



JUNE 2, 2026 2:00 - 5:00 PM

COMMENCEMENT

2026

LINCOLN CENTER
ALICE TULLY HALL

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH & HEALTH POLICY

DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear graduates, family, and friends,

My sincere congratulations on the achievements of our graduates!

It takes immense dedication and focus to earn your graduate degree in public health, as you know. For working professionals, many of you with families of your own to care for, the mountain is even higher to climb. I am deeply impressed, and frankly, quite proud of all of you.

Communities in New York City and beyond will benefit from the knowledge, skills, and determination you will bring as you join the public health workforce. With all due humility, as a graduate of the rigorous programs provided by CUNY SPH, you can boast freely of your professional preparation and skills. You have earned your place as a full-fledged member of the esteemed community of CUNY alumni. Know that you have a network of peers, public health professionals, faculty, and administrators who remain dedicated to helping you achieve your goals. We share your commitment to a healthier future. I encourage you to remain connected to our network. It will be an invaluable resource as you take each step in your career.

You are entering the profession at a time when public health is shaping conversations and decisions across the globe—from local neighborhoods to international policy rooms. I have enormous faith that now, more than ever before, CUNY SPH graduates will shape our future city and our future world for the better.

Finally, on the occasion of this significant life and career milestone—and the many more to come—take a moment to commend yourself. This is an epic achievement. And please acknowledge all those who helped you along the way.

Again, on behalf of the CUNY SPH faculty, staff, and administrators, I applaud your profound achievement and wish you all the best.



Ayman El-Mohandes
DEAN

PROGRAM

PROCESSIONAL

Honored guests,
CUNY SPH deans,
faculty, and graduates

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Alyse Gamble

WELCOME

Ayman El-Mohandes
Dean

REMARKS

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez
Chancellor, CUNY

Herminia Palacio
CUNY Trustee

Alfonso Chang
*Co-founder and Managing
Director, AC3 Group;
Vice Chairman of the
CUNY SPH Foundation
Board of Directors*

HONORARY DOCTOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Georges C. Benjamin
*Chief Executive Officer,
American Public Health Association*

DEAN'S CHAMPION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD

Susan Klitzman
*Senior Associate Dean for
Administration and Professor,
CUNY Graduate School of
Public Health and Health Policy*

GRADUATE HONORS

DELTA OMEGA HONORARY SOCIETY IN PUBLIC HEALTH, EPSILON CHI CHAPTER

Pavan Lohia
*President of the Epsilon Chi Chapter
of Delta Omega Honor Society,
MPH Class of '20*

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

Xavier Gonzalez

PRESENTATION OF DOCTORAL GRADUATES

Doctoral Program Directors

Meredith Manze

Departments of Community Health and Social Sciences & Health Policy and Management

Jean Grassman

Department of Environmental, Occupational, and Geospatial Health Sciences

Chloe Teasdale

Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Department Chairs

Spring Cooper

Chair of Department of Community Health and Social Sciences

Brian Pavilonis

Chair of Department of Environmental, Occupational, and Geospatial Health Sciences

Levi Waldron

Chair of Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Nevin Cohen

Chair of Department of Health Policy and Management

PRESENTATION OF MASTER'S GRADUATES

Lynn Roberts

Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Alumni Relations

PUBLIC HEALTH PLEDGE

CUNY SPH graduates, led by Susan Klitzman, MPH, DrPH, CPH, Senior Associate Dean for Administration and Professor, CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy

REMARKS FROM THE GRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Jessica George

GSGA President

ALUMNI NETWORK WELCOME

Pavan Lohia

Student Alumni Network Steering Committee, MPH Class of '20

CLOSING REMARKS

Ayman El-Mohandes

Dean

CLOSING MUSICAL SELECTION

“A Lovely Day,” featuring Neferkara Aaron, soloist

**HONORARY DOCTORAL AWARDEE
AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**Georges C.
Benjamin, MD**

*Chief Executive Officer,
American Public Health Association*

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, is a nationally recognized physician leader and health advocate. Since 2002, he has served as CEO of the American Public Health Association (APHA), leading its effort to make America the healthiest nation.

Prior to his position at APHA, Benjamin was secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. He is board-certified in internal medicine and a master of the American College of Physicians, a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, a fellow emeritus of the American College of Emergency Physicians, an honorary fellow of the Faculty of Public Health, and an honorary fellow of the Royal Society of Public Health.

An established administrator, author, and orator, Benjamin started his medical career as a military physician in 1978 when he trained in internal medicine at the Brooke Army Medical Center. After leaving the Army, he chaired the Department of Community Health and Ambulatory Care at the District of Columbia General Hospital. He was promoted to acting commissioner for public health for the District of Columbia and later directed one of the busiest ambulance services in the nation.

