

Friday, May 15, 2026  
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**2026**

# **Pathways to Health Symposium**

**The Power  
of Trust to  
Close Gaps in  
Cancer Care**

# AGENDA

9:00 a.m. **Check-in, Breakfast and Networking**

9:30 a.m. **Welcome**

**Paul Buckley, PhD** | he/him  
*VP & Chief Workforce Experience Officer,  
Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

9:35 a.m. **Updates from the Fred Hutch Cancer Center's Office of Community Outreach and Engagement (OCOE)**

**Craig Dee, MPH(c), Diné** | he/him | *Project Manager,  
OCOE Indigenous Cancer Health Excellence Initiative*

**Liz Tallent** | she/her  
*Community Health Education Manager, OCOE*

10:00 a.m. Keynote Address with Moderated Discussion:  
**From Promise to Practice: How Trust Built in  
Community Closes the Cancer Care Gaps**

**Mateo Banegas, PhD, MPH, MS** | he/him  
*Associate Professor and Co-Director of the Center for  
Health Equity Education and Research at UC San Diego*

*Q&A Moderator: Jean McDougall, PhD, MPH* | she/her  
*Staff Scientist, OCOE, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

11:15 a.m. *Break and Posters*

11:30 a.m. **Presentation of Awards**

*Angel Flight West Award Presentation*  
**Russell Stearns** | *Director of Outreach, Angel Flight West*

*Introduction of Health Champion Awards*  
**Beti Thompson, PhD** | she/her  
*Professor Emeritus, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

*Presentation of Health Champion Awards*  
**Mateo Banegas, PhD, MPH, MS** | he/him

12:15 p.m. *Lunch Break and Poster Session*

**1:15 p.m. Panel: I'm ready to get screened. Now what?**

This panel explores innovative examples of pathways to cancer screening and coordinated care, especially in communities experiencing barriers to access.

*Moderator: Parth Shah, PharmD, PhD | he/him  
Associate Professor, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

**Jace Angelly MBA, NARHC | he/him**  
*Clinic Manager, Odessa Rural Health Clinic*

**Cathy Lopez | she/her**  
*Public Health Specialist, Yakima Health District*

**Liz Swisher, MD | she/her | Professor of Gynecologic  
Oncology, University of WA and Fred Hutch Cancer Center**

**Tom Hutch, MD | he/him**  
*Medical Director, We Care Daily Clinics*

**Anthony Lyon-Loftus, PA-C, MPH | he/him**  
*Associate Medical Director, Peninsula Community  
Health Services*

**2:15 p.m. Break and Posters**

**2:30 p.m. Panel: Breaking Barriers to Cancer Care**

How do trust and relationships impact patient care?  
This panel explores how patients navigate care from  
treatment to survivorship and beyond.

*Moderator: Shayla Akande | she/her | CEO, Cierra Sisters*

**Anthony Nget | he/him**  
*Patient Navigator, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

**Linda Covert, RN, NC-BC | she/her**  
*Facilitator, Cancer Lifeline Harmony Retreats*

**Frankie White | she/her | Survivor**

**Vera Trainer | she/her | Patient**

**3:30 p.m. Call to Action: Key Takeaways**

*Megan J. Shen, PhD | she/her | Deputy Associate  
Director, OCOE, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

**4:00 p.m. Adjourn**

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER



**Mateo Banegas, PhD, MPH, MS** | he/him  
*Associate Professor and Co-Director of the Center for Health Equity Education and Research at UC San Diego*

Matthew (Mateo) Banegas is an Associate Professor and Co-Director of the Center for Health Equity Education and Research in the Department of Radiation Medicine and Applied Sciences at the UCSD School of Medicine. Trained as a health services researcher, with an emphasis in cancer prevention and control, Dr. Banegas uses quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the intersection between health care delivery and costs, social determinants of health, and health outcomes for individuals diagnosed with cancer. His research focuses on two primary areas of investigation: (1) the association of social and economic risk factors with health and health care outcomes over the life course; and (2) health system strategies to identify and address the social and economic needs.

Currently, Dr. Banegas leads research to investigate the burden of social and economic needs of patients, including financial hardship, employment and insurance trajectories, housing, and food insecurity across the continuum of cancer. He also works with clinical, community and health care leaders to develop approaches for integrating social risk screening and referral programs within oncology settings.

Dr. Banegas completed his post-doctoral fellowship in the NCI Cancer Prevention and Control Program. He received his doctoral training at the University of Washington's School of Public Health and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Dr. Banegas holds a Masters of Public Health in Community Health Education and Masters of Science in Agronomy from New Mexico State University.



