

The health equity briefs

National Association of State Offices of Minority Health Newsletter

NASOMH BOARD CONVENES FOR PRODUCTIVE IN-PERSON MEETING

The National Association of State Offices of Minority Health (NASOMH) held its annual board meeting from August 16 to 18 in Indianapolis, Indiana. After two years of virtual gatherings, we were thrilled to reconvene in person and make significant progress on key initiatives.

The meeting was packed with productive discussions and important decisions for the year ahead. Highlights of the meeting include:

Reviewing and Approving Bylaws: The board reviewed the current revisions to the bylaws and set a date to present them to the full membership for approval. Maintaining strong governance structures is crucial for NASOMH's continued growth and impact.

Electing New Board Members: We reviewed board vacancies and the nomination process for filling those roles. Identifying passionate, qualified leaders is essential for NASOMH's future. A slate of officers will be presented to members in the fall, and all active members are eligible to nominate and vote for 2025 officers.

Celebrating Achievements: The board recognized the outstanding contributions of this year's Cheryl Boyce Award recipients, honoring members who have gone above and beyond in service of the NASOMH mission. The winner received a plaque, and nominees received Certificates of Recognition.

Mapping the Year Ahead: The board dove into strategic priorities, setting goals for 2025 across key areas like strategic partnerships, policy focus, website enhancement for added membership value, and an inaugural national conference in the fall of 2025. This forward-looking agenda will help ensure NASOMH continues advancing its important work and strengthen its reach and impact.

The board meeting concluded with the approval of the 2025 calendar, outlining important dates for the upcoming year. NASOMH members can anticipate exciting programs and opportunities for meaningful engagement as the organization continues its vital mission.

For more information about NASOMH and how to get involved, visit nasomh.org.

SEPTEMBER 2024



Our Mission:

Promote and protect the health of racial and ethnic minority communities, tribal organizations and nations, by preventing disease and injury and assuring optimal health and well-being.

HIGHLIGHTS:

NASOMH Board Convenes for Productive In-Person Meeting

Office for Disparities Research and Workforce Diversity Webinar Series

NASOMH Welcomes Two New Board of Directors

Extreme Temperature Swings Pose Health Risks

Disability Experts Helped Health Departments Support People with Disabilities During COVID-19

Webinar: Transforming Healthcare for IPV Survivors

Save the Date - NASOMH Quarterly Meeting

WHO Declares Mpox Outbreak a Global Health Emergency

Experimental Malaria Vaccine Shows Promise

Doulas Help Promote Maternal-Infant Health Equity

Public Health Professionals Gain E-Learning Design Skills

September is . . .

- [Healthy Aging Month](#)
- [National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month](#)
- [National Recovery Month](#)
- [National Sickle Cell Awareness Month](#)
- [National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day \(9/18\)](#)
- [National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day \(9/27\)](#)
- [National Cholesterol Education Month](#)
- [Pain Awareness Month](#)
- [Newborn Screening Awareness Month](#)
- [Blood Cancer Awareness Month](#)



Attending the meeting - left to right: Reuben Hampton, Region I; Naw Pow, Intern, Monique Anthony, Region IV; Ya'nelle Powell, Region III; Antoniette Holt (Interim President), Leann Johnson, At-Large; Angela Dawson, Region V; Wilma Alvarado-Little, Region II; Janice Edmunds-Wells, At-Large; Veronica Halloway, Exec. Director.

NASOMH WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Spotlight: Alicia Belay, PhD, MPH, *Region VIII*

Assistant Director of Community Engagement, North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services

Dr. Alicia Belay brings nearly two decades of equity work experience as Assistant Director of Community Engagement at the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services. Her focus areas include HIV and STI programs, women's preventative health, and improving prenatal and postpartum outcomes.

Education & Career Highlights: Dr. Belay has a diverse educational background and extensive professional experience. She holds a PhD in Social and Health Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a Master's in Public Health from Gondar, Ethiopia. This unique combination of academic achievements has equipped her with a global health-issue perspective. Throughout her career, Dr. Belay has gained extensive experience in equity work across the United States and eastern Africa. She plays a crucial leadership role in North Dakota's health initiatives, applying her international insights to local challenges.

Beyond the Office: Dr. Belay leads a busy and purposeful life outside of her professional commitments. She and her husband run a small nonprofit organization when she's not busy with her two energetic boys, ages 2 and 5. Their initiative provides job training and micro-loans to empower African women, showcasing Dr. Belay's ongoing commitment to global health equity. Her diverse background and dedication to community health make her a valuable asset in improving North Dakotans' health outcomes.



