

Speaker Biographies

(in Order of Appearance)

Elizabeth Kittrie
Senior Advisor
Bureau of Health Workforce
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Elizabeth Kittrie is a Senior Advisor in the Office of the Associate Administrator for the Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). In this capacity, she advises the Associate Administrator and Deputy Administrator on a wide range of programmatic and policy issues related to the Bureau's \$1.82 billion portfolio. Ms. Kittrie has also served as Acting Director for BHW's Division of Policy and Shortage Designation. Currently, she participates in several interagency working groups related to maternal health and behavioral health such as the HRSA Enhancing Maternal Health and Mortality Initiative and the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council Integration Subcommittee. In the evenings, she is pursuing a doctorate in public health through George Washington University. Prior to joining HRSA, Ms. Kittrie served as a Senior Advisor in the Immediate Office of the HHS Secretary.



Dave Goodman, MS, PhD
Maternal Mortality Prevention Team Lead
CDC Division of Reproductive Health

Dave Goodman, MS, PhD is Team Lead for the Maternal Mortality Prevention Team at the CDC Division of Reproductive Health. Prior to joining CDC headquarters, he was the CDC Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Epidemiology Assignee to the state of Georgia and Senior MCH Epidemiologist at the Florida Department of Health. Dave received his PhD in International Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and he is a former Procter and Gamble MCH fellow and CSTE Applied MCH epidemiology fellow.



Shannon William
KC Healthy Start Initiative Program Director
Maternal and Child Health Coalition of Greater Kansas City
(Nurture KC)

Shannon Williams joined Nurture KC in 2015, as the Education and Health Promotion Coordinator for the Kansas City Healthy Start Initiative. In July of 2020, Shannon was promoted to the Kansas City Healthy Start Initiative Program Director. She is an experienced health educator, having spent 15 years helping those in underserved populations as an employee of Johnson County Government. Shannon speaks Spanish and attained a Bachelor's degree in Management and Human Relations, and a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership, both at MidAmerica Nazarene University. Shannon was recently selected for the KC Chambers Centurions Leadership Program Pinnacle class of 2026. She has devoted her career to helping underrepresented communities elevate their well-being through education, empowerment and self-efficacy.



Benita Baker, MS
Branch Chief
Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services
Health Resources and Services Administration

Ms. Baker began her career as a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defense (NBC) specialist in the United States Army. She received her BS in Food and Nutrition from Hood College, and an MS in Community Health Education from West Virginia University before eventually becoming a Clinical Nutritionist with the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program in West Virginia. After 5 years with WIC, she entered the HRSA Scholars program as a Public Health Analyst. Currently, Ms. Baker serves as Chief of the Healthy Start Branch in the Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau's, Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services.



Ashley Hirai, PhD
Senior Scientist
Office of Epidemiology and Research
Maternal Child Health Bureau
Health Resources and Services Administration

Ashley Hirai is a Senior Scientist in the Office of Epidemiology and Research within HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau. For more



than a decade, she has served as a Bureau expert in perinatal epidemiology, GIS, and advanced research methods to inform, monitor, and evaluate various programs and initiatives including the Title V Block Grant, Healthy Start, and infant mortality initiatives. She also leads the state oversampling option for the National Survey of Children's Health, conducts applied research focusing on perinatal trends and disparities, and supports MCH epi training investments. Prior to joining MCHB, Ashley worked as an epidemiologist for the Hawai'i Health Department and completed an Academy Health postdoctoral fellowship at the National Center for Health Statistics. She holds a PhD from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Macarena C. García, DrPH, MPS, MIS
Senior Health Scientist
Office of Rural Health
Public Health Infrastructure Center
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Dr. Macarena García is a Senior Health Scientist at the Office of Rural Health at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. Before her current role, Dr. García was on an extended detail for 18 months at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health (OASH). She was recruited as the Principal Investigator on several national studies on preventable health among women of color in rural America. Before being recruited by OASH, Dr. García served as the CDC Country Director for the Dominican Republic from 2020-2022. She previously served in the Office of the Director in the Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services at the CDC Headquarters in Atlanta for five years. She is one of CDC's senior health scientists working across the agency, with other federal partners, and public and private healthcare entities to explore how multiple data sources can be accessed, integrated, and analyzed to answer high-priority public health questions. Dr. García has worked in global health and international development for over 15 years, serving in technical and leadership roles for NGOs, multi-lateral agencies (UNDP), USAID, and CDC. Dr. García has co-chaired the agency's data preparedness work group since 2017 and has served as the Lead Epidemiologist for Zika emergency response missions to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Colombia in 2016 and 2017, respectively. Dr. García also served in the senior role of Chief Data Scientist in the CDC Lung Injury Emergency Response in 2019 and has served in the same capacity in the CDC COVID-19 Response in 2020. She has also served as principal investigator and lead subject matter expert for CDC's Rural Health initiative, launched in late 2016.

