CUGH 2025, Atlanta Georgia, USA.

The 16th Annual Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) Conference convened in Atlanta, Georgia, from February 20–23, 2025, drawing over 1,800 participants from more than 60 countries. Hosted at the Hilton Atlanta and co-organized by Emory University, the University of Georgia, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the event centered on the theme "Innovating and Implementing in Global Health for a Sustainable Future.

A Global Gathering for a Sustainable Future

CUGH 2025 served as a nexus for global health professionals, researchers, students, and policymakers to address pressing health challenges. The conference featured over 230 speakers and more than 40 panel sessions, covering topics such as non-communicable diseases, health systems, public health, primary and surgical care, and maternal, sexual, and reproductive health.

Pre-conference workshops on February 20 were free and open to all, offering 15 sessions that provided attendees with opportunities to build skills and knowledge in various global health domains. The domains included implementation science, pedagogy and curricular, sustainability and equity in Global Health, Mental Health and Humanitarian Emergencies, Health Workforce data and how to get a job in Global Health and many others.

At this conference it was noted that, the new US administration's executive orders are devastating the lives of people around the world. They have shuttered overseas development programs, and have stopped lifesaving aid from getting to some of the most vulnerable people in the world. They have shattered United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and profoundly weakened National Institute of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Department of Education and other U.S. government agencies that are vital to the health and security of Americans and the world. As well as devastated the lives of civil servants who have dedicated their lives to creating a healthier, more secure future for all. Furthermore, the politicization of the public service, removal of independent oversight mechanisms and the undermining of Congress, along with the trashing of global alliances, will make the US weaker, poorer and sicker. The CUGH leadership assured its members that they were dedicated to reversing these damaging orders and proposing ways in which US global health investments and policies can improve lives around the world and in the US.

Highlights and Keynote Speakers

The conference featured prominent keynote speakers, including Paige Alexander, CEO of The Carter Center; Rhonda Sealey-Thomas, Assistant Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); Monika Kosinska, Global Head of Economic and Commercial Determinants at the World Health Organization (WHO); and Jorge Saavedra, Executive Director of the AHF Global Public Health Institute in Mexico .

Notably, Ugandan leaders such as Christian Acemah, Executive Secretary of the Uganda National Academy of Sciences, and Nelson Sewankambo of Makerere University and President The African Forum for Research and Education in Health (AFREhealth) as well as Elsie Kiguli-Malwadde, immediate past president of AFREhealth , contributed to discussions on strengthening global health partnerships.

Engaging Sessions and Workshops

The conference agenda included over 500 abstract presentations, with sessions focusing on bridging research to policy, innovation, and implementation science. The Pulitzer Center Film Festival on February 22 showcased short films that visualized global health challenges, providing a platform for storytelling and raising awareness on critical issues .(cugh.org)

Awards and Recognitions

CUGH 2025 recognized outstanding contributions to global health through various awards. The CUGH Distinguished Leadership Award honored individuals demonstrating long-term commitment and exceptional contributions to global health. The Dr. Thomas Hall-Dr. Nelson Sewankambo Mid-Career Leadership Award acknowledged professionals aged 30 to 50 who have significantly impacted global health education, research, advocacy, or service

Looking Ahead

CUGH 2025 emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation in addressing global health challenges. The conference fostered connections among attendees, encouraging the development of partnerships and the exchange of ideas to improve health outcomes worldwide.

For more information on the conference and to access session recordings and materials, visit the official CUGH 2025 website at www.cugh2025.org.