

Law & Disability Conference - May 2, 2024

Moderator and Speaker Bios

INTRODUCTION

- **Erika Kerber, Esq.**, *President/Executive Director, Community Health Law Project*

OPENING SESSION: HOUSING: A SOCIAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH

Housing is a well-established social determinant of health. Housing stability, quality, safety, and affordability all affect health outcomes. This session will discuss initiatives that are being implemented to improve housing opportunities for the most vulnerable residents of our state.

MODERATOR

- **Diane Riley**, *Executive Director, Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey*
Diane joined SHA as Executive Director in 2017 bringing her many years of experience as a leading voice for the economically disadvantaged in New Jersey. Joining the Community Food Bank in 2011, Diane led a coalition of stakeholders to raise awareness about hunger, engage in public dialogue, and influence policies that address underlying causes such as housing. In March 2016, Diane was recognized by the NJ General Assembly for her service leadership and commitment to improve the quality of life for citizens throughout the state of New Jersey. Prior to the joining the food bank, Diane worked at The Apostles House, a non-profit agency providing emergency shelter, transitional housing, and other services to homeless and at-risk families in the Newark area. Diane is currently a member of the Federal Home Loan Bank of NY Affordable Housing Advisory Council. As an ordained deacon in the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, the Rev. Diane Riley serves as Archdeacon for Mission and Service a resource to congregations and other faith communities.

PANEL

- **Joe Bongiovanni**, *Director, Managed Long Term Services & Supports, NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services*
Joseph Bongiovanni, Director of MLTSS and Contract Logistics for the New Jersey Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services. He began working there in 2011 and is currently overseeing the operation of the Managed Long Term Services and Supports Program as part New Jersey's 1115 Medicaid Comprehensive Waiver. He has served as project director for the federal Money Follows the Person demonstration, managed operations for a 1915(c) HCBS waiver for persons with developmental disabilities, coordinated community supports and served developmentally disabled adults as a direct support professional. Throughout his career, Mr. Bongiovanni has developed connections and partnerships in the area of workforce development, HCBS program operations and institutional transitions. Mr. Bongiovanni has a BA in Psychology from Seton Hall University and an MA in Counseling Psychology from Montclair State University.
- **Erika Kerber, Esq.**, *President/Executive Director, Community Health Law Project*
Erika Kerber is the President/Executive Director at the Community Health Law Project (CHLP), a non-profit legal services organization which provides legal and advocacy services to low-income New Jersey residents living with disabilities, chronic health conditions, and the frail elderly. Ms. Kerber has been with CHLP for 19 years, moving up the ranks within the organization. She began her career at CHLP first as Supervising Attorney of its Monmouth/Ocean office, then as the Managing Attorney of that office.

She then moved up to Director of Litigation and then Associate Executive Director to ultimately being appointed as the new President/Executive Director in January 2022.

Prior to joining CHLP, Ms. Kerber practiced law at Northeast New Jersey Legal Services, she litigated child welfare cases while working for the City of New York and spent some time in private practice. She sits on the board of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies and the New Jersey Mental Health Institute. She is also a member of the New Jersey Mental Health Coalition. Ms. Kerber received her law degree from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law and her bachelor's degree from the NYU Leonard N. Stern School of Business.

- **Jonathan Tew**, *Policy Director, NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services*

Jon Tew is Policy Director in the Office of Policy and Innovation in the NJ Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services' (DMAHS) where he oversees the 1115 Comprehensive Demonstration as well as other waivers of federal authority needed by NJ to run NJ FamilyCare, New Jersey's Medicaid program. He is a lawyer by training and prior to working at DHS worked at the Camden Coalition and prior to that, the Pennsylvania State Senate

- **Melanie R. Walter**, *Executive Director, NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency*

Melanie R. Walter is the Executive Director of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, a statewide and national leader in providing and advocating for affordable housing and homeownership. Before joining NJHMFA in January 2021, Walter served as Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Director of the Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) and as Deputy Attorney General. She has been an advocate for governmental transformation and advancement, particularly in areas of government finance, collaborative outreach, and data driven programming. Ms. Walter, a New Jersey native, earned her Juris Doctor and her Masters of Public Policy from the College of William and Mary, and her bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Mary Washington. She is a member of the New Jersey and Virginia bars.

- **Janel Winter**, *Assistant Commissioner & Director, Division of Housing & Community Resources, NJ Department of Community Affairs*

Assistant Commissioner Janel Winter leads the Division of Housing and Community Resources at the NJ Department of Community Affairs, which includes the State's public housing authority serving more than 40,000 households annually; home energy assistance programs serving more than 200,000 families annually; affordable housing production programs; the Office of Homelessness Prevention; the Office of Eviction Prevention; weatherization and lead remediation and abatement programs; neighborhood revitalization programs; and a variety of other community development initiatives. She has managed the distribution of more than \$2 billion in federal Covid-related funds to address rental and utility arrears and community revitalization and development throughout the State. Prior to joining DCA, Janel led the Office of Housing at the NJ Department of Human Services and served as Associate Director at the Corporation for Supportive Housing/CSH. Before returning to her home state of NJ, Janel worked at various direct service homelessness and housing agencies in Chicago.

