



## Workshop Speakers



**Amytis Towfighi, MD**, is Associate Professor of Neurology and Preventive Medicine (Clinical Scholar) at the University of Southern California. As Director of Neurological Services for the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services public safety-net system, she spearheads initiatives targeting quality, efficiency, and equity of neurologic care delivery. She is the Chief of Neurology and Associate Medical Director of Research at LAC+USC Medical Center. She serves as Director of Healthcare Delivery Science for the Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute. Her research focuses on designing and testing complex secondary stroke prevention interventions in resource-constrained settings to improve delivery of evidence-based care, enhance care coordination, and facilitate patients' medication adherence, lifestyle, and self-management skills to reduce health disparities. She has led two secondary stroke prevention randomized controlled trials: Healthy Eating And Lifestyle after Stroke (HEALS) and Secondary stroke prevention by Uniting Community and Chronic care model teams Early to End Disparities (SUCCEED).

She received the Robert G. Siekert New Investigator Award in Stroke from the American Heart Association (AHA) and the Michael S. Pessin Stroke Leadership Prize from the American Academy of Neurology for her research on disparities. She has served on numerous AHA Scientific Statement and Guideline writing committees, including as Chair of the Post-Stroke Depression Scientific Statement, Vice-Chair of the Secondary Stroke Prevention Guidelines, and Chair of the Strategies to Reduce Inequities in Stroke Preparedness, Care, and Risk Factor Control. She previously co-chaired the NINDS Health Services Implementation, Stroke Progress Review Group and chaired the Quality and Outcomes Committee for AHA's Stroke Council. She is currently a Section Editor for Health Equity for the journal *Stroke*.



**Barbara McMakin, MS**, joined NIH's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) in 2013 as a science writer and has been a member of the NINDS Press Team. She has recently led the development of the updated Mind Your Risks public health campaign. Prior to joining NINDS, Ms. McMakin was a Communications Editor at the National Cancer Institute's Office of Cancer Complementary and Alternative Medicine and a Publications Manager at the Association for Psychological Science. Ms. McMakin earned a Masters in Neuroscience from the University of Pittsburgh.



**Dr. Bernadette Boden-Albala** is the Director and Founding Dean of the Program in Public Health in the Susan & Henry Samueli College of Health Sciences at the University of California, Irvine, where she is also a Professor in the Department of Health, Society and Behavior and the Department of Neurology in the School of Medicine. She is an internationally recognized expert in the social epidemiology of stroke and cardiovascular disease. Over the past 15 years, her robust research portfolio has focused on defining and intervening on social determinants of disease, including the role of race-ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sex, social support, stress, and social networks on disparities and patterns across the United States and globally. Her recent work includes a strong emphasis on health equity and social justice.

Dr. Boden-Albala has led numerous large, multi-site stroke prevention strategies in urban and rural communities and has significant experience leading community-level health assessments and interventions. Selected interventions include SWIFT, a hospital-based stroke preparedness intervention; ASPIRE, a community-based preparedness study in Washington, DC; and DESERVE, a discharge secondary stroke prevention intervention targeting stroke/TIA patients. Dr. Boden-Albala is PI of the National Initiative for Minority Involvement in Neurological Clinical Trials (NIMICT), supported by NINDS/NIMHD, which has built a toolkit of materials to improve racial-ethnic minorities' and women's participation rates in neurological clinical trials. She co-leads the Minority Recruitment initiative for the NINDS-funded national StrokeNet program. She served as PI for the Alaska Native Stroke Registry (ANSR). Her work has extended internationally to a collaborative effort between the American Heart Association and the Grenada Ministry of Health to develop and evaluate novel community- and policy-based interventions for cardiovascular disease prevention in Grenada. She is also PI of an exploratory project in Ghana to assess gaps in lay knowledge of primary and secondary stroke prevention, stroke treatment, and recovery. Finally, her work in global chronic disease prevention has included a World Health Organization project that sought to identify the optimum social networks for promoting health policy dialogue in Moldova. In addition to her broad research experience, Dr. Boden-Albala previously served as Senior Associate Dean of Research and Program Development at New York University College of Global Public Health. In this role, she co-created courses with UNICEF and the United Nations World Food Program focused on innovative solutions to Ebola and Polio response and exploring a system's approach to food access. She also developed the Cross-Continental MPH, a 1-year program that combines classroom learning, collaborative research with faculty mentors, and public health practice experience across three continents.

