



NASMHPD Annual 2025 Meeting

Presenter Biographies

Thank you to all the presenters for their valuable contributions to this conference.

Session 1: Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 9:15 a.m. – 10:40 a.m. Eastern 988 and the Crisis Services Continuum

David Covington, L.P.C., M.B.A. (david.covington@riinternational.com)

David W. Covington, L.P.C., M.B.A. is a nationally recognized innovator in behavioral health crisis care. He is CEO and President of Recovery Innovations and Managing Partner at Behavioral Health Link, where he co-developed the Georgia Crisis and Access Line. David co-founded the Crisis Now and Zero Suicide initiatives, shaping crisis systems across the U.S. and globally. He also produces Moving America's Soul on Suicide and co-hosts Lifelines: The 988 Podcast. A licensed professional counselor and award-winning leader, David continues to champion systems that respond with compassion, not handcuffs.

Senator Tina Orwall

Senator Orwall has represented the 33rd legislative district, Des Moines, since 2009. She was appointed to the Washington State Senate in 2024 after serving 15 years in the House of Representatives. She has worked with all levels of government to help embrace best practices to better serve the community. Her 20 years of experience working in the public mental health system, as well as her expertise in strategic planning in workforce development and affordable housing have established her as a valued legislator and community leader.

Richard McKeon, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Richard McKeon received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Arizona, and a Master of Public Health in Health Administration from Columbia University. He has spent most of his career working in community mental health, including 11 years as director of a psychiatric emergency service and 4 years as Associate Administrator/Clinical Director of a hospital-based community mental health center in Newton, New Jersey. In 2001, he was awarded an American Psychological Association Congressional Fellowship and worked in the United States Senate, covering health and mental health policy issues. He spent 5 years on the Board of the American Association of Suicidology as Clinical Division Director and has also served on the Board of the Division of Clinical Psychology of the American Psychological Association. He is currently Chief for the Suicide Prevention Branch in the Center for Mental Health Services, of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, where he oversees all branch suicide prevention activities, including the Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention, and Campus Suicide Prevention grant programs, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, and the Native Connections program. In 2008, he was appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Secretary's Blue Ribbon Work Group on Suicide Prevention. In 2009, he was appointed by the Secretary of Defense to the Department of Defense Task Force on Suicide Prevention in the Military. He served on the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention Task Force that revised the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention and participated in the development of WHO's

World Suicide Prevention Report. He is also the Co-Chair of the Federal Working Group on Suicide Prevention.

Kevin Tanner, M.P.A (kevin.tanner1@dbhdd.ga.gov)

Kevin Tanner is the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. Commissioner Tanner brings over three decades of public service experience, with a deep understanding of Georgia's complex behavioral health continuum. His extensive career reflects a profound commitment to improving the lives of Georgians across the state. With an operating budget of \$1.6 billion and a workforce of more than 4,500 employees, Commissioner Kevin Tanner has led transformative initiatives at DBHDD since his appointment. Under his leadership, historic investments in the agency's workforce have resulted in the reopening of previously offline crisis beds, which has enabled state hospitals to operate at nearly full capacity. His efforts also led to a significant provider rate increase for intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) services and behavioral health professionals. By improving internal efficiencies, Commissioner Tanner was able to raise starting salaries for critical clinical positions by nearly 20 percent.

Additionally, he serves as a Trustee of the Georgia Opioid Crisis Abatement Trust and has played an integral role in the construction of new crisis settings across the state. The Trust was created to receive and administer Georgia's share of funds from national settlements with opioid manufacturers and distributors. Funds held by the Trust will be used to support drug addiction prevention, treatment and recovery services. Tanner previously served as the County Manager of Forsyth County and represented House District 9 in the Georgia House of Representatives for four legislative terms. During his legislative tenure, he sponsored the founding legislation for the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission; he was later appointed by Governor Kemp to serve as its Chair. This commission played a pivotal role in the creation of the historic House Bill 1013, the Georgia Mental Health Parity Act.

His public service journey began as a volunteer firefighter and continued with nearly two decades at the Dawson County Sheriff's Office, where he held various roles, including 11 years as Chief Deputy/Undersheriff. His diverse background provides him with a unique perspective on the challenges facing Georgia communities. Tanner holds an undergraduate degree from North Georgia College and State University and a Master of Public Administration from Columbus State University. He has been actively involved in community and civic activities in the North Georgia area for many years.

Lula Haile, M.S.W., L.C.S.W. (lhaille@vibrant.org)

Lula Haile received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Georgia State University, followed by a master's degree in social work from Clark Atlanta University. Lula has spent most of her professional career with the Department of Veterans Affairs, serving in a multitude of roles supporting suicide prevention initiatives. In her most recent role, she has served as an Assistant Deputy Director for Crisis Operations at the Veterans Crisis Line since November 2019. During her tenure, Lula played a key role in transitioning VCL to a fully remote environment as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Lula also oversaw significant growth and expansion efforts to support 988, which included a 50% increase in Crisis Operations staffing. These expansion efforts resulted in a 23% increase in VCL managed interactions (based on a pre-988 baseline) while maintaining KPI's. When she is not working, Lula enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends.

Tonja Myles (tonja@setfreeindeedministry.com)

Tonja Myles is a nationally recognized mental health advocate, peer recovery specialist, ordained minister, and community activist dedicated to improving mental health care, substance use disorder, and trauma-informed services. With over 25 years of experience, she has led groundbreaking initiatives addressing mental health awareness, substance abuse prevention, and faith-based recovery programs. As the Senior

Advisor, Public Policy, Corporate Partnerships, & Community Engagement, she advises within the larger Huntsman Mental Health Foundation. Tonja is a critical component to the continued growth and impact of the Huntsman Mental Health Institute as it furthers the stated mission of becoming the first and most recognized mental health institution in the United States.

Tonja founded and led Set Free Indeed Ministry, which established Louisiana's first licensed faith-based intensive outpatient addiction treatment center. Under her leadership, Set Free has provided thousands of individuals with intensive outpatient treatment, peer mentoring, and wrap around services. She developed programs for peer support specialists and has successfully partnered with community-based organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, and judicial systems to implement effective reentry programs and reduce recidivism.

Her work extends beyond direct services into advocacy at the highest levels. Tonja has testified before Congress on mental health and substance use disorder policy reform, worked alongside federal agencies to address the opioid crisis, and led national campaigns raising awareness about fentanyl overdoses, suicide prevention, and crisis intervention. She was recognized by President George W. Bush in the 2003 State of the Union Address for her pioneering work in faith-based addiction recovery and community rehabilitation. Tonja went on to work in an advisory role for George W. Bush administration White House Faith-Based Office Access to Recovery Initiative. Most recently, Tonja hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill that addressed the fentanyl crisis, mental health, substance use, and suicide prevention.

Shelby Rowe, M.B.A. (shelby-rowe@ouhsc.edu)

Shelby Rowe is Executive Director of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. A leader in the suicide prevention field for the past 15 years, Rowe has a wealth of experience working at the local, tribal, state, and national level, most recently serving as head of SPRC's Tribal Initiatives Team and establishing SPRC's first Lived Experience Advisory Committee.

Rowe has collaborated extensively with other leaders across the U.S. to advance suicide prevention efforts. She serves on the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's American Indian/Alaska Native Task Force and Care Transitions Advisory Group, the Clinical Advisory Board for Crisis Text Line, the Board of Directors for RI International, and she co-chairs the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline's Lived Experience Committee. Rowe also co-founded the American Association of Suicidology's Indigenous Peoples' Committee and is a former member of the Board of Directors for the National Association of Crisis Organization Directors and United Suicide Survivors International.

An award-winning artist, mother of three sons, and suicide attempt survivor, Rowe is the recipient of the 2021 American Association of Suicidology Transforming Lived Experience Award and the 2016 Chickasaw Nation Dynamic Woman of the Year. With a BA in sociology and philosophy and an MBA, she is an experienced public speaker and regularly travels across the country to speak at mental health and suicide prevention conferences and trainings.

Session 2: Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 10:40 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Eastern
Action Alliance's Continuity of Care Initiative

John Draper, Ph.D. (jdraper@ihrcorp.com)

Dr. John Draper has over 35 years of experience in crisis intervention and suicide prevention work and is considered an international expert in behavioral health crisis services (hotline, online chat, text services, etc.). Dr. Draper's experience includes working on a mobile crisis outreach team, founding and administering New York City's first 24/7 crisis hotline as well as becoming the founder and former Executive Director of the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (now the 988 Suicide and Crisis

Lifeline) for 18 years. He has been a primary author of several book chapters and journal articles related to suicide hotlines and crisis intervention, and has worked with print, broadcast and social media as both a spokesperson and consultant to promote crisis care and suicide prevention for over 20 years. Dr. Draper joined Behavioral Health Link, Inc. (BHL) in 2022 as President of Research, Development & Government Solutions, where he is continuing his long history of applying research, data and technologies to improve the quality of crisis care systems in communities across the United States.

Colleen Carr (ccarr@edc.org)

Colleen Carr serves as the director of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance) Secretariat at the Education Development Center (EDC). The Action Alliance is the nation's public-private partnership for suicide prevention charged with coordinating a comprehensive national suicide prevention response in the U.S. In this role, Carr works with more than 250 partner organizations to coordinate the implementation of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (National Strategy). She provides strategic direction to the Action Alliance's distinguished leadership including its 40-member Executive Committee and its national advisory groups, comprised of senior leaders from government, business, and non-profit sectors. She is responsible for cultivating new partnerships and collaborations that advance the National Strategy. Carr has more than 20 years of experience working in public health and suicide prevention at the state and national level. She received her undergraduate degree in public policy analysis from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her master's degree in public health from Boston University.

Session 3: Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Eastern
Meeting the Complex Needs of Individuals Experiencing Crisis: District of Columbia
Stabilization Center

Barbara J. Bazron, Ph.D. (barbara.bazron@dc.gov)

Barbara J. Bazron, Ph.D. is the Director of the DC Department of Behavioral Health, appointed by Mayor Muriel Bowser. In this role, she manages the District's recovery oriented, integrated behavioral health system. Throughout her career, Dr. Bazron has used her expertise in strategic planning and organizational development to build systems of care that promote the integration of mental health and addictions services, foster equity with physical health care and address disparities in health care. Prior to her appointment, Dr. Bazron served as the Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration which is responsible for the state's services and supports for individuals with mental health and substance use disorders, including five psychiatric hospitals. During her tenure, she led improvements in the forensic services system.

Dr. Bazron previously served as Interim Director and Senior Deputy Director of the District's Department of Behavioral Health where she led initiatives to expand evidence-based practices for children and youth, integrate peer leadership in treatment models and increase access to care in non-traditional settings, including an urgent care clinic located at the US Superior Court for immediate service for court-ordered referrals. She also established a research and evaluation division to collect accurate, reliable data to drive sound decision making. Dr. Bazron is an early innovator and a published author on cultural competency in behavioral health. She also has clinical experience as a family therapist and as an educational diagnostician. Dr. Bazron received a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh, a Master of Education from the University of Cincinnati and a Bachelor of Arts from Oberlin College.

