PA SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND DIRECTOR OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT JOIN PANEL DISCUSSION ON VACCINES

FREE, VIRTUAL WEBINAR ADDRESSES VACCINE HESITANCY AND WHY VACCINATION IS KEY TO THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

PITTSBURGH, June 29, 2021 – Carnegie Science Center’s Vaccine Speaker Series final event is Thurs., July 1 at 7 pm. The lineup of high-profile panelists will discuss what’s next for public health and the lessons learned from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event is free to attend, but preregistration is required to receive the webinar link. A sign language interpreter will be present for the webinar.

Featuring conversations with:

- **Alison Beam**
  Acting Secretary of Health, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
  Alison Beam is currently the Acting Secretary of Health for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Ms. Beam has experience advising and supporting key health care priorities, such as stabilizing and sustaining the health insurance markets, increasing access to health care for all Pennsylvanians, and ensuring the high caliber of health care delivered in the commonwealth continues. Ms. Beam most recently served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Wolf, where she coordinated policy development, fiscal and legal management, legislative initiatives, and communications and stakeholder engagement across Pennsylvania’s departments of Health, Human Services, Drug and Alcohol Programs, Aging and Insurance. Prior to transitioning to the Governor’s Office, Alison served as the Chief of Staff to the Insurance Commissioner. She also previously served as the Director of Public Policy and Associate Counsel for Independence Health Group in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she guided interactions with regulators, legislators, and national trade associations and developed and implemented internal response strategies.

- **Dr. Debra Bogen, MD**
  Director, Allegheny County Health Department
  Dr. Debra L. Bogen is the Director of the Allegheny County Health Department. She assumed her leadership role in March 2020, nearly two months in advance of her scheduled start date, to address the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since taking the helm of the Health Department, Dr. Bogen has guided Allegheny County through the numerous and unpredictable challenges of a global pandemic. Most recently, she prioritized an equitable and universal distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines. Even while facing a pandemic, she and her ACHD team also advanced
significant regulatory improvements for environmental health during her first year, including overhauling plumbing and air quality regulations. In response to need, she launched the COVID-19 Field Response Team in July 2020 to visit area food establishments and conduct education and compliance assistance with state and local COVID-19 health orders. Dr. Bogen is absolutely committed to improving community and family health using public health data to drive policy and practice. She has proven a strong partner for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and community organizations and is committed to working with groups that share a passion for the mission of public health.

- Dr. Ariangela Kozik, PhD
  Research Investigator, University of Michigan;
  Co-founder and Vice President, Black Microbiologists Association

Dr. Kozik is a Research Investigator at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor-Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, where she studies microbial-immune relationships in adult asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Her work on the microbiome is currently focused on the contribution of the respiratory microbiome to adult asthma phenotype and treatment response. She is also the Co-Founder and Vice President of the Black Microbiologists Association, and a member of the Microbes and Social Equity Working Group. Dr. Kozik has been engaged in outreach efforts to various groups throughout the pandemic to address topics including pathogenesis, mitigation strategies, and vaccination.

- Dr. Anuradha Ray, PhD
  Professor, Department of Immunology, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Dr. Ray is a basic/translational scientist with a long-standing research interest in molecular mechanisms of inflammation and tolerance to understand the role of immune dysfunction in the pathogenesis of lung diseases like asthma. She is also interested in mucosal defense mechanisms against respiratory pathogens. Dr. Ray’s early research identified a central mechanism for the anti-inflammatory actions of corticosteroids and defined GATA-3 as the master regulator of Th2 cells, which promote asthma and allergic diseases. GATA-3 was subsequently successfully targeted in allergen-provoked mild asthma in humans with relief of symptoms. In ongoing research, she and her colleagues are investigating immune dysfunction in severe asthma that unlike milder asthma is refractory to corticosteroid treatment. In recently published work, she and her colleagues have identified two clusters of severe asthma patients with very similar clinical presentations but with strikingly distinct immune profiles and associated biological pathways. These findings would pave the way for novel therapeutics for steroid-resistant asthma for which 28 billion dollars are spent annually in healthcare costs in the United States.

Questions for the panelists are asked to be submitted ahead of time for inclusion in the moderated Q&A. The event is free to attend, but preregistration is required to receive the webinar link.

Vaccine Speaker Series is sponsored by Highmark.

About Carnegie Science Center
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