

2025 Public Health Learning Forum Speaker Biographies

Sonja Armbruster, MA, Performance Improvement Expert, Public Health Foundation



Sonja Armbruster, MA, has an insatiable curiosity about how we can improve public health practice. She has been a public health performance improvement consultant for 15 years. Her public health practice, teaching, and publications focus on performance improvement. When she's not consulting with local, state, tribal, and territorial health departments through her work with the Public Health Foundation, she's supporting training and workforce development efforts within Kansas through her work with the Center for Public Health Initiatives at Wichita State University. When life gets too intense, Sonja heads outside for a walk or listens to books she's already read. Ask her about her big family.

Ron Bialek, MPP, President and CEO, Public Health Foundation



Ron Bialek is President and CEO of the Public Health Foundation (PHF). Under his leadership, PHF has focused its efforts on developing and implementing innovative strategies for improving performance of public health agencies and systems. Initiatives include developing performance management and quality improvement tools and training for public health professionals; developing the consensus set of Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals through the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice; creating the Nation's most comprehensive public health learning management system – TRAIN – linking together 26 states, 3 tribes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Veterans Health Administration, the U.S. Medical Reserve Corps, and other organizations; and developing consumer oriented county health profiles – the Community Health Status Indicators initiative – for all counties in the U.S. Ron served as one of the editors and chapter authors for the books, *Solving Population Health Problems Through Collaboration* and *Public Health Quality Improvement Handbook*. Ron received his BA in Political Science and his MPP in Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins University.

Lisa Camooso Miller, MA, Crisis and Strategic Communications Consultant, The Friday Reporter



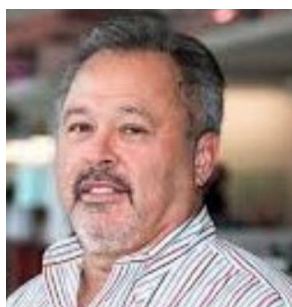
Lisa Camooso Miller has been a notable communications leader for over twenty years in local, state, and federal government posts; political campaigns and committees; as well as advocacy organizations. She regularly provides commentary on radio and television. Ms. Miller is the founder of Friday Reporter Public Affairs, and the producer and host of the Friday Reporter Podcast. She was previously deputy communications director for the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and the U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives. She also served as the head of communications for the Republican National Committee in 2007. Prior to her time in Washington, DC, Ms. Miller served under two New Jersey governors, where she participated in the recovery and rebuilding efforts following the attacks of September 11th. Ms. Miller holds an MA in corporate and public communications from Monmouth University and a BA in communications from The College of New Jersey.

Sarah Compton, MPH, Public Health Program Officer, Montana Public Health Institute & Montana 21C



Sarah Compton is a public health program officer at the Montana Public Health Institute. In this role, she provides technical assistance, policy analysis support, and project management skills to strengthen the capacity of local, tribal, and state public health agencies in Montana. Sarah has over fifteen years of public health and healthcare experience building and improving organizational programs and systems to meet the needs of the people that they serve. Sarah holds a master's degree in public health from the University of Montana focusing on the impacts, challenges, and applications of technology on rural health. She is based out of Bozeman, Montana, where she lives with her blended family.

Joe Finkbonner, RPh, MHA, Chair, PHF Board of Directors; Former Executive Director, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board



Joe Finkbonner is the former Executive Director of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB). Prior to holding that position, Mr. Finkbonner was the Director of the Northwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (The EpiCenter) at the NPAIHB. The EpiCenter is one of 12 epidemiology centers nationally that focuses specifically on American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) health status. Mr. Finkbonner began his work in Indian health for the Lummi Tribe as the Health Director/CEO and was very active at State and Federal levels in his efforts to heighten awareness of disparities of the AI/AN population and to assist with focusing action toward improving the health status through policy development. His efforts were through his membership on the Washington State Board of Health, participation in the Washington Public Health Improvement Plan, and miscellaneous workgroups for the Indian Health Service. Mr. Finkbonner also is Immediate Past Chair of the Public Health Accreditation Board.

