

Health communications and public relations executive Jack Leslie joins Duke to lead effort to build trust in public health

DURHAM, N.C., JANUARY 25, 2023—Jack Leslie, an internationally recognized executive in strategic communications and political consulting, is joining Duke University as a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Duke Global Health Institute (DGHI) and Visiting Fellow at the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy.

Leslie, the former chairman of Weber Shandwick, a global public relations firm, and former chair of the Duke Global Health Institute's Board of Advisors, will work across DGHI, the Margolis Center and the Duke Global Health Innovation Center to design a new initiative to build trust in public health.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has made clear that public health organizations need to do more to build and keep the public's trust. Jack has a long track record of bringing stakeholders together around innovative engagement strategies," said **Chris Beyrer**, director of DGHI. "We are delighted to have him continue this important work at Duke and DGHI."

"Jack has been a pioneer in bringing a broad base of stakeholders together to work to solve leading, complex health challenges. His passionate commitment to health equity, demonstrated through his years of public and private sector contributions on this consequential issue, will inform his valuable contributions to Duke and this initiative to advance public health locally, nationally, and globally," said **Mark McClellan**, founding director of the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy.

Leslie has deep experience in development, humanitarian assistance and global health. President Barack Obama appointed him as chairman of the U.S. African Development Foundation in 2009, following six years of service on the board. He is the chair of the board of the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation and a member of the board of directors of Water.Org, in addition to several other board roles. He began his career in Washington, D.C., serving as a legislative assistant to Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and has provided political counsel to presidential and statewide campaigns in the United States, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

"I'm delighted to join Duke in efforts to build greater trust in public health," said **Jack Leslie**. "Trust in all institutions has been on the decline for some time, and trust in public health has been significantly undermined during the COVID-19 pandemic. DGHI and the Margolis Center are leaders in global health and health policy, and can harness the resources and talent needed to address this important issue."

In his role at Duke, Leslie will build from work he began at The Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center Residency to understand the crisis of trust in public health, which has been building for decades. A convening of global public health stakeholders, led by Leslie and colleagues from Duke in November 2022, identified and prioritized specific actions that hold promise to enhance trust with a focus on communities, communication, and competence. These focus areas will serve as the building blocks for a larger global initiative to strengthen trust in public health.

About Duke University

Younger than most other prestigious U.S. research universities, Duke University consistently ranks among the very best. Its graduate and professional schools—in business, divinity, engineering, the environment, law, medicine, nursing and public policy—are among the leaders in their fields.

Duke enrolls more than 16,000 students in its undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, and its world-class faculty is helping to expand the frontiers of knowledge. The university has a strong commitment to applying knowledge in service to society, both near its North Carolina campus and around the world. Situated on nearly 9,000 acres in Durham, North Carolina, Duke is one of the very few schools in the country, or the world, that combines academic and athletic accomplishment at the highest levels.

About the Duke Global Health Institute

Formed in 2006 as part of Duke University's commitment to spark innovation in global health research and education, the institute brings together knowledge and resources from across the university to address the most important global health issues of our time. <https://globalhealth.duke.edu/>

About the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy

The mission of the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy at Duke University is to improve health, health equity, and the value of health care through practical, innovative, and evidence-based policy solutions. For more information, visit healthpolicy.duke.edu and follow us on Twitter [@DukeMargolis](https://twitter.com/DukeMargolis).

About the Duke Global Health Innovation Center

The Duke Global Health Innovation Center supports the scaling of health delivery and policy innovations through applied research and education to improve health worldwide. For more information, visit <http://dukeghic.org>.