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Dani Pacia (she/her): Thank you for joining the Hastings Center event, is it possible to have healthy people on a sick planet.

Dani Pacia (she/her): Please know that you will not be audible or visible throughout the webinar, but we do welcome your participation and are encouraged to ask questions to the Q amp a function in zoom This event is being recorded and will be available at the Hastings Center website later today for viewing.

Dani Pacia (she/her): it's now my pleasure to introduce Dr Mildred Solomon president of the Hastings Center.

Mildred Solomon: Thanks Danny.

Mildred Solomon: Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, no matter what time zone you're in welcome.

Mildred Solomon: I’m Millie Solomon I’m president of the Hastings Center and it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the third annual Daniel Callahan public lecture.

Mildred Solomon: named in the in honor of the Hastings centers co founder, we are grateful to the Klingenstein family, for their great generosity.

Mildred Solomon: Both the John and Patricia Klingenstein fund and the Andrew and Julie Klingenstein family foundation underwrite our Callahan lecture and a number of other activities through which we bring bioethics issues to public attention.

Mildred Solomon: Dan passed away in the summer of 2019 three days shy of his 89th birthday over five decades, he produced 47 books writing across a diverse set of topics from abortion to aging from health care costs to organ donation.

Mildred Solomon: A basic through line was his hope that we humans, would be able to articulate values and develop ethical guidance, so that we would use our biomedical knowledge wisely to build a world capable of supporting human flourishing and the common good.

Mildred Solomon: Just months before his death for what was to be his last project Dan convened an interdisciplinary group of scientists environmental emphasis and other scholars.

Mildred Solomon: To address global warming and to consider how bioethics might help it was his last act that's why we know he would be especially pleased by today's topic.

Mildred Solomon: Can there be healthy people on a sick planet and he would be delighted by our featured guest Gary Cohen I’d like to thank Hastings trustee Blair Sadler for introducing us to Mr Khan that wasn't inspired connection Blair, thank you.

Mildred Solomon: Mr Cohen, is going to join us in just a moment, but first I want to mention how our time is going to be structured Gary and I are going to talk for about 35 or 40 minutes.

Mildred Solomon: and during that time, please enter your questions into the Q and A function, not the chat function Q amp a please then sometime in Danny will return to let me know what questions you've posed, and we, I will present them to Gary to take up we're going to end the whole webinar at.

Mildred Solomon: i'd like to tell you, first a bit about Mr come he's The co-founder and President of healthcare without harm.

Mildred Solomon: it's an international campaign for environmentally responsible healthcare.

Mildred Solomon: Healthcare without harm is working to prevent disease and illness in society by assisting the healthcare sector to understand the links between a healthy environment and healthy people.

Mildred Solomon: it's also helping hospitals, become more environmentally sustainable and helping communities build resilience equity and Community wellness wellness.

Mildred Solomon: This initiative already has thousands of Member organizations and partners in 70 countries there are over 1300 hospital members in the United States alone.

Mildred Solomon: One of its many impressive accomplishments is that nearly 4000 hospital incinerators that were burning toxic medical waste have been shut down thanks to Gary’s leadership.

Mildred Solomon: Before he started healthcare without harm is to Cohen helped build coalitions and networks globally to reduce toxic chemical exposure.

Mildred Solomon: a pioneer in the environmental health movement he's published numerous books and articles in 2013 he was awarded the champion of change Award for climate change and which was an award that was given by the White House and in.

Mildred Solomon: He received the benefit venerable MacArthur fellowship award and you know those awards that are known as the genius award so Gary Cohen please join us.

Mildred Solomon: there.

Gary Cohen: are going hi everyone.

Mildred Solomon: Gary.

Mildred Solomon: you've called climate change, the number one threat to human health and a medical emergency so let's start there would you give us a kind of primer.

Mildred Solomon: walk us through the major ways in which global warming is threatening him and health.

Gary Cohen: Okay, so for one.

Gary Cohen: The emissions from fossil fuels are killing twice as many people as AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined on the planet, through millions of people they're dying prematurely from emissions from fossil fuels and the toxic chemicals that derive from it.

Gary Cohen: we're also learning that that climate change will have profound impacts on people's health at multiple levels from rising temperatures, that means people will be exposed to more and more extreme heat days, more and more.

Gary Cohen: Flooding as sea level rises so coastal cities are being impacted more extreme weather around hurricanes more air pollution.

Gary Cohen: More waterborne diseases more anxiety and we're seeing that already among our youth, who are concerned about what kind of future do I have.

Gary Cohen: Should I have children in such a world in crisis and also the explosion of climate refugees that is going to have already having huge impacts on the politics of many different countries.

Gary Cohen: So it's so many different levels, the climate change will will profoundly impact everyone on the planet and will also.

Gary Cohen: be a force multiplier for all the racial and social inequities and health inequities that we see in our society and society it's all around the world.

Mildred Solomon: thing more about that has explained for.

Mildred Solomon: The connection.

So.

Gary Cohen: What we see is in in places where communities that have been red lines.