Mr. Finkbonner began his work in healthcare delivery as a pharmacist at Providence Medical Center in Seattle, WA and Overlake Medical Center in Bellevue, WA. He holds an Master of Health Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy, both from the University of Washington. He is a member of Lummi Nation. Mr. Finkbonner is a member of the clinical faculty at the University of Washington and Oregon Health & Sciences University.

Meagan Gillespie, MBA, Local & Tribal Support Specialist, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services & Montana 21C



Meagan Gillespie works for the Montana Department of Health and Human Services in the Public Health System Improvement Office. She holds a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor's degree in Healthcare Administration. Meagan has experience in both the healthcare administration and public health fields and is dedicated to strengthening systems that support the health and well-being of Montana.

Taban Herrington, MA, Chief of Staff, Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services



Taban Herrington is the Chief of Staff for the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS). CHFS is the state's primary agency responsible for leadership in protecting and promoting the health and well-being of Kentuckians through the delivery of quality human services and the operation of public health, Medicaid, certificate of need and licensure, and mental health and intellectual disability programs in the Commonwealth.

Prior to her appointment as CHFS Chief of Staff, Taban served as Chief of Staff for the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH). Taban earned her master's degree in risk and crisis communication from the University of Kentucky, where she also taught in the College of Communication and Information.

Taban has experience in emergency management and has worked with federal, state and local partners on the development of emergency response plans and exercises, risk and crisis communication strategies, and the use of culturally tailored communications campaigns in emergency preparedness and response. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to her role in crisis communications, Taban served as the Access and Functional Needs Specialist and led the Medical Reserve Corps program for KDPH. Before moving to Kentucky in 2017, Taban worked at the Walt Disney Company in Orlando, FL.

James R. House, BS, MEP, Health Program Administrator/Workforce Director, Kentucky Department for Public Health



James House has worked for the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) since December 1, 2007. During his years of with KDPH, he has served as the Harm Reduction Program Administrator, Public Health Preparedness Branch Manager/Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director, Hospital Preparedness Program Manager, Emergency Support Function #8 Planning Coordinator, and the Exercise Program Coordinator. Currently, he is the Health Program Administrator/Workforce Director for the Public Health Infrastructure Grant responsible for developing workforce development programs

through the Center for Foundational Health. James is the Chairperson of KDPH's Public Health Workforce Readiness Subcommittee and Co-Chair of the Kentucky Public Health Association's Workforce Development Committee.

Prior to his employment with KDPH, James worked for the Lake Cumberland District Health Department (LCDHD) in Somerset, KY. He supervised a multi-disciplinary team who planned, conducted and evaluated preparedness-related planning, training, and exercise activities throughout a 10-county region. These activities enhanced the preparedness level of LCDHD and partnering agencies for public health responses to man-made and natural disaster events.

James served 21 years with the United States Navy from 1980 to 2001, specializing in the field of Preventive Medicine and Environmental Health. During his last tour with the Navy, he earned his certification as a Group Paced Instructor and served as the Senior Instructor for the Preventive Medicine Technician School in San Diego, CA. As an instructor, he delivered over 1,500 hours of instruction to 450 military personnel in the functional areas of Epidemiology, Communicable Diseases, Mathematics, Occupational Safety and Health, Food Safety, Environmental Health and Instructional Methods.

James holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Workforce Education and Development with specialization in Education, Training, and Development from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, IL.

Ryann Ickes, Evaluation & Quality Improvement Manager, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health



Service.

