

Rolf: Welcome to the Health Disparities Podcast from Movement is Life. On November 10th and 11th, 2022, Movement is Life convenes our annual caucus in Washington DC. For over 10 years, Movement is Life has brought together leading voices, advocating for an end to health and healthcare disparities across race and gender in the US. Highlighting both the root causes of disparities and examples of practical solutions, every year, our workshops are an essential part of the conference, known for their adventurous diversity of approaches and celebrated for their ability to inspire. We're excited to share a lively preview and discussion of all eight of the workshops at this year's caucus on the podcast as episodes 126 and 127, released simultaneously, and following on from the preview of the plenary sessions, which we featured in episode 124. Episode 126 will now preview the workshops in the "Activism" category and episode 127 will preview the workshops in the "Movement" category. So, let's meet our guests.

So, firstly, welcome our inaugural Movement is Life Executive Director, Dr. Millicent Gorham, who is now full-time at Movement is Life, having joined us this year from the National Black Nurses Association, but for many years has been an important part of our steering group.

Dr. Gorham: Thank you so much and good day to our listening audience. I am ecstatic to be with the new evolved invigorated Movement is Life. So, we welcome you to our podcast.

Rolf: And if only listeners could see you, Millicent, they would see your ecstatic smile. And welcome to our Movement is Life board chair and caucus chair Dr. Mary O'Connor, who also manages to find time to be the Co-Founder and Chief Medical Officer of startup Vori Health, who are finding innovative ways to manage musculoskeletal health conditions. Welcome, Mary.

Dr. O'Connor: Thank you, Rolf. Delighted to be with you and Millicent today to talk about the exciting workshops that we have at the Caucus this year.

Rolf: So, a couple of episodes ago, we previewed our plenary speakers. It was a very strongly downloaded episode of the podcast. So today, as a follow-up, we're going to be discussing the workshops' component of the annual Caucus in DC, and the Caucus is titled "Health Equity: Beyond the Headlines." Now, workshops are in two sessions called firstly "Activism" and secondly "Movement". And attendees get to pick one from each, each session offering a choice from four. So, attendees are picking two out of a total of eight. We hope today's preview will help with that choice and also show why you should seriously consider attending in November if you can. So, before we preview the actual

workshops, a general question for you both. Our workshops are always considered such a highlight of this conference. We have a stellar set this year. Why are the workshops always so good, so popular and so important?

Dr. O'Connor: Rolf, that's just a great question, and I think the answer is because the workshops are so engaging on an individual level, to give Caucus attendees actionable knowledge that they can then take back home with them to advance health equity. So, everyone that comes to the Caucus is already committed to improving the health of our communities and our nation and recognizing that disparities exist. And so, each of us want to gain knowledge regarding that in ways that can actually be translated into doing something about it. And so, the workshops take a deeper dive into very focused topics that the attendees can gain more insights and really practical steps. I think that's why they're so popular. And one of the common feedbacks we get from Caucus attendees is they wanted to attend more workshops than they were able to. I wish that we had a way that you could attend every workshop that you want but this is our format right now. And we get a huge number of people, as you know, that come back year after year.

Rolf: Yeah. And I think it's one reason why trying to get as many discussions on the podcast from workshop participants is helpful to people who can't obviously attend every workshop.

Dr. Gorham: The exciting part about the workshops is that they are popular, and Dr. O'Connor is absolutely right. More than 50% of our 300 attendees show up the next year and the next year and the next year after that. And what they're really looking for are specific ideas that they can take back to their communities or specific ideas that they can use for themselves about improving their own health and wellbeing. But to take those kinds of ideas back to their communities, to let their community residents know this is what we can do collectively and individually to make sure that we can improve our health status. If that means I can walk 500 steps today and 10,000 steps next week, that's a few more steps that's going to push me to better health. And so that's the kind of thing that they're looking to find when they come to the workshops.

Rolf: Yeah, I think it's really observable that people come away from those workshops feeling extremely motivated. It's like, "I've worked with some kindred spirits. I've got great information and can't wait to take this back to my community." And I think also it's the steering group who are volunteers who really bring most of the workshop ideas to Movement is Life. So, we really should give them a shout-out and great thanks,

because the volunteers from their various places across the country who are bringing their networks, their ideas, their contacts, in order for us to assemble these amazing workshops.

Dr. O'Connor: Absolutely, Rolf, we couldn't do it without our amazing volunteers and steering committee. And then of course, the workshop participants who come to put the workshop on. So, we all know that it takes a village to raise a child. It's going to take the whole country to address health equity.

