



2024 HEALTHCARE SUMMIT

THE HOTEL CHICAGO | AUGUST 1 - 2, 2024

2024 Healthcare Summit Speakers



Mary Bartlett works as a patient advocate for Teva Pharmaceuticals. She is an advocate by profession but passionate by choice. She has spent over a decade using her voice to help those living with mental health conditions. Through lived experience and supporting family members, she shares her story, connects with others, and fights for positive change in the mental health community. She is an avid cyclist, recovering stand-up comedian, and published author. In her first novel, she marries her love of writing with her personal and professional experience with mental health.



Jamie Belsito founded Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance in 2019 to keep a focus on national policy around maternal mental health, and she currently is Director of Policy and Partnerships. Jamie has been a key advocate in passing two pieces of federal legislation to address the nation's maternal mental health crisis. Her grassroots advocacy efforts helped establish the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline and garnered funding for federal grants to create state programs addressing maternal mental health. A Boston native, Jamie previously served as a Trustee of Salem State University, as a Commissioner on the (MA) Ellen Story Special Commission on Postpartum Depression, and as a Board member of the Massachusetts March of Dimes. Jamie served the Massachusetts Legislature from December 2021 to January 2023, representing the 4th Essex District.



Sara D. Brown is the Director of Government Affairs at Prevent Blindness, overseeing all Congressional, public policy, coalition, and grassroots advocacy in Washington, DC on behalf of patients across the United States who live with vision loss and blinding eye diseases. Sara gained in-depth, practical knowledge of Medicare and value-based physician payment policy and its effect on medical group practices while leading the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA)'s response to the Obama Administration's implementation of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA), as well as through a role with NRC Health advising hospital executives on improving patient experience. Sara began her career working for over 6 years with U.S. Senators Jim Webb (D-VA) and Chuck Hagel (R-NE). A Nebraska native, she holds degrees in English and Political Science from the University of Nebraska-Kearney and a master's degree in public administration, focusing on the role of government, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector in defense and foreign aid policy, from Walden University.



Senator Cristina Castro represents the 22nd District of Illinois and is the Majority Caucus Whip for the 103rd General Assembly and is chair of the Senate Executive Committee. She is a second-generation Mexican-American and lifelong district resident who is committed to her community and to public service. Castro's public service career began in 2008 when she was elected to the Kane County Board where she served until 2016. In addition to the Kane County Board, she served on the board of directors for the Illinois Housing Development Authority, Black History Family Festival and Centro de Información. With her marketing and communications management background, Castro has held positions in both the public and private sector. In 2015, she decided to run for the Illinois State Senate with the intention of using her professional background, life experiences and compassion to represent the interests and concerns of the people of the 22nd District.



Kelly Crane works as the Policy and Government Relations Manager for Prevent Child Abuse America. She has worked in the field of prevention and child welfare for nearly 20 years. Her policy activities center on providing leadership, strategic planning, guidance, and support to advance the goals and mission of Prevent Child Abuse America and Healthy Families America. Kelly facilitates informative advocacy and educational campaigns, cultivating positive public and political will, and connecting allied political champions and stakeholders to each other. She supports the federal policy team and distills national priorities into effective state advocacy strategies for the PCA America network



Renne Dabbs works as the management and leadership consultant for the National Foundation for Women Legislators. Renee leads all NFWL projects related to strategy and the best approach to achieving the organization's goals. She has spent a career working at the highest level to ensure that organizations, like NFWL, drive results. She is the principal at Renee Dabbs, LLC where she provides clients with strategic, operational and sales expertise. She has a passion for leading organizations to exceed expectation as well as deliver sustainable results. She brings order to chaos. Renee has spent a lifetime supporting women and is the founder of WEWILL Symposium where she helps women become more engaged in the political process. She also is a board member of Women's Exchange, an organization that works toward getting more women government appointments. Renee's business background includes serving as the COO of a top tier Republican media production firm in Florida. Before that she built a sixteen-year track record of success with Procter and Gamble, rising to a senior management position with oversight of a \$220 million business and a multi-million dollar marketing client.



Emily Dickens is Head of Government Affairs for the world's largest human resources trade association, SHRM, and she leads the Advocacy Team. Before joining SHRM, Dickens served full-time as a passionate advocate for access to higher education for minority students as the general counsel/head of policy for the DC-based Thurgood Marshall College Fund; Vice President of Public Policy for the Association of Governing Boards for Colleges and Universities; and the Assistant Vice President for Federal Affairs at the University of North Carolina System. Emily leverages her higher education background to promote the importance of the education-to-employment pipeline. She has also worked at Duke University and Fayetteville State University in administrative and external affairs roles.