Workshop 1: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: RECENT INITIATIVES AND SERVICES

This workshop will discuss state initiatives and supportive services for individuals with behavioral health challenges.

MODERATOR

- **Rebecca Kolas, Esq.**, *Managing Attorney, Community Health Law Project*
Rebecca Kolas completed her undergraduate degree at Montclair State University and is a graduate of Seton Hall Law School. She has practiced law in the non-profit realm for over twenty years in various areas of law including Social Security, Entitlements and Housing. When not advocating for her clients, she spends her time at home with her husband and nine children.

PANEL

- **Carolyn Beauchamp**, *President and CEO, Mental Health Association in New Jersey*
As President of the Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ), Carolyn Beauchamp has been a leader in the public mental health field for over four decades. A graduate of Gettysburg College, Ms. Beauchamp received her M.S.S.W. from Columbia University School of Social Work and pursued three years of post-graduate training in family therapy at the Mid-Jersey Institute for Family Therapy. From working on the wards of Greystone Psychiatric Hospital as a social worker early in her career, to creating one of the state's first outreach programs to board and care homes, to becoming the Mental Health Association's Director of Policy and Advocacy and then its CEO – her interest and abilities using individual, systems and legislative advocacy have led to her success in the field. Under her leadership, the MHANJ has developed and implemented programs to empower consumers to become effective personal and systems advocates, and created a strong statewide consumer voice that affects policy decisions at the highest levels.

Ms. Beauchamp served for ten years as Chairperson of the Statewide Mental Health Coalition as well as the Boarding Home Advisory Council. She has been a member of the Professional Advisory Committee for Addictions, the Governor's Task Force on the Criminally Insane, Direct Care Salary Coalition, Protection & Advocacy Advisory Committee, the Governor's Advisory Committee to Close Hagedorn State Hospital, Governor Murphy's Transition Team as well as the AOC-Mental Health Advisory Committee. She led the fight for mental health parity legislation in our state through building a strong coalition that worked with legislators to create legislation that was signed by Governor Murphy in 2021. Under her direction, the MHANJ Government Affairs (GA) Team spearheaded the development and passage of the Patients' Bill of Rights as well as the New Jersey Advance Directives for Mental Health Care Act, D(PADs) both of which are designed to protect patients' rights while in hospital settings. Psychiatric Advance Directives empower consumers by involving them in treatment choices based on past experience.

Concerned about the paucity of affordable housing for those with mental illness, the MHANJ founded a housing consulting program called Monarch Housing, to assist disability organizations in establishing affordable housing in the state. In 1996 Monarch Housing became an independent entity that continues to work on housing issues and homelessness. As part of its leadership in developing a peer workforce, the MHANJ launched the first statewide employment training program for those who suffered a serious mental illness – teaching them to work as peers in the health care system. Today, the Consumer Connections Program has

expanded to include those suffering from co-occurring disorders – both mental illness and substance use disorder.

When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, under Ms. Beauchamp's leadership, the MHANJ acted immediately, shifting to all-virtual and expanding capacity to help those in need. It was called upon as a key partner in crisis response, including New Jersey Hope and Healing programs with the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services and FEMA/SAMHSA grants.

Within the last few years, the Association advocated for more funding to add psychiatric residencies in New Jersey, adding \$3 million to the state budget, helping to increase access to care and address the serious shortage of psychiatrists in our state. It provided leadership in efforts to pass important legislation, such as the Parity law, mandating that treatment for mental health and substance use disorders have the same insurance coverage as physical diseases.

Throughout her career Ms. Beauchamp has received awards for outstanding performance. They include the following: Pequannock Valley Mental Health Center Leadership Award (1985); Bridgeway Partnership Award (1998); NJ Psychiatric Association Citizen of the Year (1999); Consumer Provider Award (2000); Communicator Award Beyond 911 (2002); Ann Klein Advocate Award (2003); Vision of Achievement Award Passaic County MHA (2005); MHANJ Leadership Award (2011); MHANJ's Golden Bell Leadership Award (2019); Boy Scouts of America Patriots Path Council Good Scout Award (2020); New Jersey Association of Social Workers New Jersey Chapter Award (2020); and Leading Women Entrepreneurs Force for Change Award (2021).

