

Emily Santich, Research and Policy Analyst
Colorado Health Institute

Emma Uridge, Analyst
Kansas Health Institute

John Oeffinger, Director, eLearning and
Training
Texas Public Health Institute

Karam Ahmad, Director
Colorado Health Institute

Lauren Ruiz, Senior Program Manager Institute
for Public Health Innovation

Leslie Ortiz Montes, Communications and
Marketing Manager
Puerto Rico Public Health Trust

Makamae Namahoe, Trainings & Workforce
Development Initiatives Program Manager
Hawaii Public Health Institute

Mona Arora, Assistant Research Professor
University of Arizona

Sartia Hudson, Senior Director of Strategy &
Development
Public Health Institute of Western MA

Tania Busch Isaksen, Teaching Professor
University of Washington

NNPHI Staff

Diana Hamer, Director, CCP

Francesca Toledo-Alexander, Senior
Program Manager, CCP

Jaime Jimenez, Program Associate, CCP

Jennifer Ventura, Program Assistant, CCP

Madelyn Gustafson, Program Analyst, CCP



Leslie Ortiz Montes

PUERTO RICO PUBLIC HEALTH TRUST

Leslie Ortiz Montes is a seasoned marketing, communications, and development executive with an illustrious career spanning over 23 years across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. With a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of Puerto Rico, Leslie has continually demonstrated her commitment to making a positive impact through her work. One of Leslie's notable achievements came early in her career when in 2009 she spearheaded the "Armata de Valor" campaign against gun violence for the telecommunications company Centennial. Her dedication and creativity in crafting effective messaging and strategies earned the campaign the prestigious

Silver Ambil award and a recognition from New York City, presented by then Governor Michael Bloomberg. This campaign not only showcased Leslie's marketing and communications prowess but also highlighted her passion for addressing pressing social issues. In another impactful initiative, Leslie designed and executed the "Se Acabo" campaign for The Salvation Army, focused on preventing domestic violence in Puerto Rico. Collaborating with Oscar winner Benicio del Toro, Leslie leveraged her expertise to raise awareness and drive meaningful change in her community. Driven by her desire to effect positive change, Leslie has shifted her focus to Public Health, health equity and climate change communications and marketing initiatives. As the Communications and Marketing Manager for the Puerto Rico Public Health Trust, she is fully dedicated to leveraging storytelling and outreach to promote these vital causes. Leslie's strategic vision and unwavering dedication make her a valued leader in the field, inspiring those around her to work towards a healthier and more sustainable future for all. Throughout her career, Leslie Ortiz Montes has demonstrated not only exceptional professional skills but also a deep commitment to social responsibility. Her journey from pioneering impactful campaigns to developing health equity communications initiatives alongside her team, serves as a testament to unwavering dedication, persistence, and passion to making the world a better place.

Emily Santich

COLORADO HEALTH INSTITUTE

Research and Policy Analyst Emily Santich is actively involved in the Colorado Health Institute's Acclimate Colorado initiative, which advances policies to protect human health against climate change. Emily brings her expertise in assessment and research to support Colorado partners -- including the Division of Insurance, the Governor's Office of Climate Preparedness and Disaster Recovery, and Kaiser Permanente -- in promoting community resilience to climate change. Emily earned a master's degree in public health from the Boston University School of Public Health with a focus in community assessment, program design, implementation, and evaluation. In her spare time, Emily enjoys adventuring outside, crafting, and spending time with her dog (Callie) and cat (Mocha).





Makamae Namahoe

HAWAII PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

Since joining HIPHI in 2018, Makamae coordinates the Hawaii Public Health Training Hui program and community-based initiatives focused on strengthening capacity for our public health workforce in Hawaii and the US Affiliated Pacific Islands. Her work is centered in her background as a Native Hawaiian immersion student. She believes in health access and equity for all in Hawaii and across the Pacific Ocean. Makamae earned her BS in Nutrition and MPA from Long Island University. Her background includes student affairs

operations and program management. In her spare time, you can find Makamae in the gym coaching volleyball for the University of Hawaii at Hilo Vulcans, spending time with family, finding new eateries, and being outdoors.

