

Project UNITY Takes the Stage at APHA 2025: Empowering Youth to Lead the Future of Public Health

Redefining Interdisciplinary Education to Build the Next Generation of Healthcare Leaders

WASHINGTON, D.C., DC, UNITED STATES, November 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the nation faces growing health inequities, workforce shortages, and a surge of misinformation, [Project UNITY](#) — a 501(c)(3) nonprofit shaping the next generation of interdisciplinary healthcare leaders — brought an innovative solution to the forefront at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 2025 Annual Meeting & Expo. Selected to present at the Emerging Scholars Theater, UNITY unveiled its framework for bridging public health, medicine, and digital innovation, redefining how youth leadership can drive system-level change.

The Emerging Scholars Theater highlights student and early-career professionals driving innovation in public health. Project UNITY was selected to showcase its model, “Bridging Medicine, Public Health, and Digital Health: Empowering the Next Generation of Healthcare Leaders” led by Morish Shah, Pranav Mehta, and Justin Chang, MPH.

The session introduced UNITY’s youth-driven framework designed to bridge medicine, public health, and technology to address pressing challenges such as misinformation, fragmented care, and inequities in access.

“Only 24 percent of healthcare employers report formal interprofessional training for their staff. Our work ensures that the next generation of clinicians and innovators grow up thinking across disciplines, not within silos.” said Morish Shah, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Project UNITY.



Project UNITY Senior Leadership at APHA 2025 following the Emerging Scholars Theater session: Morish Shah, Pranav, Mehta, and Justin Chang, MPH.

The second part of the presentation featured UNITY's flagship summer program, Catalyst Academy, which was also highlighted in the APHA Closing Session by President-Elect Nandi Marshall as the nation's first high school interdisciplinary public health leadership program grounded in the CEPH Public Health Foundations, AAMC Pre-Med Competencies, and Digital Health Literacy. Since its inception, Catalyst Academy has trained more than 250 students, engaged over 100 mentors, and produced 60+ research publications. As Dr. Marshall noted, "Project UNITY is training and engaging students in [public health], showcasing a window of endless possibilities."

The third part of the presentation showcased Project UNITY's Youth Public Health Innovation Coalition (Y-PHIC) — the first national incubator supporting youth-led organizations in transforming public health ideas into scalable social impact initiatives. Through mentorship, leadership development, and applied learning frameworks inspired by startup methodologies, Y-PHIC equips students to move from education to implementation.

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*Dr. Nandi Marshall, DrPH,
President-Elect, APHA*

“Our work proves that youth aren't just the future of public health — they're leading it today,” said Pranav Mehta, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Project UNITY.

Project UNITY's approach is anchored in its four-part framework — youth-driven, community-rooted, evidence-based, and interdisciplinary-focused — ensuring that every initiative combines real-world impact with measurable

outcomes. The organization's national advisory board includes leaders from UC Davis Health, Salesforce, Harvard Medical School, the American College of Cardiology, and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, among others.

Since its founding during the COVID-19 pandemic, Project UNITY has evolved from a student-led



Project UNITY team at the APHA 2025 Emerging Scholars Theater: Pranav Mehta, Diana Jacob, Meredith Loui, MPH, Justin Chang, MPH and Morish Shah.

initiative into a national innovation lab reaching more than 23+ states & Canada through workshops, educational programs, and research-to-action initiatives that empower youth to design scalable public health solutions. Project UNITY continues to demonstrate how education can be a catalyst for lasting innovation in medicine, public health, and digital health.

Looking ahead, Project UNITY plans to expand Y-PHIC, launch new AI and digital health education programs, and build partnerships with leading institutions to scale its impact nationwide.

For more information about Project UNITY or to join its growing community of educators, healthcare leaders, and students, visit www.projectunitynfp.org or email info@projectunitynfp.org.

Sign up for our [newsletter](#).

Diana Jacob

Director of Marketing, Project UNITY

diana.jacob@projectunitynfp.org

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Diana Jacob of Project UNITY with Dean Kelly Gebo, Milken Institute of Public Health at The George Washington University

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