- **David Helfand, MS**, *Assistant Division Director, Office of Community Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, NJ Department of Human Services*

David Helfand is the Assistant Division Director, Office of Community Services in the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

David has worked at DMHAS for 24 years implementing new mental health programs, improving existing mental health services, and overseeing many of the mental health services that DMHAS has contracts for.

David holds a bachelor's degree from Ursinus College, PA, a master's degree from Rutgers University, NJ and is certified as a Disaster Response Crisis Counselor (DRCC).

- **Harry Reyes, DHSc, LPC, LCADC**, *Assistant Director, Office of Treatment and Recovery Supports, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, NJ Department of Human Services*

Dr. Harry Reyes is the Assistant Division Director, Office of Treatment and Recovery Supports (OTRS) in the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

Dr. Reyes manages and oversees numerous mental health and addiction services, such as Recovery Court, Justice Involved Services (JIS); Workforce Development, Acute Care Services, MH/SUD Housing, SUD Women and Children Services, SPB, PATH, PACT and Community Support Services (CSS) to name a few.

Dr Reyes holds a BA degree from Trenton State College, NJ, a master's degree from Lincoln University, PA, and a Doctorate Degree from Nova Southeastern University, FL. He is dually licensed in the State of New Jersey as a Licensed Professional Counselor, LPC and Licensed Clinical Alcohol a Drug Counselor (LCADC) and certified as a Disaster Response Crisis Counselor (DRCC) as well.

- **Kimberly Veith, MBA, MSW, LCSW, LCADC, CEO, Bright Harbor Healthcare**
Kim Veith holds a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University, an MSW from Fordham Graduate School of Social Services, and an MBA from Georgian Court University. Kim is dually licensed as an LCSW/LCADC and is the Chief Executive Officer at Bright Harbor Healthcare. Kim has been an employee of Bright Harbor Healthcare for over twenty years and has worked in children/adolescent/ family services as well as adult services, in several different capacities. Her experience includes working in residential care, assessment and therapy with Court-involved youth and their families, adult partial care, substance use disorder services, and behavioral health outpatient services. Additionally, Kim has worked per diem as a PESS screener and in private practice.

Currently, her role as CEO includes strategic planning for a diverse community integrated care agency delivering services to over 7,000 patients in the Ocean County area. Bright Harbor Healthcare has a talented staff of 450 trained professionals tasked with providing safety net services for those with mental health, substance use, and primary care needs.

Kim strives to bring evidenced-based treatment with an emphasis on measured positive outcomes, to all programming at Bright Harbor. She is focused on improving population health while building strong communities.

Workshop 2: GUARDIANSHIP AND ALTERNATIVES TO GUARDIANSHIP

This workshop will discuss the guardianship process for individuals who are alleged to be “incapacitated,” as well as discuss alternatives to guardianship in appropriate circumstances.

MODERATOR:

- **Kimberly E. Devinney, M.A.,** *Director of Administration, Community Health Law Project*
Kimberly Salomon Devinney is the Director of Administration at the Community Health Law Project. She obtained a master’s degree in forensic psychology at John Jay College in Manhattan, NY. She began working at CHLP in 2000 as a disability advocate at the Union and Hudson County Office. Ms. Devinney spent over 20 years representing the low income, frail elderly, and disabled population in the areas of public entitlements, consumer matters and home care issues, and insurance appeals. Ms. Devinney was promoted to Director of Administration in July of 2023.

PANEL

- **Carolyn M. Caputi,** *Assistant Deputy Public Defender*
Carolyn M. Caputi has worked for the Office of the Public Defender, Division of Mental Health, and Guardianship Advocacy since 2004. Carolyn represents clients who are alleged to be incapacitated, as well as clients who are facing civil commitments at psychiatric hospitals and Krol clients. Prior to her current position, she clerked for the Honorable Walter Marshall in Gloucester County. Carolyn graduated from Rutgers School of Law-Camden in 2002. During law school, she interned at Pine Tree Legal Assistance-Native American Unit in Bangor, Maine. She graduated from Douglas College in 1997.
- **James F. Anderson, Esq.,** *Senior Attorney, Community Health Law Project*
James Anderson has been a practicing attorney for 33 years. Jim joined the Community Health Law Project in January 2016. Prior to that he was a staff attorney at another non-profit legal services organization for 14 years and was in private practice for ten years. Jim's areas of law include guardianship, landlord/tenant, consumer including debt collection and bankruptcy, foreclosure defense, Wills, Powers of Attorney and Advanced Health Care Directives among many other areas. Jim is a member of the New Jersey, Federal District of New Jersey, and United States Supreme Court Bar.
- **Nkechi Okoli,** *Statewide Director, Transition to Adult Services and Employment, Division of Developmental Disabilities, NJ Department of Human Services*
Nkechi Okoli, MSW, LSW is the Statewide Managing Director for the Transition to Adult Services and Employment Unit at the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). In addition to the work that Nkechi has been involved in within the DDD she also has experience working within the Division of Child Protection and Permanency within the Department of Children and Families and the local Family Support Organization. The work Nkechi and her team do is to ensure that individuals and families have the information they need to make informed choices and work towards achieving their best most meaningful life.
- **Tina McDuffie,** *Intake & Intensive Case Management, Statewide Coordinator, Division of Developmental Disabilities, NJ Department of Human Services*
Tina McDuffie, B.A joined The Division of Developmental Disabilities in January 2000 where she has worked in Case Management, Community Development and Intake- Intensive Case Management. She is currently the Statewide Coordinator for the Intake and Intensive Case Management Unit. Tina has worked in the social services field for over 30 years serving Individuals with Intellectual and

