

Pediatric Health Equity Collaborative (PHEC) Participant Bios



Alicia Adiele, MSW, LICSW

*Director, Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Seattle Children's Hospital*

Alicia received a B.S. in Public Health from Central Washington University and a Master of Social Work from the University of Washington. Alicia's experience as a clinical social worker in community mental health, Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families, and hospital social work has contributed to her dedication to achieving health equity. Alicia is committed to identifying existing health disparities in health outcomes at Seattle Children's by utilizing data and to create platforms to make those data visible across the institution. Through the Center for Diversity and Health Equity and Workforce Diversity and Inclusion consultation services, advocacy and collaboration, Alicia and her team support medical divisions, frontline workforce members, and hospital leaders with developing interventions to address potential inequities of care and to work towards the elimination racism and of disparities in health outcomes.



Amita Bey, MPH

*Program Director, Office of Inclusion and Health Equity
Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt*

Amita Bey is the Program Director for Implementation and Evaluation in the Office of Inclusion and Health Equity (OIHE) at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. Her extensive experience includes domestic and international multi-institutional clinical research, assessment of health disparities in the treatment of pediatric chronic diseases, and global health program evaluation. As part of her current role, she facilitates unconscious bias, cultural competency, and civil behavior in the workplace training for Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) faculty and staff. Prior to her current position, she served as the Program Director for the VUMC Surgical Outcomes Center for Kids (SOCKs) at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital. She was responsible for developing a training program and comprehensive research curriculum for medical students and undergraduate trainees. She has a Bachelor of Science in biology from Tuskegee University, and a Master's in Public Health in global studies with a focus in epidemiology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in education from Lipscomb University. Prior to coming to Vanderbilt, she served as an epidemiologist in immunization services at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



LaVone Caldwell, MSW

*Director of Health Equity
Nationwide Children's Hospital*

LaVone has over 30 years' experience as a Clinical Social Worker in the areas of HIV/AIDS, hematology/oncology, neonatology; and child abuse/neglect. She has been employed at Nationwide Children's Hospital for over 23 years in various social work and leadership roles. LaVone was hired in September 2013 to develop a new department focused on eliminating health disparities throughout Children's Hospital. Her primary responsibilities include defining and developing a health equity vision and a strategic plan; leading, participating in and conducting activities related to addressing health disparities in our target communities; and creating methods, tools, resources and models that leads to equal clinical outcomes for all pediatric patients.



John D. Cowden, MD, MPH

*Professor of Pediatrics
Culture and Language Coaching Program Director
Health Equity Integration Project Lead
Children's Mercy Kansas City*

Dr. Cowden is a Professor of Pediatrics at Children's Mercy Kansas City, where he serves as the Health Equity Integration Program Lead and Director of the Culture and Language Coaching Program. Dr. Cowden's research and quality improvement interests include provider-patient communication, immigrant health care, diversity of research subjects, and access to health care for minorities, specifically those who do not speak English.

Dr. Cowden serves on the Health Equity leadership team for the Children's Hospitals Solutions for Patient Safety and is a member of the Pediatric Health Equity Collaborative.

Dr. Cowden graduated from Yale University School of Medicine (MD) and the University of Washington School of Public Health (MPH). He completed pediatric residency at Seattle Children's Hospital and completed the Disparities Leadership Program at the Disparities Solutions Center.



Kirk Dabney, MD, MHCDS

Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Dr. Kirk Dabney, is a pediatric orthopedic surgeon, specializing in cerebral palsy in the dept. of Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery at Nemours/Alfred I duPont Hospital for Children. He received his MD from Thomas Jefferson Medical College and a Masters in Healthcare Delivery Science from Dartmouth. He also serves as the Delaware Valley’s Chief Diversity and Equity Officer. In that role, he cofounded the Pediatric Health Equity Collaborative, a consortium of pediatric hospitals in the US and Canada that champion efforts in pediatric health equity. He is entering his 30th year of employment at Nemours and has the distinction of being hired as duPont’s first African American surgeon and doctor.