Dr. García has managed teams of senior public health technical advisors across sub-Saharan Africa – Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Lesotho – and worked in numerous other countries, including Australia, Denmark, Spain, and Vietnam. Dr. García is a trained health scientist with advanced skills in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and extensive experience in data utilization, visualization, and translating research findings for programmatic and policymaking purposes. Dr. García has supported the conceptualization, development, implementation, and management of numerous multimillion-dollar

U.S.-funded HIV programs in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, most recently serving as the CDC Country Director in the Dominican Republic.

Dr. García is an Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health, teaching courses at the doctoral level. Dr. García has an impressive publication record, with over twenty pieces of research published in international health journals. She is a peer reviewer for high-impact global health and interdisciplinary publications.

Dr. García earned a Doctor of Public Health degree from Flinders University in Australia, a Master of International Studies degree from the University of Sydney, a Master of Professional Studies Degree in Data Analytics and Visualization from the Maryland Institute College of Art, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and International Relations from the California State Polytechnic University.

John Pender
Senior Economist
Agricultural Research Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

John Pender is a senior economist in the Rural Economy Branch of the USDA Economic Research Service. His research focuses on concepts and measurement of rural household and community wealth and well-being and impacts of development policies and programs on the U.S. rural economy. Most of his current research focuses on economic impacts of broadband and USDA broadband programs in rural America. He has a Ph.D. in agricultural and development economics from Stanford University, a Master of Public Policy from the University of California at Berkeley, and a Bachelor of Science degree from the California Institute of Technology.



Chris Proctor
Technical Assistance Branch Chief
Telecommunications (Telecom) Program
Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Chris Proctor serves as the Technical Assistance Branch Chief within the USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Telecommunications (Telecom) Program. He has held various roles since joining the USDA Rural Development mission area in 2014. Chris has expertise in broadband policy, partnership development, regional planning, community capacity building, and implementing place-based approaches. In his current role, Chris leads the implementation of the RUS Telecom Program's technical assistance strategy. This includes administering



the Broadband Technical Assistance Program and playing a critical role in policy development and outreach efforts. Chris holds a Bachelor's Degree in political science from Salisbury University.

Emily Eckert, MS
Associate Director, Federal Policy
Upstream USA

Emily Eckert is the Associate Director of Federal Policy at Upstream USA. Emily has worked throughout her career to improve access to women's health care, and was instrumental in securing passage of a state plan option to extend pregnancy-related Medicaid coverage from 60 days to one year postpartum as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. Emily has been quoted in U.S. News and World Report, the Associated Press, Inside Health Policy, and Stateline. Her original research and commentaries have been published in Women's Health Issues, the Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law, Frontiers in Public Health, and Health Affairs Forefront.



Jessica Perfette, MPH
Tribal Liaison
National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention

Mrs. Perfette is a Tribal member from the Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama and serve as a Tribal Liaison for the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention. She main charge is engaging with Indigenous communities. The National Center is dedicated to addressing health disparities and promoting cultural competence, ultimately aiming to provide better-informed recommendations for the betterment of fetal, infant and child health in communities across the nation.



Prior to this, Mrs. Perfette served as the Arizona Child Fatality Review Program Manager for over 6 years, providing a unique perspective in maternal, child and infant mortality and prevention. She is committed to promoting health equity and reducing health disparities and fatalities and is passionate about improving the health outcomes of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Mrs. Perfette has her master's degree in public health from Grand Canyon University and has completed advanced training in various public health disciplines, including biostatistics, health policy, and health communication.

Mrs. Perfette has a strong background in injury prevention and health promotion and has worked on numerous public health initiatives at the local, state, and national levels. She has also collaborated with

various stakeholders, including health providers, community leaders, and policymakers, to develop and implement effective public health programs and policies.

Nima Sheth, MD, MPH
Associate Administrator for Women's Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Dr. Nima Sheth is a psychiatrist by training and has a strong public health background. Prior to her arrival at SAMHSA, she worked at Georgetown University Hospital as Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry. During her time there she served as clinician, researcher and educator, primarily focusing her efforts on improving care of the critically mentally ill and highly traumatized populations both nationally and internationally. She served as medical director of the partial hospitalization program, was regularly involved in the training of residents, and ran a busy clinic that primarily focused on severely ill and traumatized populations. Her research projects to date have largely focused on improving community mental health care programs and systems for underserved populations.

Dr. Sheth has also served as psychiatric consultant for various community clinics as well as led various trauma initiatives across organizations. This work has provided her with significant experience in the management of clinical and administrative processes for challenging and high risk patient populations and effective practice of care across disciplines.

