TUFH 2025 Conference: Challenging Assumptions and Reimagining Solutions

The Network Towards Unit for Health (TUFH) is an international, intersectoral, and intergenerational organization dedicated to fostering equitable, community-oriented health services, education, and research with the overarching goal of improving health both locally and globally. It serves as a convener for innovative health care organizations, universities, community institutions, and thought leaders from all over the world. To ensure accessibility for its diverse membership, TUFH holds an annual conference in a different continent each year.

Hosts and Setting

The 2025 conference marked TUFH's 46th anniversary. This year, TUFH, Woods System of Care, and the Mollie Woods Hare Global Center of Excellence jointly hosted the event. The conference, which took place from September 12 to 15, 2025, gathered the health workforce, educators, leadership, students, young professionals, policymakers, researchers, and health advocates. Its central theme was "Reframing Access to Health: Challenging Assumptions and Reimagining Solutions".

A unique aspect of this year's gathering was the venue. Unlike past conferences, which were typically hosted at university campuses, the 2025 event was held at the Woods System of Care headquarters in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, United States. The Woods campus, unlike traditional university settings, is located in the scenic countryside of Bucks County, PA. With a history spanning over 60 years, the campus is dedicated to providing exceptional care and services to individuals with disabilities. Its expansive, peaceful grounds offered a beautiful backdrop for networking, learning, and community-building, creating a calm, inspiring, and welcoming atmosphere conducive to focused discussions.

Program and Participation

The 2025 conference was a resounding success in terms of attendance and global reach. A total of 452 physical participants attended across the four days, including the attendees of the two unique summits hosted alongside the main conference: the IDD/Autism Summit and the Convenient Care Summit. Additionally, 86 participants joined virtually, contributing to the conference's global reach. In total, attendees represented 29 countries.

The conference's main theme was further explored through four detailed subthemes:

- Innovative Approaches to reduce Health Disparities for Vulnerable, Marginalized, and Complex Populations
- Community Engagement to promote Physical and Mental Health and Wellness
- Partnerships to build Social Accountability Bridges linking Education and Service to advance Community Health
- Policy and Collaborations to advance Community, Planetary, and Environmental Health

TUFH is known for its unique conference program, which includes a variety of formats to ensure that nearly everyone has an opportunity to participate. The TUFH 2025 program featured 9 Workshops, 4 Documentaries, 10 TUFH Talks, 147 Oral Presentations, and 17 Panels with multiple panelists.

A distinctive component of TUFH conferences is the "Conference on the move", an experience that gives participants an opportunity to visit various local organizations and communities. The aim is for participants to gain a deeper understanding of the local community by the time they depart. In 2025, half a day was dedicated to this activity, during which participants visited over 9 communities.

Key Dignitary

TUFH 2025 was honored to host Her Excellency Mrs. Katumu Y. Boakai, the First Lady of the Republic of Liberia, along with her distinguished delegation. Her presence underscored the global significance of TUFH's work and emphasized the importance of international partnerships in promoting inclusive, community-driven models of care. The First Lady's participation began on Friday, September 12, with her attendance at the opening reception. Delegates from around the world gathered to welcome Her Excellency, whose gracious presence established a tone of unity and respect for the ensuing days. This initial encounter provided participants an opportunity to greet the First Lady and express their appreciation for her commitment to global collaboration.

The 2025 Declaration

Following the tradition of TUFH conferences, a declaration is compiled at the conclusion of the event and communicated to all partners and collaborators. The TUFH 2025 Philadelphia Declaration builds upon past milestones specifically the Thunder Bay Communiqué (2012), Vancouver Vision (2022), Sharjah Consensus (2023), and Ubuntu Declaration (2024) reaffirming that universal access to health is a shared societal responsibility.

The declaration urgently calls for the transformation of health systems through community-led, socially accountable, and inclusive education and service32. It commits to four key action areas, which mirror the conference subthemes:

1. Innovative approaches to reduce disparities for marginalized and complex populations
2. Deeper community engagement for physical and mental well-being
3. Socially accountable partnerships linking education and service
4. Policies promoting community, planetary, and environmental health[36]

Acknowledging the progress made while noting persistent inequities, the declaration calls for a renewed sense of urgency toward achieving the 2030 goals. Governments, institutions, communities, and students are urged to collaboratively create and implement socially accountable systems. Ultimately, the declaration serves as both a recommitment and a checkpoint on the path toward equitable, people-centered global health transformation.