Ashley Durkin, MPH

*Health Equity and Diversity Consultant
Center for Diversity and Health Equity
Seattle Children’s Hospital*

Ashley Durkin is a Health Equity & Diversity Consultant in the Center for Diversity & Health Equity (CDHE) at Seattle Children's Hospital. In her current role, Ashley supports the consultation program at CDHE by working to build awareness through education about anti-racism, health inequities, and social determinants of health with the goal of eliminating health inequities. Her focus includes utilizing outcomes metrics stratified by race, ethnicity, and language and supporting equity quality improvement projects throughout the hospital. Ashley received her BA in Biology from Whitman College and her MPH from San Diego State University.



Bridgette Jones, MD, MS

Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Missouri-Kansas City

Bridgette L. Jones, MD MS holds a faculty appointment as Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in the divisions of Pediatric Clinical Pharmacology, Toxicology and Therapeutic Innovation and Allergy/Asthma/Immunology at Children’s Mercy. She is a clinician scientist with a focus on therapeutics and interventions to improve the lives of children with allergic disease and asthma. She has received funding thru the National Institutes of Health, and other extramural and intramural resources to support her work. She is also the Assistant Academic Dean of Student Affairs at the University of Missouri Kansas City School of Medicine. At Children’s Mercy she is the inaugural chair of the Faculty and Trainee Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee and the Medical Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity at Children’s Mercy where she works develop and maintain a pipeline of diverse and successful trainees and physicians in medicine and overall achieve health equity for children and families. Dr. Jones currently serves as Chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Drugs and is also Chair of the American Academy of Allergy Asthma Immunology Asthma and Cough

Diagnosis and Treatment Committee. In addition, she serves as a member of the Food and Drug Administration Pediatric Advisory Committee and was appointed by the United States Secretary of Health to serve on the National Institutes of Health Task Force on Research Specific to Pregnant Women and Lactating Women. She is married to Rafiq Saad and is the mother of two daughters, Lola and Nora.



Karima Karmali, RN, BScN, MBA

*Director, Centre for Innovation & Excellence in Child and Family-Centred Care
The Hospital for Sick Children*

Karima Karmali has over 20 years of leadership experience in health care and is the Director of the Centre for Innovation & Excellence in Child- and Family-Centred Care at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto. In this role, she provides strategic and operational leadership to advance the design and delivery of health care to better meet the needs of patients and their families. Karima champions and leads initiatives aimed at improving patient and family experience at SickKids. She has a special interest in health equity for vulnerable populations and international health issues. Ms. Karmali is a strong proponent of volunteerism and gives of her time both locally and internationally. She is currently the Vice-President of the Aga Khan Ismaili Council for Canada. Karima obtained her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from McGill University and a Master of Business Administration from Queens University.



Hans B. Kersten, MD

*Professor of Pediatrics
Drexel University College of Medicine
Attending and Physician
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children*

Hans Kersten graduated from Temple University School of Medicine and completed his residency at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children (SCHC). He is an attending and hospitalist physician at SCHC, the medical director of the multidisciplinary Grow Clinic, and a professor of pediatrics at Drexel University College of Medicine. Dr. Kersten founded the Reach Out and Read programs at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children over 10 years ago and is a member of the Reach Out and Read Greater Philadelphia Advisory Committee. He has led recent efforts for St. Christopher's to become "hunger-free" by developing initiatives to screen for FI throughout the hospital, providing resources for families, organizing food drives, improving fresh food access by starting the F2F and FreshRX programs at the hospital and the Philly Food Cart in the lobby. He has completed over 20 invited lectureships on failure to thrive and FI, and presented an American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) webinar on FI. He is a member of the APAs Task Force on Childhood Poverty, received the Vincent Zarro, MD, PhD Community Outreach Award from Drexel University College of Medicine (DUCOM) for his advocacy and scholarly efforts and has recently been elected to DUCOMs Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) Honor Medical Society.