Rolf: So, let's start with the first set of workshops, which we call activism. And the first title asks the question, "Is Health Equity the New Startup?" And the description for this is that "You're invited to join a unique conversation with emerging leaders in healthcare and learn how they're addressing health inequities in non-traditional and innovative ways. The workshop will identify solutions which promote the adoption of true equity in community spaces and seek to understand how organizations develop a framework to foster change and address inequities in healthcare." The participants, Dr. Coeurlida Louis Ashby from Sarasota, Florida, she'll be discussing why lifestyle is a new startup and how it promotes health equity. Dr. Kelli Tice from Jacksonville, Florida will discuss why a payer created a new role of Chief Equity Officer and how this promotes health equity. Dwight Tillery from Cincinnati, Ohio will discuss how community nonprofit startups promote health equity. And Dr. Laura Morgan Roberts, who is a professor at the University of Virginia Darden Business School, will moderate as the table groups create and review startup business plans based on the previous presentations. So, it's a great title. Innovations are accepted in stages, and I think the same seems to apply to health equity. Just a kick-off question for you, Mary, what stage do you think we are at now with health equity?

Dr. O'Connor: Well, Rolf, I wish we were at a more advanced stage, but I think we're actually at a very early stage. And what we've seen with the pandemic is a huge increase in awareness regarding health equity. As you know, Movement is Life, we were founded in 2010, and so we have been on this journey for some time, and just now are we starting to see this broader conversation occurring about the importance of health equity as people start to understand that I can't be protected in my affluent community. I mean, a virus knows no economic or social boundaries. And so, really looking at addressing the health of everyone collectively, it is very important. But now there's this increasing awareness around health equity and an increasing awareness by payers of how much it's

costing for there to be such inequities because the most expensive healthcare is no healthcare. At the end of the day, someone is still paying. And so not having that care along the journey to promote better health and help avoid chronic expensive diseases and conditions, that is really what I think the new awareness is. And that's why we're seeing positions like Chief Equity Officer now being created. And these are really positive steps, so I'm very excited about this workshop.

Rolf: And you must know firsthand from getting Vori Health off the ground that every startup has to have a really strong value proposition. And it seems like more and more the value proposition of health equity is being defined in business terms.

Dr. O'Connor: It is. At the end of the day, it comes down to how much money we're going to spend, if you want to look at it just from a financial perspective. How much money we're going to spend, how much money we can afford to spend, and how should we allocate those funds? So, we spend a tremendous amount of money in the healthcare system on end-of-care and on chronic disease management. And those things are important. But wouldn't it be better if we could prevent the development of some of these chronic diseases by addressing health disparities and social determinants and individual behaviors that are not favorable to health? And so that's this whole shift in mindset to wellness prevention that is so important for us, right now. So, I really think we're at a turning point.

Dr. Gorham: I've already engaged Dr. Louis Ashby. I decided I'd take advantage of her being a workshop presenter and ask her my own questions. And she offered to answer my questions around my health issues. And what she said was exactly what Dr. O'Connor said. Wouldn't it be wonderful as individuals that we took care of our own wellness and preventive issues early on from the beginning of life? So, let's just make this a lifelong process and hopefully, we'll be able to get down to some of those things that get me to those 10,000 steps.

Rolf: So, great sounding workshop. I'm sure a lot of people will be choosing that. Number two, the title is "Playing the Race Cards", and that's plural. "Playing the Race Cards: Conversations on Racial Healing and Equity." And this is led by Dr. Kimberly Allen, who is CEO of 904WARD in Jacksonville, Florida. So, Dr. Allen will engage participants in 904WARD's race cards activity during which small groups will dive deep into questions on race, equity, privilege, and much more, and on a personal, organizational, and systemic level. This challenging and honest dialogue will prepare workshop attendees to return to their lives,

workplaces, and communities ready to continue the conversation and improve their communities' understanding of these important topics. The mission of 904WARD, the organization is creating racial healing and equity through deep conversations and learning, trusting relationships, and collective action. Working to end racism so that everyone thrives because too often discussions about race either stay at the surface level or happen only among audiences steeped in knowledge about sociology, history, systemic racism, and privilege. But the goal of the race cards is to facilitate an honest, authentic discussion in a way that is accessible to everyone. So, each deck of cards contains questions such as, "When did you first become aware of your race?" and "What do the hashtags 'Black Lives Matter', and 'All Lives Matter' mean to you?" And I think the 904WARD name comes from the fact that 904 is Jacksonville Florida's dialing code. Millicent, your thoughts on this workshop. Sounds fascinating, and it also sounds like this isn't just a concept, it's a toolkit.

Dr. Gorham: It is a toolkit for communities and people within their workplaces, within their churches, wherever they may work, live, play, to have these kinds of discussions about racism, about institutional racism, about racial healing and equity. Those deep kind of discussions I think are going to have to be played out beyond the folks that attend the workshop. I think that they're there. I think that they will have to take those kinds of conversations back home to places where they will boldly have to go in order to get down to some very deep decisions about how organizations and individuals can change their minds about race and having more healing kinds of discussions. This is not going to happen overnight. It's going to take time. It's going to take time, probably a generation or two, quite frankly, because we are already going through some racial reconciliation, but racism is still alive and well. And particularly when you're talking about privilege, Black and brown people have to better understand about how other people think about privilege, and others need to think about how what they say and the privilege that they take for granted affects Black and brown people.