Since January 2020, under Dr. Boden-Albala's leadership, the UCI Program in Public Health has become the key academic partner for government agencies and community organizations to address COVID-19 in the region. She has led efforts at the university, county, and state levels on COVID-19 preparedness and response, including strategies around communication, health behaviors, and testing. The program has fostered a strong relationship with the Orange County Health Agency (OCHCA), and, in collaboration with OCHCA and other community partners, initiated a unique health equity-based, bilingual contact tracing strategy for Orange County. Dr. Boden-Albala was principal investigator (PI) on two large-scale community COVID-19 serosurveillance projects in Orange County and the city of Santa Ana and serves on multiple strategic advisory groups and tasks forces to guide COVID-19 response. She was named Community Hero by the Greater Irvine Chamber in May 2020 for her efforts and is frequently featured on local, state, and national media for her expertise on issues around COVID-19.

## Health Disparities and Inequities in Neurological Disorders Workshop Speakers



**Bruce Ovbiagele, MD, MSc, MAS, MBA**, is Professor of Neurology and Associate Dean at the University of California, San Francisco, as well as Chief of Staff at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Health Care System. Prior to these roles, he served for 6 years as Professor of Neurology and Chair of the Department of Neurology at the Medical University of South Carolina. He leads several NIH-funded programs including the Program to Avoid Cerebrovascular Events through Systematic Electronic Tracking and Tailoring of an Eminent Risk-factor (PACESETTER) study, which is evaluating whether a theoretical model-based, mHealth technology-centered, multi-level integrated approach can be effectively implemented to improve sustained blood pressure control among stroke patients encountered in South Carolina (at least half of whom will be African American) within 1 month of stroke symptom onset; the Training in Research for Academic Neurologists to Sustain Careers and Enhance the Numbers of Diverse Scholars (TRANSCENDS) program, which aims to train, mentor, and inspire a national cohort of underrepresented in medicine individuals who are post-residency fellows and junior faculty, to conduct high-quality neurological research and develop successful academic careers; and the Health Equity and Actionable Disparities in Stroke: Understanding and Problem-Solving (HEADS-UP) symposium, which is an annual multidisciplinary scientific and educational forum targeting major inequities in cerebrovascular disease, with the ultimate objective of helping to bridge major inequities in stroke, including global health inequities, and promptly translating scientific results into routine clinical practice, for the benefit of vulnerable and underserved populations. He was Chair of the International Stroke Conference (2016-2018) and is an Associate Editor for the journal, *Stroke*.



**Dr. David R. Williams** is the Florence and Laura Norman Professor of Public Health and Chair, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He is also Professor of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. His prior faculty appointments were at Yale University and the University of Michigan. He holds an MPH from Loma Linda University and a PhD in sociology from the University of Michigan. The author of more than 500 scientific papers, his research has enhanced our understanding of the ways in which race, socioeconomic status, stress, racism, health behavior, and religious involvement can affect physical and mental health. The Everyday Discrimination Scale that he developed is the most widely used measure of discrimination in health studies.

He was elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 2001, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2007, and the National Academy of Sciences in 2019. He has received Distinguished Contribution Awards from the American Sociological Association, the American Psychological Association, and the New York Academy of Medicine. He was ranked as the Most Cited Black Scholar in the Social Sciences in 2008. In 2014, Thomson Reuters ranked him as one of the World's Most Influential Scientific Minds.

He has played a visible, national leadership role in raising awareness levels of inequities in health and interventions to address them. He has served on multiple national advisory committees (including 10 Committees for the National Academy of Sciences), as the staff director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Commission to Build a Healthier America, and as a key scientific advisor to the award-winning PBS film series, *Unnatural Causes: Is inequality Making Us Sick?* His research has been featured in the national print and television media and in his TED Talk.

