriers, priorities, and opportunities for supporting families. Participants will learn how sleep, nutrition, physical activity, mindfulness, and family habits can be incorporated into care in ways that are practical, respectful, and culturally responsive. The session offers strategies for improving access to non-medication supports and strengthening family involvement in mental healthcare.

2 Grand Maple Ballroom: Sugar (continued)

Best Day Ever: Film Screening & Talkback

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:35–3:35

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health-related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs
- Intersectionality in Health Equity



FILM SCREENING & TALKBACK

Presenter: Kelly Brush

A film about Freedom, Friendship and the Power of Possibility

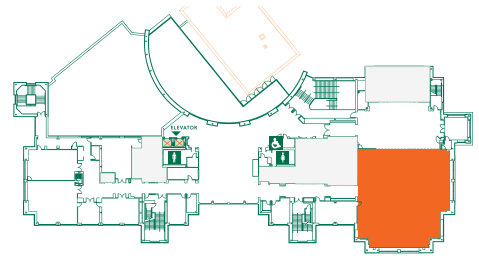
The Best Day Ever documentary follows adaptive mountain bikers Greg Durso and Allie Bianchi as they tackle the daily challenges of disability—and find joy, connection, and belonging in Vermont's mountain biking community.

Set in the Green Mountains, this is a story of grit, independence, and what's possible when community and creativity come together. At its heart is the world's first fully adaptive trail network—built to prove that everyone belongs outside.

Visually stunning and emotionally powerful, Best Day Ever challenges perceptions of disability and celebrates community.

3 Grand Maple Ballroom: Silver

Capacity: 248



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

Evaluating a Mental Health Agency-Based Doula Program: Client Perspectives

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Rural Health Equity



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenters: Melanie Meyer, Thomas Delaney, Maria Rossi

Perinatal mental health challenges disproportionately affect rural and economically vulnerable populations. This session explores a unique program that places specially trained doulas within a community mental health agency. Presenters will share findings from client interviews highlighting the value of emotional support, advocacy, education, and connections to mental health and social services. Participants will learn how integrated doula care can improve access, strengthen support systems, and advance maternal mental health equity in rural communities.

One Goal, Two Communities: Advancing Health Equity by Bridging Communication Gaps with Older Adults and Multilingual Allied Health Students

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 10:25 – 11:25

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Health Education
- Cultural Humility



PANEL

Presenters: Jeffrey Henebury, Jennifer Zoller, Arzu Gul, Jarod Waite, Danielle LaFleur Brooks

Health equity depends on effective communication. Yet communication barriers can arise both within a shared language and across different languages and cultures. This presentation explores two complementary approaches to reducing those barriers and improving health outcomes. The first segment focuses on communicating with older adults about substance use and healthy aging. Participants will examine how generational differences in language, cultural norms, stigma, and health literacy can affect conversations about sensitive health topics and will explore strategies for building trust and fostering meaningful dialogue. The second segment highlights promising practices for supporting multilingual health students as they prepare to enter the healthcare workforce.

Hybrid: Attend in the listed room or join online using the session link or QR code.

Virtual Only: Join online using the session link or QR code.

In-Person Only: Available only at the Davis Center.

3 Grand Maple Ballroom: Silver (continued)

Amplifying Voices of Lived-Experience: Peer Support Provider Certification in Vermont

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 11:30 – 12:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices
- Mental Health and Well-being



PANEL

Presenters: Amey Dettmer, Betsy Hoekstra

Peer support providers use their lived experience with mental health challenges to support others on their recovery journeys. This interactive panel explores Vermont's new pathways for peer support provider certification and what this milestone means for the state's behavioral health system. Presenters will discuss the value of peer support, best practices for integrating peer roles into care settings, and strategies for sustaining a strong peer workforce. Participants will gain a better understanding of how peer support improves engagement, strengthens recovery, and promotes more person-centered mental health services.

Why Does Research Matter: From Evidence to Community Health Impact

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 3:30

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Health Education

WORKSHOP

Presenters: Dr. Nimrat Chatterjee, Debora Kamin Mukaz, Tiffany Delaney, Olive Gallmeyer, Kate Tracy, Christopher Huston, Mel Symeonides, Matthew Caporizzo, Booker Davis, Michael Toth, Katharine Cheung, Erika Ziller, Charles Irvin, Rebecca Ouellette-Morton, Jessica Heath, Elizabeth Bonney, Marc Greenblatt, David Kaminsky, Neil Zakai, Nels Olson, Scott Langevin, Connie Tompkins, Brian Cunniff, Julie Dumas

If we want healthier communities, we need a deeper understanding of how health advances occur and how new ideas become better care, treatments, and outcomes.