Ryann Ickes engages in performance management with 100+ program teams and manages the entire Clear Impact system for the Division of Public Health. Before joining the Office of Performance Management team, she spent 4 years with Nebraska’s SNAP-Ed Program. With opportunities to continue her education within the state college system, she received an undergraduate degree in Applied Science from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and a graduate degree in Urban Studies from the University of Nebraska Omaha College of Public Affairs and Community

Jacqueline Isaly, Bureau Chief, Family and Community Health Bureau, Early Childhood & Family Support Division, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services & Montana 21C



Jacqueline Isaly, a lifelong Montana resident, has devoted her career to the non-profit and public sectors. She began as a Licensed Addictions Counselor after graduating from Montana State University-Bozeman, an experience that led her to pursue administrative roles and ultimately transition into public health. After serving at the Park County Health Department, where she rose to Director and led major initiatives like the LiveWell49 coalition, she moved to Lewis and Clark Public Health as the Community Health Promotion Division Administrator. Throughout her career, Jacqueline has continually sought to enhance her expertise, earning multiple certificates in Non-Profit and Public Health Administration. In December 2020, she advanced to the state level, becoming the Family and Community Health Bureau Chief for the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, where she leverages her extensive local experience as a chief health strategist to oversee vital statewide programs including WIC, Maternal and Child Health, Community Health, Children’s Special Health Services, and Home Visiting programs.

Summer Johnson, Crisis and Strategic Communications Consultant, Riester Influence



Summer Johnson is a Washington, DC-based media trainer and crisis communications consultant who has spent the last 25 years helping high-profile lawmakers, officials, candidates, issues, and organizations navigate delicate situations and tell their stories. She has held both private and public sector positions, including in television, in local government, and on Capitol Hill, and has served as spokesperson for a major political party. She is currently the Managing Partner at Riester Influence, a strategic communications partner to public health leaders. She led the company’s growth from start-up to its naming in the top half of Inc’s Fastest Growing 5000 Businesses in America in 2024. She conceived and developed Public Health Review Morning Edition for the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, co-hosted, and oversaw production of the first 1,000 shows. Her campaign and political work have consistently won awards, including PRWeek’s Best in Public Sector Campaigns, Gold ADDY Award, and Public Relations Society of America Bronze and Silver Anvils.

Anna Kiley, MEd, Operations Manager, Montana Public Health Training Center



Anna Kiley is the Operations Manager for the Montana Public Health Training Center (MPHTC), where she provides leadership across all MPHTC projects, including statewide training coordination, workforce pipeline initiatives, technical assistance, and workplace wellness. She also serves on the Montana 21C Project Management team, helping connect academic and research innovation with public health system transformation. As a member of the Professional Development Core at the Montana Clinical and Translational Research Center, Anna supports training and capacity-building efforts for public health and clinical research professionals across Montana.

Originally from Colorado, Anna spent 15 years in Arizona earning degrees in interdisciplinary studies and secondary education, and taught middle and high school science – experience that continues to inform her passion for education, learning, and public health.

Sarah D. Matthews, MPH, MS, PhD, Founder & Principal Scientist, Health Communications Consultants, Inc.



Dr. Sarah Matthews is a research scientist and consultant whose work bridges health and technology, integrating public health, healthcare, and modeling and simulation to advance systems innovation. She is the Founder and Principal Scientist of Health Communications Consultants, Inc. (HCC, Inc.), a woman-owned small business established in 2009 that delivers interdisciplinary, equity-centered solutions across sectors, including public health, healthcare, technology, and education. Guided by Human-in-the-Loop philosophy, Dr. Matthews blends innovation, data science, and human insight to help organizations strengthen

workforce capacity, leadership, and systems performance. Her work advances HCC, Inc.'s mission to transform systems through knowledge, innovation, and equity for a more adaptive and resilient future.

Amanda McCarty, MS, MBA, MHA, Performance Improvement Expert, Public Health Foundation



Amanda McCarty is the Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences at the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. She is also an Adjunct Professor in Health Care Administration at West Virginia University Institute of Technology. From 2012-2016, she served as the Director of Performance Management & Systems Development at the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health. At the Bureau, Amanda was a member of the health department's leadership team and was responsible for accreditation, performance management, strategic planning, workforce development, and quality improvement efforts. Prior

to joining the Bureau, Amanda worked for Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield/Highmark, Inc. in health promotion and disease prevention.