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**Edwin Trevathan, MD, MPH**, a pediatric neurologist and an epidemiologist, is the Amos Christie Chair in Global Health, Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology and Director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. His current research includes two NIH-funded projects based in northern Nigeria: (1) BRIDGE, a large cluster randomized clinical trial of shifting epilepsy care to community health workers in Africa, and (2) SEED, a large cohort study of clinical and genomic predictors of outcome among children with status epilepticus in northern Nigeria. Prior to moving to Vanderbilt in 2016, Dr. Trevathan served in several leadership positions: (1) Executive VP and Provost at Baylor University, (2) Founding Dean of the College for Public Health and Social Justice at Saint Louis University, and (3) Director of the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Director of the Division of Pediatric and Developmental Neurology at Washington University in St. Louis and St. Louis Children's Hospital. Dr. Trevathan has authored or co-authored more than 100 scientific publications, and he has served on numerous editorial boards and international boards and committees. Dr. Trevathan received his MD and MPH from Emory University, completed his pediatric residency at Yale and his neurology/child neurology residency at Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School, and completed his epilepsy/clinical neurophysiology fellowship at Boston Children's Hospital. He also served as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer at the CDC. He currently serves as a member of the Advisory Council for the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke at the National Institutes of Health.



**Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, MD**, is Director of the NIH National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), which seeks to advance the science of minority health and health disparities research through research, training, research capacity development, public education, and information dissemination. Dr. Pérez-Stable practiced general internal medicine for 37 years at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) before moving to NIH in September 2015. He was professor of medicine at UCSF and chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine for 17 years. His research interests include improving the health of racial and ethnic minorities and underserved populations, advancing patient-centered care, improving cross-cultural communication skills among clinicians, and promoting diversity in the biomedical research workforce. For more than 30 years, Dr. Pérez-Stable led research on Latino smoking cessation and tobacco control policies in the United States and Latin America, addressing clinical and prevention issues in cancer screening, and mentoring over 70 minority investigators. He has published more than 300 peer-reviewed articles and was elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 2001.



**Dr. George Howard** is a Distinguished Professor of Biostatistics at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). He received his training in biostatistics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has had experience in biostatistics, data management, and the direction of coordinating centers of multicenter studies. His career has a dual focus of observational studies cardiovascular epidemiology, with a recent focus to understand and reduce disparities in stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, and in the direction of coordinating centers for multi-center randomized clinical trials. For the former, he was the initial PI (serving for the first 19 years of the project) and remains one of the multiple PIs for the REasons for Geographic and

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Racial Differences in Stroke (REGARDS) project, a U.S. national study developing a cohort of more than 30,000 individuals to provide insights to the excess stroke mortality among African Americans and Southerners. Previously, he was PI of the coordinating center for the Insulin Resistance Atherosclerosis Study (IRAS) and was one of the original investigators in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) study. In the domain of clinical trials, he the PI of the Statistical and Data Management Center for the Carotid Revascularization for Primary Prevention of Stroke Trial (CREST-2), a pair of randomized trials each with an anticipated sample size of 1,240 that assess: (1) the difference between carotid endarterectomy versus intensive medical management and (2) between carotid stenting and intensive medical management. He was the PI of the Statistical and Data Coordinating Center for the Coordinated, Collaborative, Comprehensive, Family-based, Integrated, and Technology-enabled Care (C3FIT), a cluster-randomized trial assessing the efficacy coordination of post-stroke care. He is also the past PI of the Coordinating Centers the Carotid Revascularization Endarterectomy Stenting Trial (CREST), Secondary Prevention of Small Subcortical Strokes (SPS3), and the Trial of Early Aggressive Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis (TEAR). He has more than 525 publications with an H-index of more than 110, primarily in the analysis of cerebrovascular and cardiovascular risk factors, and has more than 35 years of experience working directly with clinical investigators.



