PANELIST BIOS

Recognizing the Power of Early Relational Health in the Community-based Doula Movement

Thursday, September 19, 2024
1-2pm ET | 12-1pm CT | 11am-12pm MT | 10-11am PT

Co-Hosted by:

Nurture Connection
Early Relational Health Funders Community

Early Childhood Funders Collaborative

HealthConnect One

Twylla Dillion, MBA, PhD
Executive Director
HealthConnect One

Twylla brings 10+ years of experience in the nonprofit sector spanning philanthropy, Medicaid reform, maternal-child health, data analytics, and academia. In her prior work at United Way of Greater Rochester, Dr. Dillion focused on using data and analytics across the fundraising, grantmaking, and evaluation cycle. Additionally, Dr. Dillion has conducted research on breastfeeding, served as program officer for maternal-child health programs, and worked as a research lead on a Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), the project focused on collaborating with Black moms better to understand contributors to Black maternal mortality/morbidity and develop strategies for better outcomes. She is a graduate of the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, where she received her Ph.D. in Health Services Research, Policy and Outcomes, and St. John Fisher College, where she received her MBA.

Cynthia Hayes, B.S., CLC
Project Director, Doula Advocacy Team
Doulas4CT Coalition

Cynthia is a certified doula who has been working in that profession for 21 years. She has been an Officer in the Family Support Magistrate Court with the State of Connecticut for 29 years. Cynthia currently serves as the Project Director of the Doula Advocacy Team with Doulas 4CT Coalition. She is a Certified Lactation Counselor and Maternal and Infant Health Specialist. Cynthia served as the Vice Chair of the Executive Board with Postpartum Support International, Connecticut Chapter. Cynthia is a member of the Maternity Bundle Stakeholder Advisory Board (DSS, State of Connecticut) and Doula Advisory Board (Department of Public Health, State of Connecticut). Cynthia is a former Pritzker fellow, and has recently been chosen to participate as a Steering Committee member of the Nurture Connection Center for the Study of Social Policy). She is a member of the Black Maternal Health Initiative with FCCF/FWG that promotes programs to support sustainability of Black doulas in Connecticut. She is the mother of three loving adult children.

Kay Johnson
President
Johnson Policy Consulting, LLC.

Kay Johnson is nationally recognized as a maternal and child health policy (MCH) analyst, advocate, and consultant. Her work at Children's Defense Fund, March of Dimes, George Washington University, and Johnson Consulting have helped to shape the direction of MCH and Medicaid policy since 1984. Her expertise encompasses a wide range of women's and children's policies at the federal and state levels. Reducing poverty and racism and increasing access are two of her lifelong goals.

Andrea Palmer
Program Officer
Pritzker Children's Initiative

Andrea Palmer is a Program Officer with the Pritzker Children's Initiative. As a member of the Pritzker Children's Initiative team, Andrea leads the foundation's strategy to address the needs of expectant mothers with the goal of reducing the number of pre-term births and the evident racial disparities that exist in birth outcomes. Through her more than thirty years in public health, Andrea has a wealth of expertise in the development, implementation and administration of systems, services and supports for families at risk for poor health, educational and economic outcomes. Before joining the foundation early in 2019, Andrea served as Chief of the Illinois Department of Public Health's Division of Maternal, Child and Family Health Services, where she oversaw the State's Infant Mortality Reduction initiatives, Regional Perinatal Health services, School-Based Health Centers and adolescent health programs. She was also the Director of Illinois' Maternal and Child Health Services, overseeing the state's Title V Block Grant, facilitating the ongoing assessment of the State's maternal and child health needs and the establishment of statewide priorities and objectives. During her tenure with the State, she also managed the Teen Parent Services, Healthy Families and Parents Too Soon programs, and played an integral role in the development and implementation of Illinois' Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation program (MIECHV).

Hoda Shawky, MSN, CPNP, PMHS, IBCLC
Noorture, LLC

Hoda Shawky is a pediatric nurse practitioner certified in lactation and primary care mental health, a trained doula, and a maternal child health equity consultant. She received both her undergraduate degree in Physiological Sciences and Master's of Science degree in Nursing from UCLA. She recently completed a fellowship at the UMass Chan School of Medicine Early Relational Health Program and started a new practice entitled Noorture, LLC, where she provides spiritually and culturally- centered support to new mothers and their infants. During her free time, Hoda enjoys being in the sun and in the water with her amazing sons, husband, and dog, while rejuvenating mind, body and spirit.

Dana D. West

Project Director, Department of Health Equity Innovation
National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ)

Dana West is project director of equity in the Department of Health Equity Innovation at the National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ), an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving children's health. In this role, she supports NICHQ's commitment and strategy to serve as a diverse, anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive organization. She also serves as interim project director for the Healthy Start Technical Assistance and Support Center.

Dana has served in the maternal and child health arena for 22 years across many organizations such as the MS State Department of Health – Office of Preventive Health, University of MS Medical Center, MS Department of Human Services, and Delta HealthPartners via the Healthy Start Initiative: Eliminating Disparities in Perinatal Health funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB).

David Willis

Professor of Pediatrics at Georgetown University
Founder, Nurture Connection

David W Willis, MD, FAAP is Professor of Pediatrics at Georgetown University. There, he leads Nurture Connection, an impact network, to advance early relational health at the growing intersection of child health transformation and resilient community building in partnerships with families with a social justice commitment. He also is the current Co-Chair of National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's Forum on Children's Wellbeing. Dr. Willis was previously a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of Social Studies in Washington DC, the Inaugural Executive Director of the Perigee Fund of Seattle, WA, the Division Director of Home Visiting and Early Childhood Systems at HRSA during the Obama Administration, and an early brain and child development clinician and leader in Oregon and the American Academy of Pediatrics. He currently lives in Alexandria, VA with his wife in close proximity to his oldest son's family.