

Good afternoon everyone.

My name is Courtni Andrews. I am a Black woman with long black hair and blunt bangs wearing colorful makeup and a button-up shirt. I'm here today before you all virtually as a young public health practitioner in her personal capacity, not representing my employer or job. I am also one of the Co-Chairs for the Education and Outreach Subcommittee for the ICSWG and a member of the Campaign Against Racism among other affiliations.

While I only have two minutes to speak, I want to say bluntly that a minute after I speak, according to current stats, someone will have died from COVID as every three minutes someone dies from COVID globally.

And after a few more people speak after me, someone from the US will have died of COVID as it is estimated that someone dies of COVID in the US every seven minutes. And because 1 in 10 infections will also lead to a long COVID diagnosis, we are, to some degree, repeating history because with every pandemic, there is a rise of eugenics and authoritarianism.

So, as more and more Black people become disabled or die from COVID and our life expectancy continues to drop because of this novel virus, I am saying bluntly that we are not out of the woods with this pandemic by any means, and I refuse to accept this as the best we can do to keep each other safe from COVID and future infectious diseases.

Therefore, while I am grateful for the opportunity to be here virtually and because I am not a eugenicist or a fascist, I ask the PFPAD to be on the right side of history, lead the way in championing for health justice because it should not just be on immunocompromised and disabled people to speak up.

COVID is real, it is killing our people and we cannot contribute to a culture of health supremacy.

Thus, I want to encourage and recommend the PFPAD be adequately resourced by the United Nations to ensure it can live up to and make real the commitments made to racial justice and equity, which must include having accessible options and protocols for safety and health for these events this week and going forward permanently with budgets and allocated resources to do so. There should be proper ventilation in all buildings and rooms, masking and testing protocols, and other mitigation strategies to keep all of us safe.

Thank you for your time. I yield.