**Dr. George Mensah** is a clinician-scientist who currently serves as the Director of the Center for Translation Research and Implementation Science at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), a part of NIH. In this role, Dr. Mensah leads a trans-NHLBI effort to advance late-stage translational research and implementation science to address gaps in the detection, prevention, treatment, and control of heart, lung, and blood diseases and sleep disorders, and the elimination of related health disparities. His goal is to maximize the health impact of advances made in fundamental discoveries, clinical and translational research, and population science

research. Dr. Mensah is an honors graduate of Harvard University. He obtained his medical degree from Washington University and trained in Internal Medicine and Cardiology at Cornell. His professional experience includes more than 25 years of public health service at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and NIH. In addition to his public service, Dr. Mensah had 15 years of experience in direct patient care, teaching, and research at Cornell, Vanderbilt, and the Medical College of Georgia (MCG). He was a full professor with tenure at MCG and is currently a Visiting Full Professor at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Dr. Mensah has been admitted to fellowships in several national and international societies including the American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology, and the European Society of Cardiology. He is an Honorary Fellow of the College of Physicians of South Africa and a Life Member of the Association of Black Cardiologists. His recent honors include the 2020 Alumni Achievement Award from his alma mater—Washington University School of Medicine; the 2020 Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society Visiting Professorship at Morehouse School of Medicine; and the 2020 Ancel Keys Memorial Lecturer at the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions. Dr. Mensah maintains active collaboration with several international groups to advance research on the global burden of diseases and risk factors.

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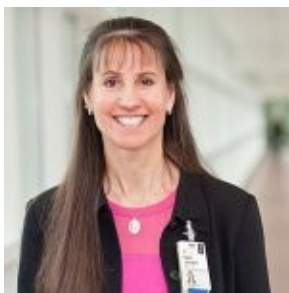


**Jeffrey Venstrom, MD**, is a physician-scientist with expertise in oncology, hematology, and drug/diagnostic development at Roche/Genentech. Dr. Venstrom has more than 18 years of experience leading scientists, clinical staff, and cross-functional teams on impactful patient-centered projects. As the Chief Medical Partner, Cross Portfolio in US Medical Affairs, Dr. Venstrom leads the group's efforts in Health Equities and Inclusive Research, Personalized Healthcare and Digital Health. Prior to this role, Dr. Venstrom was Senior Vice President and Head of Clinical Development and Medical Affairs at Foundation Medicine. Dr. Venstrom joined Roche/Genentech in 2014, when he established the Hematology Biomarker Franchise in Research and Early Development, which he led for 5 years.

Prior to joining Roche/Genentech, Dr. Venstrom was the Krishnamurthi Endowed Chair in Hematologic Malignancies at The University of California San Francisco from 2010 to 2014. Dr. Venstrom trained in medical oncology and internal medicine, including 1 year of research training at the NIH National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. He completed clinical and postgraduate research training at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, where he focused on translational research in cancer immunology. He received his medical degree and bachelor's degree of science from Vanderbilt University.



**Jennifer Manly, PhD**, is a Professor of Neuropsychology in the Department of Neurology at Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Her research focuses on mechanisms of disparities in cognitive aging and Alzheimer's disease. In order to do this research, her research team has partnered with the Black and Latinx communities in New York City and around the United States to design and carry out investigations of social forces across the lifecourse, such as educational opportunities, racism and discrimination, and socioeconomic status, and how these factors relate to cognition and brain health later in life. Her research has been funded by NIH and the Alzheimer's Association. She has authored more than 220 peer-reviewed publications and 10 chapters. She was the 2014 recipient of the Tony Wong Diversity Award for Outstanding Mentorship and was the recipient of the Paul Satz-International Neuropsychological Society Career Mentoring Award in 2020. She served on the HHS Advisory Council on Alzheimer's Research, Care and Services from 2011 to 2015 and is a member of the National Advisory Council on Aging.



**Karen C. Johnston, MD, MSc**, is the Harrison Distinguished Professor of Neurology and Associate Vice President for Clinical and Translational Research at the University of Virginia (UVA). She is the immediate past chair of the UVA Department of Neurology, a position that she held from 2007 to 2018. She is currently the Director of the integrated Translational Health Research Institute of Virginia (iTHRIV), the cross state collaborative NIH-NCATS-funded Clinical & Translational Science (CTSA) program.

Dr. Johnston's personal research has focused on treatment and outcomes in acute ischemic stroke, and she is the PI on the recently completed, NIH-funded, multi-center Phase III Stroke Hyperglycemia Insulin Network Effort (SHINE) Trial. She currently serves on the NIH-NINDS Advisory Council and Chairs the NINDS Health Disparities Steering Committee. She is a Food and Drug Administration panel member for neuro devices. She has participated in and/or led numerous clinical research education programs and career development programs locally and nationally over the past 15 years. She is passionate about training and supporting the career development for the next generation

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of researchers. She is also committed to diversity and inclusion across all programs with a special emphasis on training and leadership programs.