Benjamin's academic career spans teaching, policy research, and academic program development and management. He has combined his practice and academic experience as an emergency physician with public health to become one of the nation's experts in public health emergency preparedness.

In 2008, 2014, and 2016, Benjamin was named one of the top 25 minority executives in health care by Modern Healthcare Magazine, voted among the 100 most influential people in health care for 15 years (2007-2018 and 2021-2025), and in 2023 and 2024, Washingtonian Magazine voted Dr. Benjamin one of the 500 most influential people shaping health policy.



DEAN'S CHAMPION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD

Susan Klitzman

MPH, DrPH, CPH

*Senior Associate Dean for Administration
and Professor, CUNY Graduate School
of Public Health and Health Policy*



A New York City native and graduate of the New York City public school and State University systems, Susan Klitzman has dedicated her career to public service. She brings over 40 years of experience leading public health programs in academic and government settings, with expertise in urban health, environmental and occupational health, epidemiology, leadership, and public health policy.

From 1987–1999, Klitzman directed programs in childhood lead poisoning prevention, occupational and environmental epidemiology, and employee health and safety at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Among her many accomplishments, she developed regulations for safe lead paint abatement in housing, which resulted in dramatic reductions in childhood lead poisoning.

In 1999, Klitzman joined the CUNY family as a faculty member in the Urban Public Health Program at Hunter College, and has since played a central role in founding New York City's first public school of public health. As inaugural associate dean for academic affairs, she led the school through its first accreditation in 2010. Since 2015, she has served as senior associate dean for administration, working with faculty, staff, students, and partners to build the top public school of public health in the tri-state area.

Klitzman has held leadership roles with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Public Health Association of New York City. From 2002 to 2021, she served as a mayoral appointee to the New York City Board of Health, advancing policies such as menu calorie labeling, sodium warnings, restaurant grading, and recognizing racism as a public health issue.

GRADUATE HONORS

VALEDICTORIAN AND DEAN'S MERIT AWARD FOR SCHOLARSHIP

Xavier Gonzalez

DEAN'S MERIT AWARD FOR COMMITMENT

Tareisha Dunlap

Holly Farkas

DEAN'S MERIT AWARD FOR SERVICE

Rebecca Weiner

DEAN'S MERIT AWARD FOR RESEARCH

Taiwo Fayemi

Gabrielle Nicole Perez

DEAN'S PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT DISSERTATION AWARD

Jacqueline Chiofalo

Silpa Srinivasulu

DEAN'S DEPARTMENTAL SCHOLAR AWARDS

Community Health and Social Sciences

Chidi Adeyemi

Environmental, Occupational, and Geospatial Health Sciences

Lynn Francis

Joyce Ho

Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Olga Cuero-Vidal

Health Policy and Management

Jessica George

GRADUATES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PUBLIC HEALTH— COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HEALTH POLICY

Jacqueline Chiofalo

Racial disparities in ambulatory care settings and outcome—Evidence among medicaid beneficiaries with diabetes in three urban areas

Dana Huber

College students' experiences seeking support to meet their essential needs: Assessing opportunities to link students to services through the CUNY Cares Bronx demonstration project

Alexander Moreta

Drivers of healthcare utilization and engagement among hispanic/latino men: A mixed methods study of facilitators and barriers to care

Amanda Pierz

A mixed-methods approach to understanding factors contributing to the reduction of childhood sexual violence: A case study of Eswatini

Valentina Ramirez

Bullying, early sexual debut, and sexual health behaviors among adolescents in New York City

Ronald Sanchez

Measuring healthcare disparities: A medical expenditure panel survey (MEPS) application of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid's health equity summary score (CMS-HES)

Lauren Shiman

Reproductive decision-making under constraint: A mixed-methods assessment of structural barriers to reproductive freedom in the post-Dobbs United States

Silpa Srinivasulu

Integrating medication abortion care in primary care settings: An implementation science study

DOCTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH—COMMUNITY, SOCIETY, AND HEALTH

Tatanisha Peets

Food insecurity in cancer care: Opportunities in nutrition and dietetics

Stephanie St. Pierre

Four directions home decolonization, mobilization, healing, and transformation: An exploratory study of traditional food projects in North American indigenous communities

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PUBLIC HEALTH— ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANETARY HEALTH SCIENCES

Fiona Fogarty

Meconium metal concentrations and infant temperament and development

A. Michael Ierardi

Investigating inhalation risks of volatile organic compounds among New York City nail salon workers