Joan Gillece, Ph.D. (joan.gillece@nasmhpd.org)

Dr. Joan Gillece has forty years of experience working in the health field with twenty-five dedicated to addressing the impact of trauma and social justice. Working across agencies, Dr. Gillece promotes the use of trauma informed care in multiple settings including mental health, substance abuse, adult and juvenile

justice, social services, and homeless services. Prior to joining the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) seventeen years ago, Dr. Gillece served as Director of Special Populations for Maryland's Mental Hygiene Administration where her responsibilities included all aspects of state mental health planning and delivery of services as well as development of collaboration across agencies serving individuals with psychiatric diagnosis. As project director for SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC), Dr. Gillece championed the cause of full consumer integration and development of culturally competent programs. Utilizing survivors in all aspects of trauma work, Dr. Gillece has coordinated and provided technical assistance, conference presentations, and consultations to multiple systems across the country. Commitment to strength-based support by implementing trauma informed values with the overarching theme of healing has been her focus.

Session 4: Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Eastern
Umbrella Paper - Refocus and Renew: Moving Towards Health for Adults with Serious Mental Illness and Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbances

Debra A. Pinals, M.D. (debra.pinals@nasmhpd.org)

Dr. Debra A. Pinals has been from 2016 to 2023 the Director of the Program in Psychiatry, Law, & Ethics and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan Medical School and Clinical Adjunct Professor at the University of Michigan Law School. She has also served as the Medical Director of Behavioral Health and Forensic Programs for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Pinals was appointed as the Assistant Commissioner of Forensic Services from 2008 to 2016 and the Interim State Medical Director from 2012-2013 for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. She has worked in outpatient, inpatient settings, forensic and correctional facilities, emergency rooms and court clinics, has received public service awards and has been an expert witness in many cases. She is Board Certified in Psychiatry, Forensic Psychiatry, and Addiction Medicine. During her career she has consulted on complex systems cases for people with mental illness, substance use disorder, and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who are receiving treatment or support in various places- such as in state hospitals, community and justice and forensic settings. She teaches and publishes extensively and has led and consulted on numerous federal grants including those related to opioids, juvenile justice, and behavioral health and justice partnerships. Recently she has been a lead subject matter expert on issues pertaining to competence to stand trial for the SAMHSA GAINS Center. She is a past President of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, current Chair of the American Psychiatric Association Council on Psychiatry and the Law, and past Chair of the Forensic Division and current Chair of the Medical Directors Division for the National Association for State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD). In her work with NASMHPD, she is the Sr. Medical & Forensic Advisor/Editor-in-Chief and has co-authored key policy papers including "Beyond Beds: The Vital Role of a Full Continuum of Psychiatric Care" and "The Vital Role of Specialized Approaches: Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the Mental Health System.

Elizabeth Hancq, M.P.H. (Elizabeth.hancq@nasmhpd.org)

Elizabeth Sinclair Hancq is Senior Research Advisor for NASMHPD and helps lead the development of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-funded Technical Assistance Coalition "Beyond Beds" policy paper series.

Prior to joining NASMHPD, Elizabeth served as Director of Research of the Office of Research and Public Affairs within the Treatment Advocacy Center, where she authored multiple research and policy reports that have garnered national attention and acclaim. Elizabeth is a nationally recognized expert in mental health research and policy, having been cited in national media, including Washington Post and Wall Street Journal, and has generated statistics that have been used as testimony by government officials in the highest levels of office. In addition, Elizabeth has published in prestigious academic journals including JAMA

Psychiatry and Nature Communications. Elizabeth co-authored a paper in 2017 that eventually led to a \$30 million federal government initiative to determine the prevalence of schizophrenia in the United States and was integral in getting people with serious mental illness to be considered high-risk and prioritized during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Elizabeth earned her Master of Public Health degree in prevention and community health from George Washington University in Washington, DC, and her bachelor's degree in physiology and neuroscience from McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Session 5: Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. Eastern ***Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) in Children, Youth, and Young Adults***

Michelle Zabel, M.S.S. (michelle.zabel@uconn.edu)

Michelle Zabel (Executive Director, Innovations Institute, UConn School of Social Work) provides project management, quality oversight, and maintain budget responsibility for the Innovations Institute deliverables. Ms. Zabel has over 30 years of experience working in child- and family-serving systems, public and private sectors, at organizational, county, and state levels across the nation. She has expertise in and provides TA in implementation science, service system design and sustainable financing, evidence-based and promising practices, care coordination, residential redesign, crisis response systems, and the establishment of evaluation and continuous quality improvement (CQI) approaches. Ms. Zabel has been Principal Investigator (PI) for multiple state and federal contracts including two CMS-funded demonstration grants (PRFT Demonstration Waiver and three State CHIPRA Collaboratives). She participated in multiple state contracts that included evaluation and CQI centered around system redesign, service array development, and sustainable public financing. Ms. Zabel was PI and Project Director for SAMHSA's National Training and Technical Assistance Center for Child, Youth, and Family Mental Health (NTTAC), a \$41million multi-year task order inclusive of 17 subcontractors and more than 50 consultants. NTTAC organized and implemented an annual work plan of over 100 distinct projects on behalf of SAMHSA grantees and the behavioral health field at large.

Tony Bonadio, Ph.D. (tony.bonadio@uconn.edu)

Tony Bonadio, Ph.D., is an Assistant Research Professor at Innovations Institute, University of Connecticut School of Social Work. Dr. Bonadio primarily focuses on the implementation and evaluation of evidence-based interventions in public behavioral health and child welfare systems. He works closely with the National Wraparound Implementation Center (NWIC) to support the implementation and evaluation of care coordination models across multiple states. Additionally, he brings extensive expertise in leveraging administrative data to support system redesign and outcome monitoring for public child-serving systems. He partners with states to provide technical assistance for evaluation planning, fidelity monitoring, and continuous quality improvement processes that help systems of care identify barriers and facilitators of implementation and support data-informed decision making. His research interests include the use of person-centered approaches to explore differential patterns of service utilization and outcomes across service arrays as well as the development and implementation of data-informed decision making in behavioral health settings. Tony holds a PhD in clinical psychology from Bowling Green State University.

Session 6: Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 2:45 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Eastern ***Supportive Passages for Children, Youth and Families to Prevent Multi-System Involvement***

Debra A. Pinals, M.D. (debra.pinals@nasmhpd.org)

Dr. Debra A. Pinals has been from 2016 to 2023 the Director of the Program in Psychiatry, Law, & Ethics and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan Medical School and Clinical Adjunct

Professor at the University of Michigan Law School. She has also served as the Medical Director of Behavioral Health and Forensic Programs for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Pinals was appointed as the Assistant Commissioner of Forensic Services from 2008 to 2016 and the Interim State Medical Director from 2012-2013 for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. She has worked in outpatient, inpatient settings, forensic and correctional facilities, emergency rooms and court clinics, has received public service awards and has been an expert witness in many cases. She is Board Certified in Psychiatry, Forensic Psychiatry, and Addiction Medicine. During her career she has consulted on complex systems cases for people with mental illness, substance use disorder, and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who are receiving treatment or support in various places- such as in state hospitals, community and justice and forensic settings. She teaches and publishes extensively and has led and consulted on numerous federal grants including those related to opioids, juvenile justice, and behavioral health and justice partnerships. Recently she has been a lead subject matter expert on issues pertaining to competence to stand trial for the SAMHSA GAINS Center. She is a past President of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, current Chair of the American Psychiatric Association Council on Psychiatry and the Law, and past Chair of the Forensic Division and current Chair of the Medical Directors Division for the National Association for State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD). In her work with NASMHPD, she is the Sr. Medical & Forensic Advisor/Editor-in-Chief and has co-authored key policy papers including “Beyond Beds: The Vital Role of a Full Continuum of Psychiatric Care” and “The Vital Role of Specialized Approaches: Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the Mental Health System.

Ruby Goyal-Carkeek, M.B.A. (rgoyalcarkeek@chcs.org)

Ruby Goyal-Carkeek, M.B.A., is the director of behavioral health and child welfare at the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS). In this role she leads initiatives focused on children and youth who receive publicly financed physical health and behavioral health services, with a particular focus on the child welfare and foster care systems.

With 30 years of experience in the nonprofit and public sectors, Ruby has deep knowledge of systems of care, holding roles in direct service, administration, and public policy. Most of her career has been in public service, where she served as the fiscal manager and deputy director for the NJ Children’s System of Care (CSOC) division, considered a national model for providing services to children/youth with behavioral health needs, substance use challenges, and intellectual/developmental disabilities. During this time, Ruby helped launch important initiatives with the support of leadership and partnerships with provider agencies/vendors — including around integrated care and trauma-informed care — and was part of significant system transformation efforts. Ruby also provided oversight of CSOC’s Contracted System Administrator, a managed healthcare entity that hosts the division’s management information system, including a statewide electronic health record. Ruby has delivered technical assistance nationally on CSOC, has provided consultation for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and served as a senior consultant at Sellers Dorsey.

Prior to joining CHCS, Ruby was senior vice president at Social Current — a nonprofit that provides a range of supports to advance the social sector and ignite change toward a more equitable society. Her varied experience has provided Ruby with insights that help connect clinical, operations, quality, financing, regulatory, and policy impacts on service delivery, while reinforcing the importance and value of strengthening public-private partnerships. Ruby has also served on the board of Building Bridges Initiative and Arc of New Jersey. Ruby holds a master’s degree in business administration and a bachelor’s degree in psychology, both from Rutgers University.

Session 7: Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. Eastern
NASMHPD Research Institute, Inc. (NRI)

Carrie Slatton-Hodges, L.P.C. (Carrie.Slatton-Hodges@nri-inc.org)

Carrie Slatton-Hodges currently serves as the Executive Director at the NASMHPD Research Institute (NRI). She came to this role after serving as Senior Behavioral Health Program Director at NASMHPD. Prior to these roles, she served as the Commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and had served in this Governor appointed position for the previous four years. Prior to this position, she served as Deputy Commissioner of the same agency for twelve years. In these roles, she oversaw a budget for the purchase and operation of services for Oklahoma of more than 600 million dollars. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor with a master's degree in psychology and a bachelor's degree in human resources management. She has worked in Behavioral Health, both as an administrator and clinician, for the last thirty years. She is a leader who enjoys mentoring and developing others to be at the top of their skill level. She enjoys the development of goals, and monitoring, meeting, and exceeding those goals. She has excellent verbal and written communication skills and enjoys challenges. She is a collaborator who loves to build consensus and bring various points of view into a strategy. She has a lifelong vision of excellence to those we serve with mental health, addiction, and co-occurring needs that involves the entire person body, mind, and spirit.

