

2020 STD PREVENTION CONFERENCE

2020 Vision: Disrupting Epidemics and Dismantling Disparities

2020 STD Prevention Conference Day One Recap | #STDConf20

September 15, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We have just wrapped up day one of our first-ever virtual [STD Prevention Conference](#). I am excited and pleased to share a couple of high points from the first day and a few items to look forward to as the conference continues.

We began with a pre-conference roundtable for journalists, in which myself, Drs. Hillard Weinstock (CDC) and Hilary Reno (Washington University in St. Louis and the St. Louis County Sexual Health Clinics and a CDC medical consultant), as well as [NCSID's](#) David Harvey, shared thoughts and data related to the impact COVID-19 has had on STD prevention. We also talked about the course we will chart forward together, as we adapt to the rapidly changing healthcare landscape and find novel ways of working during the pandemic and beyond. If you're interested in learning more, you can read coverage in the news media, including [Politico](#), [MedPage Today](#) and [Bay Area Reporter](#).

Then the conference officially kicked off with Racism as a Public Health Issue. In that humbling and frank panel discussion, Drs. Aletha Maybank and Leandro Mena walked us through the finer points of navigating racism through organizational culture change and in our work. The speakers underscored that if we truly want to address racism in a meaningful way, we must honestly examine the history of racism within our institutions and explore our own biases and blind spots. Importantly, they reminded us that health equity is not an after-thought; it thrives when it's woven into the fabric of an institution.

Following that, the COVID-19 and STI Prevention panel discussion expanded on the earlier conversation with journalists and highlighted some of the innovative, "boots on the ground" work our colleagues have been doing since COVID struck. Finally, in what will come as a surprise to no one, the dynamic, Dr. David Malebranche gave us a lot to consider when thinking about systemic and institutional barriers to our prevention work.

In a mixture of live and pre-taped sessions, the remainder of the conference will dive into even more. It's not too late to [register](#)! After registering, you can catch up on the conference sessions you missed today and not miss a second of the rest of the action.

Don't forget to visit the virtual Expo Hall to learn about the exhibitors. Please stop by CDC's virtual "merch" booth, which is full of fun items like Zoom backgrounds and social media images to put you in the conference spirit. If you're a poster presenter, consider participating in the [#SelfiewithScience contest](#). I look forward to a Zoom session with the winner(s)! And we welcome your addition to the "[virtual attendee mosaic](#)," which will combine participants' individual photos into one, collective image. I'm looking forward to sharing my picture! You can learn more about each of these and other special events, like trivia night, on the [Virtual Activities](#) and [Special Events and Sessions](#) pages.

I look forward to so many more fascinating, informative and intellectually challenging discussions as the conference progresses.

Best regards,

Gail Bolan, MD

Conference Co-Chair

Director, Division of STD Prevention

National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention