NHIT COMMUNITY HEALTH INNOVATION SUMMIT: MEMPHIS 2026

— TITLE —

Reimagining Health. Expanding Access. Building Trust.

— UNIFYING THEME —

From National Dialogue to Local Action: Advancing Cancer Care Access and Early Detection, Community Trust, and Clinical Research Participation

— JOIN THE CONVERSATION —

#NHITSummit2026 · #FromMemphisToDC · #NHITImpactTour

DURATION	TIME	PARTICIPANTS	DATE
3.5 Hours	9:00 AM – 12:30 PM	75+ Multi-Sector Leaders	October 8, 2026

University of Tennessee Health Science Center

College of Nursing, Crowe Building · 874 Union Avenue, Memphis, TN 38103

Thursday, October 8, 2026

SUMMIT OVERVIEW

The next era of healthcare is being shaped by advances in precision medicine, biomarker testing, clinical research, AI-enabled care, and community-centered approaches to prevention and treatment. Yet for many communities, the challenge is not whether innovation exists — it is whether innovation reaches the people who need it most.

The NHIT Community Health Innovation Summit – Memphis 2026 is built on a simple belief: meaningful progress in cancer outcomes begins where scientific innovation meets community trust. Earlier detection, improved access to care, patient navigation, and participation in clinical research are most effective when patients, providers, researchers, community leaders, and trusted messengers work together.

As part of the NHIT National Impact Tour, the Summit brings national conversations on healthcare modernization, patient engagement, and clinical research into a local setting — creating a platform for Memphis leaders to identify practical solutions that improve cancer care access, strengthen community trust, and expand participation in clinical research.

For one focused afternoon, patient advocates, caregivers, healthcare providers, researchers, community health workers, faith leaders, public health professionals, industry partners, and policymakers will come together not simply to discuss challenges, but to co-design solutions that can improve health outcomes and serve as a model for communities across the nation.

Building on the momentum of the NHIT Congressional Roundtable, Baltimore Roundtable, Puerto Rico Community Health Innovation Summit, and NHIT Legislative Summit, Memphis represents the next phase of the NHIT National Impact Tour — where national priorities are translated into meaningful local action.

This Summit is where national priorities become local action.

PURPOSE

Cancer continues to be one of the leading causes of death in Memphis, with many patients facing barriers to screening, early diagnosis, patient navigation, and access to innovative treatments and clinical research opportunities. These challenges are often compounded by gaps in awareness, trust, and community engagement.

At the same time, advances in early detection, biomarker testing, precision medicine, and community-based care create new opportunities to improve outcomes when patients are connected to

care earlier and supported throughout their healthcare journey.

The NHIT Memphis Health Innovation Summit exists to bring together patients, caregivers, healthcare providers, researchers, community health workers, faith leaders, public health professionals, and industry partners to identify practical strategies that:

- Expand cancer care access and early detection
- Strengthen community trust and patient engagement
- Increase awareness and participation in clinical research
- Build partnerships that support long-term community health improvement

Building upon recommendations emerging from the NHIT National Impact Tour and Legislative Summit, Memphis will serve as a demonstration community for translating national priorities into measurable local action.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- **Expand Cancer Care Access and Early Detection —** Increase awareness of screening, biomarker testing, patient navigation, and early intervention strategies that improve outcomes.
- **Strengthen Community Trust and Patient Engagement —** Leverage Community Health Workers, faith leaders, patient advocates, and trusted organizations to improve communication, education, and access to care.
- **Expand Clinical Research Participation —** Increase awareness of clinical research opportunities and identify community-centered approaches to participation and engagement.

THREE SUMMIT PILLARS

Cancer Care Access & Early Detection	Community Trust & Patient Voice	Clinical Research Participation & Community Innovation

AGENDA

Thursday, October 8, 2026 · 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM CT

8:00 AM
60 MIN

Registration, Breakfast & Networking Reception

Arrival, breakfast, and networking. Participants connect with community organizations, healthcare providers, patient advocates, researchers, and industry partners.

9:00 AM
10 MIN

WELCOME

Welcome from the Summit Co-Chairs

Summit Co-Chairs: Gregory Vidal, MD, PhD & Janeane Anderson, PhD

9:10 AM
15 MIN

OPENING REMARKS

Opening Remarks

Speakers

- Luis Belén, CEO, National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved (NHIT®)
- Dana Barbee, Health Literacy Lead, Genentech
- Mitch Graves, Chief Executive Officer, West Cancer Center & Research Institute

9:25 AM

55 MIN

PANEL 1

Expanding Cancer Care Access and Early Detection Through Technology

Moderator: Athena Starlard-Davenport, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Genetics, Genomics and Informatics, University of Tennessee Health Science Center

Opens with a three-minute framing of her work and perspective before the panel discussion.