Dr. O'Connor: I think that simply having this workshop that says, let's talk about questions and finding questions that can open the conversation is so important. And I'll share just a personal story. I was writing one of my Equity 360 columns for clinical orthopedics and related research on privilege. And I had my husband, I said, "Here, honey, why don't you read this?" And he's like, "I'm just concerned. You've worked so hard for everything. I don't see that people have given you any privilege. You're

a minority as a woman in orthopedic surgery." And I said, "Well, okay, wait a second. We have a son." I said, "Have you ever been concerned about your son walking outside with a hoodie? I mean, have we ever thought for one moment about our son being stopped by police? That thought has never entered my mind. And if I was a Black mother, I know I would have that thought". I said, "That's what privilege, that's what white privilege is for us." And he saw it.

Getting the right question to open the conversation that allows someone to see things through a different lens is so important, because that was like a real moment. Now he's starting to get some understanding from not ever thinking about these things. So, I love this idea of these cards that are going to give people ideas for questions that they can then think of questions on their own that relate to their own personal journey.

Rolf: But also, they get beyond the soundbites. They get beyond the headlines and down to the real discussion. And it takes time and conversation to really get there.

Dr. O'Connor: Yes, because as we know, there's many, many forms of privilege. And so yes, there are multiple layers. but getting to at least an openness to recognizing that there's privilege and what does that mean for the people who have privilege and the people who don't have privilege, I think is a really important step for us.

Dr. Gorham: One thought comes to mind about individual racial healing. I've had conversations with African American physicians and nurses who have tried to take care of patients who absolutely did not want them to be touched by an African American physician or nurse. They would rather be in pain. They'd almost rather die than have someone who's at the top of their game to take care of them. When do we evolve beyond that? When do we ever evolve beyond "This is just going to be good for me, so let me have the best person who is there to take care of me, take care of me?" That's the kind of racial healing that individuals need to have and help us all move towards a better health status.

Rolf: And I'm sure that during your time with the National Black Nurses Association, that was feedback that you heard quite frequently.

Dr. Gorham: My career has expanded more than 35 years. So, both the nurses and the docs, I've worked with both. I've been on a board at a hospital in southeast DC and they've all said that they've all been abused, both physically as well as emotionally, trying to provide good care to people. And so, I think that's the direction that we need to move in. I think these race cards will help us to take that deeper dive and look inside of

ourselves and help us all to make some decisions about how we want to live our lives.

Rolf: So, creating a safe space to have those difficult conversations is really important.

Dr. Gorham: I'm not so sure it's creating a safe space. I am sure that it is creating a space that is necessary, and it may not be safe. It'll be safe in terms of where they are having the discussion, but it might not be safe in terms of, let's just make this as controversial as it needs to be, get that deeper dive, and let's move on to some racial healing and health equity.

Rolf: Okay, so moving on to the third workshop in the activism set. And this is the "Art of Storytelling: Changing the World One Story at a Time." So, in this Interactive Experience Workshop, participants practice using the language and methods of theater to challenge ideas and advance community dialogue. This practice generates opportunities for collective problem-solving and the workshop culminates in an audience-generated interactive theater performance and dialogue. The workshop aims to demonstrate several principles that's central to creating community, building resiliency, and advancing advocacy and change. These include the importance of amplifying individual and grassroots perspectives through storytelling, understanding the healing power of group activities, meeting people where they are, where all perspectives are honored and seen, promoting cross-cultural understanding, creating a safe space for vulnerability and authenticity, and accessing the power of hearing the voices that are not normally heard. The workshop is moderated by Sonya Seymour from Nth Dimensions and led by John Johnson, who is the founder and creator at Verbal Gymnastics Theater Company and the Playback Theater Ensemble, which are based in Washington DC. And Millicent, I think you've seen John Johnson in action, haven't you?

Dr. Gorham: Oh, my goodness. Let me just tell you. Back by popular demand is this workshop. I am most excited about this workshop. I was there last year. John Johnson picks someone from the audience. Someone from the audience tells their story about a healthcare situation. They describe it, they give in some cases, testimonials about what's happened within the problem. And then this wonderful Playback Theater Ensemble takes it, expands it, tells the story, and so helps to solve the problem. And it is done with words, it's done with singing, it's done with music. And in the end, you come away with, oh my goodness, that's exactly what happened. And that's exactly what was solved. And actually, they took it a step further for me to take that resolution back to my community, back

to my family member, something that I can employ myself. It is amazing.