As a consultant for the Public Health Foundation, she has provided training and technical assistance for state and local health departments in the areas of performance management systems development, workforce development, quality improvement, and development of evaluation plans and logic models since 2013. Amanda is author of *Collaborative Performance Management for Public Health: A Practical Guide* (2020). She holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Exercise Science and a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration from Marshall University and a Master of Business Administration from West Virginia University.

Ashley McCracken, Transformation Program Manager, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health



Ashley McCracken provides insightful leadership on quality improvement and program development in her current role within the Office of Performance Management. Prior to joining the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Ashley worked in the field of Human Services for over 16 years in various state and non-profit organizations. She pursued education in her home state of Nebraska, where she earned an associate degree in applied science in human services from Southeast Community College and a Bachelor of Arts in Human Relations from Doane University.

Jennifer Medina Matsuki, MPH, CHES, Director, Public Health Partnerships and Initiatives, Pfizer



Jennifer Medina Matsuki is a dynamic, equity-focused leader with over 20 years of experience at the crossroads of public health, marketing, and community engagement. Her career centers on advancing health equity and improving outcomes through culturally responsive programs, strategic communications, and building authentic partnerships. Prior to her role at Pfizer, Jennifer served in senior leadership at the New York City Department of Health, where she led innovative initiatives such as the NYC Condom Availability Program, and developed acclaimed public health campaigns, including Living Sure, ¡Listos!, and Made Equal. She played a pivotal role in NYC's responses to emergencies like COVID-19 and Mpox, earning honors such as NYC Health's Distinguished Service Award for Championing Health Equity (April 2023) and Black Pride's Heritage Award (August 2023). Her work consistently focused on underserved populations and influenced citywide strategies for improved health outcomes.

Currently, as Director of Public Health Partnerships and Initiatives at Pfizer, Jennifer leads the strategic dissemination of multi-cultural, unbranded materials for oral anti-viral treatment marketing, collaborating closely with public health partners nationwide. She is working to launch a dedicated toolkit for public health professionals, offering centralized access to oral anti-viral treatment resources for communities that are in-language and in-culture. Jennifer also partners with Pfizer CRGs to drive community impact initiatives, where she was recognized in 2025 with the Community Engagement Global OPEN Award. She holds an MPH from The City University of New York's Hunter School of Health Sciences and resides in Queens, NY with her family, bringing joy and energy to her work—sometimes even through spontaneous dance breaks.

Carol Moehrle, RN, BSN, Vice President, Programs, Public Health Foundation



Carol Moehrle serves as Vice President of Programs at the Public Health Foundation (PHF). Prior to working with PHF, she served for 32 years as the District Director for Public Health – Idaho North Central in Idaho. Carol serves on the Board of the National Association of Counties where she holds leadership positions in Public Health, Healthy Counties, and Resilient Counties subcommittees. She has been active in the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) since 1991 and served as NACCHO President in 2010-2011. She served on the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) and was Chair of PHAB, 2011-2013. Her Public Health District has been accredited since 2016, and was re-accredited in 2023. She shares her passion for public health with numerous public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

John (Jack) Moran, PhD, Senior Advisor, AI and Quality, Public Health Foundation



Jack Moran, PhD, is a Senior Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Quality Advisor to the Public Health Foundation (PHF) and a former Adjunct Professor in the Arizona State University College of Health Solutions' School for the Science of Health Care Delivery. He brings to PHF more than 30 years of quality improvement (QI) expertise in developing QI tools and training programs, implementing and evaluating QI programs, and writing books and articles on QI methods. Dr. Moran is a retired Senior Vice-President of Information Systems, Administrative and Diagnostic Services at New England Baptist Hospital. He was previously Chief Operating Officer of Changing Healthcare, Inc, specializing in management consulting and educational support to Health Care Organizations. For 21 years, Dr. Moran was employed at Polaroid Corporation where he worked in various senior management capacities in Manufacturing, Engineering, and Quality. His last position was as the Director of Worldwide Quality and Systems.