Ted Lutterman (ted.lutterman@nri-inc.org)

NRI Senior Director of Government and Commercial Research at NRI, Ted has extensive experience working with public mental health systems to develop, compile, analyze and use information about public behavioral health services, finances, policies, and outcomes. For over 35 years, he has worked with the state mental health agencies to identify important new policy questions, design data collection systems to capture such information, and to collect, analyze, and disseminate results to help states improve their service systems. Mr. Lutterman oversees NRI's federal data collection and policy analysis efforts. He has been a lead NRI staff person on the development of behavioral health performance indicators and National Outcome Measures (NOMS) including heading the CMHS-funded Data Infrastructure Grant Program, the collection of client-level data from state mental health agencies for the SAMHSA mental health Block Grant, the 16 State Study of Mental Health Performance Measures, the CMHS Funded 5-State Feasibility Study on Mental Health Agency Performance Indicators, and the NRI's behavioral health performance measurement system developed in response to the Joint Commission's ORYX initiative.

Mr. Lutterman is the NRI's lead staff person on policy and data issues around the financing and organization of state mental health systems. He led the development and testing of a State Community Integration Self-Assessment tool to help states prepare Olmstead plans and has worked directly with several states on Olmstead planning issues. Mr. Lutterman leads NRI's work with 23 states funded to develop Crisis Bed Registries, designed to quickly help consumers in crisis find appropriate mental health services and avoid boarding in emergency rooms and jails. He has directed the State Mental Health Agency Revenues and Expenditures Study, as well as been a member of numerous other CMHS-funded projects documenting mental health services and financing. Mr. Lutterman has published articles, book chapters, and various publications about the organization, financing, and policies of state mental health agencies. He has served on a variety of national advisory committees on mental health financing and mental health data and information policy.

Mihran Kazandjian, M.A. (mkazandjian@nri-inc.org)

Mihran Kazandjian is a researcher with experience in study design, program evaluation, data collection, and geospatial analysis. His professional research has focused on behavioral health care systems and the implementation of evidence-based practices. He works with national, state, and local data systems, helping stakeholders at all scales make strategic and effective use of resources. Recently, he has studied how states

have implemented coordinated specialty care for first episode psychosis and has worked with practitioners and academic partners to create technical assistance products to aid the successful expansion of such programs. Mihran is currently working closely with states and state funded crisis providers to document their implementation of behavioral health crisis services. Prior to coming to NRI, Mihran managed data collection and analysis for a felony drug court in Ohio.

Kristin Neylon, M.A. (kristin.neylon@nri-inc.org)

Kristen Neylon has 17 years of experience conducting qualitative and quantitative research related to behavioral health and public policy. During this time, she has focused her attention on identifying and addressing needs to improve service delivery, service integration, interagency collaboration, and ultimately, the lives of clients and their families' receiving services in the public behavioral health system. Ms. Neylon manages projects for multiple stakeholders related to collecting and analyzing data about the public behavioral health system, including early serious mental illness programs, coordinated specialty care programs, and crisis services. Ms. Neylon authors reports and literature reviews for federal and state governmental agencies, providers, associations, and other stakeholders. She is particularly interested in improving health equity, and addressing the challenges associated with service delivery to underserved populations.

**Session 8: Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 4:15 p.m. – 4:20 p.m. Eastern
*Columbia Protocol***

Kelly Posner, Ph.D. (kelly.posner@nyspi.columbia.edu)

Dr. Kelly Posner is a Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University. The former President of the American Psychiatric Association noted her work with the Columbia Protocol could be “like the introduction of antibiotics.” The U.S. Department of Defense said her work is “nothing short of a miracle” and that “her effective model of improving the world will help propel us closer to a world without suicide,” and The White House recently highlighted the Columbia Protocol app for workforce and citizen prevention as helping to achieve the Biden-Harris mental health and suicide prevention initiatives. The CDC noted that her work is “changing the paradigm in suicide risk assessment in the U.S. and worldwide.” Dr. Posner was awarded The Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service and this year she is being awarded the Exceptional Public Service Award in Suicidology by the International Symposium on Suicidology and Public Health. Dr. Posner’s work has been noted in a keynote speech at the White House and in Congressional hearings, and she gave the lead presentation in a U.S. Senate forum on school safety after Parkland. Jim Shelton, former Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education under President Obama, says her work “has the potential to keep the 64 million children in our schools safe physically and mentally by helping prevent school violence.” Stand with Parkland said, “We found another big piece of the school shooting puzzle – an antibiotic for suicide. This ... could fundamentally change the game for early identification and intervention. We found the first thing to interrupt the pathway to violence.”

Her work is policy across all 50 states, across the continuum of care, national agencies, and most countries. Through her advocacy she has helped change local, national, and international policy, which in turn has contributed to reductions in suicide across all sectors of society. Dr. Posner was commissioned by the FDA to develop a scientific approach to suicide risk detection that has become the gold standard for suicide monitoring and is ubiquitous across the U.S and worldwide. The FDA has characterized her work as “setting a standard in the field” and a lead article in The New York Times called it “one of the most profound changes of the past sixteen years to regulations.” Dr. Posner has recently been appointed Chair of the Governor’s Veterans’ Suicide Prevention Task Force in New York. She was recognized as one of top 20 most influential scientists from Columbia University across all areas of medicine over the past 10 years and her scholarly

work has been included in the compendium of the most important research in the history of the study of suicide.

Session 9: Sunday, July 27, 2025, from 4:20 p.m. – 5:20 p.m. Eastern
Celebrating TTI: 18 Years of Making a Difference

David Miller, M.P.Aff. (david.miller@nasmhpd.org)

David Miller has fourteen years of direct state government experience and twenty-one years working at the federal level. Mr. Miller has experience in delivering and directing a variety of multi-million-dollar technical assistance projects to state and local entities related to behavioral health service delivery systems, including: SAMHSA's Transformation Transfer Initiative (including working with 95 separate state projects focused on transforming state systems to better serve children, youth, and families), the Technical Assistance Coalition project (which entails coordination with nine (9) national behavioral health organizations), and Children's MH Systems of Care Social Marketing project (delivering social marketing technical assistance to all of SAMHSA's System of Care sites). Mr. Miller serves as Association lead, or co-lead, on policy and technical assistance relating to the issues of Housing, Employment, Primary Health Integration, Olmstead Litigation, Children and Families, Co-Occurring MH/IDD Coordination, Peer Support Services, and Criminal Justice. He supports and directs NASMHPD's Children, Youth, and Families Division, Housing Division, and Legal Division. Prior to coming to NASMHPD, Mr. Miller served as a division director in the Texas Governor's Office and the Executive Assistant to the Texas Board of MHMR, where he was the liaison between the Commissioner, agency, and a 9-member operating board appointed by the governor. Mr. Miller holds a Master of Public Affairs degree from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.

Jane Tobler (jane.tobler@nasmhpd.org)

Jane Tobler has more than 30 years of experience in providing strategic direction, program management, training and technical assistance, and communications working to support behavioral health in communities, states and nationwide. This work has included supporting cross system collaboration, enhancing partnership development, supporting standing up systems, sustainability planning, developing curriculum, producing material, and leading local and national trainings. For more than a decade, Ms. Tobler served as the Director of Training and TA for SAMHSA's Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign. Ms. Tobler worked with states, tribes, territories and communities to support them in their efforts to plan, implement, expand and integrate the System of Care approach to improve behavioral health outcomes for children, youth and families. As the Project Director for SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention's Underage Drinking Prevention Education Initiative, Ms. Tobler provided project management, strategic direction and financial oversight, to increase public awareness and engagement of the risks, and further the prevention, of underage and harmful drinking. She also directed the training and TA to civic organizations, communities, and colleges to garner support and collaboration which led to more than 1,500 "Communities Talk: Town Hall Meetings" focusing on substance use prevention

Ms. Tobler has worked with NASMHPD since 2019 and currently serves as a Senior Training and Technical Assistance Advisor working with the Transformation Transfer Initiative (TTI). In this capacity, she has the honor of working with states and territories providing technical assistance and training as they plan, design, and implement transformation of their behavioral health systems. She has worked on more than 250 projects which focused including: youth suicide prevention, treatment and supports for children with high acuity needs, crisis services, peer support, Trauma-Informed Care, improved services for those with co-occurring mental health and intellectual/developmental disabilities, and other vital behavioral health topics.

Beth Jordan, M.S. (beth.jordan@ky.gov)

Beth Jordan has worked in the Children's Mental Health & Recovery Services Branch within the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental & Intellectual Disabilities for since 1997, serving as the as the Program Manager for that branch from 2014 to 2025 and recently moving into the role of Assistant Director. Beth holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and psychology and a master's degree in clinical psychology as well as a graduate certificate in children's mental health. Beth has worked on numerous federal grants, serving as Project Director and/or Principal Investigator for all six of Kentucky's System of Care Grants. She has also supported implementation of Healthy Transitions; Adolescent Treatment; Early Childhood; Perinatal Depression; Trauma, and Title IV-E grants. She has served as project lead on several Transformation Transfer Initiative grants as well. Beth has expertise in child, youth, and family behavioral health systems; the System of Care framework and interagency collaboration; grant writing, and public health approach to behavioral health. Prior to her state government career, Beth worked as a child, youth, and family outpatient therapist in Texas, and for Bluegrass IMPACT. Beth loves live music, spending time outdoors, all things equestrian, and spending time with friends and family. She lives in Versailles with her husband John, two cats (Frankie and Coal), dog (Zipper), and hedgehog (MoDean).

Dawn Peel, L.P.C., C.P.C.S. (dawn.peel@dbhdd.ga.gov)

Dawn Peel L.P.C., C.P.C.S. is the Senior Director of Crisis Coordination at the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. Dawn became a Licensed Professional Counselor in 2008 and a Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor in 2013. Dawn received her undergraduate degree from the State University of New York at Geneseo in 1996 and her graduate degree from Canisius College in 1998. She has worked in the behavioral health field for over twenty-eight years with diverse roles in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Dawn has worked for DBHDD for over thirteen years and currently serves as the Director, Office of Crisis Coordination. Previously, she served as the Behavioral Health Regional Services Director for the Region Two Field Office. Dawn is responsible for enterprise oversight of the DBHDD state funded crisis system and collaborating with internal and external partners for ongoing management of 988. Dawn also serves as a CIT Coordinator for DBHDD.

Frank Gregory, Ph.D. (Francis.Gregory@ct.gov)

Frank Gregory, Ph.D. is the Administrator for the Behavioral Health Community Services Division at the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). In this role he has oversight of DCF's community-based Mental Health, Substance Use and Interpersonal Violence services. Dr. Gregory is a licensed Clinical Psychologist. He earned a PhD in Clinical Psychology from Columbia University and completed predoctoral and postdoctoral clinical fellowships at the Child Study Center of Yale School of Medicine, where he is an Assistant Clinical Professor. His previous roles at the Department of Children and Families have included Behavioral Health Clinical Manager overseeing in-home mental health services; Director of Treatment Services at Connecticut Children's Place (RTC); Director of Program Operations for Solnit Center South Campus (Hospital & PRTF); and Superintendent of Solnit Center South Campus.

