



MDAC ORAL HEALTH SUMMIT
Innovation, Advocacy, Action: Shaping Maryland's Oral Health Future
November 17, 2025

Speaker Bios

Opening Keynote Presentation

Speaker: Meg Sullivan, MD, MPH
Title: Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services
Organization: Maryland Department of Health

Meg Sullivan, MD, MPH, serves as the Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services, at the Maryland Department of Health (MDH).

Dr. Meg Sullivan is a Board-certified Pediatrician with extensive experience in public health, health policy, human services, and emergency response. She recently served in the role of Acting Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), developing deep expertise in programs and initiatives that promote the well-being of children and families. Prior to that role, Dr Sullivan was a Counselor to the Secretary of HHS, providing strategic guidance and expertise for multiple public health and human service agencies. She has also served as the Chief Medical Officer for the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), the agency within HHS that leads the nation's medical and public health preparedness, response, and recovery efforts for disasters and public health emergencies.

Prior to serving at HHS, Dr. Sullivan was the Medical Director at the Mecklenburg County Health Department in Charlotte, North Carolina where she provided medical leadership for all health department programs as well as the COVID-19 response. Previously, she has worked at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, a Federally Qualified Health Center in Washington, DC, and as the Medical Director of an organization in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

Dr. Sullivan completed medical school at the University of California, San Diego and her pediatric residency at New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center. She received a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.



Plenary Panel Discussion: How Big Bold Advocacy Will Save Medicaid

Moderator: Ann Ciekot

Title: Partner and Director of Strategic Partnerships

Organization: Public Policy Partners

Ann is a leading advocate on economic justice, civil rights, and behavioral health initiatives in Annapolis. Prior to co-founding Public Policy Partners, she led the successful lobbying firm of Binderman & Ciekot. Ann began her lobbying career as an advocacy director for several non-profit organizations including the Maryland Chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Action for the Homeless, and Center for Poverty Solutions.



Panelist: Melissa Burroughs

Title: Senior Director of Public Policy

Organization: CareQuest Institute for Oral Health

Melissa Burroughs is the Senior Director of Public Policy at the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health. She has been working in oral health policy for over a decade, and her role includes leading the organization's policy, advocacy, and government affairs strategies. Melissa serves as the organization's key policy expert and spokesperson with a particular focus on oral health coverage issues. Her background is in health policy and health care consumer advocacy, having previously worked for nearly a decade at the leading national health care consumer advocacy organization Families USA. Melissa led the Families USA's Oral Health for All, and led policy and coalition efforts related to Medicare, Medicaid, health equity, and health care pricing abuses.



Panelist: Robyn Elliott

Title: Policy and Governmental Affairs Consultant for Maryland Dental Action Coalition

Organization: Public Policy Partners

Robyn serves as MDAC's Policy and Governmental Affairs Consultant and has over 15 years of experience in legislation, the state budget process, and health care finance. She is an expert in navigating the legislative and state budget process on complex policy and financial issues. She has particular expertise in health care reimbursement, health insurance, health occupations, and disabilities issues. Robyn has previously served as Director of Governmental Affairs at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and a Senior Policy Analyst with the Maryland General Assembly under the Department of Legislative Services. Her health care finance experience includes being a senior financial analyst at Johns Hopkins Hospital. She has a Master's in Health Care Administration from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.



Panelist: Kevin Lindamood, MSW
Title: President & CEO
Organization: Health Care for the Homeless

Kevin Lindamood is President & CEO of Health Care for the Homeless and President of HCH Real Estate Co. He leads Maryland's largest provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness, guiding efforts to deliver whole-person care, expand affordable housing, and strengthen a values-driven workforce. With more than 30 years of experience spanning outreach, clinical care, advocacy, and nonprofit leadership, Kevin works locally and nationally to address poverty and homelessness. He has served as Board President of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, on the Boards of Baltimore's Continuum of Care and Behavioral Health Systems Baltimore, on Maryland's Interagency Council on Homelessness and for 17 years on the Maryland Medicaid Advisory Committee, including 14 years as Chair. A former adjunct professor at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, Kevin frequently speaks on issues of homelessness, housing, health and social justice.