Rolf: So, this kind of process really proves something about how the theater group can truly understand and relate to the experience that the audience member has shared.

Dr. Gorham: And they do it in such a way that leaves you contemplative, it leaves you asking more questions, wanting more answers, and wanting to learn how to share your story. They do it in such a way that you can literally feel like, I can go out on that stage and tell my story now. I can have that conversation with the reporter now and share my story. I can actually get up on a stage at a conference and share my story because of the points that they've given and laid out the resolution. Absolutely amazing.

Dr. O'Connor: The reason why storytelling is so important is because we, as human beings, we make decisions based on our emotions. People may think that they're making data-driven decisions, and we will use data to support the direction that we want to go from an emotional standpoint. That's the power of storytelling. Storytelling connects to us emotionally and connecting to us emotionally then allows us to see things as Millicent said, in a different light, a broader view. So, they are incredible. It's just going to be an amazing workshop. And we are also going to have them do a kind of mini session for us to close the Caucus on Friday. So, people do not want to miss that. If you can't get into the workshop, which will fill up very quickly, we are going to have them also do a little mini session for us at the end of the day on Friday.

Rolf: Wonderful. It sounds like the workshop will sell out quite quickly.

Dr. O'Connor: Yes.

Rolf: Okay. So on to number four. And this is titled "The JEDI Journey: This is the Way." And what does JEDI mean? Well, this is the integration of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. To integrate these things requires a progressive discussion and strategic initiatives at both the organizational and system levels. This panel of leaders will highlight approaches and proven solutions that inspire action, advance health equity, and improve workforce diversity. The workshop will discuss strategic initiatives aiming to end organizational systemic racism, and which creates space to promote the adoption of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles. Moderated by Charla Johnson from our Lady in the Lake Medical Center in Baton Rouge, and who is also president of the National Association of Orthopedic Nurses, with speakers, Dr. Tonya Jagneaux, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine at the Our



Lady of the Lake Medical Center in Baton Rouge. She's also the Chief Informatics Officer and leader of DEI Community Workgroup. We have Dr. Daytheon Sturges, who's a physician associate and JEDI chair for the University of Washington School of Medicine, and assistant professor, Vice Chair in the Department of Family Medicine. And finally, we will welcome Dr. Holly Pilson, Associate Professor Orthopedic Trauma and Vice Chair social impact DEI for Department at Wake Forest in North Carolina. And I should mention Daytheon Sturges has been on the podcast before talking about his role as a physician associate, educator and leader. So, we had a great episode a few months ago talking about JEDI. And Holly Pilson has also been on the podcast, and she got in touch with us to say, I'd love to talk to you about her indigenous ancestry and health disparities in the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. Mary, your thoughts. This workshop looks very exciting.

Dr. O'Connor: It's really exciting, Rolf because what this workshop does is it educates us on a framework that organizations can use to promote equity through, again, these concepts of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. And we know how important policy and procedures are because that's what drives behavior in organizations. And so, giving people the right framework that grounds the creation of policies and procedures and decision-making at an organizational level is critical to advancing health equity. So, this is going to be, I think, really another incredible workshop where people are going to leave with knowledge and actionable items that they can take home and implement in their own organizations, whether that's a healthcare system or a community organization. The principles are the same. And getting people to align and agree with principles is so fundamental a step-in terms of then saying, okay, now we're going to base our policies and procedures and the way that we operate based on these principles. So, I think it's just a very, very powerful framework.

Dr. Gorham: So, I think in terms of the justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, when you think about these three speakers and where they're actually living in the low country in Louisiana, working through a Lumbee Tribe in North Carolina and in Hawaii actually. He's at the University of Washington, but he's also doing some work in Hawaii as well in terms of equity and inclusion. When you take a look at all of the kinds of people that they are working with, then you really begin to see the inclusivity of their work.

Rolf: Traditionally people say DEI but he's part of kind of a greater movement, which is saying, let's evolve this to add justice, call it JEDI.

Do you think it's a distraction that it's called JEDI, or does it actually confer something powerful to these ideas?

Dr. O'Connor: I think it confers power to the idea because equity, diversity, and inclusion are all rooted in our sense of fairness and justice. So, I think it actually strengthens it because it calls to the real why of why those things matter, and they're important. I like it.

Rolf: So, thanks for listening to part one of our Caucus workshops preview, discussing the four activism workshops. We reviewed workshop one, "Is Health Equity the New Startup?" Workshop two, "Playing the Race Cards: Conversations on Racial Healing and Equity." Workshop three, "The Art of Storytelling: Changing the World One Story at a Time." And Workshop four, The JEDI Journey: This is the Way." To learn about our four movement workshops, tune into part two, which is episode 127 of the Health Disparities Podcast. We look forward to seeing you over there soon. And many thanks to our underwriters, Zimmer Biomet, and thanks again for joining us.

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