**MODERATOR Jean McDougall, PhD, MPH** | she/her  
*Staff Scientist, Office of Community Outreach & Education, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

As a Staff Scientist in the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, Dr. Jean McDougall is committed to working with diverse communities to identify and amplify creative approaches to improving cancer outcomes. Dr. McDougall received a Master of Public Health (MPH) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees in epidemiology from the University of Washington. She completed a joint postdoctoral fellowship with the Hutchinson Institute for Cancer Outcomes Research (HICOR) and the Pharmaceutical Outcomes Research and Policy Program at Fred Hutch and the University of Washington, respectively. Dr. McDougall returned to Fred Hutch after spending several years as a faculty member at the University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center. She leads the analysis and dissemination of data on the burden of cancer in Washington State and serves as Director of the Recruitment and Retention Shared Resource at Fred Hutch.

2025-2026

## COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM PROJECTS

Poster presentations in the lobby.



### **Access to Women's Cancer Screenings for Uninsured Adults**

Lahai Health | Maggie Konstanski & Maria Musgrave-Acosta



### **Addressing Social Determinants of Health and Advancing Health Equity with Patient Financial Assistance Funds**

Cancer Lifeline | Deserie Sjouwke



### **Afya ya Utumbo (Gut Health in Swahili) Project: Colorectal Cancer Awareness & Screening**

Congolese United Foundation | Jean-Jacques Kayembe & Mapenzi Kinege



### **Assessment to Inform Wellness House Support Services for Spanish Speakers**

Wellness House | Amy Zook & Janette Garcia



### **Breast Health Navigator Program**

Leaders in Women's Health, Tacoma Urban League | Alicia Klein



### **Building Trust and Expanding Care in South King County through Outreach and Education**

International Community Health Services | Sharissa Tjok, Dicken Leung, Olivia Mejia-Martinez, & Elisabeth Anderson



### **Camp Kesem**

Camp Kesem | Catherine McNeill & Nina Buzzotta



### **Expansion of Cancer Care Fuel Card Program for Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties**

Northeast Tri County Health District | Molly Corvino & Monica Teibel

## PANEL

# I'M READY TO GET SCREENED. NOW WHAT?

This panel explores innovative examples of pathways to cancer screening and coordinated care, especially in communities experiencing barriers to access.



**MODERATOR Parth Shah, PharmD, PhD** | he/him  
*Associate Professor, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

Dr. Parth Shah is a behavioral and implementation scientist at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center whose research focuses on integrating evidence-based preventive health services into community pharmacies. His work spans cancer prevention, vaccination, and infectious disease prevention, with particular attention to HPV immunization, colorectal cancer screening, and provider–patient communication around hesitancy and misinformation. He also collaborates on domestic and global HIV prevention research with the HIV Vaccine Trials Network.



**Jace Angelly, MBA, NARHC** | he/him  
*Clinic Manager, Odessa Rural Health Clinic*

My healthcare career has been about serving underserved patients and communities from behavioral health to rural primary care. I have managed lock down units for individuals who suffer from mental health in Montana, medication assisted treatment for patients who suffer from opioid used disorder in Western Washington, to a primary care clinic in rural North East Washington. I have ten years of managing behavioral health clinics or division of clinics, and the last four years I have managed a rural health clinic. In behavioral health I have helped start dental programs, integrated primary care, and worked on county opioid taskforces. In rural primary care I serve on the Lincoln County Board of health, participate in the Lincoln County health collaborative, and continue to help bring future providers to our wonderful little clinic for clinical rotation. Outside of my work I am an active member of the Odessa WA Lions Club, walker, video game player, and player of pinball.



**Cathy Lopez** | she/her  
*Public Health Specialist, Yakima Health District*

Cathy Lopez is a Public Health Specialist at the Yakima Health District with 20 years of experience supporting the Breast and Cervical Health Program. She brings a strong commitment to public health, client support, and expanding access to preventive services for women across the Eastern and South-Central Regions.

Cathy holds an AAS in both Administrative Assistant and Medical Office Assistant studies, giving her a strong foundation in healthcare coordination and community outreach.

Her personal and professional goals are rooted in helping others, promoting health equity, and continuing to grow within the public health field. Outside of work, Cathy enjoys spending time outdoors—hiking, camping, boating, spending time with family and traveling whenever she can.