Breakout Session: Improving Children's Oral Health Through School Based Programs: Future Opportunities and Lessons Learned

Moderator: Uma Ahluwalia, MSW, MHA
Title: Director
Organization: Leapp Strategies LLC

Uma S. Ahluwalia is a respected social services and public health services professional. Currently, she is working as a Senior Policy Fellow at Chapin Hall part time and providing consultation services through her consulting practice through Leapp Strategies, LLC. For about six and a half years Uma was at Health Management Associates. She supported public and private sector organizations through projects related to public health, child welfare, social services, children's behavioral health and strategic planning. Prior to joining HMA, she had a 22-year public sector career in state and local government. For twelve years she served as director of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services in Maryland. She also worked in several state and county jobs in executive leadership roles.



She has a master's degree in social work from the University of Delhi in India and a specialist, post-master's in health services administration from George Washington University.

Panelist: Christina (Chrissy) Bartz, PAC, MMS
Title: Director, Community-Based Programs
Organization: Choptank Community Health Systems, Inc

Chrissy Bartz is the Director of Community-Based Programs at Choptank Community Health, bringing more than 20 years of experience in adolescent, pediatric, and community-based medicine. She earned her Master of Medical Science from St. Francis University in 2003 and began her career coordinating a public health-funded School-Based Health Center in Delaware. Since 2013, she has led Choptank’s school-based medical, dental, behavioral health and nutrition teams, migrant and mobile health programs, providing clinical support and ensuring access to comprehensive, integrated care for underserved populations across Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Chrissy also serves on the Caroline County Board of Education, the Maryland Council on the Advancement of School-Based Health Centers, the Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports, and the Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care.



Panelist: Elizabeth (Liz) Elliott, MSN, RN, CDCES, NCSN
Title: President
Organization: Maryland Association of School Health Nurses

Elizabeth (Liz) Elliott, MSN, RN, CDCES, NCSN, is committed to supporting students, families, and school staff in school health. She has shared her expertise with school nurses at various levels and earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Maryland, as well as a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Case Western Reserve University. Since 2022, Liz has been the President of the Maryland Association of School Health Nurses (MASHN) and has been a Nationally Certified School Nurse since 2018 and a Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist since 2016. An active MASHN and National Association of School Nurses member since 2009, she has served on the MASHN Board since 2019 and also serves on the Board of Directors for the Allergy and Asthma Network. Liz works and lives in Montgomery County, Maryland, in School Health Services.



Panelist: Ambyr Klink, CPNP-PC, MSN, BSN, RN
Title: Program Supervisor of School-Based Wellness Centers
Organization: Howard County Health Department

Ambyr Klink is the School Based Wellness Center Program Supervisor in Howard County, MD. She is the Wellness Center nurse practitioner at Phelps Luck Elementary School.

Ambyr has been a pediatric nurse practitioner since 2013. She received her BSN from Shepherd University and her MSN from University of Maryland, Baltimore. She worked at Johns Hopkins as a nurse and has had experience in a pediatric urgent care and primary care practice as a nurse practitioner before joining the School-Based Wellness team in 2022.



Panelist: Phylicia Porter, MPH, MSL
Title: Councilwoman for District 10
Organization: Baltimore City Council

Councilwoman Phylicia Porter is a public health scientist and advocate committed to building a city rooted in opportunity, safety, and wellness. Growing up amid the challenges of disinvestment and inequality, she witnessed the strength and resilience of her community, experiences that continue to shape her work in public service.

As Chair of the City Council's Public Health and Environment Committee, she leads efforts to combat the opioid crisis with compassionate, evidence-based solutions. Her lived experience and public health background drive a people-first approach focused on healing.

Councilwoman Porter has delivered key wins, including Baltimore's first Child Health Equity Act, \$1.5 million in grassroots investments, \$50 million in recreation spaces, and a \$300 million wind facility in Curtis Bay. A proud homeowner and dog mom, she champions safe neighborhoods, clean streets, and thriving families. She believes local leaders are democracy's front line, creating lasting change from the ground up.