Emma Uridge

KANSAS HEALTH INSTITUTE

Emma Uridge, M.P.H., is an Analyst at the Kansas Health Institute. She currently conducts research and policy analysis on renewable energy and facilitates the Age-Friendly Public Health Systems initiative in Kansas. Emma has contributed to research on holistic care coordination and Medicaid expansion, and has co-facilitated state-level task forces focused on older adult care and crisis standards of care. Her research interests include sustainable built environments, environmental health, Health in All Policies, One Health, food and water systems security, and energy insecurity. Before joining KHI, Emma served as an Environmental Public Health Specialist and Investigator at the Kansas City Missouri Health Department. In this role, she focused on food safety, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and supporting the city's public health response during the COVID-19 pandemic. She earned her master's degree in public health with an emphasis on food safety and biosecurity from Kansas State University and holds a degree in community health education from the University of Kansas.





Lauren Ruiz

INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INNOVATION

In her role as a Senior Program Manager with IPHI, Lauren contributes to several programs. She leads efforts to design, implement, and evaluate public health solutions which address unmet needs of individuals and families impacted by neurologic health conditions, such as the project Improving Access to Diagnostic and Support Resources for Rural Populations Impacted by Multiple Sclerosis in Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. Through more than a decade of professional experience in health-related nonprofits, Lauren has served almost 30 unique disease populations navigating complex, chronic health conditions. As the Director of a national

patient assistance program, she oversaw a team of more than 20 patient advocates providing financial assistance grants, health insurance education and counseling, information and referral services, and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) education and application support. She successfully maintained the organization's status as a Certified Application Counselor Designated Organization (CDO) under the Affordable Care Act, training and overseeing certified application counselors (CAC) to assist with health insurance enrollment on the federal Health Insurance Exchange. She also presented regularly at conferences and other events on topics related to health care access and utilization. Before joining IPHI in 2022, Lauren was Program Manager for a national foundation serving people impacted by neurodegenerative diseases. She led community engagement events, designed and implemented demonstration projects, and created and managed a competitive grants program which awarded more than \$1 million dollars to over 20 grantee organizations nationwide. Lauren graduated from Virginia Tech with degrees in Political Science, Mass Communications, and English. She is an American Society on Aging RISE Fellow and a former CAC and certified financial counselor. She lives in Richmond, Virginia where she volunteers with local political advocacy organizations and is a member of several coalitions focused on aging, caregiving, environmental health, and other health-related topics.

Tania Busch Isaksen

NORTHWEST CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

Tania Busch Isaksen is Teaching Professor and Undergraduate Program Coordinator for the UW Department of Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences (DEOHS). In addition to her teaching and administrative responsibilities, she maintains an active, practice-based research portfolio focused on public health outcomes associated with extreme heat and wildfire smoke exposures; risk communication methods; climate change-related public health adaptation planning and response, and sustainable materials management. Tania has over 25 years of environmental public health experience working in local public, private, and academic settings. She earned her PhD from the UW in Environmental and Occupational Hygiene, her MPH from the University of Washington's eMPH Program, and her BS in Environmental Health from Colorado State University.





