

Statewide Conversation on Post-Viral Infection Associated Chronic Conditions (IACCs)

A DAY OF LEARNING, CONNECTION, AND ACTION

June 2, 2026 | 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM CDT | Virtual Event

Join Via [Zoom \(https://direc.to/oJjU\)](https://direc.to/oJjU)

Thank you for joining us for a **statewide conversation to improve awareness, support, and community-driven solutions for post-viral chronic conditions such as long COVID.**

This gathering brings together partners and interest holders to foster collaborative strategies that can help:

- Improve long-term health outcomes
- Strengthen public health responses
- Enhance social support systems

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will also introduce their **[Statewide Roadmap with actionable recommendations for people and organizations across sectors](#)**. There's a role for everyone!

Let's learn from each other and work toward stronger, more responsive communities and systems for people living with post-viral chronic conditions.

See below for the event agenda, along with speaker and panelist information.

Check out the event page at [Statewide Conversation on Post-Viral Chronic Conditions - MDH \(health.state.mn.us/diseases/longcovid/doing/conversation.html\)](https://health.state.mn.us/diseases/longcovid/doing/conversation.html) for additional information.

This event is funded through the State of Minnesota.

Agenda

Time	Topic	Speakers/Panelists
9:00-9:45 am	Opening Remarks and Keynote	Robsan Halkeno Tura, PhD, MPH, MA Alba Azola, MD, FAAPMR
9:45-10:10 am	Overview of Minnesota's Statewide Roadmap to Address Long COVID and Post-Viral Chronic Conditions	Kate Murray, MPH
10:10-10:15 am	Break	
10:15-11:00 am	Panel: Living with Long COVID and IACCs	MN Senator Lindsey Port Alison Sbrana Sarah Pohlrad Amy Engebretson, MD, FACOG Moderator: Kate Murray, MPH
11:00- 11:15 am	Overview of Minnesota Roadmap Recommendations: Formal Assistance and Health Outcomes	Jay Desai, PhD, MPH
11:15-12:00 pm	Panel: Working within Systems to Support People with IACCs	Roli Dwivedi, MD, FAAFP, DABFM Eric Herman, MD Dan Stewart, JD, PhD, MA Moderator: Jane Pederson, MD
12:00-12:10 pm	Break	
12:10-12:50 pm	Long COVID Grantee Network Overview	Jay Desai, PhD, MPH Jen Timm, DNP, RN, PHN Rodolfo Gutierrez
12:50-1:20 pm	Audience Breakout Groups	Audience
1:20-1:45 pm	Breakout group highlights Sending activity	Moderators
1:45- 2:00 pm	Roadmap implementation and opportunities for funding and involvement <i>Event Adjournment</i>	Kate Murray, MPH

Speaker and Panelist Bios:

Dr. Robsan Halkeno Tura serves as Assistant Commissioner for Health at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), where he oversees divisions focused on health promotion, chronic disease prevention, injury prevention, substance misuse prevention, mental health, and child and family health. He previously led MDH's Health Equity Strategy and Innovation Division, the Offices of American Indian Health, African American Health, and Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, as well as broader agency equity initiatives. Before joining MDH, Dr. Tura served as Deputy Director for County Public Health in Iowa, where he also directed refugee and immigrant health programs with a local NGO. He also has over 12 years of international public health experience across many countries.

In his spare time, Dr. Tura also engages in research and teaching; he has taught courses on health equity, epidemiology, and global health. His research focuses on the intersection of gender and maternal and child health, and he is widely recognized for his leadership in equitable data use, systems transformation, and addressing the structural determinants of health. Dr. Tura holds a Ph.D. in Community and Behavioral Health from the University of Iowa, an MPH in Nutrition, and an MA in Public Health Education. Dr. Tura also served on the steering committee for the statewide roadmap.

Dr. Alba Azola is an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation and Pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She specializes in the care of patients with Long COVID, myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), dysautonomia, and other infection-associated chronic illnesses. Dr. Azola directs the Pediatric Long COVID/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Clinic at Johns Hopkins and co-directs clinical and translational research initiatives focused on neurocognitive dysfunction, autonomic impairment, and immune mechanisms in Long COVID. Her work integrates multidisciplinary clinical care, rehabilitation, and translational research, including NIH-funded studies investigating blood-brain barrier dysfunction and cognitive impairment in Long COVID. She is an invited national and international speaker on Long COVID, ME/CFS, post-exertional malaise, and autonomic dysfunction, and serves as faculty for multiple educational and research initiatives focused on post-infectious chronic disease.

