

## SUMMARY & REPORT OUT

# RURAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

May 9, 2025 - Community Engagement Breakout Session

At Dartmouth Health's first inaugural Rural Health Symposium, CARHE sponsored and led the community engagement breakout session, facilitated by Dr. Jack Westfall and Angela Zhang. We had a packed room of 80 people, including researchers, healthcare providers, students, and community members join us for the morning and afternoon to discuss the principles of participatory research and how community members and researchers can work together to improve health equity.

## What's Your Mission?

We asked our participants what their mission was in the world, and what changes they hoped to create in the community. By sharing our passions and dreams, we are able to build connections across different roles and sectors. This word cloud summarizes some common themes that people discussed.



## How Do We Work Together?

We had a rich discussion of what community members and researchers both expect from the process of working together on participatory research, and how researchers can engage and work with communities. These are some of the results from the small-group discussions.

### WHAT DO COMMUNITY MEMBERS EXPECT FROM RESEARCHERS?

- Return on investment
- To be listened to
- Recognition in a way that matters to community
- Genuine interest from the researcher, not just checking a box
- Collaboration on making changes to improve their community
- Personal connection with the community
- Commitment over time
- Humility from the researcher
- Understanding of the culture
- Patience with the time it takes for trust-building

### HOW CAN RESEARCHERS APPROACH COMMUNITIES RESPECTFULLY?

- Approach communities early in the research process and agenda development
- Immerse yourself in the community - show up, volunteer, be a part of it as much as possible
- Don't make assumptions and consider all views
- Be transparent - acknowledge your constraints and don't over-promise
- Respect cultural norms
- Ask what matters to the community
- Use plain language (avoid jargon)
- Acknowledge past actions, especially why communities might be skeptical of research



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