



UNC Executive DrPH in Health Leadership Cohort 19 Biosketches

Current as of April 2023

Anna Blanton, MSW (she/her)

Chief Clinical Officer

AMOREM (formerly Burke and Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care)

Sherrills Ford, North Carolina

Anna is the Chief Clinical Officer at AMOREM and provides clinical, quality and compliance oversight for both hospice and palliative care programs serving the foothills of North Carolina. In this role, areas of focus have been improving access to care initiatives, developing exceptional visit standards curriculum and further understanding the implications of social determinants of health in hospice and palliative care. Anna served as a senior leader on the COVID-19 Emergency Response Team to aid in the navigation of organizational pandemic response.

Anna has over 14 years of clinical social work practice and leadership experience in non-profit hospice and palliative care. Prior to joining the senior leadership team at AMOREM she served in clinical social work roles including traumatic brain injury rehabilitation and research, hospice and palliative care and clinical leadership. She has overseen the provision of care delivered by clinical social workers, spiritual care counselors, grief support professionals and organizational volunteers.

Anna holds two degrees from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, earning a BA in Psychology and a Master of Social Work (MSW). She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in the state of North Carolina. In 2020, Anna earned her advanced palliative and hospice social work certification (APHSW-C).

Anna was born and raised on Lake Norman, NC, the daughter of a dedicated public-school teacher and a skilled blue-collar professional. She finds joy spending time at her home on Lake Norman with family, friends and two dogs. She enjoys watersports, cooking and live music.

Anna is dedicated to bringing enthusiasm, advocacy and diverse end-of-life care knowledge at both the direct practice and leadership level. She is humbled and eager to enter the ranks of the DrPH program and hopes to integrate the pillars of social work skills and practice with advanced public health leadership to innovate, support and improve care for current and future generations.

Cassandra (Cassie) Harris, MA
Chief Strategy and Engagement Officer
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Columbia, SC

Cassie Harris is the Chief Strategy & Engagement Officer for the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). In this role, she oversees long-term strategic goal development for the agency. This includes co-leading the agency’s strategic planning efforts and working with cross-functional teams to promote a culture of strategic, “without-the-box” thinking, as well as helping to identify and drive priority initiatives through inception to completion and evaluation. In this capacity, she is also charged with working collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to engage employees, partners, and communities in state-wide, regional, and local priorities for the agency. As part of this work, she leads issues management and executive positioning for the agency’s director and executive leadership team.

Harris remains passionate about working with DHEC’s team of talented and dedicated employees, agency partners, and community members to support a healthier future for all South Carolinians. This includes leading innovation and change efforts across the agency and within communities.

Previously, Harris served as the state press secretary for a U.S. Senator, where she served as the primary statewide media contact and spokesperson in the national office. Prior to that, Harris held various roles at DHEC, including as the special projects director and an agency spokesperson. In these capacities, she provided crisis communications and issues management support and served as spokesperson in state and agency emergency response centers during the 2015 Historic Flood and Hurricane Matthew. She also oversaw project management of high-priority initiatives. Harris began her career with the Hawaii State Senate, advancing to deputy director of senate communications.

Harris earned her master’s and bachelor’s degrees in communications from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where she competed on the national championship sailing team and served on the school’s Board of Publications. She believes in making a positive impact in all that she does and is proud to join multiple generations of her family in serving others through pursuing a career in public service.

Jalisa Dawkins, MPH, CHES (she/her)
Team Lead, Capacity Building & Education
Columbus Public Health
Columbus, OH

Jalisa Dawkins is the Capacity Building & Education Team Lead within the Center for Public Health Innovation at Columbus Public Health (Columbus, Ohio). She oversees the team responsible for leading capacity building and educational opportunities for staff and the community that identify and address the factors that contribute to health disparities for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. This includes providing guidance on equitable policies, practices and procedures development as well as overseeing the department’s language services.

Jalisa has over a decade of public health experience at the local and federal levels in the areas of health equity, food systems, food safety, emergency preparedness and response and chronic and

communicable diseases. Jalisa serves as the Emergency Response Team Co-chair of the Columbus (OH) Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and the Board President of Neighborhood Services Inc food pantry.

She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology and Master of Public Health degrees from The Ohio State University. When she's not doing something public health related, you can find her baking her famous chocolate chip pecan cookies or taking a nature walk with her husband Jonathan to counter the cookie eating!

Jennifer Cockrill, MS, MPH (she/her)

Regional Administrator

**Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (US Department of Health & Human Services)
Seattle, WA**

Jennifer is a Commander in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, and currently serves as the Regional Administrator for the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response in Seattle, WA. With ASPR, Jennifer is privileged to lead an office of dedicated and talented professionals who work closely on public health preparedness and response efforts with Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and the tribes of the Pacific Northwest and Alaska.

Jennifer's career demonstrates a commitment to public health and process improvement, with assignments in molecular research, surveillance epidemiology, operations and management. Her previous positions—uniformed and civilian—have been with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, the Department of Defense's Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch, the Naval Medical Research Center's Infectious Disease Directorate and the National Institutes of Health's National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases. She has deployed in response to public health emergencies numerous times, including: Unaccompanied Children in Nogales, AZ (2014); Ebola Response in Liberia (2016); Zika Response in Puerto Rico (2016); Zika Support to the U.S. Olympic Committee (2016); Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria Responses in Texas, Georgia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands (2017 and 2018); Hurricane Michael (2018); the California Wildfires (2018); COVID (2020-Present); the Oregon Wildfires (2020); and several National Special Security Events.

Jennifer is a proud alum of Butler University and holds graduate degrees from the University of California Berkeley and Georgetown University. She lives in Seattle with her wife, Amy, and two cats, Tigger and Roo. In her free time, she enjoys starting home improvement projects (sometimes even finishing them), and hiking in the mountains.

Jennifer Greene, MPH (she/her)

Health Director & Chief Executive Officer

AppHealthCare

Boone, NC

Jennifer is a passionate public health advocate who leads a talented team at AppHealthCare, a district public health agency and federally qualified health center serving Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga Counties in NC. Jennifer has family roots in Eastern NC and in rural Appalachia which has helped shape

her love for people, family and NC. She is eager to support rural communities in having strong public health services.

For over 18 years, Jennifer has partnered within the rural Appalachian region to develop policy, system and environmental change that supports improved public health infrastructure and outcomes. Early in her career, she led collaborative efforts to create more opportunities for active transportation, physical activity, tobacco prevention and healthy food access. In more recent years, her efforts have included expanding services for farmworker health, mental health, substance use treatment, dental health and quality care across the agency's six locations. Jennifer reflects on the many lessons learned through her work in rural communities, including her role in leading the community public health response efforts through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jennifer received her BS in health promotion from Appalachian State University and MPH from Des Moines University Osteopathic Medical School. She is a wife and proud mom of two and lives in Boone, NC with her family, including her beloved pets Kitty, Leo and Benny. She loves spending time indoor cycling and outdoors, traveling with her fellow "lady leaders" in public health, and expanding her cooking skills.

Kristin Kelling, MHS

Health Attaché, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

U.S. Embassy Brasilia

Brasilia, Brazil

Kristin Kelling serves as the HHS Health Attaché in Brazil. She works at the intersection of global health and diplomacy, focusing on the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Brazil. Kristin advises the U.S. Mission on health and human services issues and advances priorities for the HHS Secretary and the administration. She supports the diplomatic and foreign policy priorities of all HHS Operating Divisions with international engagement. In addition to supporting CDC, she facilitates the activities of NIH, FDA, BARDA as well as others with equities in Brazil.

Prior to deploying to Brazil, Kristin spent seven years at U.S. Department of State's Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy (S/GAC) as a Senior Public Health Advisor to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). She served as a Deputy Director at S/GAC as well as PEPFAR Chair for the Western Hemisphere Region. She was responsible for setting high-level programmatic strategy and overseeing successful implementation of annual plans in Central America, South America and the Caribbean. Committed to social policy issues and humanitarian service, she was the most senior PEPFAR representative working on the Venezuela Regional Crisis for several years.

Much of her federal career has been with the CDC's Division of Global HIV and TB (DGHT), where Kristin started as a Presidential Management Fellow in the Science Office in 2007. In her Deputy Branch Chief role, she served as a key focal point for business services spanning multiple CDC divisions.

Kristin graduated from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with a Master of Health Science degree in International Health. During her graduate studies she spent nearly two years in Brazil carrying out research on disease control and prevention. She is fluent in Portuguese and enjoys exploring the stunning landscapes and vibrant culture of Brazil.