Lisa Fawsett works as the Executive Vice President of Strategy & New Market Development for CooperSurgical. Prior to her joining CooperSurgical in June of 2022, Lisa was the Vice President of Corporate Marketing, Communications & ESG (environmental, social, governance) at CooperCompanies, where she was responsible for Cooper's corporate responsibility strategy and reporting, along with key corporate affairs initiatives. Lisa was formerly Chief Marketing Officer of The HydraFacial Company. Her previous roles include various senior positions in global and regional marketing at CooperVision and Bausch & Lomb, and she began her career in sales. Lisa has a Bachelor of Science in business from the University of Buffalo.



Stacy Finkbeiner, PhD is a Medical Director at Teva Pharmaceuticals and leads the company's medical education and research efforts within the U.S. focused on the movement disorders of Tardive Dyskinesia and chorea associated with Huntington's Disease. One of her key areas of focus is research to create a better understanding of how the irregular movements associated with Tardive Dyskinesia cause physical, psychological, social, and work impacts on individuals with the condition. She is a PhD trained scientist and received her PhD in Microbiology from Washington University in St. Louis and went on to complete postdoctoral fellowships at Baylor School of Medicine in Houston and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Prior to joining Teva, Stacy worked in the nonprofit sector to identify ways to increase and ensure access to medicines in low- and middle-income economies and led a variety of biotechnology & business/strategy consulting projects through an academic trainee-run non-profit consulting organization she co-founded.



Shonu Gandhi is a healthcare strategist and operator who has tackled payment and payer challenges from many seats—payer, provider, medical device, and regulatory. Trained as a lawyer, Shonu served in leadership roles at McKinsey & Company, in academic medicine, and in growth stage and publicly traded companies, including multiple exits, acquisitions and integrations. She has previous experience from roles at Coalition Operators, Hologic, Inc., Acessa Health Inc., and Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin. Shonu Gandhi obtained her J.D in 2009 from Harvard Law School.



John Gay is Vice President, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs of the Pharmaceutical Product Stewardship Work Group and is Client Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Director at Association Management Strategies, Inc. John has over 30 years of experience in advocacy and association management. He served as Executive Director and CEO of the Natural Products Association; and led the government affairs programs of the National Restaurant Association, the Consumer Healthcare Products Association, and the International Franchise Association. He also served as Chair of the National Immigration Forum, a coalition of organized labor, immigrant advocates, religious groups, and business working together to advance sound federal immigration policy. He has a B.A. in American Government from the University of Virginia. John and his family live in Arlington, VA.



Stephanie Hengst joined The AIDS Institute, a national nonpartisan, public policy, advocacy research, and education organization that advocates for people with HIV and viral hepatitis in 2017. As the manager for Policy & Research she focuses on issues of healthcare access and affordability through federal advocacy and policy analysis. Her work ensures that health insurance plans provide fair and equitable coverage to people living with complex and chronic conditions, that federal funds are allocated to further the goal of ending the HIV and hepatitis epidemics, and that public health policies are designed to address the needs of vulnerable communities. Prior to joining The AIDS Institute, Stephanie worked at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on implementation of the Affordable Care Act. She earned a B.A. from Purdue University and a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Minnesota



Evan Hoffman works as the Director of State and Local Government Affairs for health technology company, Philip's. This includes advocating for legislation that impacts any of Philips businesses, managing relationships with state and local government officials, and supporting business development opportunities with state and local government. Evan frequently works on issues relating to some of Philips core priorities, including telehealth, maternal health, and reducing healthcare inequities. Additionally, he manages Philips senior manager of state government relations and a network of contract lobbyists across the states. Evan obtained his BA of Government & Politics and Criminal Justice from the University of Maryland.



Veronica Johnson, MD works as an assistant professor for Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Veronica completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan, then completed her Doctor of Medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine. She has board certifications for internal medicine and general pediatrics but has a specific focal point on her certification in obesity medicine. With recent publications such as “Disparities in Access and Quality of Obesity Care”, she is an advocate for treating the role obesity plays in our health.



Sharon Lamberton, MS, RN, FAAN is Deputy Vice President of State of America, Ms. Lamberton works in health policy and state advocacy as a policy analyst/lobbyist, as well conducting third party outreach with provider groups. Trained as a registered nurse with experience in leading clinical trials at the National Institutes of Health, her clinical knowledge adds to her credibility where she works to improve access and affordability to innovative medicines for patients. Prior to working at PhRMA, Ms. Lamberton worked on Capitol Hill, lobbied for long term care issues and Medicare for a senior's association, and worked on rural health issues at the GAO, as well as the Center for Research, Health Policy and Ethics at George Mason University. She currently teaches a health policy class at Georgetown University as adjunct professor and serves on the College of Health and Human Services Advisory Board for GMU.