State Senator Lindsey Port has served in the Minnesota Senate since 2021. She represents District 55, which includes Burnsville and Savage. She is Chair of the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee and serves on the Health and Human Services Committee. She is the former Chair of the Reproductive Freedom Caucus and was chief author of the 2023 Adult Use Cannabis Legislation bill, which prioritized social equity within an emerging industry. Beyond her leadership at the Capitol, Senator Port is also a long COVID survivor – an experience that has shaped not only her health, but her perspectives on public health, healthcare access, and advocacy.

Alison Sbrana (she/her) is a disability activist in Fort Collins, Colorado, living with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis since 2014. She bridges the gap between policymakers and the chronically ill and disabled communities, and supports these communities through grassroots engagement, advisory council facilitation, and systems change work. Earlier in the pandemic, Alison helped lead a Long COVID peer support group through Body Politic of over 15,000 people and was a contributing author on *The Long COVID Survival Guide*. Featured in *The Washington Post* and NPR, she regularly speaks on panels about chronic illness, disability, and navigating healthcare and benefits systems. Alison also

works as a consultant for #MEAction under a grant from the MDH Long COVID Program and served on the Formal Assistance workgroup during the Statewide Roadmap co-design process.

Sara Pohl is an interdisciplinary artist who is always learning new methods and finding new ways in which to create. She is currently studying liberation theology, interfaith ministry, and social transformation at United Theological Seminary while playfully experimenting with projects like improvisational embroidery and a virtual songwriting collaboration. Passionate about equity, the human body and spirit, and nature, Sara co-founded The Good Acre eleven years ago. The Good Acre is now an anchor in the Midwest's food system: a non-profit food hub that connects small, independent farmers with new and often unreachable markets to ensure that access to organic, locally grown produce is justly distributed and justly compensated.

As a mother of three boys, one of whom suffers from recurring long Covid each time he comes in contact with the virus, Sara spends a lot of her time caretaking. Sara says she has been honored to join others in the conversation about how to support those living with the Post-Viral Chronic Conditions which so greatly disrupt their everyday lives. She also participated in the statewide roadmap co-design process through the Public Life workgroup.

Dr. Amy Engebretson is an obstetrician/gynecologist who practiced for over 15 years in Minnesota until her life was changed by long COVID in 2020 - she was forced to stop practicing medicine in 2021 and has been primarily couchbound ever since. She earned her medical degree from the University of Minnesota Medical School and completed her residency training at the University of Minnesota Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women's Health. Dr. Engebretson now volunteers to promote research and treatment options through a weekly long COVID newsletter. She also participates in the MDH Long COVID Guiding Council of healthcare providers and served on the Health Outcomes workgroup for the Statewide Roadmap.

Dr. Roli Dwivedi serves as University of Minnesota faculty in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, and chief clinical officer at the Community University Health Care Center, and vice chair for community engagement and advocacy. She is also the Mac Baird Endowed Chair in Advocacy and Community Engagement and she also chairs the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health's Community Health Committee. Dr. Dwivedi is involved with several leadership and quality committees all across Minnesota and serves as director at large within the executive committee of Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians. She is multilingual, an educator and likes to create new models of teaching and culturally competent care deliveries. Her special interest in education includes global health and culturally sensitive care. She is also invested in improving health disparities and mentoring medical students and residents. Dr. Dwivedi participates in the MDH Long COVID Guiding Council and was a member of the steering committee for the statewide roadmap.

Dr. Eric Herman is the Chief Primary Care & Population Health Officer for Oregon Health & Science University. His goals include achieving the quintuple aim for the entire health system and ensuring a consistent care delivery model across primary care practices. Dr. Herman is a family medicine physician who currently practices at the OHSU Gabriel Park Family Medicine Clinic. He received his medical degree from University of Washington, and completed family practice residency in 2004 at Tacoma Family Medicine. Before joining OHSU, Dr. Herman was at MultiCare Health Systems for 18 years, serving as the VP for Clinical Integration, Medical Director for Population Health and Physician

Lead for Medical Informatics. Dr. Herman is the founder and physician executive for the OHSU Long COVID program which is the only program that serves all Oregonians regardless of health system or insurer. He serves as a Co-Chair for the AAPM&R Multi-disciplinary PASC collaborative and is an author on multiple publications including the AFPs “Long COVID - Rapid Evidence Review” and “Long COVID Compendium: Expert Strategies for Comprehensive Patient Care”.

Prior to his career in medicine, he was an electrical engineer and Peace Corps volunteer, serving two years in The Gambia, West Africa. In his spare time, Dr. Herman enjoys astronomy, composing music, studying new languages, supporting his favorite sports teams, and spending quality time with his family.

