



2019 Planetary Health Annual Meeting

Summary Report from Stanford Global Health to The Sean N Parker Center for Asthma and Allergy Research

Overview:

The 2019 Planetary Health Annual Meeting, held on September 4-6, 2019 at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California convened a global audience to catalyze efforts towards resolving the great planetary health crises of our time. Nearly 500 attendees from over 40 countries — over half of which were low- and middle-income countries — gathered in-person on traditional Ramaytush Ohlone land, while 46 virtual watch parties across 16 countries participated remotely.

Unlike traditional research conferences, this diverse and robust community of attendees was brought together not merely by “intellectual curiosity,” but because of an “urgent need for social action,” in the words of Planetary Health Alliance Director, Dr. Sam Myers, during his opening remarks. The objectives of this meeting were to convene the global planetary health community, provide a forum to spark transdisciplinary collaborations, reinforce the scientific case for and commitment to the planetary health framing, and learn from existing efforts to solve planetary health challenges.

The Annual Meeting Programming Committee of 20 international planetary health experts, chaired by Dr. Steve Luby and Ms. Kathy Burke of Stanford University, exceeded these goals through co-designing a conference program packed with powerful plenaries, skills-building workshops, community-organized breakout sessions, outcome-focused satellite sessions, and an interactive poster session featuring over 120 presenters representing a wide variety of fields, countries, and career stages. Plenary sessions explored a diversity of timely topics: from the mental health impacts of environmental change and the ecological drivers of recent wildfires from the Amazon to California, to the roles of indigenous systems of knowledge, the private sector, and movement builders in advancing planetary health. Throughout these transdisciplinary sessions, no panel or workshop was homogeneous in speakers’ gender, age, country of origin, or discipline; the voices of indigenous communities, youth, women, and the Global South were highlighted as leaders in planetary health research and action.

Key highlights from the 2019 Planetary Health Annual Meeting:

- 500 attendees from over 40 countries (20+ LMICs);
- 46 watch parties across 16 countries;
- Over 100 speakers and 120 research poster presentations;
- Top-rated abstracts selected and published by the editorial board of *The Lancet Planetary Health* in their 2019 Planetary Health Annual Meeting [Special Issue](#);





- Over 75 participants in the Speaker Ambassador Program (including over 30 speakers);
- Nearly 40 fully sponsored travel scholars from 20 different countries (17 LMIC);
- Seven keynote plenary sessions, five workshops, and eight breakout sessions;
- Seven indigenous leaders featured in opening ceremony, keynote address, plenaries, workshops, and Indigenous Perspectives on Planetary Health lunch;
- Over 600 uses of #planetaryhealth2019 on Twitter;
- Over 1,500 views of livestream recordings, available on the [Annual Meeting website](#).
- Commitment to planetary health demonstrated in all logistical details — from outdoor programming, to recycled and biodegradable badges, to low-waste, plant-based fare.

Agenda Highlights:

- The conference included seven **plenary sessions** featuring leading voices in the environmental and health sciences, policy, innovation, and movement-building from around the world, with topics including: 1) urban ecosystems and planetary health; 2) the mental health impacts of environmental change; 3) private sector innovation in planetary health; 4) mobilizing a planetary health movement; 5) land and ocean food systems; 6) wildfires and deforestation; and 7) co-beneficial solutions to non-communicable diseases.



- We showcased **keynote addresses** from: Christine Loh, Former Undersecretary for the Environment and Professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, who spoke to China's Ecological Civilization directive; Nainoa Thompson, President of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and Pwo Navigator, who highlighted the role of traditional knowledge in planetary health; and Rebecca Shaw, Chief Scientist at the World Wildlife Fund, who discussed the intersection of science and policy within planetary health.

- The meeting featured three rounds of **lightning talks** with 18 different speakers, including seven next-generation and travel scholars, showcasing great ideas and novel research in planetary health under three minutes each.
- To allow for small-group discussions, the meeting featured eight community-organized **breakout sessions** on topics including: 1) the compound disaster risks of climate change; 2) women's health and empowerment; 3) community-driven justice on planetary health challenges; 4) ecological solutions to mitigate infectious disease; 5) scaling freshwater solutions to combat water scarcity; 6) working with policymakers to advance planetary health; 7) holding universities accountable to planetary health practices; and 8) educating and empowering the world's youth around planetary health.
- We featured in plenary the upcoming launch of the planetary health **case study anthology**: a collection of on-the-ground, site-specific examples of planetary health across the globe that will serve as a foundational educational resource for the global network of academic institutions committed to planetary health.



- We featured **120 diverse research posters** during a two-hour poster networking event; posters were grouped by broad thematic area to encourage interdisciplinary intellectual exchange, including: 1) education, 2) policy & practice, and 3) research, subdivided by themes of non-communicable disease, global pollution, food systems & nutritional ecology, urban ecosystems, and disease ecology.
- The meeting also featured **five workshops** to promote hands-on and collaborative skill-building opportunities, with topics of focus including: 1) restructuring universities to support planetary health; 2) utilizing systems-thinking to understand planetary health challenges; 3) improving communications and media relations in planetary health; 4) leveraging spatial data analysis to monitor and address planetary health challenges; and 5) expanding commitment to planetary health across the healthcare sector, which spotlighted the development of the PHA's [Clinicians for Planetary Health](#) initiative.
- Before the conference, the PHA identified members of the planetary health community to lead outcome-oriented **satellite sessions** that would physically convene working groups and coalitions within the PHA network. Notable outcomes of this programming included: 1) the development of seven planetary health regional hubs around the world (and counting); 2) the distillation of high-level policy actions for planetary health by the Consortium of Universities for Global Health; and 3) the initiation of a planetary health competency framework to support planetary health education across various disciplines and levels around the world, among other satellite convenings.
- The annual **PHA Membership Meeting** convened over 80 of our member institutions from around the world, including through remote participation, for a dialogue about recent activities, proposed updates to the PHA's governance and strategic visioning, and for general cross-fertilization of our network.
- We engaged seven **Indigenous leaders** as speakers in our keynote address, opening ceremony, plenary sessions, workshops, and a special lunch on "Indigenous Perspectives on Planetary Health," as well as formally recognized the local indigenous history of the Ramaytush Ohlone land on which the conference took place through land acknowledgments and welcoming remarks from a member of the Ohlone tribe.

Thank you very much for your generous support, allowing this exciting conference to take place and catalyze action on one of the most important priorities of our time.