Lenny López, MD, MDiv, MPH

*Senior Faculty, Disparities Solutions Center, Massachusetts General Hospital
Chief of Hospital Medicine, Associate Professor of Medicine,
University of California San Francisco*

Lenny López, MD, MDiv, MPH, is Senior Faculty at the Disparities Solutions Center, Chief of Hospital Medicine and Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of California San Francisco. Dr. López is an internist trained at the Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH), who completed the Commonwealth Fund Fellowship in Minority Health Policy at the Harvard School of Public Health and a Hospital Medicine fellowship at BWH. Dr. López joined the Mongan Institute for Health Policy (MIHP) in 2008 after his research fellowship in General Internal Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and was an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School until 2015. With an ultimate goal of reducing healthcare disparities in cardiovascular disease and diabetes, his current research addresses issues relating to patient safety and language barriers, optimizing primary care clinical services for Latinos with cultural and linguistic barriers, and using health information technology to decrease disparities. A second line of research is investigating the epidemiology of acculturation among Latinos in the US and its impact on the prevalence and development of cardiovascular disease and Type II diabetes. This research will help inform how to better design clinical interventions for improving chronic disease management among Latinos.



Kelly Martin

*Program Manager, Interpreter & Translation Services
Seattle Children's Hospital*

Kelly has 9 years' experience in language access programming and administration and 5+ years' experience developing, implementing, and facilitating equity, diversity, and inclusion learning opportunities for healthcare and research settings. Currently, work as language access program manager and implicit bias training consultant allows her great impact on the patient and family experience at Seattle Children's. Kelly shares her knowledge of language access resources, patient and family needs, practical application of equity, diversity and inclusion concepts, and data analysis to assist staff and faculty with building plans understand and address the patient and family communication experience.



DeAngalo Nesby, MBA, MSHA

Health Equity Specialist

Children's Health

DeAngalo Nesby is the Health Equity Specialist supporting the Chief Health Equity & Inclusion Officer at Children's Health in Dallas, Texas. As the Specialist, he leads the disparities portfolio of the department of Health Equity & Inclusion; using quality improvement, process improvement and research methodology to identify inequities in care delivery and implement interventions that foster equitable care in an inclusive and safe environment. Prior to his current role, DeAngalo supported the organization's strategic priorities through data analytics as a Senior Planning Analyst in the department of Strategy & Business Development. He began his career at Children's Health as an Administrative Resident completing a 12-month practicum on health administration in a pediatric health system.

DeAngalo received his bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Birmingham-Southern College. He went on to also receive his MBA and Master of Science in Health Administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.



Arie L. Nettles, PhD, NCSP, HSP

Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Licensed Psychologist,

Developmental Medicine, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Director, Office of Inclusion & Health Equity

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Dr. Nettles is associate professor of clinical pediatrics and psychologist for school age children to young adults with developmental disabilities, autism, and craniofacial in the Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) Division of Developmental Medicine.

Founder and director of VUMC's Office of Inclusion and Health Equity (OIHE) since 2011, Nettles has expanded the program from its origins at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt to encompass the entirety of the enterprise on cultural awareness, unconscious bias and Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment education and training.

Nettles is a licensed psychologist; nationally certified school psychologist; nationally registered health service provider; and an alumnus of the Disparities Leadership Program. Appointed by the Governor, Nettles chairs the Tennessee Statewide Planning and Policy Council for the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Her current research is cultural competency in health care.



Patricia Oceanic, MSOD

*Administrative Director, Office of Health Equity and Inclusion
Nemours/Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children*

Pat enables cultural change throughout the Delaware Valley by driving initiatives to eliminate healthcare disparities. The six areas of focus include: quality; community engagement; workforce diversity; research; cultural competence training; language, literacy and healthcare literacy.

Prior to joining Nemours, Pat initiated and launched a global diversity initiative with W.L. Gore and Associates, (one of Fortune's top 100 companies) and established affinity groups that identified group-level issues of gender, race, culture, age and sexual orientation, and worked in collaboration with senior leadership to address barriers raised.