Session 10: Sunday, July 27, 2025, at 5:20 p.m. Eastern

Closing Remarks for the Day and Transition to the Reception

Victor Armstrong, M.S.W. (varmstrong@afsp.org)

Victor Armstrong serves as Vice President for Health Equity and Engagement with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Victor previously served as the inaugural Chief Health Equity Officer for North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services. Victor has also served as Director of the NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services. Prior to his NC state government roles, Victor spent six years as Vice President of Behavioral Health with Atrium Health, based in Charlotte, NC.

Victor has over 30 years of experience in human services, primarily dedicated to building and strengthening community resources to serve individuals who have been historically marginalized. He is a nationally recognized speaker on issues regarding health equity and access to healthcare, particularly as it relates to individuals living with mental health challenges.

Victor currently serves on the steering committee of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. He also serves on the Board of Directors for College for Behavioral Health Leadership and i2i Center for Integrative Health. He is a member of the NC Institute of Medicine and is the host of the “Strong Talk” podcast. Victor has received numerous awards over the course of his career including recently being named 2025 National Social Worker of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers.

Victor graduated, Magna Cum Laude, from North Carolina Central University with a bachelor’s degree in business management and received his MSW from East Carolina University. He is the husband of Dr. Charletta Armstrong and the father of three sons, Carter, Alonzo, and Victor Jr.

Session 11: Monday, July 28, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Eastern *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Update*

Arthur Kleinschmidt, Ph.D., M.B.A., L.P.C., L.A.C.

Art Kleinschmidt, Ph.D. was appointed as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). In this capacity, Dr. Kleinschmidt will provide overall leadership of mental health and substance use disorder treatment, prevention, recovery services, intergovernmental and public affairs, agency operations, as well as budget, and financial management for the newly created Administration for a Healthy America.

Dr. Kleinschmidt has served in several leadership roles during his time in the federal government. He was appointed as a Senior Advisor for Substance Abuse at SAMHSA in 2017 and later served as a subject matter expert for mental health and addiction-related issues on the White House Domestic Policy Council. While on the Domestic Policy Council he co-authored the Executive Order #13954 Saving Lives Through Increased Support for Mental and Behavioral Health Needs during the COVID pandemic. He later received a Presidential Appointment from President Trump to assume the position of Deputy Director of the White House Office of National Drug Policy. As the Deputy Director, Dr. Kleinschmidt received classified briefings on Drug Trafficking Organizations, border security, and was instrumental in crafting the President’s National Drug Control Strategy.

Dr. Kleinschmidt is a licensed mental professional and a licensed addiction counselor. He completed his clinical training at Hazelden Betty Ford. His work has focused on delivering direct treatment services for over two decades by providing individuals, families, and couples with substance use disorders, serious mental illness, and behavioral health complications with crucial and life-saving services. His experience working on multidisciplinary teams in both residential and outpatient and in private practice has resulted in being nationally recognized as a subject matter expert on the nexus between mental health, substance use disorders and criminal justice. Dr. Kleinschmidt has published articles for the Washington Times, Fox News, and the Washington Examiner.

In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Kleinschmidt earned an MBA and was a licensed Certified Public Accountant in his home state of Louisiana. He has business experience running a nonprofit organization in support of individuals in need of substance use treatment. This provided a strong foundation for his public health leadership.

Dr. Kleinschmidt has many personal connections to supporting individuals, families, and communities connect to treatment and move towards paths of recovery. As an individual living in active recovery since January 4, 2002, he has served as a volunteer peer worker assisting individuals in early recovery while living in the recovery community in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Rear Admiral Christopher Jones, Pharm.D., Dr.P.H., M.P.H.

Christopher M. Jones, Pharm.D., Dr.P.H., M.P.H. (Rear Admiral, U.S. Public Health Service), is the Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and Acting Director of the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (CBHSQ). Rear Admiral Jones brings a wealth of experience to SAMHSA having led substance use, mental health, and injury and violence prevention policy, program, and research activities for more than a decade. Prior to becoming Director of CSAP, Rear Admiral Jones served as the director of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In this role, he provided scientific leadership and overall management of the Center, including driving the Center's strategic direction and advancing the Center's priorities of preventing drug overdose, suicide, and adverse childhood experiences. At CDC, Rear Admiral Jones previously served as Deputy Director of the Injury Center and as Associate Director for Strategy and Innovation.

During his career, Rear Admiral Jones has served in a variety of leadership roles in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Among these roles, he served as the first director of the National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Laboratory at SAMHSA, as the acting Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Science and Data Policy and director of the Division of Science Policy in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) at HHS, and senior advisor in the Office of the Commissioner at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Rear Admiral Jones received a Bachelor of Science degree from Reinhardt College, a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Mercer University, a Master of Public Health degree from New York Medical College, and a Doctor of Public Health in Health Policy from The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health. Dr. Jones is a Rear Admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service and has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed publications on the topics of substance use, drug overdose, adverse childhood experiences, and mental health.

Tison Thomas, M.S.W., L.M.S.W.

Tison Thomas, M.S.W., serves as the Acting Director and Deputy Director of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). In this dual capacity, Mr. Thomas leads national efforts to enhance the behavioral health system, expand access to evidence-based services, and strengthen federal and community responses to mental health and co-occurring substance use challenges. His leadership is integral to CMHS's mission of promoting the prevention and treatment of mental illnesses, including serious mental illness (SMI) and serious emotional disturbances (SED).

With over 30 years of experience in behavioral health across federal, state, and local levels, Mr. Thomas has successfully directed large-scale grant programs, managed multidisciplinary teams, and spearheaded transformative initiatives in mental health policy, service delivery, and systems of care. His career is dedicated to improving outcomes for individuals with SMI, co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders, and those with complex behavioral health needs. Previously, Mr. Thomas served as the Director of CMHS's Division of State and Community Systems Development, where he oversaw major funding initiatives such as the Mental Health Block Grant, Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), and the Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC) grant. These programs are vital in supporting services for individuals with SMI, SED, and substance use challenges.

Before joining SAMHSA, Mr. Thomas held various leadership positions at the state level, directing initiatives to implement evidence-based practices in public systems serving individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders, and co-occurring conditions. His extensive career includes leadership roles in managed care, homelessness programs, Medicaid behavioral health, and clinical service settings. Mr. Thomas holds a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in social work.

Session 12: Monday, July 28, 2025, from 10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Eastern
Addressing Serious Mental Illness and Homelessness

Pam Bennett, L.C.S.W., Ph.D. (pbennett1@utah.gov)

Pam Bennett serves as the Utah State Mental Health Commissioner and the Assistant Director for the Utah Department of Health and Human Services Office of Substance Use and Mental Health. In this role, she oversees mental health and crisis services within the public mental health system. Prior to working for the Department of Health and Human Services, Pam was the Adult Team Lead for a rural Local Mental Health Authority, gaining extensive experience working with adults with mental health issues. She is focused on addressing systemic barriers to treatment and supports for individuals with serious mental illness. Outside of work, Pam enjoys being outdoors with her husband, children, grandchildren, and a variety of pets.

Ann Marie Sullivan, M.D. (ann.sullivan@omh.ny.gov)

Dr. Sullivan has served as Commissioner for the New York State Office of Mental Health since 2014. She is responsible for implementing Governor Kathy Hochul's landmark plan to transform the state's mental health system and expand access to care for all New Yorkers. To date, this initiative has invested more than \$2 billion into dramatically expanding services, supports, and capacity across the state. Under Dr. Sullivan's leadership, the mental health system in New York serves over 800,000 individuals each year and provides over 53,000 units of supportive housing for individuals living with mental illness. She has expanded preventive services for youth and families, increased the availability of treatment services across the lifespan and provided individuals living with serious mental illness the intensive supports and treatment needed to thrive in their communities.

Dr. Sullivan has focused on ensuring integrated care throughout the mental health system, addressing the stigma around mental health, fostering equity and inclusion and incorporating the presence of peers with lived experience throughout the service system. A few major initiatives during her tenure include the implementation of 988 and expansion of crisis services across the state, a focus on school based mental health services for our youth and a comprehensive engagement and housing program for individuals with serious mental illness living unsheltered in the community. Dr. Sullivan previously served as senior vice president for the Queens Health Network of New York City Health and Hospitals, and Director of Psychiatry at Elmhurst and Queens Hospitals where she developed a comprehensive inpatient and ambulatory psychiatric service system, youth programs, substance use services, mobile outreach, and school-based programs.

A native of Queens, Dr. Sullivan graduated from New York University's Washington Square College and it's School of Medicine. She completed her Psychiatric Residency at New York University/Bellevue Hospital. She has taught, lectured, and published on best practices in community care and is an active advocate for her patients and her profession. She is a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and has served as the speaker of the American Psychiatric Association's Assembly and on its Board of Trustees. She is a clinical professor at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, a fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine, and a member of the American College of Psychiatrists.

Session 13: Monday, July 28, 2025, from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Eastern
The Evolving Landscape of State Hospitals in the Public Mental Health System Paper and Dialogue

Sheri Dawson, R.N. (sheri.dawson@nasmhpd.org)

Sheri Dawson, R.N., graduated from Bryan School of Nursing and Nebraska Wesleyan University. She has devoted most of her professional career to the prevention, treatment, and recovery of individuals with mental illness and/or substance use disorders. Providing integrated healthcare, where every nurse is a behavioral health nurse, is a passion. Sheri Dawson brings a wealth of experience to the behavioral health field, with 43 years of healthcare experience and 38 years specifically in behavioral health. She served 21 years at the Nebraska DHHS in public health and the Division of Behavioral Health in various roles, including Deputy Director and two terms as Director. While Director, she served on the NASMHPD board of directors as President and the Region VII representative to the NASADAD board of directors. She also served on the NRI board of directors. This experience is a testament to her deep understanding of the field and her commitment to making a difference.

Sheri joined the NASMHPD team as a Senior Behavioral Health Advisor in October 2023. Sheri has experience in community behavioral health, integrated co-occurring healthcare, community-based hospitals, systems of care, state hospitals, regulation and licensure, and data and quality performance. Sheri is deeply committed to ensuring that behavioral health is not just a part of the healthcare conversation but a normalized and integrated aspect. She believes that connecting those experiencing distress and helping them begin the healing process should be a top priority for the nation. Sheri believes in building strong partnerships and trusting the journey.

Ted Lutterman (ted.lutterman@nri-inc.org)

NRI Senior Director of Government and Commercial Research at NRI, Ted has extensive experience working with public mental health systems to develop, compile, analyze and use information about public behavioral health services, finances, policies, and outcomes. For over 35 years, he has worked with the state mental health agencies to identify important new policy questions, design data collection systems to capture such information, and to collect, analyze, and disseminate results to help states improve their service systems. Mr. Lutterman oversees NRI's federal data collection and policy analysis efforts. He has been a lead NRI staff person on the development of behavioral health performance indicators and National Outcome Measures (NOMS) including heading the CMHS-funded Data Infrastructure Grant Program, the collection of client-level data from state mental health agencies for the SAMHSA mental health Block Grant, the 16 State Study of Mental Health Performance Measures, the CMHS Funded 5-State Feasibility Study on Mental Health Agency Performance Indicators, and the NRI's behavioral health performance measurement system developed in response to the Joint Commission's ORYX initiative.