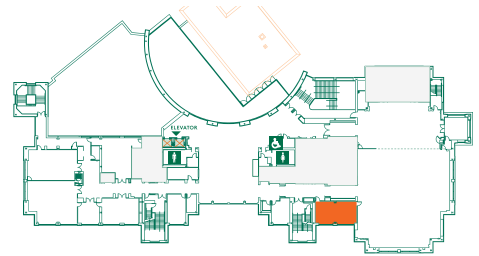
Join Larner researchers for interactive, engaging, jargon-free conversations about the discoveries shaping the future of health and their implications for our communities. Learn how research in areas such as cancer, heart health, healthy aging, women's health, rural health, and equitable access to clinical trials is making a difference here in Vermont and beyond.

Whether you're a healthcare professional, community advocate, student, researcher, or simply curious about improving health, this session offers an opportunity to ask questions, share perspectives, and explore how scientific discovery and community action work together to create healthier communities for everyone.

4 Williams Family Room

Capacity: 55

In-Person Sessions



More than a Meal: Creating Connections for NICU Families

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

■ Community Engagement and Empowerment

■ Mental Health and Well-being

■ Health-related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs

ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenters: Emily Fujioka, Sydney Lucia

Having a baby in the NICU can be stressful, overwhelming, and isolating for families. This session highlights a partnership between GROW Prenatal and Family Center and the University of Vermont Medical Center that provides free home-cooked meals, snacks, and emotional support to NICU families. Presenters will share how meeting basic needs, such as access to food, can open the door to meaningful relationships and additional support during a difficult time. Participants will learn how community organizations can work alongside healthcare teams to support caregivers' emotional, social, and practical needs. The session will also discuss challenges, lessons learned, and ways to adapt programs based on community feedback. Attendees will leave with ideas for creating family-centered partnerships that support health equity and improve experiences for families during medical crises.

Closing the Wellness Gap: Overcoming Overweight and Obesity Challenges Through Health Equity Advances in Vermont

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

■ Community Engagement and Empowerment

■ Health Disparities and Inequities

■ Policy and Advocacy

LECTURE

Presenters: Wayne Coolidge Jr., M.Ed., Kim Twitty

Overweight and obesity affect many Vermonters, but the burden is greater among people with lower incomes. This session explores how housing, finances, childcare, transportation, stress, and other social factors influence health and opportunities for healthy living. Presenters will review state data, research findings, and a personal story of overcoming obesity to show why many health challenges are linked to systems and environments rather than individual choices alone. Participants will learn about barriers faced by low-income Vermonters and discuss ways that community organizations, healthcare systems, and policymakers can better support healthy lifestyles. The session offers practical ideas for creating more equitable approaches to nutrition, physical activity, and chronic disease prevention.

Hybrid: Attend in the listed room or join online using the session link or QR code.

Virtual Only: Join online using the session link or QR code.

In-Person Only: Available only at the Davis Center.

4 Williams Family Room (continued)

Where We Belong: Integrating Outdoor Equity and Health Equity Through Community Collaborative Programming

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 10:25 – 11:25

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Rural Health Equity

LECTURE

Presenters: Arwen Turner, Jamie Bentley

Access to outdoor spaces can improve physical health, mental well-being, and social connection, but not everyone has equal access or feels welcome outdoors. This session shares findings from a three-year Vermont project that intentionally connected outdoor recreation and health equity. Presenters will review data showing improvements in physical activity, social belonging, and emotional well-being among participants. The session will also discuss ongoing barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, larger-bodied individuals, and low-income residents. Participants will learn practical strategies for developing inclusive outdoor programs and incorporating community voices into planning and evaluation efforts.

Hidden in Plain Sight: Alcohol, Culture, and Health Equity in Rural Vermont

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 11:30 – 12:30

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Rural Health Equity
- Cultural Humility

LECTURE

Presenters: Eva Zaret, Marissa Patrick, Rosemary Rosa, Patrick Barrett

Alcohol contributes to significant illness and death, yet it is often overlooked in health equity discussions. This session explores how culture, social norms, and public perceptions influence alcohol use and access to care in rural communities. Presenters will review Vermont-specific data and discuss how alcohol-related harms compare to public responses toward other substances. Participants will examine how policy, culture, and commercial influences shape alcohol use and healthcare access. The session provides practical strategies for addressing alcohol-related harms through prevention, clinical care, community engagement, and advocacy.