Breakout Session: Why Help? Students and Early Career Dental Professionals Share Perspectives on Practicing in Underserved Communities

Moderator: Debony Hughes, DDS

Title: Director of the Office of Oral Health

Organization: Maryland Department of Health

Dr. Debony Hughes has served as the director of the Office of Oral Health for the past 7 years. Her career, spanning multiple decades, has been in public health since graduating from Howard University College of Dentistry. She co-chaired the Maryland Oral Health Care Task Force, which was legislatively charged with identifying barriers to obtaining dental care and developing solutions to eliminate them. The Task Force Legislation passed in the 2023 session (HB 290) is helping to improve access to dental care. Dr. Hughes' interest in public health began early in her career while living in Vermont. That interest continued as she was the dental director at the Prince George's County Health Department for many years. Dr. Hughes is a Fellow in the American College of Dentists and the International College of Dentists.



Panelist: Jena Baguyos

Title: Dental Hygiene Student

Organization: University of Maryland School of Dentistry

Jena Baguyos is a dental hygiene student at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, where she's earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees through a dual-degree program. With a background in public health science and as a recipient of the PBF Academic Award, Jena is passionate about improving health literacy and increasing access to care in underserved communities, especially in her hometown of Baltimore, MD.



Her passion for community-centered care is shaped by her own experiences growing up in a healthcare shortage area. While studying full-time, she also works part-time in a hospital setting, where she provides care to patients and their families as part of an interprofessional team. This experience has deepened her understanding of collaborative, patient-centered care for those with complex needs.

Her capstone project focuses on integrating mental and oral health into postpartum care, supporting mothers, babies, and families. Jena hopes to become a compassionate, community-focused provider who helps break down barriers and makes dental care more accessible for all.

Panelist: Emily Chaffer
Title: Dental Hygiene Student
Organization: University of Maryland School of Dentistry

My name is Emily Chaffer. I am a B.S./M.S. Dual Degree Clinical Dental Hygiene Leader student at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry. My academic journey began at Carroll Community College, where I earned an A.S. in Biology. I then transferred to the University of Maryland, College Park, and completed a B.S. in Biological Sciences with a specialization in Microbiology. After my undergraduate studies, I gained practical experience in dentistry by working as a dental assistant. This hands-on role fueled my passion for preventive dentistry and public health, motivating me to pursue a graduate program in dental hygiene. I am eager to serve as a dental hygienist after graduating in 2026 and to make a meaningful impact on the oral health of our communities. I aim to address oral health disparities and support future dental hygienists. I am particularly interested in working in a dental health professional shortage area, as well as exploring roles in academia or research. My leadership in oral health will be essential for the healthcare system and for promoting the connection between oral and systemic health.



Panelist: Allison Cates
Title: 4th Year Dental Student
Organization: University of Maryland School of Dentistry

Allison Cates is a fourth-year dental student at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry. Throughout dental school, she has demonstrated a strong commitment to serving underserved populations and expanding access to dental care for all patients. She currently holds a Clerkship in the Special Care and Geriatrics clinic, where she is developing advanced skills in treating patients with complex medical and psychological needs. Ms. Cates earned a B.S. in Biomedical Sciences and a B.A. in Psychology from the University of South Florida in 2022 and finds that this interdisciplinary background greatly enhances her approach to dentistry. She looks forward to continuing her career in service-oriented practice and advocating for equitable oral health care.



Panelist: Ryan Witte
Title: 4th Year Dental Student
Organization: University of Maryland School of Dentistry

I'm a fourth-year dental student at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry with a strong passion for community-focused care. Growing up in Annapolis, Maryland, I was inspired by my family dentist's dedication to patient care, which sparked my interest in the field. After earning my B.S. in Biomedical Science with a minor in Chemistry from Marist College in 2021, I worked as a dental and hygiene assistant before beginning dental school. I was honored to receive a National Health Service Corps scholarship prior to dental school and am committed to providing compassionate care and supporting initiatives that improve oral health and well-being in underserved communities.



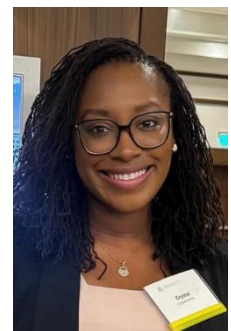
Panelist: Bahar Boroumand Rad, DDS
Title: Pediatric Dental Resident
Organization: NYU Langone at Chesapeake Health Care

Dr. Bahar Boroumand Rad is a pediatric dental resident at NYU Langone Health — Chesapeake Healthcare in Princess Anne, MD. Dr. Rad was raised in Maryland and is so excited to give back to her community. Dr. Rad was inspired to pursue dentistry through compassionate dental providers in the community, and she hopes to inspire future dentists.