Catherine Murphy works as the research manager for Prevent Child Abuse America. She holds a BS in Criminal Justice & Criminology from Loyola University Chicago and a MA in Public Policy & Administration from Northwestern University. Her career focuses on public policy, clinical research, and, most importantly, advocating for and serving vulnerable populations. Prior to joining Prevent Child Abuse America, she worked at the Cook County Juvenile Court Clinic, a program that provides forensic mental health evaluations for the children and families involved in the Juvenile Justice and Child Protection court proceedings. Research projects she has participated in include a review of risk and protective factors for court-involved youth, an assessment of a child maltreatment risk inventory, and an evaluation of state-level police use of force data collection policies. Catherine's work with the children and families in the court system sparked her passion for child maltreatment prevention research and policy.



Senator Sue Rezin works as Deputy Minority Leader. Sue Rezin has served as the Senator for the 38th Senate District in the Illinois State Senate since 2010. In 2021, she was chosen as Deputy Minority Leader for the Illinois Senate Republican Caucus. Deputy Minority Leader Rezin established the Illinois Valley Flood Resiliency Alliance (IVFRA). The IVFRA brings communities, local governments, and emergency personnel together to help them prepare for extreme weather events, especially floods, through education, communication, and the purchasing of flood prevention materials. On the national level, Deputy Minority Leader serves on the Chair of the National Foundation for Women Legislators. She is also an active member of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), currently serving on the Task Force on Energy Supply. Deputy Minority Leader Rezin is a graduate of Augustana College, where she earned a degree in International Business and Political Science with a minor in Hispanic Studies. She is also a graduate of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government's Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program.



Jenifer Rosen is Senior Director, State Affairs at the Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM), a separately incorporated advocacy affiliate of the Association. She oversees the Association's gubernatorial and legislative engagement strategy for all 50 states, manages state policy development efforts, and leads a team that provides direct support to policy staff in the field to advance the enactment of state legislative and regulatory priorities nationwide. Prior to joining the Alzheimer's Association and AIM, she served as Director of Policy and Communications for NFWL, and she continues to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for Women in Government Relations. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and history from The George Washington University.



Melissa Schulman works as the Senior Vice President for Government and Public Affairs for CVS Health. She leads the teams responsible for the public policy, regulatory, state and federal advocacy, and public affairs efforts for the enterprise and business units. She has 14 years of experience on Capitol Hill and 18 years in the private sector. Schulman has a proven record of success steering coalitions and draws on broad experience utilizing industry expertise to successfully navigate the nuances of Washington. She is known for her ability to build bipartisan consensus by dissecting complex issues in a way that resonates with key legislators and policymakers. Schulman has been named by Roll Call among the Top Fifty Congressional Staff and is frequently cited in political publications such as The Hill, National Journal and others.



Lita Simanis is a Perinatal Mental Health Certified Licensed Clinical Social Worker based in Chicago, Illinois. An expert in maternal mental health, she is dedicated to pioneering comprehensive care solutions for perinatal mood disorders. Lita has been the Coordinator of the Pregnancy and Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorder Program since 2014. Based in Illinois, she collaborated with Ascension Illinois/Alexian Brothers staff and other stakeholders to develop the state's first perinatal intensive outpatient program, which opened in August 2015. Lita's extensive professional experience includes her role as a Perinatal Crisis Counselor for the Illinois Mom's Line and serving on the Board of Directors for Postpartum Support International. As the co-coordinator of the Postpartum Depression Illinois Alliance, she has lectured on perinatal mood disorders at local, state, national, and international levels. She collaborated with stakeholders to develop the state's first perinatal intensive outpatient program, which opened in August 2015.



State Representative Nabeela Syed represents Illinois' 51st District. Her work in the legislature aims to further the shared goals of our community: preserving opportunity and public safety, investing in education and job creation, making prescription drugs and health care affordable, and protecting our reproductive health care rights. Professionally, Nabeela has worked with a variety of organizations, including EMILY's List, to raise money to elect Democrats to Congress. Nabeela worked for a non-profit in digital strategy supporting a variety of their civic engagement efforts including voter mobilization, ending sexual assault on college campuses, and promoting gender equity. Nabeela graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a degree in Political Science and Business Administration, where she served as the president of a pro-bono consulting organization assisting local businesses and nonprofits.



Laura Williams works as the Chief Medical Officer at Aredlyx since 2021, having joined in November 2020 as the Senior Vice President, Global Therapeutic Strategies and Patient Advocacy. Laura is a life science enterprise leader with extensive experience as a pharmaceutical drug developer, healthcare policy advisor, patient advocate, and portfolio strategist. Prior to Aredlyx, Laura was senior vice president and head of clinical development and biostatistics at AMAG Pharmaceuticals, where she was responsible for four investigational-staged assets and two on-market compounds. Laura earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Mississippi State University, a Doctor of Medicine degree from University of Iowa, and a Master of Public Health degree in epidemiology from University of Washington, where she also completed a clinical fellowship in infectious diseases. She completed her Internal Medicine residency at University of Michigan, where she also served as Chief Resident and Junior Faculty.