She attended medical school at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and completed neurology residency at the University of Rochester Strong Memorial Hospital. She did her vascular neurology fellowship at UVA and obtained a Master's degree in outcomes research and clinical investigation there as well. She is board certified in General Neurology and Vascular Neurology and was the founding director of the UVA Comprehensive Stroke Center.



**Dr. LaPrincess Brewer** is a cardiologist and Assistant Professor of Medicine within the Mayo Clinic Department of Cardiovascular Medicine in Rochester, MN. She is the first African American woman cardiologist on the Mayo Clinic Rochester staff. She earned her MD at the George Washington University School of Medicine, her MPH from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and her BS, magna cum laude in Chemical Engineering from Howard University. She completed Internal Medicine residency training at Johns Hopkins University and clinical fellowships in Cardiovascular Diseases and Preventive Cardiology at Mayo Clinic. Her primary research focus is addressing cardiovascular health disparities through community-based behavioral interventions for cardiovascular disease risk factor modification in racial/ethnic minority populations, particularly African Americans. She has published on racial differences in weight maintenance among women and psychosocial factors influencing obesity and overall cardiovascular health.

She was awarded highly competitive career development awards including the American Heart Association-Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program Award, NIH Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH) Scholar Award, and the NIH KL2 Mentored Career Development Award to expand her work as a clinical investigator. She is currently PI of the FAITH! (Fostering African-American Improvement in Total Health) trial, a cardiovascular health promotion intervention in partnership with African-American churches. Her research and community engagement initiatives have been recognized by a number of prestigious awards including the 2017 MN Chapter American College of Physicians Volunteerism Award, 2019 Nutrition Obesity Research Center at Harvard (NORCH) Diversity Scholar by Harvard Medical School, and the 2019 First Place Young Investigator Award by the American Society of Preventive Cardiology. Her community health advocacy efforts have been featured on both local and national media outlets including ESSENCE, CBS, PBS, CNN, and the Huffington Post. She was recently named a 2019 ChangeMaker by MN Public Radio News and a 2020 History Maker at Home by the City of Minneapolis, which both honored leaders making history in MN to commemorate Black History Month. She is an active member of the National Medical Association, Minnesota Association of Black Physicians, American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology, and the Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc., and she serves on several committees.



**Lisa A. Cooper, MD, MPH**, is the James F. Fries Professor of Medicine and a Bloomberg Distinguished Professor in Health Equity at Johns Hopkins University Schools of Medicine, Nursing, and School of Public Health. She studies how race and socioeconomic factors shape patient care, and how health systems, with communities, can improve the health of populations with complex social needs. A general internist and social epidemiologist, Dr. Cooper founded and directs The Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity, where she and her team work, in partnership with health systems and community-based organizations, to identify interventions that alleviate racial and income health disparities and translate

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them into practice and policy changes that mean better health for communities. Dr. Cooper is the recipient of a 2007 MacArthur Fellowship (“Genius” Award) and an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine. She is a frequent contributor to media outlets, including CNN, The Economist, Essence, The Guardian, The New York Times, NPR, and PBS NewsHour. She has also provided expert advice to local leaders from diverse social sectors and to national and international policymakers about how to address health disparities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Cooper is the author of the forthcoming book, *Why Are Health Disparities Everyone’s Problem?* (Johns Hopkins University Press, June 2021).



**H. Nelson Aguila, DVM** is Deputy Director of the National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CRCHD). In this capacity, Dr. Aguila plays a central role in coordinating the day-to-day functions of the Center and development of strategic planning, priority-setting, and management of CRCHD’s disparities research, diversity training, and community education/outreach efforts. He oversees the Comprehensive Partnership to Advance Cancer Health Equity (CPACHE) program. CPACHE establishes equal partnership between Minority Serving Institutions and NCI-designated Cancer Center to pursue cancer and cancer health disparities research, cancer research education, and outreach to underserved communities.

