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The Minority Student Caucus Presents the 44th Annual Minority Health Conference Practicing Health as a Human Right: Policy, Ethics and the Law

The Minority Health Conference, the largest and longest-running student-led health conference in the country, aims to raise awareness around minority health and mobilize students, academics, and community members to take action for change. The conference was founded and is led by students at the Gillings School of Global Public Health, UNC-Chapel Hill.

We are excited to announce this year's theme:

Practicing Health as a Human Right: Policy, Ethics and the Law

The [World Health Organization](#) declared "The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition." The past year has revealed how global and domestic political, legal, economic, and health systems are failing to support the highest attainable health.

Practicing Health as a Human Right recognizes that human rights provide a framework upon which we can ensure that equity and justice are routinely protected and upheld in the law. *Practicing Health as a Human Right* acknowledges that the public health problems of today are often structural, stemming from racism and other discriminatory practices and policies that have been codified into law, and therefore require legal and policy solutions. If public health practitioners, policymakers, and healthcare providers utilize human rights principles in the execution of their work, we stand a better chance of improving health outcomes and quality of life for all people.

This year's conference seeks to examine the factors that have created and impacted health inequities across gender, race, economic status, and other social determinants of health. The goal of the conference is to conceptualize a human rights framework as a tool to center our public health discussions around policy, ethics, and the law. We hope that the theme, *Practicing Health as a Human Right*, will connect us around shared values of equity and justice that can enable us to build a stronger future for all.

Topics potentially discussed include:

- The impact of the Dobbs decision on women, girls, and birthing people
- Protecting vulnerable populations in a war zone
- Equity around vaccines in the Global South
- Downstream risks to incarcerated populations

This list is by no means exhaustive, but serves as useful examples of the ever-present conflict facing all people to achieving the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

At the Gillings School of Global Public Health, community is at the heart of what we do, where we lift voices to accelerate change. The Minority Student Caucus was founded to raise the voices of Black students and to impact policies at the School of Public Health. Nearly every year since 1977, we have convened hundreds of community members, professionals and students to explore a diverse range of topics that have an impact on minority health. Together, we connect multidisciplinary champions working at the local, regional, national and global levels to support communities everywhere.

We look forward to seeing you at the return of our **in-person conference** at the Friday Center on **Friday, February 24, 2023**, and are thrilled to offer virtual engagement with the conference. Save the date for our 44th Minority Health Conference, *Practicing Health as a Human Right!*

Sincerely,



*Callia Cox
Department of Nutrition
Minority Health Conference Co-Chair*



*Rhea Jayaswal
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