Mr. Lutterman is the NRI's lead staff person on policy and data issues around the financing and organization of state mental health systems. He led the development and testing of a State Community Integration Self-Assessment tool to help states prepare Olmstead plans and has worked directly with several states on Olmstead planning issues. Mr. Lutterman leads NRI's work with 23 states funded to develop Crisis Bed Registries, designed to quickly help consumers in crisis find appropriate mental health services and avoid boarding in emergency rooms and jails. He has directed the State Mental Health Agency Revenues and Expenditures Study, as well as been a member of numerous other CMHS-funded projects documenting mental health services and financing. Mr. Lutterman has published articles, book chapters, and various publications about the organization, financing, and policies of state mental health agencies. He has served on a variety of national advisory committees on mental health financing and mental health data and information policy.

Dallas Earnshaw (dearnshaw@utah.gov)

Dallas Earnshaw was born and raised in Utah. He graduated in Nursing from Brigham Young University completing studies as a Nurse Practitioner. He later graduated from the University of Utah in Psychiatric Nursing and became Board Certified as a Clinical Nurse Specialist. He began working at the Utah State Hospital in 1983. He has held positions as the Forensic Program Director, Nursing Administrator, Assistant Clinical Director, and has been the Hospital's Superintendent for the past 20 years.

He has been very active in promoting the development and implementation of a Best Practice Model at the hospital. He has overseen the development of one of the first Electronic Medical Records in a State Psychiatric Hospital. He has worked closely with advocacy groups for the mentally ill and was recognized by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill as one of the first administrators to bring NAMI sponsored provider education programs into a hospital setting. He has been instrumental in promoting collaborative relationships with State Academic Institutions and the Utah State Hospital, which has resulted in many published research projects.

He has also worked in a variety of other clinical settings. He provides medication management as a Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Wasatch Community Mental Health Center in Provo, Utah; assisted in the development of mental health programming at the Utah State Prison; and has counseled with youth and their families participating in the Utah Youth Drug Court Program. He has served on State Task Forces for Nursing and Mental Health Issues as well as local community boards developing programs for "At Risk Youth" in the school system. He has served President of the Western Psychiatric State Hospital Association from 2011 - 2014. He and his wife Kassidy have four children and eight grandchildren.

Drew Adkins, M.B.A. (drew.adkins@ks.gov)

Drew Adkins is the Commissioner for Behavioral Health at the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services. In that role, he serves as the state's mental health Authority and the single state authority for substance abuse. Commissioner Adkins oversees six separate divisions in the Behavioral Health Commission and roughly a \$350 million budget. The BHS commission is responsible for programs such as oversight of certified community behavioral health clinics, problem gambling, crisis intervention and stabilization centers, SAMHSA's Mental Health and Substance Use block grants, housing and employment programming for individuals with serious mental illness, suicide prevention and primary prevention efforts, and the Kansas Olmstead agreement.

Drew has a background in Missouri state government, working most recently in the Missouri Department of Mental Health as the Communications Specialist for the Office of Disaster Services and serving a stint with the Missouri Department of Economic Development. He also served several years as legislative staff in the Missouri House of Representatives, most recently working for the Missouri House Budget Chairman in fiscal policy. Drew has a Master of Business Administration, a Graduate Certificate in Business Analytics from the Bloch School at UMKC, and a Master of Science and Bachelor of Science from Missouri State University. Drew was recently appointed to the Board of the National Research Institute, which is part of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, and he volunteers at his church.

Drew was appointed interim Commissioner of Behavioral Health Services effective November 27, 2023, and permanently appointed Commissioner on February 5, 2024. He began his tenure with KDADS as Assistant Commissioner of Behavioral Health in October 2021.

Nelson Smith, M.B.A., F.A.C.H.E., (nelson.smith@dbhds.virginia.gov)

Nelson Smith was appointed by Governor Glenn Youngkin in 2022 to be the commissioner of the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), a state agency that operates 12

state hospitals and facilities with over 6,000 employees and oversees a \$2.5 billion system that annually serves 217,000 Virginians and families with behavioral health disorders and developmental disabilities.

Before joining the private sector, Nelson served in the U.S. Army's 5th Special Forces Group, where he was recognized with numerous awards for his exceptional leadership and bravery. He received the Purple Heart, four Bronze Star Medals, including one with the "V" device for Valor, and the Green Beret. After retiring from the military, he pursued an MBA from Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and transitioned to a career in behavioral healthcare administration.

During his time at DBHDS, Nelson has prioritized thoughtful and intentional planning by developing and implementing the DBHDS Strategic Plan, with nine unique objectives, in concurrence with Governor Youngkin's *Right Help, Right Now* plan to transform the behavioral health care system. Under Nelson's leadership, DBHDS has modernized the way crisis services are delivered, made significant improvements to the state hospital system, and developed the capacity for continued progress throughout the system of care. With a strong foundation in faith, family, and love of country, Nelson remains dedicated to improving the lives of those he serves.

Wendy Morris, R.N., M.S.N., C.S. (wendy.morris@nasmhpd.org)

Wendy Morris has worked across the continuum of care in behavioral health for more than thirty years, including inpatient, outpatient, home health, and state government. She served as commissioner for Kentucky's Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities for seven years and deputy commissioner for three years prior to that appointment. Ms. Morris currently serves as Senior Behavioral Health Advisor for NASMHPD, a position that allows her to utilize the skills, knowledge, and experience she has accumulated throughout her career as she works with state behavioral health authorities across the nation. Ms. Morris holds a Master of Science in Community Health Nursing from the University of Kentucky and has been credentialed as a Public Health Clinical Nurse Specialist by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) since 1997.

Session 14: Monday, July 28, 2025, from 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Eastern
Commissioners Breakout/Business Meeting *Closed for Commissioners/Directors and their Proxies

Vibrant Emotional Health

Tia Dole, Ph.D. (tdole@vibrant.org)

Tia Dole, Ph.D., is the Chief 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Officer at Vibrant Emotional Health. Dr. Dole is a licensed clinical psychologist and a long-time advocate for the rights of those with intersectional identity. Prior to stepping into the role of Chief 988 Officer, Dr. Dole was the Executive Director of The Steve Fund, the nation's only organization focused on the mental health and emotional well-being for young people of color. Additionally, Dr. Dole was the Chief Clinical Operations Officer at The Trevor Project, the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ youth. Dr. Dole oversaw all of The Trevor Project's crisis services programs as well as their volunteer community and increased their impact by a factor of four. After completing her bachelor's degree at Carleton College, Dr. Dole received her master's degree in Developmental Psychopathology from Columbia University (Teacher's College), and she received a Fulbright Fellowship to study Forensic Psychology in Switzerland. She then completed her doctorate in clinical psychology at Fordham University. Dr. Dole is a published author and sits on several committees. One of her passions is normalizing mental health conditions within communities of color, LGBTQ communities and helping people get access to services. She is based in New York/New Jersey.

Private/Public Partnerships

Kana Enomoto (kana_enomoto@mckinsey.com)

Kana is the Director of Brain Health for the McKinsey Health Institute, where she specializes in behavioral health, public health, and delivery-system reform. Kana has more than 20 years of experience as a federal executive in mental-health and substance-use policy, data, programs, and practice improvement. Kana is a global thought leader and accomplished executive with a strong record of achieving public-policy goals, delivering programmatic impact, and inspiring organizational and social change.

Since joining McKinsey in 2019, Kana cofounded the Center for Societal Benefit through Healthcare to address underinvested areas of health with a focus on behavioral health. In addition, Kana has supported a wide range of clients, including government entities, payers, providers, investors, employers, and not-for-profit organizations to better serve people with, or at risk for, mental and substance-use disorders.

Prior to joining McKinsey, Kana was acting administrator for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, where she provided executive direction and policy leadership. She also served as senior advisor in the US health and human services agency, where she provided strategic guidance on efforts to combat the opioid epidemic.

Prior to entering government, Kana did health research and clinical services with a focus on mental health and trauma for minority patients. She has received awards in recognition of her work, including the Arthur S. Flemming Award, the American College of Mental Health Administration King Davis Award, and the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service.

Monica Johnson, M.A., L.P.C. (monica.johnson@healthmanagement.com)

A skilled state and federal government executive, Monica Johnson has over 25 years of experience in the behavioral health field. Leveraging her expertise, she has directed numerous behavioral health service areas at the government policy level, has led the formation of several high-profile change initiatives, chaired several collaborations, and served as a board member for a variety of governing boards.

Before joining Health Management Associates, Monica served as the first director of the 988 & Behavioral Health Crisis Coordinating Office at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the U.S. Health & Human Services Department (HHS). In this role, she was responsible for overseeing SAMHSA's primary aspirations regarding the launch of the three-digit number, 988 and enhancing broader behavioral health crisis services. In addition to her experience at the federal level, Monica has over a decade of state-level experience. Most recently, she served as the interim commissioner for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). Prior to this appointment by Governor Brian Kemp, she served in other key leadership roles at DBHDD as the Behavioral Health division director, the Community Mental Health director, and the Child & Adolescent Mental Health director.

With DBHDD, Monica led a team of executive directors for the offices of Adult Mental Health; Addictive Diseases; Children, Young Adults & Families; Deaf Services; Recovery; Prevention, Federal Grants & Culture Competency; Field Operations; and Crisis Coordination. She managed an extensive budget of over \$600 million dollars and developed the strategic plans for all community behavioral health programs. She also developed and oversaw policies and behavioral health practices, program development, and workforce development. Monica has worked in community behavioral health as well, in a variety of clinical, management and leadership roles, including program development and implementation of federally funded initiatives. She has overseen and successfully implemented a number of programs funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention & Department of Education.

Monica earned an undergraduate degree in psychology, minoring in communications, from Kennesaw State University and her graduate degree in professional counseling and psychology from Argosy University. She is an alumnus of the Georgetown University Leadership Academy and a recipient of the Intensive Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Schizophrenia Certification at the Aaron T. Beck Institute for Cognitive Behavior Therapy in Philadelphia. She is also a fellow in the Milbank Memorial Fund Leadership Fellows Program.

Celeste Merrill

Celeste Merrill is a human-centered strategist and mental health advocate who believes systems should serve people—not the other way around. As Managing Director at the Huntsman Family Foundation, she leads national efforts to improve mental health and substance use treatment through policy, philanthropy, and cross-sector collaboration. Her work focuses on operational clarity, cultural transformation, and building trust across organizations and communities.

A mother, health and wellness advocate, and mental health survivor herself, Celeste brings lived experience and professional depth to every table she joins. Celeste's career spans health startups, leadership consulting, and foundation leadership—where she has designed hiring systems, guided executive teams, and led organizations through growth and change. She is known for bringing structure to ambiguity and heart to every strategy. Whether managing multi-million-dollar organizations or coaching leaders through difficult transitions, Celeste combines a focus on compassion, equity, and long-term impact.

Andi Smith

Andi Smith is the Executive Director of National Behavioral Health and Ballmer Group's Washington team, where she sets and leads strategy and investments to improve economic mobility for children and families statewide. Andi holds deep experience in government systems and policy across issues including child welfare, early childhood, homeless youth, and housing. Previously, Andi served as the Executive Director of External Affairs for Washington Governor Jay Inslee, Policy Officer for WA Governor Christine Gregoire, and Lead Policy Analyst for the Washington State House of Representatives.

Session 15: Monday, July 28, 2025, from 3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Eastern ***Forensic Issues in the State Mental Health System***

Debra A. Pinals, M.D. (debra.pinals@nasmhpd.org)

Dr. Debra A. Pinals has been from 2016 to 2023 the Director of the Program in Psychiatry, Law, & Ethics and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan Medical School and Clinical Adjunct Professor at the University of Michigan Law School. She has also served as the Medical Director of Behavioral Health and Forensic Programs for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Pinals was appointed as the Assistant Commissioner of Forensic Services from 2008 to 2016 and the Interim State Medical Director from 2012-2013 for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. She has worked in outpatient, inpatient settings, forensic and correctional facilities, emergency rooms and court clinics, has received public service awards and has been an expert witness in many cases. She is Board Certified in Psychiatry, Forensic Psychiatry, and Addiction Medicine. During her career she has consulted on complex systems cases for people with mental illness, substance use disorder, and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who are receiving treatment or support in various places- such as in state hospitals, community and justice and forensic settings. She teaches and publishes extensively and has led and consulted on numerous federal grants including those related to opioids, juvenile justice, and behavioral health and justice partnerships. Recently she has been a lead subject matter expert on issues pertaining to competence to stand trial for the SAMHSA GAINS Center. She is a past President of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, current Chair of the American Psychiatric Association Council on Psychiatry and the Law, and past Chair of the Forensic Division and current Chair of the Medical Directors

Division for the National Association for State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD). In her work with NASMHPD, she is the Sr. Medical & Forensic Advisor/Editor-in-Chief and has co-authored key policy papers including “Beyond Beds: The Vital Role of a Full Continuum of Psychiatric Care” and “The Vital Role of Specialized Approaches: Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the Mental Health System.

Erin Bauer, M.A. (Erin.Bauer@nri-inc.org)

Ms. Erin Bauer is a Senior Research Associate with the NASMHPD Research Institute (NRI), focusing on projects related to the intersection of criminal justice and behavioral health. She has over 15 years of experience conducting qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research on the intersection of criminal justice and behavioral health systems. Prior to NRI, Ms. Bauer was a Senior Research Associate at Westat in the Behavioral Health Group. She earned a Master of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Maryland, College Park, in 2006.

Virginia Scott-Adams, Psy.D. (virginia.adams@mh.alabama.gov)

Virginia Scott-Adams, Psy.D. is a licensed Psychologist and serves as the Director of the Office of Forensic Mental Health Services for the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH). The Office is responsible for establishing, maintaining, and coordinating a forensic system of care for Alabamians who have mental health and substance use issues and who are involved in the criminal justice system. Dr. Scott-Adams has also maintained an established private practice since 2008, primarily conducting evaluations for youth and families involved with protective services agencies as well as the juvenile and family courts. She is frequently called upon to serve as an expert for various courts as well as public agencies.

Dr. Scott-Adams has practiced as a licensed psychologist in various states for nearly twenty years. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in psychology from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, her Master of Science with Distinction from Hofstra University, and her Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) from Hofstra University in Long Island, New York. She specializes in assessment and evaluation, treatment, and intervention development for children and adults with serious mental illness or developmental disabilities, particularly those struggling with conduct problems and delinquency as well as those who are victims of crime. Other areas of expertise surround identifying and responding to abuse and neglect, preventing and treating trauma, suicide prevention and crisis intervention, and fostering community collaboration and networking to respond to people with mental health and behavioral health needs. In concert with her Doctoral education, Dr. Scott-Adams completed training and education through the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University and the Suffolk County Family Court. Over the course of her career, she worked as an Associate Psychologist at South Oaks Hospital in Amityville New York, the Chief Psychologist and a Certified forensic Examiner at ADMH’s Bryce Hospital, was an Assistant Professor/Director of the Psychology Clinic through the University of Alabama, served as the Program Director and Psychologist for the UA/Alabama Department of Youth Services- Working on Womanhood Program, and served as a Deputy Director of the Office of Statewide Services for the New York State Office for People with Developmental disabilities (OPWDD). Dr. Scott-Adams has also co-authored several publications and is called upon frequently to provide lectures on various topics pertaining to mental health and juvenile and criminal justice. She was nominated for and completed the State University of New York Rockefeller College of Public Affairs’ 2017 Governor’s New York State Leadership Institute. In addition, Dr. Scott-Adams spearheaded a project team that received the Best of New York Award in 2019. Her office most recently received a financial award through NASMHD to implement and expand a competency restoration program within the State of Alabama. Dr. Adams is passionate about overcoming barriers to improve mental health outcomes and access to care for people with mental illness, substance use disorder, and intellectual and developmental disabilities in our states and communities.

Jeanette Simmons, Psy.D. (Jeanette.Simmons@dmh.mo.gov)

Jeanette Simmons, PsyD is the Deputy Director of the Missouri Department of Mental Health. She obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia and attained her Master's and Doctoral degrees from the California School of Professional Psychology in Fresno. Dr. Simmons has been with the Department of Mental Health since 2000 and has served in various clinical and administrative roles. She maintains a small private practice, primarily conducting psychological evaluations. Dr. Simmons is the Clinical Director for the Missouri State Highway Patrol DEFENSE & PCIS programs and has served as a Midwest Representative for the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, Forensic Division.

Session 16: Monday, July 28, 2025, from 3:45 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Eastern
The Link Center

Mary P. Sowers (msowers@nasddds.org)

Mary Sowers is the Executive Director for the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS). Mary joined the association in 2014 and became the NASDDDS Executive Director on July 1, 2019. Before joining NASDDDS, Mary was with Mercer Government Human Services Consulting where she provided consultation and technical assistance to state governments on a wide array of Medicaid-related issues, with a focus on integrated care, home and community-based services, and managed long-term services and supports.

Prior to joining Mercer in 2011, Mary held senior positions with the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Disabled and Elderly Health Programs Group within the Center for Medicaid, and CHIP Services (CMCS). During her tenure at CMS, Mary specialized in Medicaid home and community-based services, managed long-term services and supports (including strategies for reducing institutional reliance), self-direction, and strategies to design person-centered systems of care. Mary also has extensive experience within state government and non-profit organizations serving individuals with I/DD. Like many others in our field, Mary has also served as a direct support professional.

Wendy Morris, R.N., M.S.N., C.S. (wendy.morris@nasmhpd.org)

Wendy Morris has worked across the continuum of care in behavioral health for more than thirty years, including inpatient, outpatient, home health, and state government. She served as commissioner for Kentucky's Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities for seven years and deputy commissioner for three years prior to that appointment. Ms. Morris currently serves as Senior Behavioral Health Advisor for NASMHPD, a position that allows her to utilize the skills, knowledge, and experience she has accumulated throughout her career as she works with state behavioral health authorities across the nation. Ms. Morris holds a Master of Science in Community Health Nursing from the University of Kentucky and has been credentialed as a Public Health Clinical Nurse Specialist by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) since 1997.

Session 17: Monday, July 28, 2025, from 4:30 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. Eastern
Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy for Serious Mental Illness (CT-R)

Paul Grant, Ph.D. (pgrant@beckinstitute.org)

Paul Grant, Ph.D., is Director of the Beck Institute Center for Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy (CT-R). With Aaron T. Beck, he originated CT-R as a collaboration with providers, families, and individuals with lived experience primarily from North and West Philadelphia. Originally developed for individuals given a serious mental health condition diagnosis such as schizophrenia, CT-R is a new form of cognitive behavioral therapy that provides multidisciplinary staff concrete, actionable steps to promote recovery and resiliency for a range of challenges, including justice-involvement, substance use, physical health, and

mental health. Dr. Grant has spearheaded CT-R implementation efforts within state and municipal systems, including forensic and civil hospitals, jails and prisons, acute hospital units, programmatic residences, supportive housing, outpatient mental health clinics, community-based teams, problem-solving courts. Within these settings, the vast majority of providers and beneficiaries come from impoverished urban and rural areas. Dr. Grant developed group, family, milieu, and forensic re-entry CT-R approaches. He has created innovative implementation tools and is involved in researching positive beliefs and teamwide culture change as mediators of successful CT-R outcomes. He is the co-author of Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy for Serious Mental Health Conditions, Schizophrenia: Cognitive Theory, Research, and Therapy, and sole author of the forthcoming Thriving Together Through Schizophrenia.

Julie Burton (julie.burton@omh.ny.gov)

Julie Burton is the Chief Recovery and Resilience Officer in the Office of the Commissioner, a new role at the New York State (NYS) Office of Mental Health (OMH), collaborating with divisions across the agency to advance the recovery and resiliency agenda and improve the quality of life for the people OMH serves. Julie is a master's level Social Worker and brings with her over 30 years of experience in both community-based direct care for individuals and families as well as being a proven, compassionate, and mission-focused manager and leader. Julie joined the Office of Mental Health in 2011 as the Workplace Violence Prevention Coordinator and has since held several positions of increasing responsibility within the Division of State Operated Children's and Adult Services. Most recently, Julie served as the Director of Adult Services with oversight of residential and outpatient services, and Sustained Engagement with a strong focus on person-centered care and recovery. Julie has led the implementation of Recovery Oriented Cognitive Therapy (CT-R) across the adult services system, supporting adult civil and forensic facilities to activate individuals with hope and empowerment. Prior work within State Operated Services includes oversight of inpatient services with a focus on violence reduction and safe and comprehensive reintegration into the community and workplace violence prevention. In all her roles, Julie focused on training and education, developing initiatives, and implementing programs to most effectively help people in care toward full recovery and the ability to thrive in the community. Julie's experience and passion are invaluable for advancing the vision of the NYS OMH's Commissioner for exemplary recovery-oriented mental health services.

Brenda Cibulas, A.P.R.N., B.C., C.G.P. (brenda.cibulas@dbhdd.ga.gov)

Brenda Cibulas serves as the Executive Director, Georgia Division of Behavioral Health (DBHDD). Prior to joining DBHDD, as the Director of Behavioral Health for the Georgia Primary Care Association, she supported the development and expansion of Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) within the Federally Qualified Health Care Centers (FQHC) across Georgia.

Before that, as Director of Behavioral Health and Social Services for Mercy Care, she actively provided leadership and oversight for the IBH approach to primary care, pediatrics, dentistry, psychiatry, behavioral health, Street Medicine, and social services within the FQHC. Additionally, through the healthcare for the homeless designation, Recuperative Care, Outreach, and PATH were important components of the division efforts.