Dr. Daniel Stewart joined the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living (MCIL) after serving people with disabilities in prior organizations, including the Minnesota Disability Law Center (which is Minnesota’s Protection and Advocacy System), the National Disability Rights Network, and the Minnesota Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities. His disability rights specialties include employment, education, and physical/programmatic accessibility. He has a B.A. in Social Thought and Political Economy from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and an M.A. in Educational Policy, a J.D. and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. He lives in Minneapolis with his wife, Angie, and his Shih-Tzu, Niko. His daughter Laura is doing conservation work in Virginia. MCIL leadership and staff were also part of the steering committee and the Public Life and Formal Assistance workgroups for the Statewide Roadmap.

Dr. Jen Timm is the founding Executive Director of Bridges Health, PC, a nonprofit organization based in Winona, MN, that provides interprofessional clinical education to health profession students and serves rural and underserved communities with health and social care services. Jen received a Baccalaureate degree in nursing, Master of Science degree in Nursing Education, and Doctor of Nursing Practice in Practice and Leadership Innovations at Winona State University. She has worked in higher education for 16 years as a practicing nurse in public and community health for over 22 years. Jen served on the steering committee for the Statewide Roadmap, and members of her staff were part of the Statewide Roadmap Public Life and Formal Assistance workgroups. Bridges Health is also a current grantee of the MDH Long COVID Program.

Rodolfo Gutierrez is the Executive Director of Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment Through Research (HACER), where he has led research and advocacy efforts since 2007. With a robust background in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, Rodolfo has over two decades of experience in evaluation, community engagement, and policy-relevant research. His work is grounded in a deep commitment to equity, particularly in shaping a Minnesota where disparities rooted in ethnicity or culture are no longer tolerated.

Originally from Mexico, Rodolfo’s binational research experience has been instrumental in building trust and collaboration across diverse communities—not only Latino, but also immigrant and underserved populations statewide. He studied for a PhD and BA in History, along with an MS in Demography, and has conducted extensive re-search on demographic change, immigration, education, healthcare access, and cultural integration.

Rodolfo currently serves on the Governor’s Committee on the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of Agricultural and Food Processing Workers (AWWC), and was appointed in 2023 by the Minnesota

Department of Health Commissioner to co-chair the HEAL Committee. He also lends his expertise to other organizations as a board member, advancing collective efforts to promote health equity and community empowerment. Rodolfo served on the MDH Long COVID Program's Community Voices Group. HACER is also a current grantee of the program, and staff contributed to the Public Life workgroup for the Statewide Roadmap.

Kate Murray is the Long COVID Program Manager and Unit Supervisor at the Minnesota Department of Health. She co-leads one of the nation's first and most comprehensive public health initiatives focused on understanding the impacts of long COVID and related conditions and improving access to care and support - particularly for communities facing health inequities. Kate was also appointed to the U.S. Health & Human Services Long COVID Advisory Committee and has served on several national workgroups for public health and healthcare research initiatives related to long COVID and similar conditions. She was a key project team member and served on the steering committee for the statewide roadmap.

Kate holds a Master of Public Health in Administration and Policy from the University of Minnesota and a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Health Sciences from South Dakota State University. Her background includes community-based participatory research, health communications, clinical laboratory science, patient care, and an intensive 20-month redeployment with Minnesota's COVID-19 response team. Kate also has lived experience with recurring neurological symptoms following a severe Lyme infection in 2025.

Dr. Jay R. Desai is the Manager of the Chronic Disease and Environmental Epidemiology Section within the Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease at the Minnesota Department of Health. The Section includes the Minnesota Cancer Reporting System, the Sickle Cell Data Collection program, and the Minnesota Long COVID Program. He is a chronic disease epidemiologist and has worked in academic research and public health practice at the University of Minnesota, HealthPartners Institute (HPI), and the Minnesota Department of Health since 1993. At HPI, he worked on primary care clinical decision support – using electronic medical record data for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity surveillance, as well as diabetes prevention in low-income individuals, and HPV vaccination in underserved communities. Jay is interested in implementation science and health equity. He received his epidemiology degrees from the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Jane Pederson serves as the Chief Medical Quality Officer at Stratis Health where she provides leadership and clinical guidance for quality and safety initiatives across all settings of care. As a primary care physician with experience in both rural and urban settings, and a geriatric practice in long term care, Jane brings focus to the importance of chronic disease management and empowering patients to achieve care that aligns with their goals for quality of life. She is a 2018 Health and Aging Policy Fellow and an APSA Congressional Fellow. Jane is a board-certified geriatrician, has a Doctor of Medicine, and a Master of Science in health services research and policy. She has also helped coordinate and convene the MDH Long COVID Guiding Council of healthcare providers.