

Centering Global and Indigenous Solutions for Health Equity Webinar Summary and Call to Action



Webinar Focus

The Partners for Advancing Health Equity Collaborative hosted the webinar, *Centering Global and Indigenous Solutions for Health Equity* on July 18, 2023. Panelists engaged in discussions about health inequities faced by global and Indigenous communities, highlighting useful strategies to promote a more just and healthy future. This report provides a synthesis of key takeaways, solutions, and action steps identified from the webinar.

Webinar Voices

- › **Caryn Bell**, Associate Director, P4HE, [Tulane School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine](#)
- › **Karabi Acharya**, Senior Director, Global Ideas for US Solutions, [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)
- › **Vivian Tatiana Camacho Hinojosa**, National Director of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, Vice Ministry of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, [Ministry of Health of the Plurinational State of Bolivia](#)
- › **Kirk Scirto**, Family physician for [the Tonawanda Seneca \(Indigenous\) Nation](#)

Key Resources

- [The Impact of Historical Trauma on American Indian Health Equity](#)
- [Incorporate Ancestral Medicine in Healthcare Practices](#)
- [Suitcase Medicine](#)

Your Voice

P4HE values collaboration. If there is a resource on this topic that you would like to share with us, provide it [here](#).

Key Takeaways

Advancing health equity within global and Indigenous communities requires constructive collaboration and respect for their traditions. This webinar discussed the pressing health inequalities experienced by global and Indigenous populations, resulting from [deep-rooted systemic oppression and social injustice](#). To promote solutions that address the health issues of these communities, it is important to understand the broader historical context of such health inequities. Organizations must work alongside global and Indigenous communities to learn about their lived experiences with health inequity and to center their health priorities in the pursuit of health equity.



Many webinar participants indicated that global and Indigenous health equity affects them and ideas about how to impact global and indigenous health equity, including knowledge building and sharing, bringing communities together, voting for and supporting efforts that facilitate self-determination, and listening to and uplifting lived experience.

Call To Action



“We need to rethink the monocultural way we are thinking about health. We are millions of human beings with our own cultures, our own identities.”

Vivian Tatiana Camacho Hinojosa, National Director of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, Vice Ministry of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, Ministry of Health of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

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Below we've summarized immediate action steps shared by the panelists and identified by webinar participants to be taken to advance health equity.

› Value traditional medicine and healing as ways to increase health equity.

Traditional medicine and healing practices are often left out of mainstream healthcare methods and focus on [western cultural norms, medicine, and practices](#), overlooking Indigenous populations that rely on such healthcare systems. Find ways to [incorporate ancestral medicine and other traditional approaches in healthcare practices](#) and start larger conversations regarding health needs. [Work alongside global and Indigenous communities](#) to educate others on culturally appropriate care and [the importance of decolonization in healthcare](#). Be respectful and open-minded about sacred traditions and health practices. Recognize and welcome the differences in [healthcare approaches](#), knowledge, and experiences, including Indigenous communities' use of [traditional or ancestral medicine](#) as a way to address health inequities. Contribute to ongoing efforts to improve health outcomes, without [intruding or causing harm with "suitcase medicine."](#) As an "outsider" serving global or Indigenous communities, utilize this thought process: *"This is your place. How would you like me to operate here? I'm a guest in your clinic and in your land."* Kirk Scirto, Family physician for the Tonawanda Seneca (Indigenous) Nation, in what some refer to as New York State

› Listen to global and Indigenous communities and contribute to their established efforts for advancing health equity.

Listening to the voices of global and Indigenous communities will provide valuable insight into the health issues and inequities that they face and into how to effectively collaborate with them to reduce such inequities. [Form connections and a sense of community within collaborations](#) to facilitate the exchange of ideas and to discourage isolation and individualism in the fight for health equity for all. Given global and Indigenous populations' lived experiences with health inequities, it is important to uplift them to [lead initiatives and movements](#) that advance health equity for their communities. Include global and Indigenous people on advisory councils for [health research](#), at [healthcare providers](#), at [government agencies](#), and at nonprofit and advocacy organizations.