Prior to her work at Mercy Care, she served as the Chief Clinical Officer at the DeKalb Community Service Board (DCSB). Her responsibilities included Mobile Crisis Co-Responder Program with the police, Crisis Stabilization and Psych Emergency Services, Residential Programs, Outpatient BH/SUD Treatment, Veterans Programs, and Early Psychosis Intervention Program amongst other responsibilities and opportunities, and internal and external committee work. Prior to the DCSB, she was the Director of Mental Health Services for Emory University Hospital.

Brenda's clinical work has included services in both NIH-sponsored psychiatric research programs at the University of Cincinnati Hospital and Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in Pittsburgh and at the Allegheny General Trauma Unit. Brenda's additional experiences include private practice, consultation, program development, and mentorship. She is a Board-Certified advanced practice registered nurse practitioner, certified group psychotherapist, and a registered neutral. She has been adjunct faculty at both Emory University and Georgia State University.

She has worked throughout the care continuum, from acute care to outpatient care, medical and behavioral care delivery, and administration. Her community activities include alumna of the Chamblee PD Citizens Police Academy, immediate past chair of the DeKalb Advisory Board of the United Way, and Board member of the MLK Sr Collaborative in Atlanta. Brenda received her Master's degree from Georgia State and her Bachelor's degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Session 18: Tuesday, July 29, 2025, from 9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Eastern
Global Leadership Exchange (GLE) and eMental Health International Collaborative (eMHIC)

Steve Appleton (steve@gle.world)

Steve has served as President and Chief Executive of Global Leadership Exchange (GLE) since January 2022, having previously been the European Lead for the organization. GLE connects leaders in mental health, disability and substance use. It creates spaces for sharing ideas, knowledge, and best practice to help spread innovation and change lives. Its global leadership community is committed to advancing the experiences and opportunities for people with mental health, disability, or substance use needs. GLE is an international organization supporting leaders to grow, learn and develop, offering a space where trust lies at the foundation of all that we do. Prior to his role with GLE, Steve was Managing Director of a consultancy and research practice specializing in work relating to mental health, housing, disability and older age. He originally trained as a social worker and held several practice posts and operational management roles in local government and the English National Health Service. He was a senior manager for a regional arm of the National Health Service, leading on mental health strategy and performance. He has worked nationally and internationally on population based mental health improvement programs in cities and urban regions. Steve is the author of a range of UK national guidance and best practice and has played a leading role in population based mental health improvement initiatives in cities across the UK and Europe. He works closely with organizations including the World Health Organization, Mental Health Europe and with leaders in a number of government departments and agencies around the world. Alongside his role with GLE Steve also serves as Chair of the Board of the Association of Mental Health Providers in England and Wales and is a Global Advisor to the Coalition for Mental Health Investment. Steve is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Anil Thapliyal (anil@emhicglobal.com)

Professor Anil Thapliyal is a global leader in digital mental health, dedicated to transforming mental health access and care through innovative, scalable, and sustainable digital solutions. With over two decades of experience, his mission is to ensure timely, equitable access to mental health information, support, and treatment worldwide, prioritizing the needs of service users, their families, and caregivers. At the core of his philosophy is a user-centric approach: "If digital mental health solutions do not work for those with lived experience, their families, and carers, then they do not work at all." This guiding principle informs all his initiatives, ensuring that technology serves the real-world needs of diverse populations.

As the founder and Executive Director of the eMental Health International Collaborative (eMHIC) - the world's leading think tank and global peak body in digital mental health, Professor Thapliyal champions international collaboration to develop and implement safe, practical solutions to improve timely access to

mental health information, care, support and treatment. Under his leadership, eMHIC is supported by governments across North America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Oceania, exemplifying the trust and influence of his work on a global scale. Professor Thapliyal's work bridges academia, policy, lived experience inclusion, workforce, industry and humanitarian efforts, driving the integration of digital solutions into mainstream mental health systems and influencing international policy development.

Session 19: Tuesday, July 29, 2025, from 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Eastern *AI/Digital Mental Health*

Jessica Monahan Pollard, Ph.D. (jessica.pollard@nasmhpd.org)

Jessica Monahan Pollard, Ph.D. is a Licensed Psychologist and Senior Behavioral Health Advisor at NASMHPD. At NASMHPD, Dr. Pollard provides technical assistance to state leaders and develops resources for SAMHSA around early serious mental illness, workforce, digital mental health, and other topics. After earning a doctorate at the University of Connecticut, she completed a fellowship at Yale in community mental health and served as the first project director of the Specialized Treatment Early in Psychosis (STEP) program. She returned to her home state of Maine, working in integrating primary care and behavioral health and founding early intervention services. Dr. Pollard returned to Yale in 2013 as Assistant Professor in Psychiatry and Clinical Director of Early Psychosis Services, focusing on workforce development, transitions of care, and justice system involvement. Dr. Pollard was appointed by Governor Mills as Director of the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) for Maine's Department of Health and Human Services. There she led implementation of Maine's first living room crisis center, the Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach, Naloxone and Safety (OPTIONS) program, behavioral health response to the COVID-19 pandemic (StrengthenME), innovative forensic policy, among other successful initiatives. Dr. Pollard is past Program Chair and past Chair for Mental Health for the American Public Health Association (APHA) and a recipient of the APHA Mental Health Section Award "For Excellence in the Field of Mental Health." She has authored dozens of peer reviewed publications, book chapters, technical assistance papers, continuing education courses, and has presented around the US and the world.

John Torous, M.D., M.B.I. (jtorous@bidmc.harvard.edu)

John Torous, M.D., M.B.I. is Director of the Digital Psychiatry Division, in the Department of Psychiatry at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), a Harvard Medical School-affiliated teaching hospital, where he also serves as a staff psychiatrist and associate professor. He has a background in electrical engineering and computer sciences and received an undergraduate degree in the field from UC Berkeley before attending medical school at UC San Diego. He completed his psychiatry residency, fellowship in clinical informatics, and master's degree in biomedical informatics at Harvard. Dr. Torous is active in investigating the potential of mobile mental health technologies for psychiatry and his team supports mindapps.org as the largest database of mental health apps, the mindLAMP technology platform for scalable digital phenotyping and intervention, and the Digital Navigator program to promote digital equity and access. Dr. Torous has published over 300 peer reviewed articles and 5 book chapters on the topic. He directs the Digital Psychiatry Clinic at BIDMC which seeks to improve access to and quality of mental health care through augmenting treatment with digital innovations. Dr. Torous serves as editor-in-chief for the journal JMIR Mental Health, web editor for JAMA Psychiatry, and a member of various American Psychiatric Association committees.

Steve Appleton (steve@gle.world)

Steve has served as President and Chief Executive of Global Leadership Exchange since January 2022, having previously been the European Lead for the organization. Global Leadership Exchange (GLE) connects leaders in mental health, disability and substance use. It creates spaces for sharing ideas, knowledge, and best practice to help spread innovation and change lives. Its global leadership community is committed to advancing the experiences and opportunities for people with mental health, disability, or

substance use needs. GLE is an international organization supporting leaders to grow, learn and develop, offering a space where trust lies at the foundation of all that we do. Prior to his role with GLE, Steve was Managing Director of a consultancy and research practice specializing in work relating to mental health, housing, disability and older age. He originally trained as a social worker and held several practice posts and operational management roles in local government and the English National Health Service. He was a senior manager for a regional arm of the National Health Service, leading on mental health strategy and performance. He has worked nationally and internationally on population based mental health improvement programs in cities and urban regions. Steve is the author of a range of UK national guidance and best practice and has played a leading role in population based mental health improvement initiatives in cities across the UK and Europe. He works closely with organizations including the World Health Organization, Mental Health Europe and with leaders in a number of government departments and agencies around the world. Alongside his role with GLE Steve also serves as Chair of the Board of the Association of Mental Health Providers in England and Wales and is a Global Advisor to the Coalition for Mental Health Investment. Steve is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Anil Thapliyal (anil@emhicglobal.com)

Professor Anil Thapliyal is a global leader in digital mental health, dedicated to transforming mental health access and care through innovative, scalable, and sustainable digital solutions. With over two decades of experience, his mission is to ensure timely, equitable access to mental health information, support, and treatment worldwide, prioritizing the needs of service users, their families, and caregivers. At the core of his philosophy is a user-centric approach: “If digital mental health solutions do not work for those with lived experience, their families, and carers, then they do not work at all.” This guiding principle informs all his initiatives, ensuring that technology serves the real-world needs of diverse populations.

As the founder and Executive Director of the eMental Health International Collaborative (eMHIC) - the world’s leading think tank and global peak body in digital mental health, Professor Thapliyal champions international collaboration to develop and implement safe, practical solutions to improve timely access to mental health information, care, support and treatment. Under his leadership, eMHIC is supported by governments across North America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Oceania, exemplifying the trust and influence of his work on a global scale. Professor Thapliyal’s work bridges academia, policy, lived experience inclusion, workforce, industry and humanitarian efforts, driving the integration of digital solutions into mainstream mental health systems and influencing international policy development.

Afshin Khosravi (Afshin@trilogyir.com)

Afshin Khosravi, Founder and chief executive officer for Trilogy, had a distinguished career in international business, focusing on high technology, computer and Internet technologies, and information system integration, before he founded his own company, Local Communities Network. At Local Communities, he specialized in the development of highly innovative and interactive Web sites and virtual online communities for business as well as community-based organizations serving the poor and disadvantaged. This included the donation of hundreds of Web sites to nonprofit organizations.

Session 20: Tuesday, July 29, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Eastern
Improving Maternal Mental Health in Women with Serious Mental Illness

Lisa Hadley, M.D., J.D. (lisa.hadley@nasmhpd.org)

Lisa Hadley is currently a part-time Senior Medical Advisor for NASMHPD and a full-time psychiatrist in private practice. Her work with NASMHPD includes the areas of Women’s and Maternal Mental Health and Eating Disorders. Her private practice focuses on behavioral health treatment of women throughout the adult lifespan. Her former roles include Medical Director for the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration, Medical Director for several different healthcare management companies, and 30 years of

clinical experience, providing and overseeing mental health and addiction services in a variety of settings. Dr. Hadley is board certified in General Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine. She received her M.D. degree from University of Maryland School of Medicine. She received a B.S. from University of Maryland and a J.D. from University of Maryland School of Law.

Brooke Doyle, M.Ed., L.M.H.C., (brooke.doyle@state.ma.us)

Brooke Doyle was appointed Commissioner for the Department of Mental Health on October 30, 2020. A Licensed Mental Health Counselor (L.M.H.C.), Commissioner Doyle has both clinical and management experience, and is a long-time champion for mental health parity, improving access to mental health treatment and she is committed to addressing healthcare equity. Her previous experience in the fields of homelessness and substance use disorders is critical as we continue to reduce barriers to service access. Prior to being appointed as Commissioner, she served as the Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health Services where she oversaw DMH's adult service delivery system, led inter-agency planning and projects, and provided administrative and clinical leadership for all aspects of DMH statewide service compliance monitoring. Commissioner Doyle is an alumna of the University of Massachusetts where she received both her M.Ed. in Rehabilitation Counseling and her B.A. in Psychology.