Rachel Thompson

Green revitalization: Evaluating the impact of citywide park redesign and renovation on the health of low-income communities in New York City

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PUBLIC HEALTH— EPIDEMIOLOGY

Pui Ying (Polly) Chan

Disentangling the effect of criminal legal system involvement on mental health

Sophia Day

Evaluating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on body mass index (BMI) z-scores among New York City (NYC) public school students: A cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis of population shifts and individual trajectories

Meghana Shamsunder

To 'guess-timate' or g-estimate: Using g-estimation of structural nested mean models to understand complex treatment effects

Yanhan Shen

Understanding post-COVID conditions (PCC) in national community-based cohort: Symptoms phenotypes, symptoms natural history, and vaccine's role as a prevention tool

**MASTER OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Ilma Aamir
 Chidi Adeyemi Δ
 Patria Alguila
 Jamelia Allison
 Norma Amy
 Rita Asiamah
 Amna Aslam
 Montana Bass
 Ambrosia Beckford
 Amana Bukhari
 Lauren Burnham Δ
 Jessica Cervantes Δ
 Sean Cornett
 Catherine Cuzco
 Taiwo Fayemi Δ
 Natacha Garcia
 Elena Gonzalez
 Dana Haile
 Jesus Hernandez
 Cheryl Huynh
 Ashley Innocent
 Celeste Isais
 Yukari Izumiyama
 Emily Jennings
 Vanessa Joseph
 Josh Levine
 Sora Lichtman

Christine
 Magana Δ
 April Manis
 Zheidyleen
 Masso Rodriguez
 Aida Mejia
 Tamara
 Mizhquiri Toledo
 Mahfuza Muktadir
 Mackenzie
 Murphy Δ
 Reeha Narayan
 Abide Nbina
 Sandrah Osei
 Erica Otoo
 Madeleine Pardy
 Marleny Peguero
 Tayla Rector
 Samantha
 Richardson
 Lorenzo Rios
 Denisse Romero
 Lyndsay
 Rosenfeld Δ
 Joselin Sagastume
 Salguero
 Diang Severino Δ
 Stephnel
 Tenjoh-okwen
 Yaddy Valerio
 Alyssa Vuong Δ
 Rebecca Weiner Δ

**ENVIRONMENTAL
AND OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH SCIENCES**

Annelie Aguessy
 Tajruba Baqui
 Madelyn Bullard
 Lianna Cabili
 Mikaela Denisulk
 Oneida Echavarria
 John Fashola
 Lynn Francis Δ
 Rylee Heisler
 Julia Jardine
 Sarah Kinbar
 Valerie Kweon
 Simon Ramnauth
 Marufa Sultana
 Tammy Tang
 David Tomlinson
 Kabarree Watson

**EPIDEMIOLOGY
AND BIostatISTICS**

Kristin Abraham
 Oluwabukola
 Adesina
 Edona Ahmetaj
 Nazija Akter
 Zariya Alvarez
 Safa Amir
 Tania Bari
 Sultana Bhuiyan
 Stephen Blam

Aiyana Braswell
 Sadhana
 Budhathoki Δ
 Andrea Caicedo
 Ariel Cebelinski
 Muniyat
 Choudhury
 Delaney Collins
 Abel Craig
 Olga Cuero Vidal
 Xingwei Cui
 Mamadou Diallo
 Ryan Doan
 Makayla Dorris
 Tareisha Dunlap
 Victor Eduardo
 Hadeer Eid
 Yvesnise Estinvil
 Kylie Frost
 Victoria Garrity
 Emmanuel Gyamfi
 Reese Hirota
 Lilli Hong Δ
 Jennifer Hoppe
 Idrees Ilahi
 Lizaveta Ilyuchenko
 Saadmanul Islam
 Leah James
 Andria James
 Rachel Johnston
 Ushna Khan
 Ae Yil Kim