Previously, Dr. Aguila served as chief of CRCHD’s Diversity Training Branch. Prior to coming to NIH, Dr. Aguila worked at the Food and Drug Administration as a Reviewer Toxicologist at the Center for Veterinary Medicine. Earlier in his career, Dr. Aguila held senior research scientist positions in neuropathology at the University of Miami Medical School and later in cancer gene therapy at Aventis-Gencell.

Dr. Aguila earned his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree at Austral University in Chile and trained as a neurobiologist at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas.



**Dr. Nicole Rosendale** is an Assistant Professor of Neurology at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). She completed undergraduate medical training at New York University School of Medicine followed by residency and fellowship training at UCSF. She joined the faculty in the Neurohospitalist Division at UCSF in 2017 and primarily attends on the teaching service at San Francisco General Hospital, the city’s safety-net hospital and only Level 1 trauma center. Her clinical expertise encompasses the acute manifestations of neurologic disease, including cerebrovascular disease, neuroinfectious disease, and the neurologic manifestations of systemic illness.

In addition to her clinical duties, Dr. Rosendale is dedicated to advancing health equity in neurology through research and education, particularly in regard to LGBTQ+ health. Her work has highlighted the importance of LGBTQ+ health in neurology, educated around caring for transgender individuals in the acute setting, and exposed discrepancies between self-reported competence in caring for LGBTQ+ individuals and LGBTQ+ health knowledge in U.S. neurologists. Most recently, Dr. Rosendale published a scoping review of the current science of LGBTQ+ health in neurology, highlighting important gaps in need of further research. Dr. Rosendale is currently investigating other neurodisparities in LGBTQ+ individuals, including in stroke, multiple sclerosis, and migraine, with the goal of informing culturally appropriate interventions to improve brain health in this community. She has also spoken nationally about the importance of LGBTQ+ health in neurology.



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Dr. Rosendale serves as the Chair of the American Academy of Neurology LGBTQI Section and is a member of the American Academy of Neurology Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-Racism and Social Justice (IDEAS) Joint Coordinating Council.



**Nichte I. Mejia, MD, MPH, FAAN**, is Assistant Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School and Assistant Neurologist at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). She serves as Director of the MGH Neurology Community Health, Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives, is an Associate of the MGH Disparities Solutions Center, Member of the Board of Directors of the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, and Fellow of the American Academy of Neurology. Born in Guatemala and raised primarily in Mexico, Dr. Mejia graduated medical school with honors from the Monterrey Institute of Technology. After conducting clinical research at Baylor College of Medicine, she moved to Boston to pursue further training at Harvard and its affiliated hospitals. Dr. Mejia has since completed a Medicine internship, Neurology residency, Movement Disorders fellowship, Master degree of Public Health, and postdoctoral fellowships in Neurostatistics and Neuroepidemiology as well as in Mental Health Policy. In 2010, she was appointed to the faculty of Harvard Medical School and MGH where she continues to provide clinical care, conduct health services research, supervise trainees, and engage in administrative leadership. As part of her efforts to improve access to neurology care while addressing disparities in neurology, Dr. Mejia created mechanisms for trainees to engage in these topics: the Partners Neurology Residency Program Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion for neurology residents, the MGH Neurology Community Health Diversity and Inclusion Internship for undergraduate and graduate students, the MGH Neurology Youth Stroke Education program for high school students, and most recently the MGH Youth Neurology Education and Research Program. Dr. Mejia has taught health professionals through invited grand rounds, CME courses, and presentations including at the American Academy of Neurology Annual Meeting, the American Neurological Association Annual Meeting, the International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society International Congress, and the Physicians for a National Health Program Annual Meeting. She is an inaugural recipient of The Audrey S. Penn Lectureship Award, provided to American Neurological Association members who conduct outstanding research, program-building, or educational scholarship to promote health equity on health care disparities.



**Rachel Berger, MD, MPH**, is Professor of Pediatrics and Clinical and Translational Science at the University of Pittsburgh. She is also chief of the division of Child Advocacy at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and director of child abuse research at the Safar Center for Resuscitation Research at the University of Pittsburgh. She attended medical school at Columbia University and completed her pediatric internship and residency and a fellowship in general academic pediatrics at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and a Master's in Public Health at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health. Over the past 20 years, her research has focused on improving identification and evaluation of suspected physical abuse using serum biomarkers, clinical decision rules, and the use of electronic health records. She has received research funding from federal agencies including NIH, the Department of Defense, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, and foundations including the Hillman Foundation and the Beckwith Institute. She has co-authored more than 100 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters and is a member of the Society for Pediatric Research (SPR) and American Pediatric Society (APS). She recently became the first child abuse pediatrician to be elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation.

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She has also been involved in child abuse-related policy and served on the Pennsylvania Task Force for Child Protection, as the research lead for the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (CECANF) during the Obama administration, and most recently, as a senior policy fellow for Casey Family Programs.



delivery in low-resource settings.

**Dr. Rajesh Vedanthan** is the Director of the Section for Global Health in the Department of Population Health at the New York University School of Medicine. He is Associate Professor in the Departments of Population Health and Medicine/Cardiology. His areas of interest are implementation research, global health delivery, global cardiology, capacity-building, and the intersection of health and development. He is the PI or co-investigator of multiple NIH grants, focusing on implementation research to develop and evaluate innovative solutions to optimize cardiovascular and risk factor care



**Ralph L. Sacco, MD, MS**, is the Chairman of Neurology, Olemberg Family Chair in Neurological Disorders, Miller Professor of Neurology, Public Health Sciences, Human Genetics, and Neurosurgery, Executive Director of the Evelyn F. McKnight Brain Institute at the Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, and Chief of the Neurology Service at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

A graduate of Cornell University in bio-electrical engineering and a cum laude graduate of Boston University School of Medicine, he also holds an MS in Epidemiology from Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health. Dr.

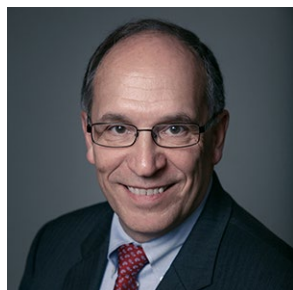
Sacco completed his neurology residency training and postdoctoral training in Stroke and Epidemiology at Columbia Presbyterian in New York. He was previously Professor of Neurology, Chief of Stroke and Critical Care Division and Associate Chairman at Columbia University before taking his current position as Chairman of Neurology at the University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine.

He is the founding PI of the 28-year, NINDS-funded Northern Manhattan Study, the Florida Puerto Rico Collaboration to Reduce Stroke Disparities, and the Family Study of Stroke Risk and Carotid Atherosclerosis, as well as co-investigator of multiple other NIH grants. He has also been the Co-Chair of international stroke treatment and prevention trials. Dr. Sacco has published extensively with 726 articles (H-index of 115) in the areas of stroke prevention, treatment, epidemiology, risk factors, vascular cognitive impairment, brain health, human genetics and stroke recurrence. His research has also addressed health care disparities. He has been listed as a Highly Cited Researcher in the top 1% of cited investigators annually since 2017 by the Clarivate Web of Science. He has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Feinberg Award of Excellence in Clinical Stroke, the Chairman's Award from the American Heart Association, the NINDS Javits Award in Neuroscience, AAN Wartenberg Lecture Award, WSO Global Leadership Award, and the WHL Daniel Lackland Award. He has lectured extensively at national and international meetings and received numerous named lectureships. He is the current Editor-in-Chief of the American Stroke Association journal, *Stroke*.

Dr. Sacco is a fellow of both the Stroke and Epidemiology Councils of the American Heart Association, the American Academy of Neurology, and the American Neurological Association, and he serves as the past-President of the American Academy of Neurology. He is also an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine and the Association of American Physicians. Dr. Sacco has been a member of the World Stroke Organization since 2008 and is on the Board of Directors. He was the first neurologist to serve as the President of the American Heart Association (2010-2011).