Kristen Morningstar (morningstark@michigan.gov)

Kristen Morningstar is the Director of Specialty Behavioral Health Services at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. In this role, she oversees adult community-based system of care for adults with mental illness, substance use disorders and developmental disabilities. Previously, Kristen was Senior Advisor to the MDHHS Chief Deputy Director for Health, where she focused on behavioral health special initiatives including expanding access to and availability of behavioral health services in Michigan. Throughout her tenure with MDHHS, Kristen has also served as the Behavioral Health Budget Manager. In this role, she was responsible for the coordination and oversight of all budget and financing for Michigan's behavioral health programs. Kristen holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and was a 2018 policy fellow at the Center for Healthcare Research and Transformation at the University of Michigan.

Session 21: Tuesday, July 29, 2025, from 11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Eastern

A Systems-Based Approach to Supporting Individuals Who Have Experienced Grief and Loss

Debra A. Pinals, MD (debra.pinals@nasmhpd.org)

Dr. Debra A. Pinals has been from 2016 to 2023 the Director of the Program in Psychiatry, Law, & Ethics and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan Medical School and Clinical Adjunct Professor at the University of Michigan Law School. She has also served as the Medical Director of Behavioral Health and Forensic Programs for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Pinals was appointed as the Assistant Commissioner of Forensic Services from 2008 to 2016 and the Interim State Medical Director from 2012-2013 for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. She has worked in outpatient, inpatient settings, forensic and correctional facilities, emergency rooms and court clinics, has received public service awards and has been an expert witness in many cases. She is Board Certified in Psychiatry, Forensic Psychiatry, and Addiction Medicine. During her career she has consulted on complex systems cases for people with mental illness, substance use disorder, and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who are receiving treatment or support in various places- such as in state hospitals, community and justice and forensic settings. She teaches and publishes extensively and has led and consulted on numerous federal grants including those related to opioids, juvenile justice, and behavioral health and justice partnerships. Recently she has been a lead subject matter expert on issues pertaining to competence to stand trial for the SAMHSA GAINS Center. She is a past President of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, current Chair of the American Psychiatric Association Council on Psychiatry and the Law, and past Chair of the Forensic Division and current Chair of the Medical Directors

Division for the National Association for State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD). In her work with NASMHPD, she is the Sr. Medical & Forensic Advisor/Editor-in-Chief and has co-authored key policy papers including “Beyond Beds: The Vital Role of a Full Continuum of Psychiatric Care” and “The Vital Role of Specialized Approaches: Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the Mental Health System.

Amy Brinkley (amy.brinkley@nasmhpd.org)

Amy Brinkley is a person with 13 years of direct lived experience with mental health and substance use recovery. Her passion and expertise are driven from the loss of three brothers to suicide and her mother to an overdose. Her heart is to advocate for change across the country through effective recovery data collection and evaluation processes that drive recovery-oriented outcomes which will in turn improve the quality of life and sustained recovery for people with substance use disorders and mental illness. Professionally, Amy Brinkley served for (5) five years as the Director of Recovery Support Services in the state of Indiana with the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction. She most recently served for 2 years as the Chairperson for NASMHPD's National Division of Recovery Support Services advocating for the professionalization of recovery supports across the country. Amy has also been a contributing author on several American Psychiatric Association Journals related to peer support through her work on the APA Policy Advisory Board and continues to serve in this capacity today. Currently Amy serves as NASMHPD's (National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors) Recovery Support Systems Coordinator, is also a wife and mother to 4 children and resides in Indiana.

Session 22: Tuesday, July 29, 2025, from 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Eastern
Plenary Lunch Presentation - Center for Mental Health Implementation Support: Supporting Organizations and Systems to Improve Care

Heather J. Gotham, Ph.D. (gothamh@stanford.edu)

Heather Gotham, Ph.D., licensed clinical psychologist and Clinical Professor, Stanford University School of Medicine, works with behavioral health and healthcare providers to improve access to effective mental health and addiction treatment. Her research uses implementation science to assist behavioral health providers in utilizing evidence-based treatments at national, state, and local levels. Currently, Dr. Gotham is PI/Director of the SAMHSA-funded national Center for Mental Health Implementation Support (CMHIS), which supports the implementation of evidence-based mental health prevention, treatment, and recovery support practices across US states and territories. She is also Co-Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-funded Helping End Addiction Long-Term Data2Action (HD2A) Research Adoption Support Center (RASC) that aims to improve the implementation research capacity of opioid use disorder and pain management research projects to increase the chances for anyone, anywhere to receive the best possible treatment for addiction and pain-related conditions. Dr. Gotham is a multiple PI on an NIAAA funded hybrid type 1 implementation study of the use of screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment in sexual and reproductive health clinics. Dr. Gotham has significant experience in clinical teaching and training behavioral health and health care students and professionals, including directing the national coordinating office for the SAMHSA-funded Mental Health Technology Transfer Network. She led two SAMHSA-funded SBIRT health professions training grants. She has designed curricula and provided training and technical assistance to behavioral health and health professionals on treatments for adult and adolescent substance use disorders, implementing EBPs into behavioral health settings, co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, integrating behavioral and primary healthcare, and SBIRT.

Katherine Marks, Ph.D. (katie.marks@ky.gov)

Katie Marks is the Commissioner for the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. Dr. Marks serves as a steward of the departmental mission to promote health and

well-being by facilitating recovery for people whose lives have been affected by mental illness and substance use; support people with intellectual or other developmental disabilities; and build resilience for all. As a behavioral scientist, Dr. Marks centers her leadership on co-creating supportive, responsive systems that promote accountability for outcomes that meaningfully impact lives. Dr. Marks previously served as the project director for the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE); bringing expertise focused on state, community, and organizational-level collaborative strategies as well as policies that support recovery from the overdose epidemic. Dr. Marks received a doctorate in Experimental Psychology from the University of Kentucky and a graduate certificate in Clinical and Translational Science.

Session 23: Tuesday, July 29, 2025, from 1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Eastern
Fire Side Chat – Next Steps for Strengthening the Continuum of Care for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness

Brian Sims, M.D. (brian.sims@nasmhpd.org)

Dr. Brian Sims is the Senior Director of Medical and Behavioral Health for the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. He is also a Senior Consultant for NASMHPD's Center for Innovation in Behavioral Health Policy and Practice, formerly known as the National Center for Trauma Informed Care (NCTIC), where he provides lectures and trainings both nationally and internationally on the practice of Trauma-Informed Care and the neurobiology of trauma. Most recently, he has been the lead consultant for Trauma Informed Care in the Faith Based community. Dr. Sims is a former staff psychiatrist with Correctional Mental Health Services, an organization serving the mental health needs of inmates in 60 detention centers in 10 states, where he was responsible for the provision of care for more than 3,000 inmates. Before joining Correctional Mental Health Care Services, he was the Senior Director for Behavioral and Mental Health for Conmed Healthcare Management where he was responsible for the development of core strategic planning for the company's correctional mental health provisions in 8 states. Prior to his work with Conmed, Dr. Sims served with the State mental health

Representative Steve Eliason, State of Utah

Steve Eliason has lived in Sandy, Cottonwood Heights and Midvale for all of his adult life. He earned a bachelor's and master's degree at the University of Utah, where he has also taught. He obtained a CPA license and currently work for the University of Utah Hospital as a senior director. While serving in public office was never in his long-term plans, he has shown a lifetime commitment to our community. He has volunteered with a number of local non-profits and served as the board chair for The Road Home. While serving in the Utah Legislature he focused on issues that truly matter to all residents. Steve has passed over 100 bills during his tenure in the Legislature on topics ranging from election reform, public safety, education, public health, tax reform and has passed over two dozen bills relating to suicide prevention and improving the lives of people suffering from a mental illness. He has been consistently ranked as one of the top five most effective lawmakers in Utah.

Kana Enomoto (kana_enomoto@mckinsey.com)

Kana is the Director of Brain Health for the McKinsey Health Institute, where she specializes in behavioral health, public health, and delivery-system reform. Kana has more than 20 years of experience as a federal executive in mental-health and substance-use policy, data, programs, and practice improvement. Kana is a global thought leader and accomplished executive with a strong record of achieving public-policy goals, delivering programmatic impact, and inspiring organizational and social change. Since joining McKinsey in 2019, Kana cofounded the Center for Societal Benefit through Healthcare to address underinvested areas of health with a focus on behavioral health. In addition, Kana has supported a wide range of clients, including government entities, payers, providers, investors, employers, and not-for-profit organizations to better serve people with, or at risk for, mental and substance-use disorders.

Prior to joining McKinsey, Kana was acting administrator for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, where she provided executive direction and policy leadership. She also served as senior advisor in the US health and human services agency, where she provided strategic guidance on efforts to combat the opioid epidemic. Prior to entering government, Kana did health research and clinical services with a focus on mental health and trauma for minority patients. She has received awards in recognition of her work, including the Arthur S. Flemming Award, the American College of Mental Health Administration King Davis Award, and the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service.

Nora Bock, M.S., L.P.C. (nora.bock@dmh.gov)

Nora Bock is the Director of the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) within the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH). Nora joined DMH in 2001. She served in a variety of positions through the years, playing key roles in the joining of two divisions to become DBH; making medications for opioid and alcohol use disorders a standard of care; pushing for language change in addiction; supporting and overseeing the change in the substance use disorder clinical treatment model and payment methodology; and the creation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics in Missouri. In Nora's current role, she oversees both community-based prevention, treatment, and recovery services, as well as community-based psychiatric programs. In addition, she is responsible for the state's five inpatient forensic hospitals, as well as the single state-operated psychiatric children's hospital. She has been active in NASADAD since 2009, serving as the NTN/NTC. She was designated as the SSA for Missouri in 2021.

Justin Volpe, CRPS-A, CIT, (justin.volpe@nasmhpd.org)

Justin Volpe is an international consultant, advocate, and peer specialist based out of Miami, FL. He has presented and trained mental health facilities and other organizations on trauma informed practices and used his life experiences to discuss workforce issues and connecting community providers to better serve individuals in need. Previously before his role with NASMHPD, Justin worked as a Jail Diversion Peer Liaison for the 11th Judicial Criminal Mental Health Project for 14 years. He has worked as a Certified Recovery Peer Specialist in Florida since 2008 and has local and national experience. Justin has extensive work experience in the community and has supervised and coordinated thousands of engagements with participants with serious mental health and co-occurring issues in the criminal justice system. He has assisted in training over 3,500 Miami Dade Law Enforcement Officers in Crisis Intervention Team Training. His passion for this work is based on bringing systems together locally and nationally while reducing stigma and advocating for the persons served. He is the recipient of the 2021 Fred Frese Award from CIT International and has many other awards and achievements; including multiple articles and film *Definition of Insanity*, (PBS 2020) with his experience with the Jail Diversion Program and the Ken Burns Documentary: *"Hiding in Plain Sight"* (PBS 2022).