**Liz Swisher, MD** | she/her  
*Professor of Gynecologic Oncology, University of WA and Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

Dr. Swisher is a clinician scientist, Professor of Gynecologic Oncology, and Adjunct Professor in Medical Genetics at the University of Washington and holds the Torkelson Family Endowed Chair. She is Co-Deputy Director of the Fred Hutchinson/University of Washington/Seattle Children's Cancer Consortium and co-leads the Breast and Ovary Cancer Program. She runs a research laboratory focused on the precision therapy and prevention of gynecologic cancers. She is an elected member of the American Association of Physicians and a past recipient of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology Innovator Award, the UW Medicine Excellent in Mentorship Award, and the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance Rosalind Franklin Award for Ovarian Cancer Research.



**Tom Hutch, MD** | he/him  
*Medical Director, We Care Daily Clinics*

Tom Hutch, MD, FAAFP, FASAM, is the medical director of We Care Daily Clinics, an organization of opioid treatment programs serving Seattle, Auburn, and Tacoma. He completed his medical training in Family Medicine at Swedish Medical Center – First Hill in Seattle, where he then taught residents as a faculty physician before serving in community health centers and as a county jail physician with Public Health – Seattle & King County. Dr. Hutch is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the University of Washington Department of Family Medicine and provides instruction to Addiction Medicine fellows. He also works with the state to expand hepatitis C treatment access and serves as a medical director of Indigenous Pact, which assists Native American tribes in establishing clinics to address substance use disorders.



**Anthony Lyon-Loftus, PA-C, MPH** | he/him  
*Associate Medical Director, Peninsula Community Health Services*

Tony is a Physician Assistant with over 15 years of experience at Peninsula Community Health Services - an FQHC in western Washington. As Associate Medical Director, he oversees their mobile program that offers medical, dental, and behavioral health services. He has partnered with schools, shelters, churches, libraries, courts/jails, EMS/hospitals, treatment centers, and other social support centers.

Since starting a mobile program in 2018, he has helped design 10 units of varying sizes, shapes, and disciplines. His team has pivoted several times since 2020 leading community-wide initiatives and connecting with isolated and vulnerable individuals.

He earned an MPH in Community-Oriented Primary Care with training in community engagement and program design. He co-presents for the Mobile Healthcare Association each year and is a co-coordinator for the PNW Regional Coalition as well. He finds inspiration in the creative energy of new and expanding programs.

## PANEL

# BREAKING BARRIERS TO CANCER CARE

How do trust and relationships impact patient care? This panel explores how patients navigate care from treatment to survivorship and beyond.



**MODERATOR** **Shayla Akande** | she/her  
*CEO, Cierra Sisters*

Shayla Akande is a researcher, advocate, and CEO of Cierra Sisters, a community-rooted organization advancing breast health equity for Black women and medically underserved communities. Building on a 30-year legacy founded by her late mother, Bridgette Hempstead, she leads community-informed research and culturally grounded programming that centers the voices and experiences of those most impacted.

As a co-investigator with the University of Washington and a former Microsoft leader, Shayla brings a unique combination of lived experience, clinical training, and systems-level strategy to her work. She is committed to advancing more equitable, accountable, and community-centered approaches to care and to driving meaningful change across healthcare systems.



**Anthony Nget** | he/him  
*Patient Navigator, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

Anthony is a clinical patient navigator working with general oncology patients. He has experience connecting communities to resources and managing programs in different settings including youth shelters, street outreach, libraries, resource centers, and jails. He now assists patients in navigating barriers to treatment and works to advocate alongside patients to ensure they get the best possible care. Anthony holds a degree in film and enjoys working on fun creative projects to counter the emotional impact of the work. He is also working on obtaining his Masters of Public Health.



**Linda Covert, RN, NC-BC** | she/her  
*Facilitator, Cancer Lifeline Harmony Retreats*

Linda Covert brings more than 50 years of experience in nursing and compassionate care to her work with individuals facing serious illness. For over 15 years she has been actively involved with Harmony Hill Cancer Programs, supporting people living with cancer through community, reflection, and shared experience. Linda co-facilitates a Living with Meaning support group, where participants explore ways to maintain purpose, connection, and emotional well-being while navigating the realities of cancer. Her work is grounded in deep listening, empathy, and the belief that meaning and hope can be found even in the most difficult circumstances.



**Frankie White** | she/her  
*Survivor*

Born and raised in Seattle, I am a STEAM educator and engineer who believes that combining art and math helps us solve the world's problems with both creativity and compassion. At age 36, I faced my own biggest challenge: a diagnosis of aggressive colon cancer. Supported by my faith and an intensive treatment plan of radiation and chemotherapy, I navigated a two-year journey back to full-time teaching. Through that process, I transformed from a "self-less" caregiver into a dedicated advocate for nutrition and self-care, learning to fuel my body with plant-based healing. I'm here to share that being vulnerable and building a community isn't just a way to survive—it is a sign of incredible strength.



