PMAC PRINCE MAHIDOL AWARD CONFERENCE 2021

WS303

ASSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO COVID19 VACCINES, TREATMENTS, & HEALTH RESOURCES

| BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a stark window into the how social and economic inequities result in disproportionate risk and impact of novel diseases. The chronic lack of access to basic health care prior to a pandemic results in populations more likely to be living with “pre-existing conditions” that make them more vulnerable to the most serious consequences of a novel infectious disease. This lack of effective health services in marginalized communities further increases their risks of negative outcomes during the pandemic. Economic inequities also profoundly reduce timely access to diagnostics and life-saving medicines (i.e. vaccines and therapies) – once they become available. This dynamic is particularly evident between resource “rich” and “poor” countries when it comes to accessing life-saving products that are in high demand when supplies are limited, including vaccines, therapeutics and personal protective equipment. These inequalities underscore the importance of universal health coverage in developing a uniformly healthy population before a pandemic, and mechanisms being in place for equitable provision of vaccines, therapies and PPEs during a pandemic. Moreover, vulerable populations will be impacted by pandemic induced impacts on education and nutrition programs. Topics to be discussed in this session include:

- Impact of inequitable access to basic health services on population health profile
- Global access to treatments and vaccines. How effective treatments and vaccines will be made available to everyone who needs them.
- The role of Universal Health Coverage in building: healthier populations (with fewer underlying conditions) that are less vulnerable to infectious disease threats; normative health systems and capacities that ensure delivery of critical services in the face of a pandemic
- How we ethically address access to therapeutics and vaccines? COVID vaccine development will be a major issue and there are also issues of the lack of ‘true partnership’ between funders and organizers around the world. How are major powers weighing in on this?
- How to ensure a unified global health approach, including access to education and nutriion, to address the most vulnerable in the world.
- How the growing power struggles between key countries on commodities affect equitable access to life saving interventions?

| OBJECTIVES

By participating in this webinar with global experts you will:

- Learn about the concerted effort to assure equitable global access to COVID19 vaccines and life-saving therapeutics
- Gain insight into the ethical considerations in rationing and prioritizing resources
- Understand the importance of nutrition, especially for vulnerable populations



Speaker

Mercy Mwangangi

Chief Administrative Secretary for Health

Ministry of Health
Kenya

Fanatically positive and militantly optimistic, Dr. Mwangangi works in the Kenya Ministry of Health as the newly appointed Chief Administrative Secretary. In this role, she supports the Cabinet Secretary in providing oversight and stewardship in the implementation of Health Sector policies and in building collaborative partnerships with a diverse range of sector stakeholders.

Dr. Mwangangi believes in the crucial and catalytic role that health plays in the social and economic development of Kenya, and it is with this affirmation that she put down her stethoscope and pursued a master's degree in Health Economics and Policy at the University of Adelaide in South Australia in 2015.

Dr. Mwangangi, contributed to the design, and implementation of the Universal Health Coverage Pilot program, that form part of the Presidential Big Four Agenda. Having previously worked as the head of the Health Financing Division in the Ministry of Health, her focus in the design of the UHC Program has centered on the health financing architecture of the program and its alignment to intergovernmental service delivery priorities.

With an indulgence for analytics and design thinking, Mercy has also contributed to the development of an array of policy frameworks in the health sector, including the Primary Health Care Strategy. She also served as the joint secretary of the Health Benefits Advisory Panel that was commissioned with the design of the Essential Health Benefit Package for Kenya.

In her role as part of the stewards of the Kenya's risk communication strategy in the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic, and an emerging face of solace and resilience, Dr Mwangangi has gained an appreciation for the role that the youth can play in public service as communication and behavior change champions. Using this lived experience, she is in the processes of setting up a platform for the participation of young people in health promotion.