Spotlight: Jade Ramsdell, MBA, *Region VII*

Transformative Leader in Health Equity and DEIJ

Jade Ramsdell is recognized as a dynamic leader committed to advancing health equity and DEIJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice) in healthcare and public health. Her extensive experience includes working in various sectors, such as local health departments, government entities, nonprofits, health systems, and community foundations.

Career Achievements

Jade has had a significant impact on public health in Kansas. She played a key role in securing millions of dollars for critical initiatives in the state, such as economic development, food security, transportation, and health services. Her efforts have been recognized, as she was named a NextGen Under 30 winner in Policy and Governance by the Department of Commerce in 2022. The following year, she graduated from Leadership Greater Topeka, further solidifying her position as a community leader. Additionally, Jade has been honored as a 2024 YWCA of Northeast Kansas Women of Excellence for her outstanding contributions to the field.



Education and Certifications

Jade's dedication to ongoing learning is clear from her educational background. She has an MBA from Baker University and earlier degrees in Occupational Therapy Assistant and Health Services Administration from Washburn University. To further augment her skills, Jade is a Certified Diversity Professional and holds a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, giving her valuable expertise in process improvement and diversity management.

Impact and Expertise

Jade is known for advocating for inclusive healthcare systems and ensuring accessibility to resources, setting a new benchmark in public health. Her expertise is widely recognized, and federal and national agencies are seeking her technical assistance services and training. Through various project management and quality improvement methodologies, Jade has implemented equity practices at essential and advanced levels.

OFFICE FOR DISPARITIES RESEARCH AND WORKFORCE DIVERSITY WEBINAR SERIES: MECHANISMS OF RISK AND RESILIENCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN INDIVIDUALS OF MEXICAN ORIGIN

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is holding a webinar on September 23, 2024, focusing on resilience factors for mental health in people of Mexican origin.

Experts will discuss challenges this population may face, like discrimination and acculturation stress. They will also share research on protective elements, such as familism, ethnic pride, and temperament, that can promote mental well-being.

Key Details:

- **Date and Time:** September 23, 2024, 1:30 - 3:00 pm ET
- **Location:** Virtual
- **Registration:** Free, but required. [Click here](#) to sign up.

The webinar will explore how adversity can increase mental health risks and how some individuals demonstrate resilience. Understanding these resilience factors is vital for developing new prevention and intervention strategies.

This event is part of NIMH's webinar series on mental health disparities, minority mental health, and related research areas.

Register today to join this discussion on promoting mental health equity.

EXTREME TEMPERATURE SWINGS POSE HEALTH RISKS

New research shows that extreme temperature swings can be harmful to health. When temperatures fluctuate in a single day, it can increase problems like asthma attacks and hospitalizations for heart and lung issues. This leads to more deaths.

Researchers found troubling disparities - communities of color and low-income neighborhoods tend to have bigger daily temperature swings compared to wealthier, white areas.

Key points:

- Race and income were the biggest factors affecting exposure to wide temperature swings.
- In Rhode Island, Hispanic and Black residents experienced 5.4°F wider swings than white residents.

These inequities are caused by discriminatory policies that have concentrated marginalized groups in neighborhoods with fewer cooling resources.

As climate change worsens, these temperature variations are expected to grow, putting vulnerable communities at higher risk.

To address this, we need both emissions cuts and investments to cool down the hottest neighborhoods. Ensuring everyone has access to a stable climate is crucial for public health.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

DISABILITY EXPERTS HELPED HEALTH DEPARTMENTS SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DURING COVID-19

A new study examined a program that brought disability experts directly into state and local health departments. The goal was to improve how these agencies addressed the needs of people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The key findings:

- The disability experts identified around 36 gaps per health department across different areas, like vaccine access and communication.
- On average, the experts were able to fix 3 of these problem areas in each department.
- Barriers included limited resources and community mistrust. However, sharing best practices and building partnerships helped overcome these.

The program was funded by the CDC and run by national public health organizations. Embedding disability experts in health departments enabled more effective support for this vulnerable population during the pandemic.

The results show the value of integrating disability experts into public health systems. As departments continue to respond to COVID-19 and prepare for future emergencies, this model can help ensure that people with disabilities get the support they need. To learn more, check out the [complete study published in the Journal of Public Health Management & Practice](#).



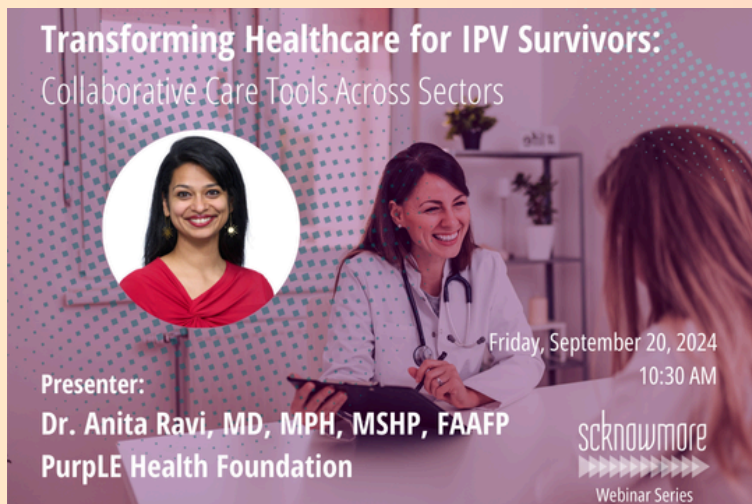
WEBINAR: TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE FOR IPV SURVIVORS

The South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA) is hosting a webinar on **Friday, September 20, 2024, from 10:30 am – 12 noon.**

The webinar, "**Transforming Healthcare for IPV Survivors: Collaborative Care Tools Across Sectors,**" will be presented by Dr. Anita Ravi from PurpLE Health in New York.

Key Details:

- **Date and Time:** September 20, 2024, 10:30 am - 12 noon
- **Speaker:** Dr. Anita Ravi, PurpLE Health
- **Registration:** <https://loom.ly/5zIYU6w>



This session will cover practical skills for addressing healthcare access and management for people who have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV). Participants will learn tools and techniques for incorporating social determinants of health and trauma-informed care when working with IPV survivors.

Learning Objectives:

- Recognize the impact of physical, mental, and financial health on IPV survivors
- Integrate trauma-informed care principles when addressing IPV survivors' health needs
- Identify verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to enhance patient-provider trust
- Identify opportunities to advocate for IPV survivors' health on individual and system levels

Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable skills for supporting the healthcare needs of IPV survivors. Register today using the link provided.

Save The Date

NASOMH QUARTERLY MEETING

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2024

4:00 pm EST VIA Zoom (Link to follow)



Presenter: Amy Rohling McGee has served as the president of the Health Policy Institute of Ohio since 2010. With her leadership, HPIO has developed a reputation as a trusted source of data and evidence-informed policy analysis.

McGee has over 20 years of experience in management, government relations, policy development, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, coalition building, and communication. Her prior public-sector experience includes work in the executive branch of state government, focused on policy issues such as mental health, health insurance, health system improvement, and Medicaid, and service in the state legislature as a Legislative Service Commission intern in the mid-1990s. Private sector experience includes five years as the executive director of the Ohio Association of Free Clinics. McGee earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from the Ohio State University.

PRESENTATION TOPIC:

The Health and Economic Benefits of Equity

Ohio ranks 44th on health value, a combination of population health and healthcare spending metrics, out of 50 states and D.C. This means that Ohioans live less healthy lives and spend more on healthcare than people in most other states. Not all communities in Ohio have access to the resources, experiences, and environments needed to thrive. Many Ohioans, including Ohioans of color, Ohioans with disabilities, Ohioans with low incomes, Ohioans with less education, Ohioans living in rural and Appalachian areas, and LGBTQ+ Ohioans, face barriers to health where they live, work, and play. Ensuring that every Ohioan has what they need to reach their full potential would have dramatic health and economic impacts.

WHO Declares Mpox Outbreak a Global Health Emergency

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the ongoing mpox outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). This designation means the situation is considered a serious, sudden, unusual, or unexpected public health event that poses a global risk.

Key points:

- The rapid spread of a new strain of mpox, particularly in parts of Africa, is driving this declaration. The virus has been detected in several countries neighboring the Democratic Republic of the Congo that haven't reported mpox before.
- Mpox cases have steadily increased in the DRC over the past decade, with this year's numbers exceeding the total from 2022.
- Globally, mpox outbreaks have occurred with different transmission patterns and risk levels. WHO now recommends the two vaccines that are available for use.
- WHO is working to support surveillance, preparedness, and response efforts and is appealing for funding to scale up the pox response, estimated at an initial \$15 million.

This is the second time pox has been declared a global health emergency following the multi-country outbreak in 2022. The WHO Director-General emphasized the need for coordinated international action to stop these outbreaks and save lives.

With mpox posing a growing threat, especially in Africa, this PHEIC declaration underscores the importance of a robust, equitable global health response. Stay informed and [follow guidance](#) from public health authorities.

EXPERIMENTAL MALARIA VACCINE SHOWS PROMISE

New research has found that an experimental malaria vaccine could provide lasting protection, including for pregnant women.

Two National Institutes of Health-supported trials in Mali tested different regimens of the PfSPZ vaccine candidate. The results showed all the tested doses were safe in healthy adults.

Notably, the vaccine provided significant protection from malaria infection and illness for up to two years without needing a booster shot, a first for a malaria vaccine.

