

# Closing the Health Equity Gap (Sustainably)

A panel discussion event at Davos 2023

ORGANIZED BY  
Health Finance Institute  
Northwell's Center for Global Health  
unDavos 23



## EVENT RECAP

Nestled in the Swiss Mountains in Davos, and alongside the concurrent annual World Economic Forum, **high-level speakers representing the Global North and South tackled one of the most challenging topics in healthcare provision: closing the health equity gap.**

The panel included four prominent experts: **Sylvana Sinha, Esq.**, Founder, Chair, & CEO of Praava Health; **Dr. Max Martin**, Executive Vice President & Global Head of Philanthropy of Lombard Odier Foundation; **Ceridwen Johnson**, Head of Advocacy and Communications at ATScale; and **Geralyn Ritter**, EVP, External Affairs & ESG Sustainability at Organon & Co.

The panel was organized by Health Finance Institute, Northwell's Center for Global Health, and UnDavos23, to tackle the big question of closing the health equity gap.

(continued)

## SPEAKERS

**Sylvana Q. Sinha, Esq.**  
Founder, Chair, and CEO  
Praava Health

**Dr. Max Martin**  
Executive Vice President & Global  
Head of Philanthropy  
Lombard Odier Foundation

**Ceridwen Johnson**  
Head of Advocacy and  
Communications  
ATScale

**Geralyn Ritter**  
EVP, External Affairs & ESG  
Sustainability  
Organon & Co.

**Dr. Andrea Feigl (Moderator)**  
Founder and CEO  
Health Finance Institute

The early start time notwithstanding, the conference room was packed, signaling the relevance and importance of the debated issue. **This sent a strong signal, especially against the backdrop of health not featuring very strongly on the WEF's main stage in 2023.** Attendees represented organizations across the public, private, and non-profit sectors, including high-level representatives from large foundations, health providers, corporations, coalitions, and more.

**The panel discussion covered a broad range of challenges and opportunities to bridge the health equity gap** and to reach high-quality, equitable, and accessible healthcare for all through the lens of Universal Health access.

The main takeaways from the panel and interactive Q&A session were that:

**Much is needed to achieve our shared goal of health equity.** We need to improve the investment ecosystem to broaden who is investing and where investments are being made. We also should seek to enhance information sharing and to forge new partnerships that enable earlier diagnosis using information exchange. Access to assistive technology is also part of health equity, and the divide between rich and poor is deepening. This lack of access denies people of basic rights (e.g., the right to education, the right to employment, and the right to play). We also should focus on healthcare quality in addition to healthcare access, as quality is deeply lacking in many parts of the world.

**We need to pursue multiple avenues to close the financing gap.** We need increased commitments and political will in support of known solutions and high-impact projects. To increase funding flows, we also should make linkages outside of the health sector, including with finance ministers. Solutions also need to be appropriate, i.e. fitted and adapted to the local context and individual needs, to have the desired impact. We will need to collect the right data and metrics to inform the management and improvement of solutions. Investors will need to set realistic expectations around timelines, as systems change in health in LMICs can look different and require a longer investment horizon. In addition, public health entities need to be clear about the downstream financial gains of interventions and who benefits from such downstream returns. Note that HFI and David Watkins recent published [this paper in Re:solve](#) on blended finance in NCD financing.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

HFI and Northwell Global Health are working on the issues discussed at this event. For more information, please contact:

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