



North Carolina State Transformation Collaborative

Duke | MARGOLIS INSTITUTE for Health Policy

CMS
CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

HCPLAN
Health Care Payment, Learning & Action Network



NCDHHS

Advancing Whole Person Health Care Through North Carolina's State Transformation Collaborative

Thursday, May 23rd 3:00-5:00pm

Speaker Biographies



Michelle Bucknor, MD, MBA, FAAP, began her career in primary care, where she honed her clinical skills and deepened her understanding of patient needs in vulnerable populations. Over three decades, she transitioned into significant leadership roles, including serving as a Medical Director at a Pediatric Accountable Care Organization (ACO), where she led efforts to improve population health outcomes for pediatric patients by enabling primary care provider performance.

With a rich background in pediatric medicine and organizational leadership, Dr. Bucknor has dedicated herself to empowering individuals and organizations to reach their full potential. Her journey also includes roles as the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of a North Carolina Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC). She served as the CMO of the UnitedHealthcare Medicaid plan, where she played a pivotal role in launching North Carolina Medicaid managed care, supporting the implementation of delegated care management, driving value-based care initiatives, and promoting healthcare equity for Medicaid beneficiaries. Her experience in managed care provided invaluable insights into payer-provider collaboration and the importance of aligning incentives to improve health outcomes and reduce costs.

Currently serving as a Regional CMO for Aetna Better Health, Dr. Bucknor brings her wealth of experience and strategic vision to supporting clinical operations and driving healthcare innovation across the Midwest region.



Kate Davidson, LCSW, is the Director of the Learning and Diffusion Group (LDG) at the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI), within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). In this role, Ms. Davidson leads CMMI's team focused on accelerating healthcare system transformation by leveraging improvement science within and across models, as well as leading the multi-payer alignment strategy for the Center through the Healthcare Payment Learning and Action Network (HCP-LAN).

Prior to joining CMS, Ms. Davidson led Policy and Practice Improvement efforts at the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, where she managed payment reform, quality improvement, and workforce development initiatives in mental health and addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery organizations and provided training and technical assistance to human services organizations, counties and states. Ms. Davidson began her career in healthcare as a social worker researching, testing and scaling interventions in primary care, behavioral health and community-based settings. Ms. Davidson has an MSW from Fordham University and a BA from Loyola College in Maryland.



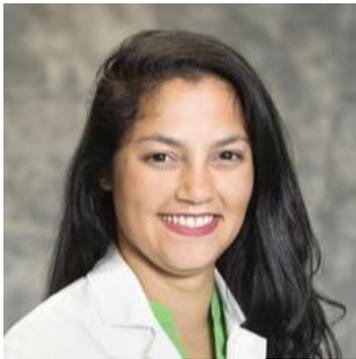
Kristen Dubay, MPP, joined NCDHHS as the Chief of Population Health in April 2023. As Chief of Population Health, Kristen oversees DHHS care management programs value-based initiatives, and the Healthy Opportunities Pilot. Kristen is dedicated to ensuring North Carolinians have access to high quality health care services. Prior to her work with Medicaid, Kristen was Vice President of Value Based and Managed Care Services with the NC Community Health Center Association where she was responsible for the strategic direction and operations of the Carolina Medical Home Network (CMHN), a Clinically Integrated Network (CIN) of Federally Qualified Health Centers. In that role, Kristen was responsible for ensuring participating network practices performed successfully in value-based contracts and provided effective care management services to Medicaid beneficiaries. Prior to that role, Kristen served as NCCCHA's Director of Policy and Governmental Affairs, driving NCCCHA's state-level policy strategy. Kristen also has experience in the academic environment working with Duke's Center on Globalization, Governance and Competitiveness researching environmental harm reduction technologies, as well as with the NC Institute of Medicine researching state health priority areas.

Kristen grew up in Durham, North Carolina, is a graduate of Georgetown and Duke (Master of Public Policy) Universities, and she can be found on the weekends spending time with her husband and children or hiking one of NC's beautiful trails.



Jennifer Houlihan, MSP, serves as a vice president for enterprise population health focused on Medicaid and Medicare value-based care policy and programming and integration of the enterprise population health platform with the academic core of Advocate Health. Jennifer is focused on executing aligned learning health system priorities including serving as a member of Wake Forest School of Medicine Center for Healthcare Innovation to test, implement, and scale initiatives that currently include new risk segmentation models and care model innovation currently focused on health equity and SDOH integration, risk segmentation, complex care, brain health and chronic kidney disease.

Jennifer also teaches at Wake Forest University and is a graduate of Florida State University and Thomas Jefferson University with degrees in Healthy Policy and Planning and Population Health.



Gabriela Plascencia, MD, MAS is a board-certified Family Medicine physician and health equity policy researcher, currently completing the National Clinician Scholars Program (NCSP) at Duke University. Her research focuses on measuring and addressing health inequities among marginalized and minoritized populations, with a particular focus on Latinx populations. She uses qualitative, mixed methods, community-based participatory, systems mapping, and implementation methods in her research. Recent projects have focused on the experience of systemic racism among Latinx communities during the pandemic, community-engaged strategies to improve COVID-19 testing and vaccination for Latinx communities, and increasing outreach and enrollment in Medicaid and ACA Marketplace-based insurance for eligible, but not enrolled Latinx populations.