In an exploratory analysis, the vaccine also appeared to protect women who became pregnant during the study, reducing their risk of malaria.

Malaria during pregnancy can have devastating consequences, causing up to 50,000 maternal deaths and 200,000 stillbirths in Africa each year. These findings suggest that the PfSPZ vaccine approach could be an important new tool for preventing malaria in pregnancy.

Larger clinical trials are now planned to investigate the vaccine's safety and efficacy further, especially during pregnancy. Researchers are hopeful this experimental vaccine could help save many lives. [Click here](#) to read more.



DOULAS HELP PROMOTE MATERNAL - INFANT HEALTH EQUITY

The IMPROVE-CIP program, led by Arizona State University, is working with doulas in Indigenous, Black, and Latinx communities to improve maternal and infant health outcomes.

Doulas provide culturally responsive support to pregnant women, helping to address issues like mental health challenges, substance use, and obesity that can contribute to maternal stress and complications.

By embedding doulas with deep community connections into the process, IMPROVE-CIP takes a culturally responsive, community-engaged approach. This process helps ensure interventions meet the unique needs of populations most affected by maternal health disparities.

Expanding access to doula care has positively impacted maternal and infant health. IMPROVE-CIP is putting this evidence into practice in the communities that need it most.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the IMPROVE-CIP program and its work to achieve maternal health equity.

PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS GAIN E-LEARNING DESIGN SKILLS

The Public Health Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) E-Learning Institute have teamed up to provide 100 public health professionals with training on designing engaging online learning experiences.

The Pro Learning Designer Analysis to Design Training Series is an online program that teaches learners how to analyze needs, develop content, and create effective e-learning. The recipients include public health workers at state, tribal, and local health departments, as well as academic institutions across the country.

This training will help these professionals improve workforce performance, streamline processes, influence behavior, and meet growth and development needs through high-quality online learning. Congratulations to all the selected participants!

The CDC's E-Learning Institute is a six-month fellowship that provides public health professionals with the opportunity to gain practical e-learning design and development skills. While the fellowship is currently paused for 2024, be sure to stay tuned for future updates.

This collaborative effort between the Public Health Foundation and CDC aims to build the capacity of the public health workforce to create effective online training, ultimately increasing learning opportunities nationwide. It's an exciting step forward in advancing public health education and skills.

To learn more, visit the [Public Health Foundation website](#).



RESOURCES

The Data Portal helps visualize and analyze key aspects of minority health, health disparities, and the social determinants that influence them. Access critical information across national, state, and county levels to support evidence-based decision-making and policy development.

Interventions Portal discovers and contributes evidence-based interventions and resources designed to enhance minority health outcomes and reduce health disparities. This portal offers a curated collection of proven strategies, tools, and initiatives to help practitioners, policymakers, and researchers drive impactful health improvements.

CDC TRAIN connects you to the TRAIN Learning Network, which offers the largest selection of public health training programs nationwide. Courses cover a wide range of topics, including emergency preparedness, disease prevention, and health promotion, and are provided by leading public health organizations.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

New research shows that Medicaid coverage can improve health outcomes for children with sickle cell disease.

The study found that 4 out of 5 kids with sickle cell were enrolled in Medicaid in their first 3 years of life. This consistent Medicaid coverage helps ensure they get the high-quality care they need. Medicaid often provides better coverage for the serious symptoms of sickle cell compared to private insurance. When combined with early diagnosis through newborn screening, Medicaid can make a big difference in these children's long-term health.

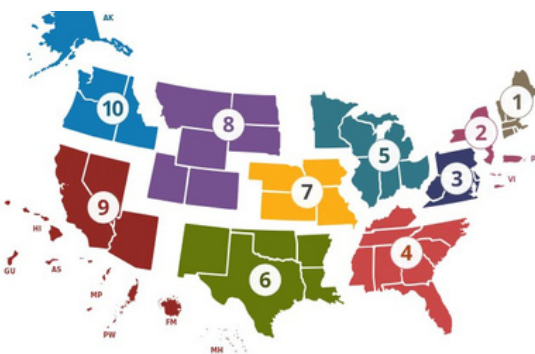
In the past, inadequate healthcare access - often due to structural racism - has led to poor care for many children with sickle cell. But this new research suggests Medicaid is a vital tool for improving outcomes and addressing longstanding disparities.

By guaranteeing Medicaid for newborns and young kids with sickle cell, we can give them the best start in life and set them up for better health down the road.

To learn more, check out the [full research letter](#).

HHS REGIONAL MINORITY HEALTH ANALYSTS

The Regional Minority Health Analysts work in the Office of Regional Health Operations to foster and strengthen relationships among federal, state, territory, tribal, and community stakeholders by working collectively to improve minority health, eliminate health disparities, and advance health equity.



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