Gary Cohen: Communities of color there's less tree cover there's been less trees planted over the years, so in a in a in a hot summer humid day in baltimore.

Gary Cohen: In a black neighborhood it could be 10 degrees hotter than the white middle class neighborhood that will lead more people to have respiratory failure to go to the emergency room.

Gary Cohen: If we look at where all the diesel truck routes are through many of our cities it's through communities of color if we look at the fact that many of the increased air pollution factors are going to increase.

Gary Cohen: A respiratory problems it's people would already with pre existing conditions.

Gary Cohen: People who have less access to health care, who have less insurance, we saw with covert the covert was a force multiplier so black people died at twice the rate of white people native people died a three times the red climate is also that same force multiplier.

Mildred Solomon: And the pandemic itself, I mean global warming is creating the erosion of habitat, in any case this is creating more borne diseases mosquito borne diseases there's a connection there as well.

Gary Cohen: yeah so, in other words i'm 25 years ago dengue fever was in Panama dinky fever now is in Texas it's in Florida it's moving North so as the planet warms.

Gary Cohen: mosquitoes that carry an actual disease are also traveling further north so anyone who's concerned with public health malaria dengate other.

Gary Cohen: Infectious Diseases tick borne diseases they've got to be consumed with climate change, because that actual area in which those disease vectors are thriving is expanding.

Gary Cohen: And even even here I mean what we saw with coven is that people who already had weekend respiratory systems were more likely to have an extreme reaction from covert it's the same dynamics that are playing out along racial grounds around economic disadvantage.

Gary Cohen: Around climate climate is does the same kinds of things.

Mildred Solomon: So I have a question about why to focus on health care delivery, you know there's we have so much research that shows.

Mildred Solomon: That well it's extremely important and, of course, we should support healthcare delivery for everybody universal health care.

Mildred Solomon: it's well known that healthcare delivery itself is only responsible for about 10 between somewhere between 10 and 20% of a population is health so.

Mildred Solomon: you're naming large social factors, and you know environmental factors why the focus on health care delivery when it accounts for such a small percentage of health status.

Gary Cohen: I think it's about changing the mission of healthcare.

Gary Cohen: So the whole reason we started health care without harm is because, as you mentioned.

Gary Cohen: In 1995 medical waste incinerators we're the largest source of dioxide emissions in the United States dioxin being.

Gary Cohen: linked to cancer and birth defects and learning disabilities and a whole set of other home health problems.

Gary Cohen: and also a large source of mercury missions, because of all the broken thermometers winding up and incinerators going out into the.

Gary Cohen: into the air into the water and then meet the fish, and so the disconnect between healthcare understanding.

Gary Cohen: what was going on in the environment that they were accountable to they were responsible for was so profound that we said look the healthcare sector is the one sector of our economy that has healing as its mission.

Gary Cohen: So what hope do we have create the conditions for health healthy communities, a healthy planet if the very sector.

Gary Cohen: That is supposed to live by this ethical frame of do no harm is itself a massive polluter, so that that cognitive dissidence.

Gary Cohen: That irony has driven our work over the course of the last quarter century, so now we look at healthcare why healthcare healthcare is in the United States is responsible for almost 9% of the greenhouse gas emissions of this country.

Mildred Solomon: Really, the one sector that's responsible.

Gary Cohen: And we did an analysis of healthcare globally and we said it's almost 5% of global greenhouse gas emissions, so that means that's the equivalent annual missions have over 400 coal fired power plants.

Gary Cohen: Help us healthcare is 25% of all global healthcare emissions, so are our culpability our accountability is massive.

Gary Cohen: So there's that and then, when we look at what's what part of the economy does healthcare occupy it's almost 20% of the US economy.

Gary Cohen: So if we can transform healthcare to to kick it to addiction to fossil fuels kick its addiction to toxic chemicals it's addiction to industrial agriculture, we can model.

Gary Cohen: A much broader transformation that we need in our civilization and through that process, we can improve everybody's health.

Gary Cohen: So healthcare's mission in the 21st century needs to expand dramatically beyond healing individuals to joining with others to heal communities and to heal the planet.

Mildred Solomon: So I really hear two distinct but interrelated goals here one is.

Mildred Solomon: As you said, creating a new paradigm for health.

Mildred Solomon: That is more focused on the social determinants of health, the economic and disparities that we that we see in a whole new way of thinking about health and thinking about how society should organize itself.

Mildred Solomon: To promote population level health.

Mildred Solomon: and health care isn't going to be the solution for all for all, a lot of us solutions will come better housing better social policies, etc.

Mildred Solomon: And then the other part, is it sounds like you're asking the healthcare system to step up hey you're 20% of the economy, you need to decarbonize yourselves.

Mildred Solomon: And what the healthcare system can do internally, so to speak, where i've heard you talk about the healthcare ecosystem, with the ECHO system can do.

Mildred Solomon: So do I have that right, first of all that you're really kind of making two very big important points that are distinct been entered but relate.

Gary Cohen: They are interesting, but they do interrelate because, as we decarbonize as as we invest getting healthcare to invest in green chemistry.

Gary Cohen: Renewable energy to rants facilities it's fleets to be a buyer of more regenerative agriculture and support farmers in their communities.

Gary Cohen: it's the how we decarbonize that's so important that that links these two together because healthcare can use its purchasing power.

Gary Cohen: To co invest in renewable energy, not only for its facilities so that the last building standing and extreme weather events, but also to co invest in renewable energy for its communities.

Gary Cohen: It can invest in food systems that are more sustainable, more racially diverse for patients and employees and visitors.

Gary Cohen: But it can also do that with schools and it can do that with universities and other institutional buyers to weave together.

Gary Cohen: A food system that is actually resilient diverse protective of the environment, it can it can be a partner, not the solution, only but a partner in helping to detoxify people's housing.

Gary Cohen: Because we know the people that show up at the emergency room again and again with kids with asthma, a lot of stuff is happening in their homes, there may be leaky.

Gary Cohen: leaky pipes, there may be moldy carpets there may be pesticides under the sink there may be all sorts of other triggers and so, if we can actually go upstream.

Gary Cohen: and invest in those upstream triggers we can improve people's homes, we can reduce the incidence of asthma and respiratory disease, we can save money.

Gary Cohen: So we need to re invent the incentives of healthcare to support prevention that will build resilience that can build equity in communities so it's a big it's a big transformation.

Where about transformation.

Mildred Solomon: So I couldn't agree more with the vision that you've just laid out for a new paradigm for health, I just want to push a little bit more on how much we are expecting the healthcare system to do, because I think there's a potential here for.

Mildred Solomon: I don't know putting too much control over this in the hands of the healthcare system, when in fact.

Mildred Solomon: There are many experts outside of the healthcare system will you mentioned housing so, for example, the Hastings Center has been working with.

Mildred Solomon: The Center for housing it at Harvard, and I mean, these are not doctors they're not part of the health care system, but they really know the relationship between housing and health and well being and they've really studied this they're dynamite experts.

Mildred Solomon: And yet, in our healthcare policy we've often been asking healthcare systems to solve housing problems, for example.

Mildred Solomon: And i'm sure where it goes well those healthcare systems turned to experts, like the folks I just mentioned, but also, I think it can go awry and we can expect doctors, especially in healthcare systems to sort of.

Mildred Solomon: Be experts in everything and and we reflect that in our budget priorities I mean just compared to what we spend on the NIH budget with what we spend on CDC is public health budget so i'm worried that.

Mildred Solomon: I think you're calling for a new paradigm for health.

Mildred Solomon: But i'm worried that so much is put on healthcare tell me why i'm wrong.

Gary Cohen: Well, I think it has a lot to do with relationships, the power relationships, so, if so, we need to move away from healthcare a savior.

Gary Cohen: and seeing community as deficit, you know even the language of Community health needs assessment so that's what nonprofit hospitals have to assess.

Gary Cohen: So what are the assets in the Community, what about the knowledge, the wisdom in the Community so it's about changing the power relationships, so it healthcare shows up as a partner.

Gary Cohen: We have purchasing power we have political power, we have moral suasion we have clinical power we have workforce development, these are all different assets.

Gary Cohen: The Community has assets as well, so it's about marrying those assets in a partnership model it's not the savior model that's also something we have to transform so I you're right we don't want to load up everything on to health care.

Gary Cohen: But healthcare has an enormous amount of money influence power in our society, and we need to leverage it for a much broader set of societal values and good so i'm agreeing with you it's it's the methodology that's really important here.

Mildred Solomon: that's great now I think you've twice talked about or you've you've mentioned purchasing power.

Mildred Solomon: And so i'm inferring that that is one big lever for decarbonizing the healthcare ecosystem can can you talk more about these these leavers and maybe start with that one what where is the potential for healthcare systems to decarbonize.

Gary Cohen: Well, so.

Gary Cohen: The obvious places which people are focused on is their energy systems so.

Gary Cohen: Much of healthcare is fueled by fossil fuels.

Gary Cohen: That can be transformed so that so that healthcare can actually be fueled by wind and solar so i'll give you a small example, there was a there's a system in Wisconsin which has been highly dependent on call a called gunderson health system.

Gary Cohen: And they made a commitment through the CEO Jeff Thompson that they were going to become energy independent they were going to get off call completely they were going to invest in wind and solar and all sorts of other.

Gary Cohen: Community based technologies so they provide, and they did that they achieved energy independence and they.

Gary Cohen: did that, by not only investing for themselves, but they invested with some other towns, so the whole town have cashed in was constant is run on windpower fueled by some of the investments that interest in May you know they've taken they've worked with the local.

Gary Cohen: Landfills to capture bio gas from the landfill to help run things they so.

Gary Cohen: So it's the idea of leveraging their.

Gary Cohen: Power as Co investors but what's what we discovered in our analysis around healthcare's carbon footprint is it's over 70% of it.

Gary Cohen: Is in supply chain and their investments it's in the stuff they buy and the companies they invest in so they have this incredible opportunity.

Gary Cohen: If we can aggregate the power of many, many different healthcare systems to move away from toxic plastics, to move toward more plant based diets in what we serve our patients.

Gary Cohen: To have more energy efficient Mr eyes that you don't have to buy a new one every every couple years you just replace apart you upgraded you lease a carpet you don't buy a carpet.

Gary Cohen: You so there's a whole way of sort of building a more circular economy.

Gary Cohen: That health care because of its purchasing power, especially if we if we aggregate across many, many systems to build that collective power we can drive the market.

Gary Cohen: We can drive the marketplace toward a low carbon toxic free economy that's the leverage that healthcare can have, and do it within their mission.

Gary Cohen: To do no harm do it within that ethical framework so that people all along the supply chain we're not.

Gary Cohen: we're not externalising harm to the planet, or two people we're building justice for building equity we're building climate resilience throughout our supply chain that's a very powerful frame and opportunity that that we've been working to create, not just in this country but globally.

Mildred Solomon: i've heard you suggest that healthcare systems should demand changes in their supply in the contracts that they're developing with their suppliers, I mean really get.

Mildred Solomon: put pressure and refuse to work with organizations that will meet some of those standards and actually have it in there in the car in the purchasing contract.

Gary Cohen: Absolutely so.

Gary Cohen: i'll give you an example, the National Health Service in Britain has committed to a zero emissions health care by 2045 first national government health ministry in the world they're saying to their suppliers, if you don't match our commitment to decarbonize.

Gary Cohen: you're going to find other suppliers that do so it's leveraging the supply chain to to match.

Gary Cohen: The bold goals and commitments that healthcare is making because we can't do it we can't do it if 70% of the.

Gary Cohen: Of the footprint is in the supply chain and investments can actually meet those goals unless the player suppliers come along with you so it's an opportunity for innovation.

Gary Cohen: And our experience for years and years is that the innovation is mostly coming from the demand side, what hospital say we actually want mercury free alternatives.

Gary Cohen: show up when we want furniture that doesn't have those toxic flame retardants and.

Gary Cohen: We want meat that's produced without the overuse of antibiotics because we're worried about the antibiotics that we're having in our facilities becoming effective that demand again using that ethical frame that healing mission has been the driver for innovation in the marketplace.

Mildred Solomon: How.

Mildred Solomon: I mean you're talking about a really major paradigm shift because we're facing a major crisis.

Mildred Solomon: But this is you've also mentioned how what how what a powerful part of our economy, this is surely there are going to be economic winners and losers, how do we manage that what strategies are there, I do do some interest have to be.

Mildred Solomon: mitigated in some way, I mean.

Gary Cohen: You have to.

Gary Cohen: You know, we have to face out fossil fuels and in toxic chemical system massive problem because we built an entire civilization, not just in this country but around the world on fossil fuels and and toxic chemicals and industrial agriculture.

Gary Cohen: The transition.

Gary Cohen: is going to be painful and so, especially in communities that have built their futures on on those industries so.

Gary Cohen: Certainly in places like Texas in our country, Texas Louisiana parts of Ohio totally dependent on fossil fuels, and so I think we're going to need a very powerful kind of.

Gary Cohen: what's been called the just transition to try to invest in those communities.

Gary Cohen: To to find other ways a of cleaning them up, because they become national sacrifice zones for these industries in amount of pollution from baton rouge to New Orleans is is is horrible.

Gary Cohen: And it's mostly in communities of color so those people need to be compensated for all of the health issues, all the environmental issues that they faced at the cost.

Gary Cohen: they're paying the cost of our fossil fuel economy or toxic chemical company, so they need to be made whole but also we need to invest as part of what.

Gary Cohen: President biden's justice 40 initiative was, we need to invest in those communities that have been dependent on those industries to build a new economy.

Gary Cohen: I think it's easier with with agriculture, because I think we can we can more easily diversify agriculture in some of that same landmass.

Gary Cohen: The broader set of farmers growing food that's healthy and not full of things that actually contribute to our disease, but I think the transition for these other industry is going to be difficult.

Mildred Solomon: So, with a new paradigm is powerful is that.

Mildred Solomon: What are the implications for preparing healthcare professionals, do we need to do, what do we need to do differently in the education of our healthcare professionals for us.

Gary Cohen: yeah so you know, one of the roles that we think broadly for healthcare is that it needs to be the anchor for resilience of our communities, we saw with with hurricane sandy with Katrina with wildfires in California, with the extreme heat in Seattle last summer.

Gary Cohen: that we need to make sure that our buildings our infrastructure, our supply chain, our.

Gary Cohen: Is is able to withstand these extreme weather events which will come more and more and more, so we need to be the last building standard we need to be able to respond in a crisis, so that we're not evacuating.

Gary Cohen: Our facilities at the very moment when the public needs us so there's that mindset of designing for resilience and not just in our communities.

Gary Cohen: In our in our facilities, but in the communities for who's most vulnerable.

Gary Cohen: Who are the people on ventilators who the people who are elderly who can't who don't have air conditioning who can't get out to a cooling Center.

Gary Cohen: Where the communities that already have the most air pollution that are going to be more impacted by extreme heat so that gets us to the whole question of racial and health inequities.

Gary Cohen: Broadly.

Gary Cohen: We got to do that and we got to educate the next generation of health professionals to understand these essential links between climate.

Gary Cohen: equity and health and so what's true still in this country in many countries around the world is that health professionals have some of the highest trust rating.

Gary Cohen: of any profession in the society of course that's been worn away somehow during this pandemic in different ways.

Gary Cohen: But still nurses have the highest trust rating of any profession, doctors, pharmacists top and so, how can we leverage that voice that truth telling voice that.

Gary Cohen: That their role as messengers to educate people that this climate crisis is fundamentally about people's health.

Gary Cohen: it's about their families it's about their communities, because when people realize that it's about what really is valuable to them, their families, their health.

Gary Cohen: they're much more likely to act they're much likely more likely to care they're much more likely to hold their politicians accountable, so we need to bring that literacy.

Gary Cohen: To health professionals and leverage their power as advocates in our society, you know, in the same way they did around nuclear nuclear war.

Gary Cohen: This is the kind of army that we need to build over the next decade.

Mildred Solomon: You used an important phrase you said, we need to build in just transition.

Mildred Solomon: there's a big ethics word just and justice, can you elaborate a little bit more, especially for this audience what makes this an ethics question we've talked a lot about how to be effective, what strategies, what can healthcare systems do.

Mildred Solomon: How should we measure decarbonisation those were all pretty much about you know effectiveness questions I was asking him.

Mildred Solomon: What makes this.

Mildred Solomon: An ethics topic, obviously I think it is or we wouldn't be sitting here but i'd love to hear your frame on that, especially since you use this intriguing phrase about just transition, it seems a good example of one way.

Gary Cohen: So.

Gary Cohen: It really gets at the core of what we value as a society do we think that children should be born toxic free.

Gary Cohen: Do you think that children should have a right to breathe clean air, clean water.

Gary Cohen: Should they be have access to healthy food and safe drinking water in our society, we hadn't valued that.

Gary Cohen: So.

Gary Cohen: This was why we started the organization in the first place is because it wasn't just that.

Gary Cohen: That healthcare was polluting its neighbors and communities and contributing to global pollution is that at that same time the CDC was telling us that kids were being born.

Gary Cohen: With dioxin in their bodies with mercury in their bodies that could be impacting their IQ their intelligence, so how is it that we think that children should be born pre polluted like it's not a fundamental human right.

Mildred Solomon: Is that what you said.

Gary Cohen: Three polluted pre polluted is not a fundamental human rights issue, we know that coal emissions impacts, the developing child in the womb, in the first thousand days of life.

Gary Cohen: whose rights are we are, we are prevailing in our society, the rights of the fossil fuel industry of the rights of our children.

Gary Cohen: And so there's a fundamental justice issue in that in I think that we need to be championing the rights of our children.

Gary Cohen: To be born toxic free to grow up in a healthy environment is fundamental conditions for you to grow into healthy individuals, we have to be.

Gary Cohen: We have to be championing that over the rights of this industry, and so what I have observed around the world in the work that i've done is that the communities that have borne the biggest brunt of this pollution are poor communities and communities of color.

Gary Cohen: They have been the national and global sacrifice zones for this industry, so this industry has has.

Gary Cohen: Has internalized the most egregious aspects of the capitalist system, which is you maximize profit and you and you minimize costs and the minimizing cost means externalising socializing all of the health and environmental costs of their of their processes so now.

Gary Cohen: The World Health Organization tells us that nine out of 10 people on the earth are breathing air that's not healthy for them.

Gary Cohen: UNICEF tells us that over a billion children's lives and their health or risk in our lifetime, because of the climate crisis in the meantime.

Gary Cohen: This industry, the fossil fuel industry has spent 30 years in a very concerted public education campaign.

Gary Cohen: To deny that the climate crisis is real to postpone action to buy off politicians to pollute our democracy and to pollute the even the scientific findings around it, whose rights should we be championing in this moment in time to me that's a justice issue.

Mildred Solomon: Thank you Gary i'm really glad I asked you to elaborate on that I think it's time for us to have hear from Danny.

Mildred Solomon: Danny feel free to come back on, and let us know.

Mildred Solomon: Ship I don't know if I have access, but you can you can choose a question.

Dani Pacia (she/her): That sounds good one recurring theme that has been present throughout the Q amp a is two parts, the first question, more general.

Dani Pacia (she/her): You talked a bit about strategies and tools that people can use, could you expand a bit on that on an institutional level.

Dani Pacia (she/her): How can we use these strategies and tools to alleviate climate change contributions.

Dani Pacia (she/her): And then, secondly, people want to hear more about the understand health care system and how it started its process of decreasing the use of fossil fuels, how long did it take, and do you know who initiated that process.

Gary Cohen: yeah so I mentioned the last one for gunderson it was really led by the CEO and he.

Gary Cohen: He said that we shouldn't be polluting our communities were the communities that we serve, and he educated, the board about the role that.

Gary Cohen: Fossil fuels plays in creating diseases in society and roll call played in particular and so he got the board initially to commit a couple of million dollars to do some energy efficiency.

Gary Cohen: initiatives and that saved them lots of money and everybody said well that was great what's next you said okay now we're going to do some more investments upstream around wind around solar the even at some point.

Gary Cohen: partnered with a brewery to take their waste heat and then run turbines off the breweries waste heat.

Gary Cohen: So very creative creative solutions that also had a lot to do with building partnerships in the Community.

Gary Cohen: with different businesses in the Community who again, who have assets getting back to the question that you raised earlier merely about does healthcare have all the answers, no.

Gary Cohen: But lots of people in the Community, do so they basically had success upon success and, ultimately, you know.

Gary Cohen: They were recognized as one of the leading systems in the country for addressing their climate footprint.

Gary Cohen: But also modeling What was it like to partner in the Community, they got some Award for being the better business in the better business bureau from Wisconsin ultimately for that that work, but I mean so that's their situation, and that was a great example another one is you know.

Gary Cohen: advocate health care system in in in the biggest system in Illinois and in Wisconsin they said we get that even though the price of fossil fuels is is is is very low.

Gary Cohen: We showed them that that price didn't include the the emissions.

Gary Cohen: That they were responsible for or the health impacts that they were responsible for or the health care costs that they were responsible for so we internalize we help them see the the externalities.

Gary Cohen: That had to do with all these people getting respiratory diseases, all the people come to the emergency rooms and so when we internalize that cost that price per kilowatt hour wasn't cheap at all and that that committed that got them to commit to 100% renewable energy by 23rd.

Gary Cohen: I think.

Gary Cohen: In other systems Another example is that we're working in the Bay area and with Kaiser permanente and common spirit and some other systems and they're saying we're saying look you guys.

Gary Cohen: buy so much food for all of your hospitals, for your patience, for your employees.

Gary Cohen: You have initiatives that are actually trying to now treat food as medicine to try to feed people.

Gary Cohen: who may have had a surgery, so they don't come back to the men's room or people who are food insecure or they're living in food deserts.

Gary Cohen: Why not we've all these goals together by investing in more sustainable and racially diverse food systems from farmers in your in your area.

Gary Cohen: And if we do that together we bring in uc Berkeley and we bring in oakland unified school district we bring in others we've got huge demand then to say, these are the kind of.

Gary Cohen: Farmers, we want to support so we're building jobs we're building a more sustainable agricultural economy in the region we're addressing food related diseases, which is one of the biggest cost to the health care system.

Gary Cohen: And we're addressing climate because we're not buying food from Ohio or a buyer from these industrial.

Gary Cohen: you'd farms that are using tons of pesticides or genetically modified organisms we're we're relieving we're healing the land and healing people and healing Community all at the same time, we have to multi solve at this point, you know we can be hiring more.

Gary Cohen: Diverse contractors like we did another initiative with a group called the healthcare anchor network.

Gary Cohen: We said we're going to have an impact purchasing commitment, what does that mean you, as a health care system has to do three things you have to double your racially diverse spend.

Gary Cohen: So we're building more equitable equity and racial equity in the Community in terms of economic development, you have to localize your spend sort of support more keeping the money inside of the Community.

Gary Cohen: And then here's a set of initiatives that are about reducing your climate footprint reducing your toxic footprint and buying more sustainable food the 14 systems that have signed on to this impact purchasing commitment initially and just the racial diversity spend is a billion dollars.

Dani Pacia (she/her): Another question that we have from the audience quite a bit, that is a through line through the Q amp a.

Dani Pacia (she/her): Is that you mentioned a lot of themes regarding sex and you've talked a bit about the notion of compensation.

Dani Pacia (she/her): But could you talk a bit more about countries and what they owe to other countries and the climate crisis, especially considering the disproportionate impacts and do you consider perhaps the compensation to be health related.

Gary Cohen: yeah so that's a great question um you know.

Gary Cohen: The country's many times the countries who are going to have the worst impacts from the climate crisis in terms of extreme weather in drought.

Gary Cohen: are actually in sub Saharan Africa, the people that have had least to do with creating this crisis, so it said in environmental justice issue on a global scale.

Gary Cohen: And so, so there's a huge justice issue in that, and so, when we think now about universal health care access and global healthcare goals, we have to prioritize.

Gary Cohen: communities and countries that that will suffer the worst impacts and so when we think about that what was that going to look like.

Gary Cohen: Actually sold arising clinics having clinics run on solar power having vaccines be refrigerated in solar refrigeration having solar autoclave to deal with the waste.

Gary Cohen: that's it that addressing that energy poverty is a critical dimension of what we mean by universal healthcare access what we mean by climate resilient healthcare so there's an amazing project that USA ID.

Gary Cohen: is running or they wanna solar rise 20,000 clinics in Africa.

Gary Cohen: To me that's a justice issue that's addressing the disproportionate impact for people in Africa.

Gary Cohen: You will be true with people who are living along rivers people in Bangladesh, who are living at the delta of the brahma future they're going to be flooded, we have to address those people's lives and their health as a fundamental justice issue.

Mildred Solomon: Thank you Gary Danny Is there something else you want to take from the.

Dani Pacia (she/her): Body yeah.

Dani Pacia (she/her): um perhaps one last question that people are wondering about is have any professional organizations, taken a strong stance on climate change mitigation that you know of.

Gary Cohen: Watts.

Gary Cohen: You have lots I mean.

Gary Cohen: In this lab in this last.

Gary Cohen: Conference of Parties, the climate treaty negotiations that happened in Glasgow, there were some very powerful ways in which.

Gary Cohen: The health sector showed up for the first time in a really big way one was a.

Gary Cohen: Healthcare that harm and the British Government and who developed the COP health program and what it commits countries to do.

Gary Cohen: is to build climate resilience healthcare systems and to decarbonize their healthcare systems so 51 countries, countries signed up for the resilience measure.

Gary Cohen: To build climate resilience healthcare systems and 15 of those said we're going to decarbonize our health care system, including the United States.

Gary Cohen: it's very important because it's we're so much a part of the footprint and then we also a part of an effort, called the race to zero, and there were.

Gary Cohen: Over 14,000 hospitals around 30 countries that committed to the race to zero to be to move towards zero emissions so there's huge momentum and in this country, the National Academy of Medicine has launched.

Gary Cohen: A collaborative to decarbonize the healthcare system, so the momentum is is is so huge now to do this to move down this path to get healthcare to model this transition away from fossil fuels it's a very, very potent moment in our country and around the world.

Mildred Solomon: Danny may I answered a follow up to Gary can you say if a if a system there's a lot of people here.

Mildred Solomon: In the audience, who are working in healthcare systems if a health system wants to join the collaborative that the National Academy is.

Mildred Solomon: Creating what should they do, and then, more specifically, if you're the CEO or the chief medical officer of a health care system, what are some of the first steps that you can take once you are committing yourself to the larger goal.

Gary Cohen: yeah I mean i'm on the National Academy, they have created a thing called network organization which is basically saying i'm aligned with this broad vision to decarbonize healthcare.

Gary Cohen: Practice green health, which is our, which is our kind of partnership division in health care of the harm that you mentioned had 13 or 1400 hospitals.

Gary Cohen: we've got all these tools and peer to peer learning and roadmaps about how to decarbonize.

Gary Cohen: And case studies from from various systems around the country about how they did it where they save money where it cost them money.

Gary Cohen: How to measure their their greenhouse gas emissions, what about anesthetic gas is what about meet.

Gary Cohen: All of these issues, how to green the operating room so we've got a lot of tools, so that somebody starting now isn't starting from scratch they're starting in your building off of.

Gary Cohen: So many other healthcare systems that have been already traveling down this road together, so I would say, get in touch with me and i'm happy to help you down that path.

Mildred Solomon: We can help been hitting Center can help you of course amplifier in this case, we can send out a link if that's if that makes sense to you.

Gary Cohen: Totally.

Mildred Solomon: To our to our own newsletter users yeah okay i'm okay i'm just posited a seat at you know CEO or chief medical officer in my last question.

Mildred Solomon: So a natural next question is, how should one think about the cost of these improvements it sounds to me like in the long term they're going to be cost saving but.

Mildred Solomon: What are people experiencing in the short term, or their financial implications here to plan for and i'm around.

Gary Cohen: Right so.

Gary Cohen: Many of the things that we've proposed and have been practicing been practiced by healthcare organizations around the country you're saving them money so when you're more energy efficient you're saving money you're using less fossil fuels.

Gary Cohen: We have a whole initiative around greening the operating room saves it saves money because you're using less stuff you're throwing away less stuff.

Gary Cohen: It turns out that the anesthetic gas, which is 2000 times more potent than carbon dioxide in in as a climate.

Gary Cohen: problem is the most expensive one so there's alternatives that are cheaper, it does cost more money to buy more sustainably grown meat.

Gary Cohen: than industrialized meet that cost more money, but if you serve 20% less meat because you're going to have more plant based diets which are good for the planet, good for patients, health, then you've mapped you know, then you can you know address the cost issues.

Gary Cohen: And there's many, many systems that are making investments.

Gary Cohen: In in some technologies that have a not a one or two year payback they might have a seven year payback gotta have you gotta take the long view on this, and even many of them are investing.

Gary Cohen: Without their money they're having to commit to buying renewable energy for a fixed period of time at a fixed cost and so there's the sort of economics actually work pretty well in this regard.

Mildred Solomon: glad I asked that shouldn't be a barrier well we're we're closing in on the last part of the webinar and i'd like to ask you, maybe a more personal question, if I can I mean clearly Gary you've committed your whole self.

Mildred Solomon: To this cause and I wondered if you could say a little bit about your own personal.

Mildred Solomon: journey your own personal motivation for committing yourself to this degree.

Mildred Solomon: tell us a little bit more about you and why why you're doing this.

Gary Cohen: yeah so I mean just as Dan callahan you know got a lot of inspiration from his his Christian roots, I I got a lot of inspiration from my Jewish roots I grew up.

Gary Cohen: As a Jewish boy in the first generation after the Holocaust in Europe and the mantra in my Community was never forget that this happened.

Gary Cohen: and never let it happen again.

Gary Cohen: Never let people be made expendable at the altar of racism or nationalism.

Gary Cohen: And it had a huge impact on me and and, as I, as I got older and I got involved in this environmental justice and health movement.

Gary Cohen: I had a chance to visit a number of places and one was Bhopal India, where was the scene of a Union Carbide pesticide factory that blew up in one night killing thousands of people.

Gary Cohen: and wounding half a million others it's been called the Hiroshima of the chemical industry, and I saw how those people 2737 years later, still suffering health impacts, the factories never been cleaned up it continues to leak poisons into the neighborhood into the drinking water.

Gary Cohen: Union Carbide was sold to TAO they claim no responsibility, I had a chance to visit places in you know in in Texas and Louisiana where hundred factories are daily polluting black black communities all up and down the Mississippi river Delta.

Gary Cohen: i'd had a chance also ultimately to go to Auschwitz in Poland, which is sort of the ground zero from my culture is collective trauma.

Gary Cohen: And and and I, and I learned something there that fused my life's work with my cultural trauma that was really, really powerful and because what I learned there, that is, that.

Gary Cohen: Not only did the chemical companies profit from providing the cyclone P gases that killed millions of people.

Gary Cohen: In that concentration camp, but as those starving people were marched every day out of that concentration camp under a sign that said work set you free they were being marched down the road to build a petrochemical factory.

Gary Cohen: So in my mind like what kind of corporate culture finds that acceptable.

Gary Cohen: What kind of corporate culture finds that acceptable that can make people expendable.

Gary Cohen: And to me there's a through line between what I saw there and what I seen Louisiana and what I see in both Paul.

Gary Cohen: And what I see now that we have in the business model of this fossil fuel and petrochemical industry, we have all become expendable because our health and our lives.

Gary Cohen: are not in the balance sheet and so that is what I am fighting against that's what it means to be a good Jew for me that mindset which can externalize harm to people in planet.

Gary Cohen: that's a big ethical question for me.

Mildred Solomon: you're drawing a line from the gas that was used in the crematoria during the Holocaust.

Mildred Solomon: To climate to global warming, now.

Mildred Solomon: That is.

Mildred Solomon: A remarkable line and, if I understand you.

Mildred Solomon: The through line is the expense of human beings.

Mildred Solomon: And our health, our health and our lot in our health and our lives.

Gary Cohen: In the duty to externalize firm whatever business model or a corporate model or a country model.

Gary Cohen: That that making people expendable it was such a powerful lesson to to resist.

Gary Cohen: And when I go around the world like to see people are dealing with various levels of intergenerational trauma, we need to be able to.

Gary Cohen: tell those stories we need to be able to resist those who are trying to wipe it from history, we need to join together in our in our.

Gary Cohen: grief in our hope and our resistance in our renewal and our healing, so we need to heal that culture that's a really destructive culture that has put the entire planet and all of its inhabitants at risk.

Mildred Solomon: Thank you for being so frank and.

Mildred Solomon: Linking what's important to you, and in terms of personal purpose and meaning to the work that you're doing I just can't Thank you enough, you have one more minute what makes you hopeful Gary and then we'll have to say goodbye.

Gary Cohen: What makes me hopeful is being around people that want to transform the world that want to heal generations of rooms and I find that there are.

Gary Cohen: You know these movements all over the world of people who are totally committed to working to solve the world's most pressing problems it's just so inspirational to see that.

Gary Cohen: And you mentioned Blair Sadler Blair is is actually he and his wife are funding this next generation of.

Gary Cohen: of young clinicians who are waking up to this broader mission of healing so i'm just so yeah i'm so inspired and knowing that you know way after I die there's going to be this incredible flourishing of the greatest movement in human history.

Mildred Solomon: Well i'm very grateful to you, and I think many in our audience must be feeling a lot of gratitude to thank you extraordinary our Gary.

Gary Cohen: You can take a look for having me.

Mildred Solomon: Thank you.

Gary Cohen: bye no.

bye.

Mildred Solomon: Daddy.

Dani Pacia (she/her): Thank you all so much for joining us today recording will be available shortly on the Hastings Center website and we invite you to please continue this discussion online on Twitter with the handles at Hastings Center and at em Z Solomon Thank you again for joining.

Mildred Solomon: Thank you.

bye bye.