Panelist: Crystal Smith, DMD
Title: Pediatric Dental Resident
Organization: NYU Langone at Chesapeake Health Care

Dr. Crystal Smith is a pediatric dental resident at NYU Langone Health—Chesapeake Health Care in Princess Anne, Maryland. Dr. Smith was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. She is passionate about advancing oral health equity and empowering families through education and preventive care. Dr. Smith serves as principal investigator on a research project exploring parental knowledge of molar hypo-mineralization within community health settings. Her professional interests include early childhood caries prevention, improving access to care in underserved populations, and mentorship of future dental professionals. She aspires to continue serving communities through compassionate, evidence-based pediatric dental care in Dallas, Texas.



Breakout Session: How Maryland Can Address the Dental Hygienist Shortage

Moderator: Robyn Elliott

Title: Policy and Governmental Affairs Consultant for Maryland Dental Action Coalition

Organization: Public Policy Partners

Robyn serves as MDAC's Policy and Governmental Affairs Consultant and has over 15 years of experience in legislation, the state budget process, and health care finance. She is an expert in navigating the legislative and state budget process on complex policy and financial issues. She has particular expertise in health care reimbursement, health insurance, health occupations, and disabilities issues. Robyn has previously served as Director of Governmental Affairs at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and a Senior Policy Analyst with the Maryland General Assembly under the Department of Legislative Services. Her health care finance experience includes being a senior financial analyst at Johns Hopkins Hospital. She has a Master's in Health Care Administration from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.



Panelist: Katy Battani, RHD, MS

Title: Deputy Director

Organization: National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center, Georgetown University

Katy is a dental hygienist with 23 years of combined experience in academia, clinical practice, and public health. She currently serves as Deputy Director of the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center, overseeing the center's technical assistance activities for federally funded projects in states that are integrating oral health care and primary care for the maternal and child health population. Katy is a member of the Maryland PRAMS steering committee, is a Regional Dental Hygienist Liaison Coordinator for Head Start programs for the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety, and serves as governing councilor and policy committee co-chair for the APHA oral health section. She is also a member of the University of Maryland School of Dentistry's prenatal/postpartum advisory board and the Maryland Coalition for Allied Dental Education.



Additionally, Katy is a fourth-year DrPH student at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, concentrating in health equity and social justice.

Panelist: Shavonne Healy, MSDH, RDH
Title: Founder and CEO
Organization: A Higher Learning, LLC

Shavonne R. Healy, MSDH, RDH, is the Founder and CEO of [A Higher Learning, LLC](#), where she leads efforts to strengthen the dental hygiene workforce through education, policy, and advocacy. A graduate of the Fones School of Dental Hygiene at the University of Bridgeport, Shavonne has dedicated her career to advancing professional autonomy and expanding access to preventive oral health care. She is actively engaged in grassroots advocacy in Washington, DC, working toward legislation that enables dental hygienists to practice at the height of their education. Her experience spans clinical practice, public health, and workforce development, with a strong focus on addressing systemic barriers that impact both providers and communities. Shavonne is recognized nationally as a thought leader and speaker on oral health, dental workforce issues, and the critical role of hygienists in transforming care delivery.



Breakout Session: CHWs at Work: Policy Wins, Oral Health Integration, and Future Opportunities

Panelist: Evelyn B. Kelly, MPH
Title: Director, Strategic Initiatives
Organization: Institute for Public Health Innovation

Evelyn Kelly is a public health professional working at the intersection of science, public policy, and advocacy. She has over 25 years of experience improving the living conditions that affect the health of communities such as food, education, healthcare and the environment with a focus on equity and racial justice.

Ms. Kelly currently serves as the Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI). She collaborates with a variety of stakeholders in the MD, DC and VA region to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes aimed at improving the quality of life of the communities. Her professional interests include *promotores de salud* or community health workers, community engagement, community organizing and advocacy, food justice, active living, environmental justice and chronic disease prevention.

She earned a Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion from American University and a Masters of Public Health from the University of South Carolina.



Panelist: Delegate Heather Bagnall
Title: D-Anne Arundel County, District 33
Organization: Maryland General Assembly

First elected to the Maryland House of Delegates in 2018. Member of the House since January 9, 2019, representing District 33. Representing District 33C since January 11, 2023. She currently serves on the Health and Government Operations Committee, among other assignments.