Karen Sappleton, MSED, MSW, RSW

Senior Manager, Centre for Innovation & Excellence in Child and Family-Centred Care

The Hospital for Sick Children

Karen Sappleton is a mother of two young boys and is the Senior Manager of Child and Family-Centred Care & Health Equity in the Centre for Innovation & Excellence in Child and Family Centred Care at SickKids. In this capacity she manages the Interpreter Services department, the Family Centre (children's library and health information for families and the schooling program), and the Office of Patient and Family Experience. Karen has been a member of the SickKids community for the last 11 years, first as a clinical social worker in the Clinical and Metabolic Genetics Program as well as the Good 2 Go Transition Program in Adolescent Medicine, and as a Clinical Research Project Manager for the Department of Social Work. Karen was also an Inter-Professional Education Specialist as a member of the New Immigrant Support Network, supporting the development and implementation of the Cultural Competence workshops at SickKids and running the Train-the-Trainer workshops throughout the province of Ontario. Karen continues to teach, present and runs workshops on health equity, social justice, child and family-centred care, and patient experience. Prior to her career with SickKids, Karen was an educator and administrator in New York City, working predominantly with children and youth with learning disabilities and special needs. Karen is passionate about health equity, social justice, education, and supporting all of our children and families to have the best healthcare experience possible.



Aswita Tan-McGrory, MBA, MSPH

Administrative Director, the Mongan Institute

Director, The Disparities Solutions Center

Adjunct Faculty, Northeastern University

As Administrative Director of the Mongan Institute, Aswita works in tandem with the Director to provide overall strategic and operational responsibility for Mongan Institute staff, programs, expansion, and execution of its mission. In addition, she works with the Mongan Institute Unit leadership to facilitate interdisciplinary team work, manage and improve operations, provide data and decision-support, manage team initiatives and projects and provide oversight for strategic initiatives as the Institute moves forward under the direction of the Mongan Institute Director. The Mongan Institute in the Department of Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital is dedicated to supporting research across MGH in the areas of population and health care delivery science. The Mongan Institute brings together nine existing research centers: the Medical Practice Evaluation Center, the Health Policy Research Center, the Global Health Research Center, the Disparities Solutions Center, the Disparities Research Unit, the Cancer Outcomes Research Program, the Clinical and Translational Epidemiology Unit, the MGH Health Decision Science Center, and the Tobacco Research and Treatment Center, as well as a developing program in primary care research in the Division of Internal Medicine.

In her role as Director at the Disparities Solutions Center, Ms. Tan-McGrory leads the Center's portfolio of projects focused on addressing racial and ethnic disparities in health care. Ms. Tan-McGrory also travels across the country to speak to organizations about how race, ethnicity, and language impact the quality of care. Ms. Tan-McGrory serves on several executive committees, including the MGH Executive Committee on Diversity and Equity, and the Partners Health Equity and Quality Committee. In addition, Ms. Tan-McGrory sits on the board of the Massachusetts Public Health Association and is Adjunct Faculty at Northeastern University. Ms. Tan-McGrory currently serves on the MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services' Quality Measurement Alignment Taskforce.

Ms. Tan-McGrory's interests are in providing equitable care to underserved populations and she has over 20 years of professional experience in the areas of disparities, maternal/child health, elder homelessness, and HIV testing and counseling. She received her Master of Business Administration from Babson College and her Master of Science in Public Health, with a concentration in tropical medicine and parasitology, from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Ms. Tan-McGrory is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer where she spent 2 years in rural Nigeria, West Africa, on water sanitation and Guinea Worm Eradication projects.

She received a YMCA Achievers award in 2017 for community service and professional achievement, and in 2016 was selected as a Pioneer as part of a groundbreaking initiative Children's Wellbeing initiative by Ashoka Changemakers and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



Nikki Tennermann, MSSW

*Administrative Director, Office of Health Equity and Inclusion
Boston Children's Hospital*

Nikki Tennermann is the Administrative Director in the Office of Health Equity and Inclusion at Boston Children's Hospital. Ms. Tennermann is a licensed clinical social worker with a background in complex care, early childhood development, and diversity and inclusion training. Ms. Tennermann has provided consultation to social service and healthcare professionals around reducing bias in clinical judgment through critical exploration of self and self-awareness. She has assisted with curriculum development for trainings on unconscious bias and racial identity development and has investigated how social determinants of health impact pediatric patients. She is passionate about mentoring students of all ages and increasing access to mental health services through telehealth. Ms. Tennermann hopes to enhance health equity and reduce health outcome disparities through systems-level analysis and research, promotion of diversity and representation across service areas, and collaboration with hospital and community stakeholders.