Ivy Kosater	Jenny Sin Δ	Alethia Charles	Diego Martinez
Meghana Krishnamurthy	Norma St. Victor	Connor Davy	Akiko Matsunaga
Viviana Laines	Bryant Suriel	Michelle Delgado	Kelly McDonnell
Michelle Liu Δ	Katherine Timmons	Kimberley Dubois	Tonie McKenzie
Sheetal Vasundara Mathai	Jordan Trippett	Llewellyn Duncan	Marcus McPherson
Aparna Matur	Shreyu Umapathy	Marie Eniolorunda	Benjamin Michaels Δ
Brigid McCarthy	Kelly Valentin	Ephier Estevez	Anthony Okolo
Nell Mckenna	Renee Watson	Mst Dina Farhana	Khushalee Oza
Oyinlola Mebude	Elizabeth Whittemore	Holly Farkas	Afroditie Paloumbis
Raj Vijaybhai Methaniya Δ	Anna Zhang	Taysha Frazer	Ethan Penha
Vanessa Mitchell	Donna Zheng	Jessica George Δ	Peyton Phan
Kimberly Murdaugh	HEALTH POLICY AND MANAGEMENT	Jada George	Gabriella Polgur Δ
Kevin Murphy	Abdul Rashid Abdulai	Xavier Gonzalez Δ	Kai Purnell
Eileen Murray	Yaw Acheampong	Geanil Gonzalez	Dinesh Pyakurel
Andre Nana	Yadairy Adames	Tatjana Gumeni	Dahiana Rosario
Mairah Naveed Δ	Sabina Adhikari	Jennifer Guyon	Ramla Sahib Din
Tasmia Nova	Tahreem Asghar Δ	Tasmim Hanif	Angelina Smith
Ann Pearson	Olivia Faith Augustin	Jingyin He	Hannahlisa Smith-Lythcott
Gabrielle Nicole Perez	Odilenny Baez	Peter-Gaye Henry	Nisha Sookoo
Romona Persaud	Tiffany Batista	Molisa Hoque	Victoria St. Clair
Sanjida Rahman	Molly Blaustein	Crystal Jaiserie	Siobhan Sullivan
Leelu Ravi	Cornell Boakye-Ansah	Dominique Juste	Jarin Tasnim
Jackilyn Rivera	Devin Boyle	Djene Keita	Ashika Taylor Δ
Melissa Rodriguez	Manahil Butt Δ	Ziyaad Khan	Jelani Thompson
Minyi Ruan	Emily Chan Δ	Saima Khanom	Nkechi Udeozo
Deep Nilesh Shah	Rayon Chan	Kendra Kirk	Melissa Viellot
Emma Sharp Δ	Ingram Chang	Caroline Layme	Chassidy Walton
Cleo Siderides Δ		Fang Lee-Ashlie	Jessica Ward
		Chrissie Mar	Fatima Warda
		Nikita Marder	
		Melanie Marin	

**PUBLIC HEALTH
NUTRITION**

Alexa Brody Δ
Yousef Elnahrawy
Hajer Farrara
Andrea Ferguson
Dayra
Fernandes Co
Joyce Ho Δ
Zexin Lin Δ
Megan Marshall Δ
Shannon Mensah
Susan Musilu
Stephanie Ortiz
Jairy Padro
Haley Raichelson Δ
Lauren Rogers
Amerigo Rossi
Julia
Shenderovich Δ
Natalie Wayland

MASTER OF SCIENCE

**ENVIRONMENTAL
AND OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH SCIENCES**

Stephen Alfano Δ
Abigail Darias
Miralem Desic
Gifty Edossa
Jameel Hammad
Fidelis Idoko

Kera Johnson
Jiaqin Liu
Ruth Lopez
Dan Jabez Sales
Aaron Stern
Shufeng Wu

**GLOBAL
AND MIGRANT
HEALTH POLICY**

Vicky Kuo
Tashi Lhatso

**HEALTH
COMMUNICATION
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

Neferkara Aaron
Ganesh Asaithambi
Talia Briant
Laurel Browne
Cindy Cajamarca
Lauren Casarona
Vicky Chan Δ
Coriann Dorgay
Caroline Dos
Santos Soares Δ
Alexis Hodges
Nafissatou Ndiaye
Alexa Ramirez
Martha
Santamaria Lopez
Kira Waldman Δ
Jen Williams

**POPULATION HEALTH
INFORMATICS**

Crispi Abono Ntela
Fanta Conde
Sabrina Goldman
Andrea Hernandez
Juan Johnson
Karen Hilda Kwan
Eunbyul Mangut Δ
Briana Monk
Jing Xie
Mebrahtom Zeweli

PUBLIC HEALTH PLEDGE

I pledge to do all within my power to safeguard human and environmental health through prevention, protection, promotion, and educational efforts.

I will accept the responsibility to use my talents, training, and professional experience to instill public trust in all my public health endeavors.

It is my personal commitment to serve my community with integrity and pride.

ALUMNI NETWORK

Let's keep in touch! Let us know your preferred contact info so that we can stay in touch with you about alumni matters after graduation.

EMAIL alumninetwork@sph.cuny.edu

VISIT cunysph.me/alumni2026



Don't forget to follow CUNY SPH Alumni Network on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) to stay connected!



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PROMOTING HEALTH
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
IN NEW YORK CITY
AND ACROSS THE GLOBE
THROUGH INNOVATION
AND LEADERSHIP