**Dr. Richard Benson** is Director of the Office of Global Health and Health Disparities (OGHHD) in the NINDS Division of Clinical Research. He is a leader in the fields of vascular neurology and health disparities research. His areas of research interest and expertise include health disparities and health equity research, and minority, community, and global health. Dr. Benson has worked in the public and private sectors and is a volunteer with several professional organizations. He is a past president and current board member of the American Heart Association (AHA), Greater Washington Region (GWR). He was a member of the national AHA Stroke Council and is currently an American Academy of Neurology (AAN) Registries committee member. Dr. Benson received his B.S. in Chemistry from Fisk University, followed by an MD/PhD from Meharry Medical College in Neurophysiology (elected to AOA). Subsequently, he completed his neurology residency at the Harvard-Longwood neurology residency program in Boston, and a stroke fellowship at the Columbia University Neurological Institute in New York, while obtaining an M.S. in Epidemiology from the Mailman School of Public Health. After fellowship, Dr. Benson worked as a vascular neurologist in New York City at the Long Island Jewish Medical Center and St. Luke's-Roosevelt Medical Centers. In 2005, he moved to the Washington, DC, area to work as a Program Director in what was then the Office of Minority Health and Research at NINDS. He left NIH in 2008 to focus on patient care, and in 2010 became Associate Medical Director of the NIH Stroke Program at Medstar Washington Hospital Center and Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology at Georgetown University Medical Center. Dr. Benson returned to the NINDS in 2019 to direct the OGHHD.



**Steven Clauser, PhD, MPA**, is the Director of the Healthcare Delivery and Disparities Research Program at the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute. He is a health services and outcomes researcher with more than 30 years of intramural and extramural research experience. Dr. Clauser's research program manages more than 230 comparative effectiveness research studies addressing comparisons among alternative health system strategies (e.g., use of personnel, technology, incentives, policies) and new delivery models to improve patient-centered outcomes. His program focuses on clinical trials and large observational studies to improve health equity and address health care disparities among racial and ethnic minorities, sexual and gender minorities, residents in rural and frontier areas, and persons with disabilities. These studies involve a broad range of clinical areas, including Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and trauma. Dr. Clauser also collaborates with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Policy to support a national program to train scientists, including minority investigators, to conduct patient centered outcomes research in learning healthcare systems.

Dr. Clauser previously held the positions of Associate Director for the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Community Oncology Research Program, as well as Chief of NCI's Outcomes Research Branch. He also was co-director of NCI's Community Cancer Centers Program where he developed and managed a variety of research projects related to multi-disciplinary treatment models to improve the management of multi-modal cancer treatment for low-income individuals of diverse race and ethnicity. Before joining NCI, Dr. Clauser served in a number of senior research management positions at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, as well as with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. He has more than 90 peer-reviewed publications related to health services and outcomes research and has participated in several national committees and advisory groups on these topics.

## Health Disparities and Inequities in Neurological Disorders Workshop Speakers



**Steven H. Woolf, MD, MPH**, is Director Emeritus of the Center on Society and Health at Virginia Commonwealth University, where he is Professor of Family Medicine and Population Health. He holds the C. Kenneth and Dianne Wright Distinguished Chair in Population Health and Health Equity. Dr. Woolf has edited three books and published more than 200 articles in a career that has focused on raising public awareness about the social, economic, and environmental conditions that shape health and produce inequities. He works to address these issues through outreach to policymakers and the public, including testimony before Congress, consulting, media outreach, and speaking engagements.

Dr. Woolf received his MD in 1984 from Emory University and underwent residency training in family medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Woolf is also a clinical epidemiologist and underwent training in preventive medicine and public health at Johns Hopkins University, where he received his MPH in 1987. He is board certified in family medicine and in preventive medicine and public health. He began his career as a health services researcher, with a focus on evidence-based guidelines. He served on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and was elected to the Institute of Medicine in 2001.

## Health Disparities and Inequities in Neurological Disorders Workshop Speakers



**Walter J. Koroshetz, MD**, was selected Director of NINDS on June 11, 2015. Dr. Koroshetz joined NINDS in 2007 as Deputy Director, and he served as Acting Director from October 2014 through June 2015. As NINDS Director, Dr. Koroshetz directs program planning and budgeting, and oversees the scientific and administrative functions of the Institute. He has held leadership roles in many NIH and NINDS programs including NIH's Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative, the NIH Blueprint for Neuroscience Research, the Traumatic Brain Injury Center collaborative effort between the NIH intramural program and the Uniformed Health Services University, and the establishment of the NIH Office of Emergency Care Research. Additionally, Dr. Koroshetz serves as Chair of the Interagency Pain Research Coordinating Committee (IPRCC) and the Executive Committee for the NIH Pain Consortium.