Marianne Weant, MSPH, MA, CHES (she/her)

Programs Manager

North Carolina Alliance for Health

Cary, NC, USA

Marianne is the Programs Manager at the North Carolina Alliance for Health (NCAH), a statewide coalition of organizations and individuals that advances policies that equitably improve health for North Carolinians. In her capacity at NCAH, Marianne works with partners on a wide range of policies from health food access to commercial tobacco use prevention. Marianne joined NCAH in 2018 after almost nine years with North Carolina PTA advocating for the health and well-being of North Carolina's children. She started her career in health promotion at Be Active NC and has worked in the nonprofit sector for over twenty years.

Marianne completed her BA in anthropology and history at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA and her MA in anthropology and development at the George Washington University in Washington, DC. She received her MSPH from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She is a Certified Health Education Specialist and has a graduate certificate in nonprofit management. Marianne lives in Cary, NC with her husband, six children, dog, and chickens.

Melissa Tucker, MBA, BSN, RN

Senior Vice President, Health Transformation

Aon

Miami, Florida/USA

Melissa Tucker works as Vice President of Health Transformation at Aon. In this role, serving in a national capacity, she consults with large and jumbo market employers from both the private and public sectors, specializing in multi-national, complex clients. Ultimately, she aims to help improve population wide clinical outcomes and the employee experience navigating healthcare while reducing costs. She has expertise in prevention, risk reduction and treatment of chronic conditions like diabetes, metabolic syndrome and obesity. Additional expertise includes cancer, family building (fertility, maternity, pediatrics), musculoskeletal conditions, value-based incentive design, global wellbeing and primary care models.

Melissa assists in steering the clinical direction of Health Solutions at Aon while demonstrating thought leadership by speaking at conferences, creating a point of view on emerging topics and consulting with clients to improve health, mitigate risk and positively impact business outcomes. She serves on Aon's Health Transformation Leadership Team, Global Wellbeing Think Tank and Innovation Lab for High-Cost Claimants.

Melissa is a graduate of University of Tennessee, having earned both a Master's in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She is a Registered Nurse licensed in Florida and Certified Exercise Physiologist through American College of Sports Medicine. She is also licensed to sell life, health and variable annuities in Florida. She is also trained in Mental Health First Aid.

Melissa believes in lifestyle medicine, is an avid traveler and enjoys an active lifestyle with her husband of 14 years.

Ogaga Tebehaevu, MS, CIH, CSP

Senior Industrial Hygienist, Environmental Health and Safety

North Carolina State University

Raleigh, NC

Ogaga Tebehaevu is currently the senior industrial hygienist in the Division of Environmental Health and Public Safety at North Carolina State University. In his role, Ogaga leads multidisciplinary teams in executing occupational health goals in areas of chemical exposure assessment, environmental toxicology, medical surveillance and risk assessment and control while also providing technical expertise in other health and safety programs.

Prior to this position, Ogaga worked as an industrial hygiene specialist at East Carolina University (ECU) for about seven years. At ECU, he led several exposure assessment investigations, collaborated with principal investigators in environmental and toxicological studies and publications and served as a guest lecturer in the occupational safety and environmental health programs. While the last decade of his career was in higher education, Ogaga's professional experience spans manufacturing, finance and downstream oil and gas.

Ogaga currently serves as the president of the American Society of Safety Professionals, North Carolina Chapter, assistant regional vice president of student affairs with the same organization and an advisory board member at ECU Master of Science in Occupational Safety Program, among other professional affiliations.

Ogaga holds a bachelor's degree in industrial safety and environmental engineering, a master's degree in occupational safety and a certificate in industrial hygiene from Petroleum Training Institute, East Carolina University, and the Harvard School of Public Health, respectively.

Rose Rios, MPH (she/her)

Director, Thought Leader Program Management

Global Accounts - BioPharma

Thermo Fisher Scientific

East Brunswick, New Jersey/United States of America

Rose is the director of international thought leader programs for the biopharma industry at Thermo Fisher Scientific. She specifically works with analytical instruments typically seen in laboratories working on drug discovery and manufacturing. Her area of focus is on cell and gene therapy, detection of impurities in biopharmaceuticals and protein-based therapeutic research. Her role is to identify experts in these fields and work with them developing the next innovation to make therapeutics safer, targeted and cheaper.

Born in "The Bronx", New York, Rose was an inner-city kid with puertorrican teen parents. She has always worked in the life science industry identifying both scientific and clinical experts to advance patient care. She is passionate about health literacy which puts patients first. Recognizing this expertise, she was offered a position as a Life Science Sector Lead at the New Jersey Economic Development Agency, under New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy. In this role, Rose helped new life science companies navigate the panoply of resources to ensure successful drug development research in a time efficient manner.

In honor of her grandmother, Rose founded The Abuela Lucy Foundation. Her charity serves underrepresented populations in accessing STEM education and resources. Her foundation traveled to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria and rebuilt several science labs decimated by the disaster.

She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Vermont, double majoring in anthropology and history. She later attended the City University of New York, Hunter College and completed a master's degree in public health while focusing on community health education and epidemiology. Rose Rose is a mother of two teenage girls and enjoys the loving support of her husband Mark.

Rosemary Mburu, MBA, MPH (she/her)

Executive Director

WACI Health

Nairobi, Kenya

Rosemary W. Mburu is a public health and policy advocacy expert with nearly two decades of experience working with communities and civil society in Africa, and currently serves as the Executive Director for [WACI Health](#). As a civil society leader in Africa, her work has included nurturing and co-leading community and civil society spaces including, the Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) Africa, Civil Society Platform for Health in Africa (CiSPHA), the Africa Network of HIV Prevention Advocates (AfNHi) and the Platform for Community and Civil Society representatives on ACT-A.

Mburu has served in various capacities within the global health architecture including on the UHC2030 Steering Committee as a CSO representative, UNITAID Communities Advisory Group, GAVI CSO Steering Committee and the Vaccine Advocacy Resource Group (VARG). She has served as an advisor on various groups including: (i) the Lancet Commission on a synergistic approach to universal health coverage, health security and health promotion; (ii) WHO Advisory Group for SDG3 Global Action Plan R&D, Innovation and Access Accelerator; and (iii) Hiroshima G7 Global Health Task Force.

Ms Mburu has co-authored several peer-reviewed [publications](#) including: A multi-country comparative analysis of prioritization of health research in sub-Saharan Africa (BMJ Global Health). Challenges in updating national guidelines and essential medicines lists in Sub-Saharan African countries to include WHO-recommended postpartum hemorrhage medicines (International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics). Global Health in the Age of COVID-19: responsive health systems through a right to health fund (Health and Human Rights Journal); Clinical trial ethics (International Journal of Clinical Practice); Investments in HIV Prevention Research (African Journal of Reproductive Health); Biomedical HIV Prevention (BMC Proceedings).

Ms. Mburu holds a Master's in Public Health from Ohio University, a Master's in Business Administration from Frostburg State University and a Bachelor of Education from Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Sara Allinder, MPP (she/her)
Deputy Director
Center for Innovation in Global Health
Program Director
Blantyre Prevention Strategy
Alexandria, VA USA

Sara M. Allinder is deputy director of the Center for Innovation in Global Health and program director of the Blantyre Prevention Strategy (BPS) at Georgetown University. BPS is an innovative project aimed at developing a replicable model for district-based HIV prevention responses implemented in partnership with the Government of Malawi. She provides strategic and technical direction to a consortium of local and global partners and serves as co-investigator on two of the four objectives for Malawi's injectable PrEP implementation science study launching in 2023. Sara also is a member of the Product Access Advisory Committee (PAAC) for the Maximizing Options to Advance Informed Choice for HIV Prevention (MOSAIC) project funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Previously, Sara was executive director and senior fellow in the Global Health Policy Center (GHPC) in the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) for four years and led GHPC's work on HIV and nutrition. She retains a CSIS senior associate (non-resident) affiliation and is a fellow in its 2023 Women's Global Leadership Program. Prior to joining CSIS, she spent more than ten years supporting PEPFAR in Washington, D.C., as a senior adviser on PEPFAR management, operations and policy issues in the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy, U.S. Department of State, and in Uganda where she served as PEPFAR country coordinator (2013-2015). In earlier roles at State, Sara was policy adviser in the Office of International Health Affairs, where she led the policy response to SARS and Avian Flu and served as senior editor for Africa in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

Sara was a Class of 2000 presidential management fellow and holds a Master of Public Policy degree with a concentration in international development and health and a B.A., *magna cum laude*, in political science and sociology, both from the American University, Washington, D.C. She is the proud mother of 13-year-old twins (son and daughter) and enjoys cooking, reading, traveling, photography and taking their Mini Bernedoodle on long walks.

Senait Tekeste Fekadu MPH, MBA
Public health emergency operations center lead
World Health Organization (WHO), Regional Office for Africa
Matthews, North Carolina, USA

Senait Tekeste Fekadu works for the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa as a lead for public health emergency operations center within the WHO's Health Emergencies Programme. She leads WHO's functions in implementation of public health emergency operations center (PHEOC) in the WHO African Region. She proactively works with Member States and all relevant partners to coordinate establishment and operationalization of national PHEOC in the African Region for effective response. Senait created the regional network of PHEOC in which national PHEOCs in the African Region are members. The network is instrumental in development of norms and standards, sharing of information, experiences and best practices among PHEOCs and brought PHEOC partners together. She serves as a secretariat of the WHO global EOCNET and co-chair of the policy, plans and procedures working group.

She also manages the EOC of the WHO Regional office for Africa in Brazzaville to effectively support management of public health emergencies in the African Region.

Senait likes to inspire others, specifically women, to build their resilience, leadership and decision-making skills so as they successfully lead themselves, family and organizations. She is a mentor on leadership, decision-making skills, personal development and developing resilient personality through emotional intelligence, as part of AFRO transformation agenda mentorship programme.

Senait holds a Master's Degree in Public Health from University of South Wales and a Master's degree in Business Administration from University of Nicosia.

Tamara Smith, MS, CHES, CHC, (she, hers, ella)

**National Associate Vice President, Strategy Advancement Health Equity & Social Impact
Humana, Inc.**

Charlotte, North Carolina U.S.A.

Tamara Smith is a nationally recognized healthcare leader who has focused on building creative, community-driven health solutions for marginalized populations for almost two decades. As the National Associate Vice President of Strategy Advancement for the Office of Health Equity & Social Impact (HESI) at Humana, Tamara leads the execution of Humana's national health equity strategy, which includes thought leadership with Medicaid, Medicare and other lines of business, building a national community engagement framework, supporting academic partnerships and building strategic, national partnerships to address health equity. As a culture builder, Tamara also directs internal efforts to build capacity across multiple lines of business to build a culture of health equity across the Humana ecosystem. Prior to joining Humana, Tamara served as Vice President of Community Engagement & Social Determinants of Health Strategy and Sr. Director of Strategy, Business Performance & Compliance at Novant Health. Throughout her career, Tamara has led the charge to focus on health equity for all, through defining and capturing impact through leveraging data analysis for creative storytelling.

Tamara often says that her alchemy is turning passion into tangible impact. In her new passion project, [Our Journey to Equity](#), Tamara aims to alchemize the passion that many people share for equity into actions that democratize health and wellbeing for people of color. Tamara is also involved in various leadership roles in the community. She serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Charlotte Rescue Mission and as a member of the Advisory Board for the Charlotte Red Cross. She was named national Top 100 Under 50 by Diversity MBA Magazine, and selected for Leadership Winston Salem, Leadership Charlotte and was a Novant Health Leadership Academy Fellow.

Tamara received her BS in Health & Exercise Science from Wake Forest University and a MS in Health Promotion Management from Nebraska Methodist College. Tamara and her husband Cassiel reside in Charlotte, NC and enjoy an active lifestyle full of competitive family game nights and great food with their two boys, Gabriel and Israel, and Doberman, Luna.

Tegan Henke, MS, She/Her

Vice President of Community Systems Innovation

Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, Center for Child and Family Wellness

Dallas, TX

Tegan Henke is passionate about developing systems that offer healing from the inside out and her approach to her work reflects that value. She is presently the Vice President of Community Systems Innovation with the Center for Child and Family Wellness at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (Meadows Institute), a nonprofit organization in Texas. The Meadows Institute provides data-driven policy and program recommendations at the state, regional and local levels to help mental health systems improve, share best practices, develop resources and increase public awareness on the most effective ways to treat mental health conditions. In her role at the Meadows Institute, Tegan leads initiatives aimed to improve early identification of mental health conditions and access to timely and effective treatments for children, youth, and their families. She is most inspired when working on projects that involve ambitious, complex change and bring together diverse partners (systems and people) to address a goal that no one entity could reach alone.

Prior to joining the Meadows Institute, Tegan worked in the public mental health system, both as a therapist and in program implementation. As a therapist, she wore many hats, working with children and youth, as well as adults, with serious mental health needs. Her experience providing crisis intervention and follow-up services for children, youth and their families allowed her to witness, firsthand, the challenges faced by both families and service providers as they strive to obtain and deliver, respectively, the highest quality services for children and youth. As a result of this work, she shifted her focus to policy, in the hopes of improving the mental health system of care so those seeking services have access to high quality care when and where they need it.

Tegan holds a master's degree in Child Development and Family Science (emphasis: Couple and Family Therapy) from North Dakota State University. In her free time Tegan, enjoys laughing and dancing with her family and friends, time in nature (especially lake time!), and falling asleep while reading.