Karam Ahmad

COLORADO HEALTH INSTITUTE

Karam Ahmad, Director of the Colorado Health Institute, is experienced in translating complicated data, policies, and analyses for a variety of audiences and stakeholders. A native Coloradan, he has a passion for connecting the dots locally, with data and community input and an upstream focus on social factors that influence our health. Karam leads evaluation work for the Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation and co-leads evaluation on the Denver Foundation's Colorado Health Access Fund. Both efforts aim to understand the impact of philanthropy on oral health and behavioral health, respectively. Karam also leads CHI's climate change and health work and is a

subject matter expert in Social Health Information Exchange, contributing statewide guidance to the Office of eHealth Innovation. As a member and evaluator of CHI's Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity Alliance, he has been working on building monitoring and feedback mechanisms into the organization's first strategic plan for diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. Before joining CHI, he worked as a technical writer for Otter Products, LLC (more commonly known as OtterBox). He also was an analyst for the National Park Service and USDA Center for Epidemiological Animal Health. Karam also worked at RESOLVE, an environmental, public policy nonprofit in Washington, D.C., developing oil and gas and community health tutorials for public health professionals. Karam received a bachelor's degree in evolutionary biology & psychology from the University of Colorado at Boulder. He earned his master's degree in public health from the Colorado School of Public Health at Colorado State University and a certificate in Climate Change and Health from Yale University.

John Oeffinger

TEXAS HEALTH INSTITUTE

John Oeffinger is Director, eLearning and Training for Texas Health Institute and the technical assistance lead for THI's technical assistance center funded by CDC/NNPHI OT21-2013 "National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk and Underserved, Including Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Rural Communities." He is also the Project ECHO Replication Hub Lead for THI and has helped develop four funded Project ECHO Series including "Hurricane Season in the Context of COVID-19" (CDC/NNPHI). He has been The PRIDE Study/PRIDEnet community engagement partner lead for THI since 2017. He has extensive Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) experience including Co-PL Project Strategist and Administrative Officer for EADI-31761 Creating National Capacity to Disseminate Transgender & Gender Diverse PCOR/CER Results (2023-2025). Previously, he was the Director, Texas Hurricane Response Hub funded by CDC/NNPHI. Professional and personal interest include documenting climate change and environmental health issues as a professional photographer and digital content creator.





Mona Arora

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Dr. Mona Arora is an Assistant Research Professor at the College of Public Health. She obtained her Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) degree in Tropical Medicine from the Tulane University School of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene and has a doctorate degree in Geography from the University of Arizona. Dr. Arora currently leads the ADHS-CDC COVID Disparities Initiative at the Arizona Center for Rural Health aimed at mobilizing partnerships to advance health equity & address social determinants of health-related to COVID-19 health

disparities among higher risk and underserved populations. Her research focuses on building the public health system's capacity and capability to address global "wicked problems," including pandemics, disasters, and climate change. She is a member of a multidisciplinary team of researchers focusing on understanding the pandemic's impacts on non-healthcare frontline worker health and well-being. The health impacts of climate change with a special focus on the usability of science for decision-making and models for translating science to action. Dr. Arora has over ten years of experience in emergency preparedness, workforce development, and community engagement. Dr. Arora has served on several national committees, including the Lancet Countdown U.S. Policy Brief Working Group, National Adaptation Forum Program Committee, and the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) Workgroup on Global Climate Change. Dr. Arora is a Co-Pi on the NIH funded Southwest Center for Resilience on Climate and Health.

Sarita Hudson

PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE OF WESTERN MA



Sarita Hudson brings experience managing programs, developing coalitions, and building community capacity on issues including environmental health, climate action and resilience, sexual violence prevention, women's rights, and social justice. As Senior Director of Strategy & Development at the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts, she leads Coalition Building and Convening, and her responsibilities include resource development, planning, program development, and organizational communications. She currently directs the Healthy Air Network, Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition, and the Springfield Healthy Homes

Collaborative. She is a member of the Steering Committee of the Massachusetts Asthma Action Partnership and the board of Massachusetts Public Health Association. Sarita holds a master's degree from Harvard Divinity School. Sarita was awarded the 2024 Luminary Award from the City of Springfield, which is awarded to recipients who have demonstrated leadership, excellence, and a commitment to improving community health in the City of Springfield. Other awards include the 2020 Partners Asthma Center Asthma Achievement Award and under her leadership, the Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition was awarded the 2019 EPA Region 1 Environmental Merit Award for Children's Health.