**Vera Trainer** | she/her  
*Patient*

Vera Trainer is the Aquatic Sciences Director at the University of Washington's Olympic Natural Resources Center in Forks, WA. She is the founder of Washington State marine monitoring programs that distribute microscopes to community members to promote seafood safety. She is a leader of international scientific approaches to study the intensity, distribution, and toxicity of harmful algal blooms. She is a community organizer for baking healthy bread and energy bars that are donated to neighborhood food banks. Vera is the mother of 2 amazing children who are adopted from Guatemala. She is a cancer survivor.

## AWARDEES

# HEALTH CHAMPION AWARDS

### Beti Thompson Community Research Award

This award recognizes an outstanding scientist from the Cancer Consortium who has made significant contributions to cancer health equity research and the scientific understanding of cancer through a health equity lens.



#### **Rachel Issaka, MD, MAS** | she/her

*Associate Professor, Clinical Research Division & Public Health Sciences Division, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

Dr. Rachel Issaka is a gastroenterologist and health services researcher focused on improving colorectal cancer screening access and quality. As the Kathryn Surace-Smith Endowed Chair in Health Equity Research and Associate Professor at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center and University of Washington, she leads programs that help thousands of people navigate screening and follow-up care. Her research implements practical solutions including mailed home stool tests and patient navigation support to prevent gaps in care. With over a decade of sustained research funding, Dr. Issaka contributes to national screening guidelines and policy development while training the next generation of physician-researchers. When she's not working, she enjoys traveling, cooking, and spending time with family.

### Beti Thompson Community Health Champion Award

This award goes to a community health champion who has had an extraordinary impact on the health and well-being of their community, nation, or state through their dedication and service to the community.



#### **Rahel Behailu, MPH** | she/her

*Program Executive, YMCA of Greater Seattle*

Rahel Behailu is Program Executive of Health Equity at the YMCA of Greater Seattle, with over 13 years of experience advancing equitable strategies, community engagement, and inclusive practices. She leads initiatives addressing systemic disparities and improving health outcomes across diverse populations. Rahel serves as Co-PI on a UW/CFAR research project addressing HIV stigma in African immigrant communities and holds multiple advisory roles across UW, Fred Hutch, and Seattle Children's. She is a Community Investigator with the RADIANT project to advance equity in cancer research and practice. She also serves as Chair for the UW Department of Global Health Partners Advisory Board.

### Stephaun Wallace Staff Champion Award

This award recognizes an outstanding staff member from the Cancer Consortium who has made an extraordinary contribution to elevating health equity and engagement with underserved communities as priorities within their program.



#### **Gabrielle "Gab" Flowers** | she/her

*Program/Department Coordinator, Cancer Genetics and Prevention, Fred Hutch Cancer Center*

Gabrielle Flowers "Gab" is a dedicated advocate and community organizer whose decade long career at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center reflects a strong commitment to equity, service, and prevention. Her journey began as a Patient Access Coordinator, spending five years on the front lines of care ensuring patients were met with compassion, dignity, and respect; an experience that continues to impact her current role as Program/Department Coordinator in the Genetics and Prevention Department, where she supports efforts in early detection, prevention, and equitable access to life saving care.

Gab is a trusted representative of Fred Hutch; she regularly participates in community events to help expand access to preventive screening services to individuals facing the greatest barriers to care. Gab learned early that lasting change is built through advocacy, collective care, and showing up for others, values instilled by her mother and family/community. Her three children are her inspiration for building accessible, compassionate systems of care.



## ABOUT OCOE

The Fred Hutch Office of Community Outreach & Engagement (OCOE) works to improve health outcomes and address cancer health disparities through authentic relationships, advocacy, and collaboration. This includes community-based research, resource support, and cancer prevention education informed by community-determined needs. The OCOE team works to build community partnerships across Washington State.



Annual Report

## READ OUR ANNUAL REPORT

Use this QR code to see our Annual Report and learn more about the work the OCOE team is doing across Washington.



Newsletter

## STAY CONNECTED WITH OCOE

Sign up for our newsletter to get updates and information about events and workshops from our team.



Podcast

## CANCER HEALTH EQUITY NOW!

Listen to our podcast Cancer Health Equity Now! which amplifies work being done by community organizations, researchers and OCOE community health educators in Washington state and beyond.



## EVALUATION

Thank you for participating in this year's Pathways to Health Symposium.

Please use this link or scan the QR to give us your feedback to help us better understand your experience of this event and what we can improve next year.

<https://l.ead.me/phs2026>

### PATHWAYS TO HEALTH IS PRESENTED BY

Office of Community Outreach & Engagement



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