Developmental Disabilities as well as Individuals dually diagnosed with I/DD and Mental Health. Her areas of interest include community outreach and constituent relations, community inclusion, and staff development.

Workshop 3: SPECIAL EDUCATION

This workshop will discuss the rights of children with special education needs and the process to obtain such services.

MODERATOR

- **Stacy Noonan, Esq., *Managing Attorney, Community Health Law Project***
Stacy Noonan, Esq. is the Managing Attorney for the Community Health Law Project's Hamilton Regional Office. Ms. Noonan has been with CHLP for 28 years and has since become a leader in the Housing law field within the organization. Ms. Noonan leads her staff on issues relating to the Public Entitlement and Consumer law fields as well. Ms. Noonan clerked for the Honorable Peter W. Thomas in both the Law Division and Appellate Division. Ms. Noonan received her undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State University and her law degree from Washington University in St. Louis School of Law.

PANEL

- **Kristin Bricketto, Esq., *Managing Attorney, Community Health Law Project***
Kristin M. Bricketto has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to representing individuals with special needs. Kristin is a managing attorney at the Community Health Law Project, a non-profit legal services organization in New Jersey that represents individuals with disabilities. Kristin manages the CHLP office in Westmont which services New Jersey's southernmost counties. Although she represents clients with various disabilities, the majority of her clients have developmental disabilities or mental health issues. Kristin has a broad practice, focusing on all matters regarding her clients' disabilities, including Social Security Administration benefits and hearings, special education law issues, access to adult services and public entitlements.

Prior to joining the Community Health Law Project, Kristin worked on a variety of legal matters within the fields of education law and non-profit law. During her time in private practice, she represented plaintiffs in a variety of special education matters, as well as guardianship and access to adult services. Kristin has done speaking engagements for parent groups on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process.

Kristin served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Linda R. Feinberg, A.J.S.C. (retired), in Mercer County. Kristin graduated from Rutgers School of Law - Camden (J.D. 2003). Prior to law school, she earned her master's degree in developmental psychology from Columbia University (M.A. 2000). Throughout her legal career, Kristin has employed her knowledge and experience in the fields of psychology and law to assist children and adults with disabilities.

- **David R. Giles, Esq., *Law Offices of David R. Giles***
For more than thirty years, David Giles has dedicated himself to fighting on behalf of parents and their children to protect their education rights. Beginning at Stanford Law School, he volunteered to represent students and youth for legal services. After law school, he continued to represent and protected the rights of students and youth at various nonprofit legal services organizations, such as the Education Law Center in Newark, and at the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. For the last twenty years, Mr. Giles has advocated for parents and students through his private practice, focusing primarily on special education, school discipline and bullying. Mr. Giles has represented parents and children before schools, administrative agencies and state and federal courts.

- **Jennifer N. Rosen Valverde, Esq./MSW**, *Distinguished Clinical Professor of Law and Nadine Taub Scholar, Education and Health Law Clinic, Rutgers University School of Law*
Jennifer Rosen Valverde, Esq., M.S.W., is a Distinguished Clinical Professor of Law at Rutgers U. School of Law in the Education and Health Law Clinic (EHLC) and holds a secondary appointment as Professor in the Rutgers School of Public Health. Professor Valverde co-teaches two seminars, one on special education law and the other on race, bias, and professional identity. She spends most of her time in the EHLC educating students in the practice of law; there, students “learn by doing” as they advocate on behalf of children with disabilities and their families in special education and, to a lesser extent, public benefits matters. Professor Valverde has published numerous articles on special education law, cross-systems educational advocacy, social determinants of health, and interprofessional collaboration, and frequently presents in New Jersey and nationally on these and related topics. Before joining Rutgers in 2001, she represented children at the Cook County Office of the Public Guardian and the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Inc. Professor Valverde received her B.A. in sociology from Wesleyan University in Connecticut, and is a *magna cum laude* graduate of the Loyola University-Chicago Schools of Law and Social Work.