QueerVT's Pilot Platform: A Data-Driven "Digital Lattice" for 2SLGBTQIA+ Health Equity

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices
- Rural Health Equity
- Data and Measurement

ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenter: Austin Grant

Rural LGBTQIA+ individuals often face challenges finding welcoming, accessible, and safe community spaces. This session introduces QueerVT's Pilot Platform, a digital tool designed to help community members locate events, organizations, and spaces that meet a wide range of accessibility and inclusion needs. Presenters will explain how the platform uses community-verified information on accessibility, privacy, safety, and support services to help users make informed decisions. Participants will explore how technology can strengthen community connections while protecting privacy and promoting trust. The session offers a practical example of how data and community partnerships can advance health equity for LGBTQIA+ populations in rural areas.

Empowering Patients: Culturally Sensitive Education of Cervical Cancer Screening Through a Language Justice Lens

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Health Education
- Cultural Humility

WORKSHOP

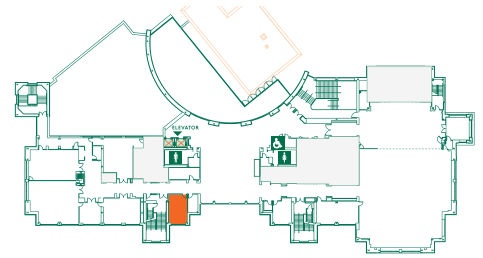
Presenters: Jill Rogers, Alison Segar, Irene KeruBo Webster

Language barriers can make it difficult for patients to understand important healthcare information, especially when discussing sensitive topics such as cervical cancer screening. This session shares a project that created culturally responsive educational videos in Somali, Maay Maay, and other languages to support patients preparing for colposcopy procedures. Presenters will discuss barriers faced by immigrant and refugee communities, including language differences, health literacy challenges, cultural beliefs, and concerns about medical procedures. Participants will learn how partnerships between healthcare providers and community organizations can improve understanding, build trust, and support informed decision-making. The session highlights the role of language justice in promoting equitable healthcare access.

5 Boulder Society Room

Capacity: 12

In-Person Sessions



Boulder Society Room is a quiet room with special features such as soft music and lighting design to help people step away from the crowd and regulate and attune when they feel stimulated. Project for Housing Accessibility will only be in this space at the times noted below.

Learning Experience: Project for Housing Accessibility and Training

DATE & TIME: September 24, 2026 from 4:00 – 7:00

DATE & TIME: September 25, 2026 from 12:30 – 2:00

In-Person Only

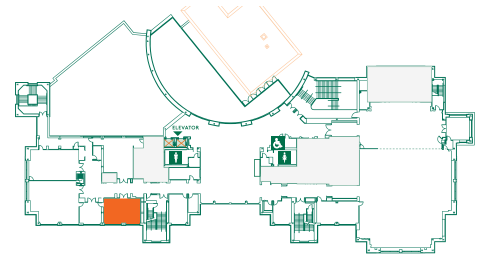
EXHIBIT

Step into an experience that brings to life the challenges many patients face when transitioning from healthcare settings back to their homes and communities. Through interactive activities and real-world examples, participants will explore barriers that can affect safety, independence, and access to essential services after discharge. Attendees will evaluate the features of an accessible home environment and gain a deeper understanding of how housing, transportation, support services, and healthcare intersect to influence health outcomes. Learn how collaboration among nonprofits, social service organizations, and healthcare providers can help remove barriers, promote independence, and reduce disparities, creating stronger systems of support for individuals and families.

6 Chittenden Bank Room

Capacity: 55

In-Person Sessions



The Community Health Worker Role in Accessing Developmental Screening and Resources in New American Families

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices
- Health Disparities and Inequities

ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenter: Tulasha Pradhan

New American families often face language, cultural, and system barriers that can delay developmental and autism screening for young children. This session highlights how a Community Health Worker (CHW) helped increase screening rates and connect families with needed resources. Presenters will discuss strategies for supporting families in multiple languages, coordinating care, and addressing cultural perspectives about child development. Participants will learn how CHWs help bridge gaps between families and healthcare systems while improving equity in access to services. The session will share outcomes from the program and provide practical lessons for organizations interested in similar community-centered approaches.

Comfort in Crisis: The Wellness Power of Traditional Food

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Rural Health Equity

LECTURE

Presenters: Nichole Thoms, Rachel Juliussen

Traditional foods play a powerful role in the health, identity, and well-being of Alaska Native communities. This session explores how incorporating traditional foods into healthcare settings can support healing, strengthen cultural connections, and improve patient experiences. Presenters from the Alaska Native Medical Center will share how foods such as salmon, berries, moose, and other traditional foods help patients maintain ties to culture while receiving care away from home. Participants will learn about the health benefits of traditional foods, the role of food in cultural identity, and practical steps for developing programs that honor community traditions. The session will also discuss policy considerations and strategies for integrating traditional foods into healthcare systems in ways that support equity and culturally responsive care.

Hybrid: Attend in the listed room or join online using the session link or QR code.

Virtual Only: Join online using the session link or QR code.

In-Person Only: Available only at the Davis Center.

6 Chittenden Bank Room (continued)

Incarceration: The Power of Shared Inquiry in Driving Change

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 10:25 – 11:25

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Policy and Advocacy

LECTURE

Presenters: Abigail Crocker, Karen Benway, Penrose Jackson

This session examines how equity-centered, community-engaged research can drive social change. The Prison Research Innovation Network (PRIN), a partnership between the University of Vermont and the Vermont Department of Corrections, engages incarcerated individuals and prison staff as co-creators of knowledge and change.

Through co-designed surveys, shared analysis, and long-term relationship building, PRIN generates data that informs action and strengthens trust across prison communities. By sharing ownership of research and data, the model elevates lived experience, creates measurable improvements within prison settings, and contributes to broader systems-level transformation.

Participants will learn how PRIN's work helped reframe the challenge of "recidivism" into the goal of "successful community reentry", laying the groundwork for the Vermont Justice Innovation Collaborative. The session will provide practical strategies for centering lived experience, navigating complex issues with humility, and fostering change through trust-based engagement.

Hands-On Healing: Community Wound Care Through Harm Reduction

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 11:30 – 12:30

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Rural Health Equity
- Health-related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs

WORKSHOP

Presenters: Jonathan Slowey, Nour Hassan, Lincoln Heath

This interactive workshop teaches practical wound care skills that can be used in community settings where access to healthcare may be limited. Participants will learn how to recognize common wounds, clean and dress injuries, identify signs of infection, and connect individuals with appropriate healthcare resources. Presenters will share lessons from a Burlington-based community wound care initiative that distributed more than 500 wound care kits through outreach programs. The session also emphasizes trauma-informed communication, harm reduction principles, and trust-building strategies. Attendees will leave with practical skills and resources that can help support healthier outcomes in underserved communities.

Lowering Barriers to Health for People Experiencing Homelessness in Burlington, VT Through Community-based Health Fairs

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

■ Community Engagement and Empowerment

■ Health Disparities and Inequities

■ Health-related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs

ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenters: Isabel Kay, Maya Davis, Kevin McMannus, Lincoln Heath

This session will describe the development, implementation, and early outcomes of a community-based health fair model designed to improve access to care for people experiencing homelessness in Burlington, Vermont. Grounded in community partnership and informed by individuals with lived experience, the presentation will highlight how collaboration and co-locating services connected individuals with primary care, preventive screenings, harm reduction, hygiene supplies, and other wellness resources. The session will explore lessons learned from design and implementation processes and discuss considerations for adapting this model to other communities seeking to improve equitable access to health and wellness resources for people experiencing homelessness.

Using Art and Storytelling for Community Engagement on Rural Health Equity

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

■ Community Engagement and Empowerment

■ Rural Health Equity

LECTURE

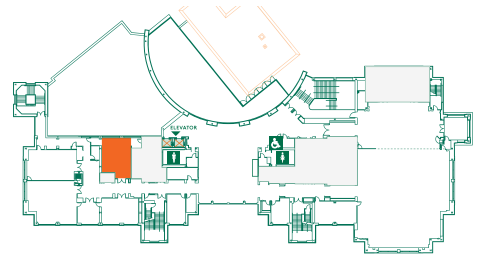
Presenters: Angela Zhang, Chelsey Canavan, Sanam Roder-DeWan, Pati Hernandez

Community members do not always feel comfortable sharing their experiences in traditional healthcare or academic settings. This session explores creative approaches that use art and storytelling to encourage participation and elevate community voices. Presenters will share examples of photovoice projects, community-created art exhibits, and interactive poster sessions that helped people express their experiences and ideas. Participants will learn how these approaches build trust, reduce barriers to engagement, and strengthen community participation in health equity work. The session includes opportunities to practice these methods and consider how they can be applied in participants' own communities.

7 Jost Foundation Room

Capacity: 64

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



Draw to Understand: Sketchnoting for Equitable Health Communication

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices
- Intersectionality in Health Equity



WORKSHOP

Presenter: Mellisa Cain

Health information is often shared through large amounts of text, creating barriers for people with different learning styles, literacy levels, or language backgrounds. This interactive workshop introduces sketchnoting, a simple visual communication method that combines images, words, and structure to make information easier to understand. Participants will learn basic sketchnoting techniques and practice turning complex ideas into clear visual messages. The session demonstrates how visual communication can support accessibility, reduce confusion, and improve understanding across diverse audiences. Attendees will leave with practical tools they can use in healthcare, education, and community settings.

Soteria House Vermont: A Relationship-First Approach to Supporting Extreme States

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 10:25 – 11:25

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices
- Mental Health and Well-being



WORKSHOP

Presenters: Nico Oldfield, Alex Ferguson, Betsy Hoekstra

This interactive workshop introduces the Soteria model, a relationship-focused approach to supporting people experiencing emotional distress or extreme states. Presenters will review the history of Soteria, its connection to mental health reform, and how Pathways Vermont adapted the model for today's healthcare environment. Participants will learn strategies for reducing power imbalances, building meaningful connections, communicating effectively, and supporting people in non-coercive ways. The session emphasizes dignity, collaboration, and the value of lived experience in mental health care. Attendees will leave with practical tools that can strengthen relationship-based approaches in their own work.

Hybrid: Attend in the listed room or join online using the session link or QR code.

Virtual Only: Join online using the session link or QR code.

In-Person Only: Available only at the Davis Center.

The Invisibility of Sex Trafficking

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 11:30 – 12:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Rural Health Equity



LECTURE

Presenter: Connie Mandeville

Sex trafficking is often misunderstood, making it difficult to recognize in local communities and healthcare settings. This session challenges common myths and explores what sex trafficking actually looks like in rural areas. Presenters will discuss the physical and emotional impacts of exploitation, including trauma, addiction, sexually transmitted infections, and mental health concerns. Because many victims interact with healthcare providers, clinicians and support staff have an important role in identifying and helping those at risk. Participants will learn how to recognize signs of trafficking, use trauma-informed approaches, and build trusting relationships that support recovery and healing. The session also highlights local efforts to address exploitation and improve access to services for survivors.

Breaking Down Barriers: Embedding Mental Health Clinicians and Coaches in Affordable Senior Housing with SASH

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Mental Health and Well-being
- Rural Health Equity



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenters: Liz Genge, Hannah Rose

Many older adults and people with disabilities face barriers to mental healthcare, including transportation challenges, stigma, and limited access to services. This session highlights Vermont's Embedded Mental Health Program, which places clinicians and coaches directly in affordable housing communities. Presenters will discuss how on-site support improves access to care, builds trust, reduces stigma, and helps residents receive support before a crisis occurs. Participants will learn about program outcomes, including improved access to services and stronger housing stability. The session offers practical lessons for organizations interested in bringing mental health services directly into community settings.

7 Jost Foundation Room (continued)

Co-Design Lab: Creating Equity-Centered Health Workforce Pathways with Students as Partners

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health Education



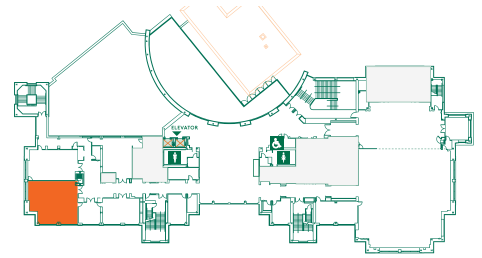
WORKSHOP

Presenters: Jeneve Joslin, Brooke Rayta, Alex Poscobut, Gemma Pello

This interactive workshop introduces the HEAL Framework, a model that helps prepare future healthcare professionals to address health inequities. Participants will learn how the CVCC Medical Professions Program integrates health equity, accountability, leadership, and community engagement into student learning. The session explores ways to incorporate social drivers of health, lived experience, and community knowledge into workforce education. Through hands-on activities and discussion, attendees will apply equity-centered approaches to curriculum design and learn how to measure outcomes related to cultural responsiveness, ethical decision-making, and community engagement.

8 Livak Ballroom: Frank

Capacity: 103



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

Taking the Bus in Rural Vermont: Allowing Freedom and Building Community

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Rural Health Equity



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenters: Kelsey Pasteris, Mary-Claire Crogan

Reliable transportation is essential for health, independence, and community connection. This panel highlights the Tri-Valley Transit model and how it supports people living in rural Vermont. Through stories from riders, drivers, and transit leaders, participants will learn how public transportation helps people access healthcare, employment, social activities, and other essential services. The session will explore how transportation reduces isolation, supports independence for people who cannot drive, and helps create stronger community connections. Presenters will also discuss lessons learned, ridership trends, and opportunities to expand similar models to other rural regions. Attendees will gain a better understanding of transportation as an important health equity strategy.

School Based Supports for Community Health

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Health-related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs

PANEL

Presenters: Matt Gile, Elizabeth Parris

Health is influenced by much more than medical care. Factors such as education, safety, healthy food access, and community support all play important roles. This session highlights how the Winooski School District works with families, community organizations, and local partners to improve access to these important social drivers of health. Participants will learn how schools can serve as community hubs that support student well-being and strengthen community health. The presentation will share examples of programs that improve safety, increase access to healthy foods, promote inclusion, and encourage wellness. Attendees will leave with ideas for building similar partnerships and supports within their own communities.

Hybrid: Attend in the listed room or join online using the session link or QR code.

Virtual Only: Join online using the session link or QR code.

In-Person Only: Available only at the Davis Center.

8 Livak Ballroom: Frank (continued)

Rural Menstrual Justice and The Plattsburgh Menstrual-Mental Health Initiative

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 10:25 – 11:25

In-Person Only

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Rural Health Equity

PANEL

Presenters: Akanksha Misra, Emily Stanley, Olivia Wolfe

People in rural communities often face barriers to menstrual healthcare, education, and support. This session shares findings from a five-county rural health survey and the development of the Plattsburgh MMH Initiative. Presenters will discuss how a partnership between SUNY Plattsburgh and Planned Parenthood of the North Country New York expanded from a PCOS support group into a broader effort focused on menstrual health, mental health, and equity. Through support groups, films, art, community conversations, and body-based learning activities, the initiative aims to improve awareness and access to care. Participants will learn about gaps in menstrual healthcare, the impacts of social and economic conditions on menstrual health, and practical approaches to building community-centered programs that promote menstrual justice in rural communities.

Practice, Power, and Place: Clinician Ownership as a Pathway to Rural Health Equity

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 11:30 – 12:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Innovations in Sustainable Health Practices
- Rural Health Equity
- Policy and Advocacy



PANEL

Presenters: Jennifer Mayhew, Lorraine Bock, Betty Rambur, Craig Coleman

Independent healthcare practices have long played an important role in serving rural communities, yet clinician ownership continues to decline. This panel explores how clinician-led practices can strengthen healthcare access, continuity of care, and community trust. Presenters will discuss barriers that make it difficult for healthcare professionals to start and sustain independent practices, especially in rural and underserved areas. Participants will learn how policy decisions, infrastructure investments, and new funding opportunities can support community-based care models. The session will provide practical examples from clinicians who have successfully launched and maintained independent practices and will explore strategies for advancing health equity through locally rooted care.

Margins of the Medical School Curriculum: Centering Student Experience in the Pursuit of Health Equity

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Health Education
- Cultural Humility



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenter: Cara Simone

Medical schools are increasing their focus on health equity, but less is known about how students experience this learning. This session shares findings from a qualitative study of medical students at the Larner College of Medicine. By examining course evaluations, institutional documents, and interviews with underrepresented students, the study explored how equity-focused teaching is understood and applied. Presenters will discuss what students found most meaningful, where gaps remain between institutional goals and classroom experiences, and how these experiences shape students' professional identities. Participants will learn practical strategies for improving curriculum design, faculty development, and inclusive learning environments that better support future healthcare providers and advance health equity.

Intersections: Municipal Planning for Health Equity and Breaking Barriers to Outdoor Access

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Rural Health Equity
- Health-related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs
- Policy and Advocacy
- Intersectionality in Health Equity



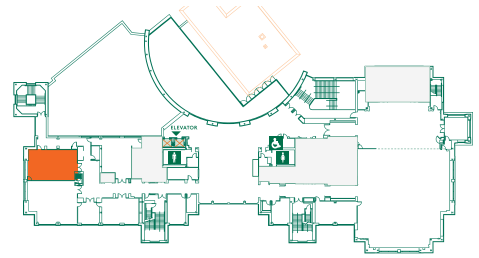
PANEL

Presenters: Bryan Davis, Colleen Boyce, Kate Lalley

Across the state and across fields, Vermonters are working to better make our shared spaces accessible and equitable. This session highlights how planning, public spaces, outdoor access, and community partnerships can support health equity. Attendees will learn how municipal planning and barrier-reduction efforts can help create healthier, more accessible, and more inclusive communities.