"Listen to the community members. Listen to the analysis that they've already done on their health. Typically, they're very familiar with the main conditions that are making them unhealthy, and they have thought deeply about the resources and how they can try to counter this. How can outsiders help to do less harm?" Kirk Scirto, Family physician for the

Tonawanda Seneca (Indigenous) Nation, in what some refer to as New York State

Listen to the voices of social justice advocates from [global](#) and [Indigenous communities](#) to learn how to best contribute to established movements for health equity and justice. In Bolivia, advocacy

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helped the country become the first in the Americas to implement [a law recognizing ancestral healers and medicine](#), leading to a COVID-19 health guide for traditional medicine. Encourage governments and corporations to [provide equity-driven funding and resources](#) that support global and Indigenous communities' efforts towards health equity. Advocate for the health needs of Indigenous and global communities to be incorporated in national and international health policies. Partnerships for advancing health equity for global and Indigenous communities should supplement and bolster their established work in this field while empowering them to inform partners of their health priorities. Inform partners of their health priorities.

› Consider all health factors and approaches, not only clinical health, when seeking to improve health outcomes.

The health needs for all people, including global and Indigenous populations, transcend the clinical health needs that we are accustomed to considering when examining ways to improve health outcomes. We must collectively utilize a more expansive definition of health to acknowledge all factors that contribute to health, including [social determinants of health](#). Access to healthy air, water, food, sanitation, and housing are critical components of health for global and Indigenous communities. It is also important to consider [mental](#) and [social wellbeing](#), in addition to physical wellbeing, in order to completely address health needs. The alarming rates of [alcoholism](#), [substance abuse](#), [depression](#), and [suicide](#) among Indigenous people are clear examples of the influence of mental and social wellbeing on one's overall health. Think beyond the monocultural view of health and healthcare that only includes practices performed by conventional medical doctors at hospitals. This is already a practice in Indigenous communities through the acknowledgement of ancestral medicine and [incorporating the natural environment](#) in conversations and practices regarding health and health equity.

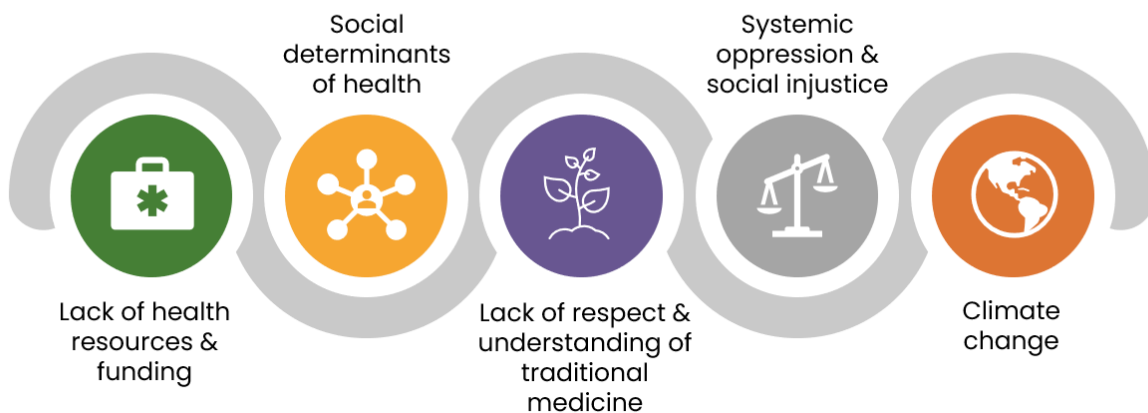


"Redefine what health is and what it means to be healthy." Karabi Acharya, Senior Director, Global Ideas for US Solutions, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Further [community-driven research](#) should be conducted to learn more about the drivers of health that influence the health inequities experienced by global and Indigenous people. Once these drivers of health are identified, healthcare providers and policymakers serving global and Indigenous communities should explore practices that take these factors in consideration when creating equitable [treatment plans](#) and [health policies](#). Additionally, corporations and governments should provide funding and resources to address determinants for health for global and Indigenous communities, such as [expanding access to clean water](#) and [improving housing conditions](#). Uplift existing efforts by global and Indigenous community organizations that have established experience in advocating for their social and mental wellbeing, alongside their physical health needs. Promoting "[whole person](#)" care and the right to health in

partnerships for advancing health equity for global and Indigenous populations is essential to understanding and treating all factors that contribute to health inequity.

Factors Contributing to Global & Indigenous Health Inequity



> Address social injustice and systems of oppression to further advance health equity.

Everyone deserves the right to health. This right can be hindered by injustice and systems of oppression that limit certain groups' access to and quality of healthcare services. Confronting social injustice, racism, and systems of oppression that permit health inequities to exist is a key step towards advancing health equity for global and Indigenous people. Global and Indigenous communities have been disproportionately harmed by unjust policies and practices related to [healthcare](#), [housing](#), and other factors that reduce one's quality of life, perpetuating trends of poor health outcomes for this populations. We must consider the historical context of their health inequities and the future implications of current efforts to improve their health outcomes.