Dr. Plascencia is also the Health Equity Policy and Primary Care Research Fellow for Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy. As part of this policy fellowship, she serves as a Policy Fellow at Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Innovation (CMMI) in the Policy and Programs Group, where she is leading the synthesis of various health equity frameworks to delineate a set of options for CMMI, clinically advising the operationalization of a standard definition of disability based on claims and patient-reported outcomes measures, and contributing to the development of an improved health equity index. She aims to address root causes of health inequities observed in her clinical practice by improving the understanding and measurement of systemic racism, how it impacts diverse marginalized and minoritized populations, and integrating improved measures in value-based care.



Emma Sandoe, PhD, MPH, is the Deputy Director of Policy for North Carolina Medicaid and Adjunct Professor at Duke University. Sandoe focused her doctoral research from Harvard University on Medicaid eligibility and enrollment, Marketplace enrollment and implementation, long-term services and supports, and the role of Medicaid in elections and voting.

Prior to starting the PhD program, Sandoe spent six years in Washington, DC, working on the passage and implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). She served as the spokesperson for Medicaid and HealthCare.gov at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and worked on ACA coordination at the Department of Health and Human Services Budget Office. While earning her master's degree in public health from George Washington University, she worked at the Center for American Progress and the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee. She received her undergraduate education from University of California, San Diego.



Angelo Sinopoli, MD, is a seasoned healthcare leader with over three decades of clinical expertise and a steadfast commitment to driving transformative change in the healthcare landscape. Throughout his career, Dr. Sinopoli has spearheaded initiatives aimed at advancing population health, earning recognition as a prominent figure in both regional and national healthcare transformation efforts. Dr. Sinopoli currently serves as the Executive Vice President of Value Based Care at Cone Health System in Greensboro, NC, where his role is to further advance this system's integration and growth in value-based care.

Previously, he held the position of Chief Growth Officer at Upstream, a value-based physician practice enablement company, where he played a pivotal role in fostering organizational growth and innovation.

Dr. Sinopoli spent most of his career at Prisma Health serving as the Chief Clinical Officer of Prisma Health, where he was instrumental in the development of a clinically integrated network comprising over 5000 providers. Additionally, he founded the Care Coordination Institute, an enablement company dedicated to supporting integrated health systems and networks in delivering comprehensive value-based care. Dr. Sinopoli has served for six years on and presently serves as Co-Chair of the Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC), appointed by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). PTAC provides expert insights and recommendations on newly proposed physician payment models to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Furthermore, Dr. Sinopoli has been actively involved in the CMS Health Care Payment Learning and Action Network (LAN), a pivotal initiative focused on accelerating the healthcare system's transition to Alternative Payment Models (APMs).



Elizabeth Tilson, MD, MPH, serves NC as the State Health Director and Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Health and Human Services. In this role, she works to advance the health of North Carolinians and provides guidance and oversight on a variety of cross-Departmental priorities linking public health and clinical care, including the COVID-19 Pandemic Response, Behavioral Health and Resiliency, Child and Family Well-Being, a Strong and Including Workforce, Medicaid Expansion and Transformation, Social Drivers of Health, and Firearm Violence. Tilson has a bachelor's degree in biology from Dartmouth College, a medical degree from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and a master's degree in public health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

She completed a pediatric residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital and a general preventive medicine/public health residency at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and is board certified in both fields. Before joining DHHS, Tilson was the Medical Director of Community Care of Wake and Johnston Counties, one of the 14 Community Care of North Carolina networks, and as the Chief Network Clinical Officer for CCNC. Prior roles have also included serving as an Assistant Consulting Professor and Cancer Control Specialist with Duke University Medical Center and a Clinical Pediatric Fellow at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Tilson practiced primary care pediatrics for 26 years, primarily at her local health department – Wake County Human Services Child Health Clinic. She has been active in many local, state and national pediatric, public health and preventive medicine organizations, in which she has served in numerous leadership roles.



Sam Thompson, MSW, is the Executive Director of the North Carolina Health Information Exchange Authority (NC HIEA) the agency that operates North Carolina's state-designated health information exchange, NC HealthConnex. Prior to joining the HIEA, Sam served as Deputy Director for Program Evaluation at NC Medicaid where he and his team oversee quality measurement, federal-facing monitoring, surveys, data collection and internal and external program evaluation. Sam has also served as a Lead Evaluator at the NC Division of Public Health. Sam has assorted degrees from the University of North Carolina, the University of Oregon, and the Oregon Coast Culinary Institute.



Cornell P. Wright, MPA, stands as a distinguished subject-matter expert, consultant, and advisor renowned for his expertise in health equity, justice, diversity, inclusion, health disparities, minority health, community engagement, and outreach. As a seasoned presenter, he passionately addresses concerns surrounding historically marginalized populations and communities. Currently Wright holds the position of Health Equity Advisor for General Dynamics Information Technology's Federal Health Sector, Wright brings his wealth of knowledge to influence positive change. In his previous role, Wright made history as the inaugural Chief Health Equity Officer at the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a national nonprofit organization founded by The Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association. There, he focused on championing Whole Child Health Equity in collaboration with schools, school districts, and various corporate and community partners nationwide. Before this pivotal position, Wright served with distinction as the Executive Director of the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to advancing health equity and addressing disparities at the state level.