9 Livak Ballroom: Mildred

Capacity: 93



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

Centering Student Agency and Learning in Developing a Participatory Model of Peer Education

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health Education
- Data and Measurement



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenters: Jennifer Demers, Max Stieglitz

Peer education programs can be powerful tools for violence prevention when students are treated as partners rather than simply messengers. This session highlights the development of PIVOT (Preventing Interpersonal Violence via Outreach & Training), a student-centered peer education program at the University of Vermont. Presenters will describe how community-engaged scholarship, student leadership, research, and mentorship shaped the program's design. Participants will learn how peer educators contributed to prevention efforts, conducted research, and developed educational campaigns. The session will share successes, challenges, and lessons learned while offering practical strategies for integrating students more fully into prevention, education, and community engagement initiatives.

Reimagining What's Possible: Advancing Equitable Healthcare for People with Disabilities

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Policy and Advocacy



PANEL

Presenters: Jacqueline Kelley, Louise Barrow, Jennifer Oshita, Gordon Powers, Amelia Briggs, Moira Mulligan

People with disabilities make up more than one-quarter of adults in the United States, yet many continue to face barriers to healthcare access. This panel brings together researchers, healthcare professionals, caregivers, and individuals with lived experience to discuss challenges and solutions for improving disability equity in healthcare. Panelists will explore how communication, policies, accommodations, and healthcare environments can either support or limit access to quality care. Participants will hear firsthand perspectives and gain practical strategies for creating more inclusive healthcare experiences. Attendees will leave with a better understanding of disability-related health disparities and actions they can take to improve accessibility and equity within their own organizations.

Hybrid: Attend in the listed room or join online using the session link or QR code.

Virtual Only: Join online using the session link or QR code.

In-Person Only: Available only at the Davis Center.

HIV Advocacy and Support During Disenfranchisement: Bringing Self to the Work

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 10:25 – 11:25

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Intersectionality in Health Equity



PANEL

Presenters: Zpora Perry, Sean Bullis, M Sebastian Araujo, Amelia McConnell, Roland Febres, Danielle Chaikin

People living with HIV often face stigma, financial challenges, and concerns about access to care. This panel brings together individuals with lived experience of HIV to discuss advocacy, community support, and the importance of finding purpose during times of uncertainty. Panelists will share personal stories about living with HIV, participating in support groups, mentoring others, and helping shape programs at the UVMHC Comprehensive Care Clinic. Participants will learn about current HIV care, the importance of support services, and the role community plays in promoting well-being. The session encourages attendees to consider how personal experiences can be used to create meaningful change and strengthen communities.

Her Heart, Her Voice: Patient Advocacy and Equity in Women's Cardiac Health

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 11:30 – 12:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Health Education



PANEL

Presenters: Vicki Mascareño Nelson, Tracy Hagerty, Kate Belluche, Kendra Cunningham, Adama Ndiaye, Kayla Messana

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death for women, yet many women continue to experience delays in diagnosis and treatment. This panel explores disparities in women's cardiac care and examines how bias, communication gaps, and limited awareness can affect outcomes. Through patient stories, community perspectives, and clinical insight, participants will learn how heart attack symptoms in women may differ from common expectations and why broader awareness is needed. The session will also highlight the role of health literacy, past healthcare experiences, and patient advocacy in helping women seek and receive timely care. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of women's lived experiences and learn practical ways healthcare organizations and communities can support equitable cardiac care.

9 Livak Ballroom: Mildred (continued)

Envisioning Inclusive Inpatient Health Systems for Young Adults with Intellectual, Developmental Disabilities and/or Autism

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Health Education



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenters: Georgia Farrell, Keith Robinson, Kassandra Cousineau

Young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism often face challenges during hospital stays that are caused by healthcare system design rather than individual needs. This session shares findings from a needs assessment that included patients, families, caregivers, and healthcare providers. Presenters will discuss common concerns related to communication, caregiver involvement, sensory needs, decision-making, and staff preparedness. Participants will learn about key features of inclusive inpatient care and explore practical approaches to improving patient and family experiences. The session highlights ways healthcare systems can move beyond individual workarounds and build more consistent supports that promote equitable and person-centered care.