Nikki Tennermann obtained her BA in psychology and Spanish from Bard College in 2009 and her MSSW in Advanced Clinical Practice from Columbia University School of Social Work in 2011. She holds a certificate in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy from Boston University. Clinically, Ms. Tennermann identifies as an anti-oppressive social worker and practices from a social justice and empowerment standpoint. She pays particular attention to race, culture and beliefs as they impact clinical encounters and practices in English and Spanish.



Valerie L. Ward, MD, MPH

*Medical Director, Office of Health Equity and Inclusion
Pediatric Radiologist
Boston Children's Hospital*

Valerie L. Ward (AB, MPH, Harvard University; MD, Yale University School of Medicine) is the Medical Director of Health Equity and Inclusion at Boston Children's Hospital (BCH); Staff Radiologist at BCH; and Assistant Professor of Radiology at Harvard Medical School (HMS). Early in her career, Valerie was sponsored by BCH to participate in the Fellows Program of The Partnership, Inc., a Boston-based organization dedicated to workplace diversity and inclusion through professional and organizational development. Subsequently she was appointed as the Faculty Director and Co-Chair of the BCH Diversity and Cultural Competency Council (DCCC). Her clinical and research interests focus on understanding factors that lead to disparate outcomes for diverse children, improving the health care provider and patient interaction, and assessing diagnostic imaging technology. Along with the research working group of the DCCC, she obtained funding from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Massachusetts to study the factors that affect communication between health

care providers and diverse in-patients and their families. This study led to the development of a patient “navigation” tool. She later collaborated with pediatric colleagues to perform a study that led to a better understanding of missed care opportunities for diverse outpatients in the primary care setting at BCH. Dr. Ward was a 2012 recipient of the HMS Harold Amos Faculty Diversity Award. She has also been the Physician Director for Quality Improvement in the BCH Department of Radiology, and in this role improved the educational experience of trainees and faculty in recognizing and understanding factors involved in difficult and missed diagnoses in pediatric imaging. Currently, she has combined her pediatric diagnostic imaging expertise with her health equity and inclusion interests to form collaborations with the BCH Program for Patient Safety and Quality to Co-Chair a newly formed Demographic Data Collection Working Group, the BCH Academy for Teaching and Educational Innovation and Scholarship to create a college-to-medical school pipeline program for those who are underrepresented in medicine, and colleagues across multiple pediatric subspecialties at BCH to Co-Chair the Healthcare Disparities Research Working Group as a forum for presenting and sharing ongoing research aimed at improving health outcomes for all children.



Michelle Patterson Wimes, JD

*SVP, Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer
Children’s Mercy Hospital*

Michelle is a strategic leader who is deft at implementing change management strategies necessary for a comprehensive and effective diversity and inclusion and professional development program. In her current role, Michelle has been charged with being a strategic advisor and educator to Children’s Mercy Hospital (CMH) where she uses data to assess cultural competency and develops action plans to close gaps. Representing the perspective of patients, families, employees, community partners, and suppliers, she also collaborates with CMH leaders to address health disparities and foster a workplace culture of inclusion while establishing and maintaining relationships with peers and partners in key organizations.

Michelle is a nationally renowned presenter and author on professional development, diversity and inclusion issues in the workplace on topics such as, “Engaging Decision-makers and Practice Group Leaders in Diversity and Inclusion Efforts;” “Aligning Associate Competencies and Diversity Principles;” and “Reconciling Diversity, Inclusion & Meritocracy: Challenges & Opportunities.” She has presented before organizations such as the Association of Corporate Counsel, the Practicing Law Institute, The Diversity and Flexibility Alliance, the National Association of Legal Professionals, the Professional Development Institute, and the Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals.