

CARRE at the North American Refugee Health Conference (NARHC) August 2024

What is NARHC? How is the IRC/CARRE involved with NARHC?

The North American Refugee Health Conference ([NARHC](#)) educates, inspires and advocates for best practices for refugee and immigrant health. This year, NARHC took place in the birthplace of refugee health: Minneapolis, Minnesota. More than 1,000 clinicians, resettlement providers, academics, policymakers, students and community members attended to learn about emerging issues in refugee health.

CARRE was a collaborative partner, participating in oral abstract presentations covering topics such as meaningful ways to adapt Mental Health interventions with Attachment Vitamins and the impact of the [Safety & Wellness case management benchmarks](#) (you can also reference our recent Newsletter article regarding the benchmarks [here](#)). CARRE was selected to speak on the continued impact of Attachment Vitamins for a second year in a row, in which approximately 100 families across 7 states and languages (includes 290 children) with 9 partners overall were engaged through the CARRE/UCSF pilot adaptation!



Further contributing to an enhanced and urgent call for community, compassion, responsibility and solidarity, keynotes from NARHC 2024 included Representative Ilhan Omar, award-winning author Kao Kalia Yang, Prof. Izzeldin Abuelaish, Dr. Gaurab Basu and IRC's Faith Akovi Cooper. Faith spoke about her inspiring journey as a refugee and changemaker and the importance of moving beyond labels to see the whole person.



IRC Staff Reflections and Takeaways

The conference imparted crucial takeaways that remain essential to the tenets of the IRC, including our collective work to provide dignified, trauma-informed, reliable, safe and culturally appropriate care that is adaptive and innovative. Some overall themes from the conference included but are not limited to the following:

- ***Collaboration is key:*** The conference brought together providers and community members in the spirit of sharing and learning from each other. According to IRC's Faith Akovi Cooper, it is our collective responsibility and duty to **collaborate, coordinate and communicate** because **none** of us can do this alone. Furthermore, this includes fully engaging and starting where the community is (not parachuting in), essential in our provision of care as reinstated by activist Isra Chaker. An example of this is using cultural and faith-based campaigning to amplify and increase the capacity of local organizations. For instance, if focusing on Muslim women's maternal health, framing by and with the Muslim community and their values is key.
- ***Nothing about us, without us:*** It is critical to center refugee voices in refugee work. Their perspective is critical to include in decolonizing refugee work and finding solutions that truly work for communities. We must honor, respect and speak up on the truths of our communities, including historical, systemic and protracted injustices and violence. As said by Dr. Anisa Ibrahim, ***those closest to the pain should have the power.***
- ***Political determinants of health:*** Several speakers urged attendees to include political determinants of health among social determinants of health in recognition that individual and community health is impacted by political

decisions. This includes policies that contribute to climate change, conflict, and destabilization that impact generations of families, including health and life expectancy outcomes, both in the U.S. and abroad.

- ***See the whole person:*** We must move beyond the label ‘refugee’, knowing refugees are **more than what they carry and certainly more than the sum of their traumas** as Faith Akovi Cooper said. It is important to recognize the many gifts and humanity within and across forcibly displaced communities and what they contribute to the world.



It is hard to do justice to the numerous impactful presenters and presentations, but you can get a sense of the conference by reading the [agenda](#). If you have not attended NARHC and have an interest in refugee and migration health, it is highly recommended. The next conference, newly re-named the International Refugee and Migration Health Conference, is already scheduled for June 2025 and will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It promises to again be a moving and impactful gathering and learning space. We hope to see you there!



*“When we see the **WHOLE** person, we see humanity.*

*When we see the **WHOLE** person, we see the assets.*

*When we see the **WHOLE** person, we move from a deficit lens to one of dignity and respect, and also to one of hope and possibility.”*

*- Faith Akovi Cooper, Regional Director, Southern Border,
IRC*