Beyond Silence: Real Stories from the Hospital Room

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

Hybrid

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Cultural Humility



PANEL

Presenters: Rebecca Lalanne, Jessica Hutchins, René Pellerin, Amber Schaeffler, Don Petit-Homme

This panel brings together Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals to share their experiences navigating healthcare and community systems. Through personal stories and discussion, participants will gain insight into communication access, self-determination, and the importance of respecting individual preferences. Panelists will describe challenges they have faced, what has helped them feel supported, and what healthcare professionals can do to create more welcoming and accessible environments. The session emphasizes listening, reflection, and practical learning from lived experience. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of accessibility, communication, and trust-building practices that can improve interactions and outcomes for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals.

Virtual Room

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

Miles to Medicine: The Real Cost of Rural Pharmacy Deserts

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

Virtual Only

TRACKS:

- Rural Health Equity
- Health-related Socioeconomic and Environmental Needs



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenter: Ben Gibson

Rural residents often face long travel distances, provider shortages, and limited access to medications. Drawing on experiences from rural West Texas, this session examines the realities of pharmacy deserts and their impact on health equity. Participants will learn how patients navigate fragmented healthcare systems, the important role pharmacists play in bridging care gaps, and practical strategies their prescriber needs to consider to avoid delaying of therapy. The session highlights opportunities to improve medication access and support better health outcomes in rural communities.

Caste and Menstruation: An Inquiry on Inclusive Menstrual Health Policies in India

DATE: September 24, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:05

Virtual Only

TRACKS:

- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Rural Health Equity
- Policy and Advocacy



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenter: Chandlee Crawford

Menstrual health experiences are shaped by social and cultural systems, including caste. This session examines research conducted with members of the Arunthathiyar community in India to understand how caste and gender influence access to resources, experiences of discrimination, and menstrual health. Presenters will discuss how policies can better address equity and inclusion for marginalized communities. Participants will explore connections between social identity, public policy, and health outcomes while learning strategies for creating more accountable and inclusive approaches to menstrual health.

Hybrid: Attend in the listed room or join online using the session link or QR code.

Virtual Only: Join online using the session link or QR code.

In-Person Only: Available only at the Davis Center.

Virtual Room (continued)

Centering Lived Experience to Transform BIPOC Maternal Health Systems

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 10:25 – 11:25

Virtual Only

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Intersectionality in Health Equity



WORKSHOP

Presenters: Nadia DuBose, Emily Smith

Significant disparities in maternal health continue to affect Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). This session shares findings from a statewide Vermont study that centered the experiences of BIPOC birthing people and healthcare providers. Through storytelling and community-engaged research, presenters identified themes related to trust, informed consent, autonomy, bias, and barriers to care. Participants will learn how lived experience can serve as an important source of information for improving healthcare systems. The session will provide practical strategies for integrating community voices into policy, program design, and clinical practice to support more equitable maternal health outcomes.

Mindfulness for All: Reimagining the Way We Cultivate Presence, Connection, and Collective Wellbeing

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 2:30

Virtual Only

TRACKS:

- Community Engagement and Empowerment
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Health Education



ORAL PRESENTATION

Presenter: Melisa Oliva

Traditional mindfulness approaches do not work equally well for everyone. Many people face barriers related to stress, culture, neurodiversity, trauma, burnout, or limited access to safe and supportive spaces. This session explores more inclusive ways to promote well-being through community-centered and culturally responsive practices. Participants will learn about nontraditional approaches such as nature experiences, storytelling, gardening, expressive arts, music, and movement-based activities. Presenters will discuss how these practices can support relaxation, connection, belonging, and emotional well-being. The session encourages participants to think about mindfulness as a shared experience rather than an individual activity. Attendees will leave with practical ideas for creating more equitable and accessible wellness programs that support diverse communities and foster connection, resilience, and belonging.

The Weight of Bias: Moving Toward Size-Inclusive Care

DATE: September 25, 2026

TIME: 2:35 – 3:35

Virtual Only

TRACKS:

- Health Disparities and Inequities
- Policy and Advocacy



LECTURE

Presenters: Ashley Gambino, Rachel Flemming, Erica Cook

Weight stigma can affect healthcare access, trust, and outcomes. This session examines sizeism and bias in healthcare and helping professions through a health equity lens. Participants will learn key concepts related to size inclusivity, examine how language and attitudes affect care, and identify practices that may unintentionally cause harm. Presenters will share tools and strategies for creating respectful, supportive environments that promote dignity and equitable care for people of all body sizes.

Parking Locations

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 for accessible parking only

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.

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.

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With sincere gratitude, we recognize **Terri Dube** for her outstanding graphic design work in creating this year's program book.

Save the Date



September 27 and 28, 2027
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.