"Without social justice, there won't be health for anyone." Vivian Tatiana Camacho Hinojosa, National Director of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, Vice Ministry of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, Ministry of Health of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

Acknowledge the [historical, generational trauma and violence committed against Indigenous communities](#) and understand the [detrimental effects that this cruelty has had on their health](#) to this day. Before acting, research the history of the global and Indigenous populations to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of the health inequities they

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experience to ensure that efforts to improve health equity are not further contributing to the trauma and inequalities. [Respecting the land rights of Indigenous communities](#) is essential for recognizing their autonomy and [self-determination](#) and helping their communities to be preserved and to prosper. Encourage policymakers to implement policies that will address the legacy of social injustice committed against global and Indigenous populations, such as [increasing funding for Indigenous health initiatives and services](#). Collaborate across sectors to dismantle the systems of oppression that restrict global and Indigenous peoples' right to health and to empower them to achieve health equity. As translated from a Spanish song sung by health activists in Tiapas, Mexico, "Health is dignity, health is a life without injustice, without humiliations...a community free and united." Vivian Tatiana Camacho Hinojosa, National Director of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, Vice Ministry of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, Ministry of Health of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

› Incorporate efforts to combat climate change to improve health outcomes for all.

Climate change is a health equity [threat multiplier](#). Combating climate change is a key step for advancing health equity, requiring collaboration and commitment from everyone to ensure that the earth is habitable and healthy for years to come. The effects of climate change are [directly related to the health](#) and longevity of the planet and of people. Climate exacerbated health inequities disproportionately affects those living in [low income areas](#), such as [Indigenous populations](#). Indigenous people have been "living in harmony" with the earth for a long time, so they can provide a lot of insight and [leadership for how to best respect and interact with the planet to improve health outcomes](#), amid the progression of climate change. Learn from Indigenous communities whose traditions and ancestral medicines have [always been connected to the natural environment](#). [Large corporations, the primary contributors to climate change](#), must accept the gravity of their actions and shift their focus from profits to real sustainability of life and wellbeing on earth.



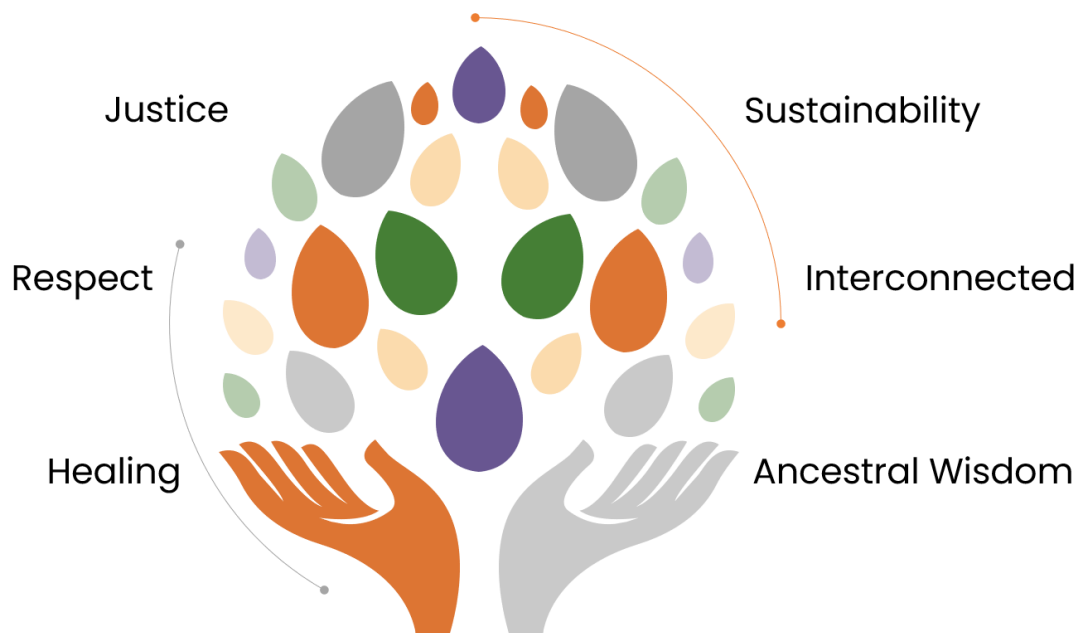
"Climate change affects every aspect of our health...it affects our air, our water, our food, and even our social connection." Karabi Acharya, Senior Director, Global Ideas for US Solutions, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Amplify the voices of the most vulnerable communities, helping to spread awareness of the harm that climate change has had and will continue to have on their communities and their health unless impactful changes are made. Researchers should conduct [further research to predict the effects of climate change on health](#) and social determinants of health and publish the findings in an easily digestible, widespread manner to unite the public in the fight against climate change. Pressure policymakers and government agencies to take immediate action to enforce [regulations and policies that will reduce the impacts of global climate change](#), especially for vulnerable communities. In addition, [partnerships between Indigenous communities and environmental advocacy organizations](#), two groups that hold the earth in high regard, would allow