Panelist: Stephanie Brown
Title: Co-Founder
Organization: Maryland Community Health Worker Association, Inc.

A Certified Community Health Worker with over two decades of experience, Stephanie Brown is a passionate advocate for health equity in Baltimore City. As a Co-Founder of the Maryland Community Health Worker Association, Inc. and a key part of the team at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, she is dedicated to improving patient outcomes by addressing the social determinants of health. Stephanie's work focuses on empowering patients with chronic illnesses to navigate complex healthcare systems and access the resources they need. For Stephanie, being a CHW is not merely a profession, but a core part of her identity, driven by a deep connection to the community she serves.



Panelist: Elizabeth Chung, MS, Public Health
Title: Executive Director
Organization: Asian American Center of Frederick

Elizabeth Chung is the founder and Executive Director of the Asian American Center of Frederick (AACF) in Maryland, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing equity, system integration, and community engagement. Since immigrating from Hong Kong in 1970, Elizabeth has been a tireless advocate for underserved populations, with a career spanning decades in public health and community development. Under her visionary leadership, AACF has grown from a one-person after-school program into a comprehensive service provider with over 40 staff and 300 volunteers, with a capacity of 60+ languages/ dialects, supporting more than 25 ethnic communities. AACF's wide-ranging services include early childhood education, citizenship and civic classes, senior support programs, health and human services outreach, and workforce development through initiatives like the WISE (Workforce Integration Services for Empowerment) program. AACF also celebrate several ethnic cultural events throughout the year.



Elizabeth has been instrumental in building local and global partnerships that support the holistic well-being of newcomers to America. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she led efforts to combat anti-Asian hate and expand mental health access through culturally responsive programming.

Panelist: Micheal Rhein,
Title: President and CEO
Organization: Institute for Public Health Innovation

Michael Rhein is a passionate and innovative non-profit leader who has spent over 25 years creating positive community change by leveraging and directing support from the national, state and local levels. Michael has focused his career on developing model approaches and influencing resources and systems to give all people the best possible opportunities for health and well-being. Michael was involved in establishing IPHI in 2009 and has served as its first full-time President & CEO since 2013. Michael and the team at IPHI have developed multisector partnerships and programs aimed at tackling the disproportionate effects of HIV/AIDS, chronic disease, food insecurity, housing quality, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. IPHI has developed novel business partnerships and led groundbreaking workforce development, broad-based coalitions, and policy, systems and environmental change initiatives. Previously, Michael served for close to a decade with the National AIDS Fund (NAF), now AIDS United, most recently as Vice President. Under Michael's leadership, NAF's annual grantmaking to communities nearly quadrupled to over \$8M in 2010 with the launch of numerous national initiatives to address



critical challenges in the modern HIV/AIDS epidemic. From 1996 – 2001, Michael managed grantmaking and technical assistance activities for the National Program Office for the *Turning Point: Collaborating for a New Century in Public Health* initiative, based at the National Association of County & City Health Officials. Turning Point, an unprecedented investment in public health systems change by W.K. Kellogg Foundation and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, remains widely recognized in the public health field as a milestone in the modernization of effective public health practice. Michael holds a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Southern California and completed undergraduate studies at The George Washington University.

Closing Plenary: Fluoride – Protecting a Proven Public Health Tool

Speaker: Chelsea Fosse, DMD, MPH

Title: Vice President, Research and Policy Center

Organization: Vice President, Research and Policy Center

Chelsea Fosse, DMD, MPH is the Vice President of the Research and Policy Center at the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD). She is a diplomate in dental public health and previously worked in hospital and health care settings providing clinical care predominantly to adults with disabilities. Now working in oral health policy and health services research, she's responsible for developing and implementing a research agenda to inform sound policymaking in pediatric oral health. She leads a team that analyzes the pediatric dental workforce, Medicaid policy and program implementation, evidence-based dental care delivery, access to high quality and safe dental care, and other contemporary issues in oral health, public health, and health policy. She's a proud "alum" of Jacobi Medical Center, Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health, Rutgers School of Dental Medicine, The University of Texas, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the ADA Health Policy Institute (HPI).