Dr. Sheth has special expertise in cultural psychiatry and the care of forced migrants and has provided numerous trainings on trauma-informed care for migrant populations to various NGOs and community organizations as well as to trainees. She has served as psychiatric consultant to the World Health Organization and worked in a number of international projects across the Middle East, advising on increasing mental health capacity, improving the quality of mental health services, strengthening referral networks, and coordinating collaborative and integrative care.

Dr. Sheth has extensive experience in working in interdisciplinary teams to solve the complex mental health problems that lie at the nexus of clinical, administrative, and policy issues, as well as advising on clinical considerations and overseeing efforts to increase access to quality mental health care for vulnerable populations.

Dorothy Fink, MD
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Women's Health Director



**Office of Women's Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

Dr. Dorothy Fink is Deputy Assistant Secretary for Women's Health and Director of the Office on Women's Health in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Fink brings to OASH extensive experience treating women's health issues. She is board certified in endocrinology, internal medicine, and pediatrics, and is recognized as a physician leader on topics such as diabetes, nutrition, and bone health. Previously, her clinical practice focused on women from adolescence through menopause and beyond. She is a nationally certified menopause practitioner and an expert on estrogen.

Dr. Fink has done extensive research related to women's health, including evaluation of blood markers to assist in the diagnosis of hypothalamic amenorrhea and investigating the role of diabetes in women's skeletal health. Dr. Fink has presented at national meetings on polycystic ovary syndrome, the female athlete triad, and other bone-related conditions. Most recently, Dr. Fink practiced at the Hospital for Special Surgery and New York Presbyterian Hospital, Cornell University, where she served on the faculty and worked with women to attain optimal health, treated metabolic bone conditions, and improved patients' diabetes care prior to surgery.

As a Georgetown University undergraduate focusing on health studies, Dr. Fink developed a passion for public health. She received her medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine. She completed her combined internal medicine and pediatrics residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. She then completed a National Institutes of Health post-doctoral fellowship in endocrinology and metabolism at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. During her fellowship, Dr. Fink was selected as a Women's Health Scholar and worked at the Center for Menopause, Hormonal Disorders and Women's Health. She has published numerous peer-reviewed articles on a variety of topics, including thromboembolic disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis.

**Alicia Lieberman, PhD
Irving B. Harris Endowed Chair in Infant Mental Health
Professor
UCSF Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences
Director, Child Trauma Research Program**

Dr. Lieberman is the Irving B. Harris Endowed Chair in Infant Mental Health and Vice Chair for Academic Affairs at the UCSF Department of Psychiatry, and Director of the Child Trauma Research Program. She is a clinical consultant with the San Francisco Human Services Agency. She is active in major national organizations involved with mental health in infancy and early childhood. She is past-president of the board of directors of Zero to Three:



National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, and on the Professional Advisory Board of the Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute. She has served on peer review panels of the National Institute of Mental Health, is on the Board of Trustees of the Irving Harris Foundation, and consults with the Miriam and Peter Haas Foundation on early childhood education for Palestinian-Israeli children.

Born and raised in Paraguay, she received her BA from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. This background informs her work on behalf of children and families from diverse ethnic and cultural origins, with primary emphasis on the experiences of Latinos in the United States.

Dr. Lieberman is currently the director of the Early Trauma Treatment Network (ETTN), a collaborative of four university sites that include the UCSF/SFGH Child Trauma Research Program, Boston Medical Center, Louisiana State University Medical Center, and Tulane University. ETTN is funded by the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as part of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, a 40-site national initiative that has the mission of increasing the access and quality of services for children exposed to trauma in the United States. Her major interests include infant mental health, disorders of attachment, early trauma treatment outcome research, and mental health service disparities for underserved and minority children and families. Her current research involves treatment outcome evaluation of the efficacy of child-parent psychotherapy with trauma-exposed children aged birth to six and with pregnant women involved in domestic violence. As a trilingual, tricultural Jewish Latina, she has a special interest in cultural issues involving child development, child rearing, and child mental health. She lectures extensively on these topics nationally and internationally.

Niambi Lewis
Chief, Perinatal Equity Section
California Department of Public Health

Niambi Lewis serves as the Chief for the Perinatal Equity Section in the Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division at the California Department of Public Health. In her capacity, she is responsible for the oversight of the Black Infant Health and Perinatal Equity Initiative Programs. These programs have been tasked with providing support to Black pregnant and parenting mothers and their families to mitigate the harmful impacts of racism and ultimately improve birth outcomes.



For over 20 years, she has been employed by the State of California over a decade of that service working within departments in the Health and Human Services Agency, supporting her desire to work for programs that serve communities most impacted by the effects of structural racism. Prior to transitioning to Public Health, Niambi spent several years with the Department of Social Services where she focused on the oversight of child welfare programs statewide with special focus on decreasing the disproportionate rate of Black children entering foster care.