for a productive exchange of ideas regarding solutions for improving the health of the planet and thus, of people. Encourage intercultural and intersectoral discussions and initiatives to protect the environment and the organisms that inhabit it because *“the health of Mother Earth...a healthy earth – it’s the first medicine we have that we need to be healthy and to survive.”* Vivian Tatiana Camacho Hinojosa, National Director of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, Vice Ministry of Ancestral Traditional Medicine, Ministry of Health of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

Deeper Dive

The Future of Global and Indigenous Health Equity Looks Like...



The People’s Health Movement (PHM)

The [People’s Health Movement \(PHM\)](#) is a global network of grassroots health activists, academic institutions, and civil society organizations, particularly from low and middle income countries. With a presence in about 70 countries worldwide, PHM is guided by the [People’s Charter for Health \(PCH\)](#) to engage in various programs and activities that seek to provide comprehensive primary health care and address social, environmental, and economic determinants of health in the pursuit of achieving health equity. Goals of PHM include: promoting health equity for all through an equitable and participatory intersectoral movement; advocating for universal access to quality health care, education, and social services; encouraging people to participate in the development of sustainable

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programs and solutions to meet their local health needs; and holding government authorities and corporations accountable. [PHM Global](#) helps to coordinate several global and regional programs that integrate the health equity work of country-based PHM chapters and global networks, such as the [People's Health Assembly \(PHA\)](#), [Global Health Watch \(GHW\)](#), [International People's Health University \(IPHU\)](#), the [Health for All Campaign \(HFAC\)](#), and PHM's Global Health Governance (GHG). The [PHM Handbook](#) is a key resource developed by PHM to outline PHM governance and structures, operational policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities of staff and members, and various additional resources to aid each component of PHM. Participation and collaboration among activists, academic institutions, and civil society organizations within PHM is a worthwhile approach to address global health inequities for [low-income countries that lack the resources and adequate healthcare systems](#) to do so.

CDC Global Health Equity Strategy 2022–2027

In 2021, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) published an agency-wide [Global Health Equity Strategy for 2022–2027](#) to outline the agency's approaches and reaffirm their commitment to addressing global health equity. The strategy employs CDC's four [CORE commitments](#) to health equity: cultivate comprehensive health equity science; optimize interventions; reinforce and expand robust partnerships; and enhance capacity and workforce engagement. Contents within the strategy include: the CDC's vision for their global health equity work; the CDC's global program goals, indicators, and milestones; the implementation plan to achieve global health equity; and appendixes with the [core components to achieve the highest attainable level of health](#) and the [guiding principles for implementing health equity into CDC's global work](#). With this strategy, the CDC aims to focus on the impacts of social determinants of health, expand multi-sectoral and community partnerships, and utilize [data-driven, evidence-based interventions](#) to address global health disparities and improve health outcomes for all. This resource can be used and referenced by organizations across sectors to learn about the CDC's global health equity goals and plans and to incorporate applicable action steps and guiding principles to their collaborative global health equity work.

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About P4HE

The P4HE Collaborative harmonizes goals, advances learning, and facilitates collaboration to improve health equity. It is led by the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and is part of the Tulane Institute for Innovations in Health Equity. Support for this program is provided by ICF. Funding is provided by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



Foster

the co-creation and spread of knowledge.



Sharpen

our research tools to focus on solutions, facts and stories.



Disrupt

traditional research approaches.



Harmonize

our voices.



Challenge

the status quo.



Shine

light on practices that are indefensible, irrational and inconsistent.

To learn more about these issues, or Partners for Health Equity's calls to action, a resource library including a full recording of this, and all previous P4HE Webinars, can be found on the P4HE [website](#).