His past appointments include Senior Fellow at the University of Minnesota, School of Public Health in the Division of Health Policy and Management, 2010–2015; President of the Advisory Board of Choose To Be Healthy Coalition of the Healthy Maine Partnership for York County, Maine, 2011–2016; faculty member of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Institute for Healthcare Improvement Antibiotic Stewardship project, 2011-2012; member of the Public Health Accreditation Board's Evaluation and Quality Improvement Committee, 2013–2016; and Adjunct Professor in the Graduate and Undergraduate School of Engineering at the University of Lowell for more than 20 years. Dr. Moran has authored numerous articles, case studies, and textbooks in public health, healthcare, quality function deployment, and process redesign. He has been active in the American Society of Quality (ASQ) as a Fellow of the society and serving as Division Chair, Vice-Chair of Technology, and Publications Chair of the Quality Management Division, Chair of the ASQ Certification Committee, Past Exam Chair of the Certified Quality Manager's Exam, and a member of the Standing Review Board of Quality Press. Dr. Moran is an ASQ Certified Quality Manager (CQM) and a Certified Quality Improvement Associate (CQIA). He is a Certified Management Consultant (CMC) by the Institute of Management Consultants. He is also a past member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the *Total Quality Review Journal*. In addition, Dr. Moran is a 1993-2001 RIT/USA Today Quality Cup Judge in Healthcare and a member of the Malcolm Baldrige Board of Examiners. He was a founder and past member of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Quality Award. Dr. Moran is accredited in Generative AI Fundamentals and holds BS, MBA, MS, and PhD degrees.

Billy Pitts, MHA, MHR, Chairman of the Training Committee, Kentucky Health Departments Association



Billy Pitts serves as Public Health Director for the Marshall County Health Department (MCHD). He is retired from active-duty Air Force, where he served from August 1984 to November 2004. He has a bachelor's in business management, a master's in human resource management, and a master's in healthcare administration. Billy is a member of the Kentucky Health Departments Association (KHDA) Executive Committee and Chairman of the KHDA Training Committee, serves on the Board of Directors for the Kentucky Rural Health Association, and is honored to serve on the Board of Directors for the Life Coordinated Pace Center in Benton, KY. He found a passion for public health when he became the human resource manager for the MCHD in July 2014. He has served in his current role as Director since March 2018. Billy believes strongly in the science of public health and making strategic decisions that can and will positively change the trajectory of public health outcomes for the citizens of Kentucky.

**Kaela Schommer, MEd, Instructional Coordinator & TRAIN Montana Administrator,
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services**



Kaela Schommer serves as the Instructional Coordinator and TRAIN Montana Administrator with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. After a career in education, she found her way to public health in 2023 and quickly discovered a deep connection to supporting those who serve Montana communities. Kaela now helps coordinate statewide training efforts, customize learning plans, and strengthen workforce development across 60 local and Tribal health departments. She led the rollout of TRAIN Montana, a statewide learning network designed to make training more accessible and connected. Guided by her background in teaching, Kaela brings a focus on learning that is practical, people-centered, and grounded in growth.

Quisha Umemba, MPH, BSN, RN, CDCES, CHWI, CEO, Umemba Health



Quisha Umemba is the CEO of Umemba Health, a training and consulting firm that helps health-focused organizations and mission-driven leaders build, deliver, and scale high-impact learning experiences using proven curriculum design and artificial intelligence (AI) innovation. A Registered Nurse, Public Health Practitioner, Amazon Best-Selling Author, and recognized AI Literacy & Workforce Development Expert, Quisha brings a rare blend of healthcare expertise, instructional innovation, and AI fluency to every stage and classroom she steps into. Widely known as the “AI Translator™,” she helps leaders and learners cut through complexity to find clarity, and positions herself as the missing piece of the AI puzzle.