

HOUSTON

Viral Hepatitis Task Force

Welcome To The Viral Hepatitis Task Force Annual Symposium

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SYMPOSIUM AGENDA

9:00 AM Welcome Remarks

Marlene McNeese, Deputy Assistant Director at Houston Health Department

9:15 AM Transforming Public Health: Viral Hepatitis from Awareness to Action

Moderator: Dr. Catherine Troisi, UTHealth Houston School of Public Health

- Dr. Absiola Oladimeji, City of Houston Health and Human Services
- Ana Zangeneh, Harris County Public Health

10:20AM Hepatitis C Lived Experience

Geneva Martinez-Belt, Santa Maria Hostel

10:45AM Experience Meeting Patients on the Road to a Hepatitis C Cure:

Dr. Victor Ankoma-Sey, Houston Methodist Hospital, Liver Associates of Texas

11:45 AM Break & Pick Up Lunch

12:00 PM Shifting the Paradigm: Advancing the Treatment for Chronic Hepatitis B

Dr. Hector Nazario, Methodist Health System

12:50 PM Award Presentation

Presented By: Dr. Catherine Troisi & Shane Chen

1:00 PM Building Healthier Communities: Grassroots Strategies for Hepatitis Testing, Education & Engagement

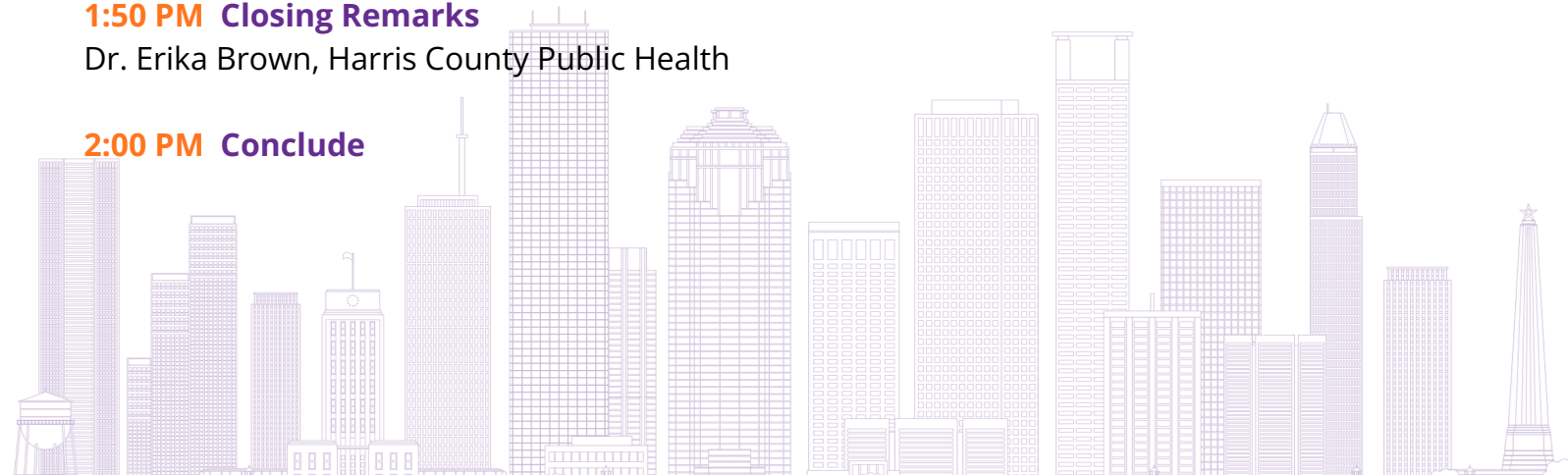
Moderator: Dr. Andrea Caracostis, HOPE Clinic

- Wayne Gosbee - Link2Labs
- Dr. Karen Vigil - Thomas Street at Quentin Mease Center and UTHealth McGovern
- Cathie Chilson Partridge - Grassroots Health Project

1:50 PM Closing Remarks

Dr. Erika Brown, Harris County Public Health

2:00 PM Conclude



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Marlene McNeese, PhD

For the past 33 years, Marlene McNeese has played a leadership role in redefining public health and community-based support systems addressing HIV prevention, chemical dependency, mental health, communicable disease, and post-incarceration syndrome. Since 2004, she has served with the Houston Health Department, currently as Deputy Assistant Director overseeing the Bureau of HIV/STI and Viral Hepatitis Prevention, and holds an MBA from Texas Woman's University, where she is now pursuing a doctorate in Education, Leadership, and Organization.

Ms. McNeese has extensive leadership experience with local and national advisory councils and boards, having served as past chair of the Houston Area Ryan White Planning Council, co-chair of the Houston HIV Prevention Community Planning Group, past board chair for NASTAD, and Co-Chair of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.



Catherine Troisi, PhD

Catherine Troisi, PhD is Professor at UTHealth Houston School of Public Health, an infectious disease epidemiologist and member of the Texas Epidemic Public Health Institute. She previously practiced public health as Assistant Director at the Houston Health Department.

She holds a PhD in Epidemiology from U. Michigan and completed National Public Health Leadership Training. Dr. Troisi was elected to the APHA Executive Board, is currently serving as Chair of the Evidentiary Review Committee as well as Chair Elect of the International Network of Epidemiology in Policy as well as participating in other local and state public health advisory boards including the Houston Viral Hepatitis Task Force where she is the Science Officer.

She is co-editor of the Control of Communicable Diseases Manual and recipient of the 2018 ASPPH Academic Public Health Practice Excellence Award.



**Dr. Abisola Oladimeji, MD,
MPH, FWACP**

Dr. Abisola Oladimeji, MD, MPH, FWACP is a public health physician and epidemiology leader who serves as Epidemiology Manager in the Bureau of Epidemiology, Disease Prevention and Control Division at the Houston Health Department. In her role, she provides strategic and operational oversight for infectious disease surveillance, outbreak preparedness and response, and the translation of epidemiologic intelligence into timely public health action.

Her work is centered on strengthening surveillance systems, optimizing cross-functional response capabilities, and advancing data-driven strategies that support disease prevention and population health outcomes. She brings extensive experience in leading multidisciplinary teams, coordinating complex public health responses, and fostering partnerships across healthcare, governmental, and community sectors.

She is passionate about connecting data, people, and public health practice to create healthier communities and lasting impact.



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Ana Zangeneh, MPH

Ana Zangeneh, MPH, currently serves as the Sr. Manager for the Communicable and Emerging diseases groups within the Office of Epidemiology, Surveillance, and Emerging Diseases at Harris County Public Health.

She oversees a large group of epidemiologists and investigators who investigate notifiable conditions reported to public health and provide guidance on responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases. Ana has been with Harris County Public Health for 14 years and has experience in applied epidemiology, including disease surveillance, and preparing and responding to various emergencies. Her interests include the development of the public health workforce and identifying adequate training and strategic skills needed to shape the future of public health.



Dr. Hector Nazario

Dr. Hector Nazario is Chief of the Division of Hepatology and a board-certified specialist in liver disease and transplantation. He specializes in viral hepatitis, cirrhosis, liver cancer, autoimmune and cholestatic liver diseases, and liver transplantation. Dr. Nazario is an active clinician, researcher, and educator and is a member of leading gastroenterology and hepatology organizations.



Cathie Chilson Partridge

Born in Michigan and raised in Colorado from age eight through young adulthood, Cathie Chilson Partridge has dedicated her career to helping underserved populations in the U.S. and abroad. Her diverse experiences include teaching, health education, and international work, including serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer and Community Health Educator in West Africa, where she promoted nutrition, hygiene, and disease prevention.

She also worked with migrant farmworkers on the East Coast during the AIDS epidemic to improve health education and access to care. Cathie speaks fluent French and Spanish, holds master's degrees in International Administration and Public Health, and is a Certified Community Health Worker. She is delighted to bring her experience and passion for health equity to the Grassroots Health team in support of individuals who have experienced homelessness.



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Geneva Martinez-Belt

Geneva Martinez-Belt is a Recovery Support Peer Specialist at Santa Maria Hostel with more than 30 years of experience in addiction services and over three decades in recovery. Drawing from her personal journey, she openly shares her experience with intravenous heroin use, a hepatitis C diagnosis, and successful treatment. Geneva uses her lived experience to inspire hope, reduce stigma, and support others on their paths to recovery.



**Wayne Gosbee, CEO
Link2Labs**

Wayne Gosbee is the founder and CEO of Link2Labs and a healthcare professional with more than 20 years of experience in liver disease. He founded Link2Labs after seeing too many patients delay or forgo important laboratory testing due to cost, lack of insurance, or difficulty navigating the healthcare system.

Link2Labs was created to remove those barriers by helping individuals access affordable labs and supporting timely linkage to care. In his eleven years operating Link2Labs, Wayne has assisted hundreds of individuals in obtaining affordable labs and free medication—leading to cures for Hep C—and has screened thousands. He has expanded his reach to all 50 states by collaborating with national telemedicine companies.



Dr. Karen J. Vigil

Dr. Vigil is a Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth and the Associate Medical Director of Thomas Street at Quentin Mease Health Center.

Dr. Vigil's clinical and research interests focus extensively on HIV and viral hepatitis. She has contributed to research published in leading journals, including JAMA and Clinical Infectious Diseases, examining HBV vaccine responses and strategies to improve immunizations among people living with HIV, as well as the epidemiology, prevention, and outcomes of Hepatitis B.



**Shane Chen, COO
HOPE Clinic**

Ms. Shane Chen is the Chief Operations Officer of the Asian American Health Coalition dba HOPE Clinic, which she helped establish in 2002 as a fully staffed FQHC offering primary, preventive, and specialty health services. She holds a Master's in Healthcare Administration from Texas Women's University and has over 15 years advocating for Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander health equity. Since 2008, she has overseen HOPE Clinic's operations while leading community engagement efforts, and remains active in Houston-area nonprofits and boards, including the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum's Community Advisory Board.

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**Dr. Andrea Caracostis, CEO
HOPE Clinic**

Andrea Caracostis, MD, MPH is the CEO of the Asian American Health Coalition dba HOPE Clinic, a physician with an MPH from Texas A&M and over 25 years in health care. Since taking the helm in 2007, she has grown HOPE Clinic from a five-person, \$700,000 operation into a \$30 million FQHC with nearly 300 staff, five Houston locations, and 180,000 annual patient visits offering care in 30 languages. A recognized leader in the community health centers movement since 1998, she serves on multiple healthcare boards, chairs the Harris Health System Board of Directors, and has been named a top and most admired CEO in Houston.



Dr. Ericka Brown, MD, MBA

Dr. Ericka Brown, MD, MBA is the Local Health Authority and serves as Division Director of the Community Health and Wellness Division (CHWD), overseeing all clinical and prevention services for the department. Before joining HCPH, Dr. Brown worked most recently as the Program Manager for the Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) and served as Chief Operating Officer at Harris Health System, one of the largest public health systems in the country. She previously served as the CEO of Ben Taub Hospital – Level One Trauma Center and is the former CEO of Ambulatory Services and its 41 primary care and specialty clinics.

Dr. Brown has served on numerous boards, including America's Essential Hospitals Institute Board of Directors, Avenue 360 Federally Qualified Health Center Board of Directors, and America's Essential Hospitals Essential Women's Leadership Mentor program. She holds an undergraduate degree in chemistry from Temple University, a medical degree from Rush Medical College, and an MBA from Texas Women's University.



Dr. Victor Ankoma-Sey

Dr. Victor Ankoma-Sey is the Director of the Liver Transplant Program at Houston Methodist Hospital and Director of Liver Associates of Texas. He is board-certified in Gastroenterology, Transplant Hepatology, and Internal Medicine. With extensive experience in liver disease and transplantation, Dr. Ankoma-Sey is a recognized expert in viral hepatitis, fatty liver disease, liver cancer, and advanced liver disease, and with his vested work in research and treatment, he has published more than 100 scientific papers and abstracts.





**SCAN TO SEE
THE FULL AGENDA!**