Panelists

- Bruce Randolph, MD, MPH, Interim Director & Health Officer, Shelby County Health Department
- Jessica Snowden, MD, MS, MHPTT, Vice Chancellor for Research & Interim Dean, Graduate Health Sciences
- Gregory A. Vidal, MD, PhD, Director of Clinical Research, West Cancer Center & Research Institute

Discussion Questions

1. How do we strengthen collaboration between academic institutions and community oncology programs to improve community understanding of and participation in clinical trials, as well as the quality, type, and number of trials offered in Memphis? What context-specific strategies might leverage existing strengths?
2. How can health tech developers move from “building for” underrepresented communities to co-designing innovations with them?
3. How do we build trust in AI-driven health innovations when the data used to train them has historically excluded minority populations?
4. What steps must innovators take to ensure new predictive health tools do not inadvertently replicate or scale existing systemic biases?

10:20 AM
55 MIN

PANEL 2

Building Community Trust and Expanding Participation in Clinical Research

Moderator: Karen M. Winkfield, MD, PhD, Executive Director, Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance

Panelists

- Carla Baker, RN, Director, Memphis Breast Cancer Consortium
- Ricki Fairley, MBA, Co-Founder & CEO, Touch
- Janeane N. Anderson, PhD, MPH, IF, Associate Professor, College of Nursing, University of Tennessee Health Science Center

Discussion Questions

1. What are the most effective strategies for overcoming deep-rooted medical mistrust and fear around a cancer diagnosis that often delays early screening?
2. Can you share an example of a successful mobile screening or decentralized trial model that brought oncology care directly into a healthcare desert?
3. Data is often called the new currency of health innovation — how do we ensure communities that share their data directly benefit from the treatments or commercial value generated?
4. How do we move past short-term, grant-funded pilots into permanent, sustainable infrastructure for equitable cancer care delivery?

11:15 AM
10 MIN

Networking Break

Transition to the breakout rooms.

11:25 AM
45 MIN

INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY INNOVATION LAB

The Community Voice: Co-Designing Memphis's Future

Format: Breakouts for small-group, topic-focused idea generation. Attendees choose the breakout they join — one that reflects their professional or personal expertise, or one to explore something new.

Breakout Rooms

- Room 1 — Women · Facilitator: Claudette Shephard, MD, University of Tennessee Health Science Center
- Room 2 — Youth, Training & Education · Facilitator: Nikki Wallace, Crosstown High School
- Room 3 — Reconciling Health Innovation with Environmental Racism in Memphis · Facilitator: KeShaun Pearson, Memphis Community Against Pollution
- Room 4 — Health IT & Memphis Workforce Development · Facilitator: Ted Townsend, Former President & CEO, Greater Memphis Chamber

12:10 PM
10 MIN

Networking Break

Return from the breakout rooms and regroup for closing.

12:20 PM
10 MIN

CLOSING REMARKS

From Community Voice to Community Partnership

Summit Co-Chairs: Gregory Vidal, MD, PhD & Janeane Anderson, PhD

FEATURED MODERATORS

Athena Starlard-Davenport, PhD

Associate Professor in the Department of Genetics, Genomics and Informatics at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, and a faculty member of its Center for Sickle Cell Disease. Her research examines how genetic, epigenetic, and environmental factors shape health disparities, with a focus on breast cancer among African American women. She leads the Sistas Taking a Stand for Breast Cancer Research (STAR) study, which engages African American women in Memphis in breast cancer research, and brings deep expertise in research equity, community trust, and the responsible use of technology in cancer care.

Karen M. Winkfield, MD, PhD

Executive Director of the Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance and the Ingram Professor of Cancer Research at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. A radiation oncologist and nationally recognized leader in cancer health equity, she focuses on improving access to high-quality cancer care and expanding clinical research participation in underserved communities. She is widely recognized for her work engaging patients and communities as partners in cancer care and research.

PIPELINE TO ACTION

NHIT NATIONAL IMPACT TOUR

NHIT Congressional Roundtable · Washington, DC
Baltimore Roundtable · Baltimore, Maryland
NHIT Community Health Innovation Summit · San Juan, Puerto Rico
NHIT Legislative Summit · Washington, DC

NHIT Community Health Innovation Summit · Memphis, Tennessee

NHIT Community Health Innovation Summit · Orlando, Florida
NHIT Community Health Innovation Summit · San Antonio, Texas
NHIT Congressional Briefing · Washington, DC

The Memphis Summit represents the next chapter of the NHIT National Impact Tour — turning national priorities into local action and demonstrating how community-driven innovation can improve health outcomes.

This Summit is where national priorities become local action.

HOST

National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved (NHIT®)

Established in 2008, NHIT engages underrepresented populations in the development and use of health information technology (HIT) to support and sustain health transformation and economic mobility. NHIT's work is grounded in five pillars: Workforce, Innovation, Policy, Research, and Community.

Convened by the National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved (NHIT®)

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