

# **Family Support and Navigation: where compassion, empowerment and community connect**

**Speaker Bios and Contact Information listed by date and session**

## **Day One: April 15**

### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

**Victor Armstrong, MSW.** *Director of NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services, NC DHHS*

Victor has responsibility and oversight of the public community-based mental health, intellectual and other developmental disabilities, substance use, and traumatic brain injury system in North Carolina. Victor currently serves on the board of directors for American Association of Suicidology (AAS), the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) of NC, and United Suicide Survivors International. He is also former board chair of NAMI NC, and member of National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Victor is a former member of the board of directors of National Council for Behavioral Health, i2i Center for Integrative Health, and RI International.

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**Talley Wells, Executive Director,** NC Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD)

At NCCDD, Talley works with the 40-member Council appointed by the Governor to improve systems for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities across the state of North Carolina. Talley also serves as the Chair of the Legislative Committee of the North Carolina Governor's Taskforce for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice. From 2008 to 2017, Talley was the Director of the Disability Integration Project at the Atlanta Legal Aid Society. His advocacy was based on the United States Supreme Court's Olmstead decision, which was brought by Atlanta Legal Aid. Talley also founded the Olmstead Disability Rights Clinic at Georgia State School of Law and developed a national website with resources and stories entitled OlmsteadRights.org. From 2017 to early 2020, Talley was the Executive Director of Georgia Appleseed, a systems-change advocacy organization that advocated to keep children in school and out of the criminal justice system.

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## **Keynote: Reimagining Families and Support.**

**Pat Nobbie**, Ph.D. *Disability Policy Engagement Director*, Anthem, Inc.

Pat's education in Family Support began with her daughter Mia's birth. Pat was a founding member of the Parent Training and Information Center in the US Virgin Islands where Mia was born and served on the first Interagency Coordinating Council for the Birth to 3 program there. After moving to Georgia and completing her PhD, Pat served for 12 years as the Deputy Director of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities. In 2013, Pat went to Washington DC where she held the Kennedy Fellowship in Sen. Jay Rockefeller's Office, followed by almost two years at the Administration for Community Living where she worked on the HCBS Settings Rule, family support and family caregiver issues. She began her current role with Anthem in 2015 and has spent a great deal of time in North Carolina conducting stakeholder outreach with community-based organizations engaged in the Medicaid Transformation. All along, she has followed Mia's direction and Mia continues to keep her straight.

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## **Moving the Needle with Family Navigation and Supports**

**Cindy Ehlers**, MS, LCMHC. *Executive Vice President*, Trillium Health Resources

Cindy has worked in the public sector of BH I/DD in NC for the past 25 years. She is also the mom of children with I/DD that have received services through CAP-C, CDSA, Foster/Adoption and Innovations Waiver over the past 30 years. Cindy has a unique position in the system, working with the system, both as a parent and a professional. Cindy brings innovation and vision to Trillium in designing systems and supports that help people achieve their potential and families to get the supports they need. Cindy worked with Trillium's I/DD stakeholders to develop Family Navigator for Trillium members.

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**Christie Edwards**, MS, LCMHC, LCAS. *Vice President of Clinical Operations*, Trillium Health Resources

Christie earned her MS in Rehabilitation Counseling and Substance Abuse and Clinical Counseling from East Carolina University. She has worked in the private sector and MCO settings during her 14 years in the field as a direct support professional, licensed clinician, educator, and project manager. Christie has managed projects related to Assistive Technology and

implementation of Evidence Based Practices. Christie currently oversees the Call Center, Care Management Supports and Innovative Development departments at Trillium Health Resources.

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**Megan Roberson, BS, ATP. I/DD Clinical Director, Trillium Health Resources**

Megan earned her BS in Psychology and Assistive Technology Certification from East Carolina University. She has worked in private and managed care settings for the past 14 years in multiple roles including direct support professional, qualified professional, care coordinator, and project coordinator. As I/DD Clinical Director, Megan works to help develop policies, services, and other supports for Trillium members. Among helping to support I/DD related efforts, Megan currently works as a member of Trillium's Transition Team helping to lead the organization through North Carolina's Medicaid Transformation. Megan also currently oversees the Internal System and Performance Support department at Trillium.

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**Elissa Hanson, MSW, LCSW, CCM. Behavioral Health Director, Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear (CCLCF)**

Elissa has been with CCLCF since 2003. She earned her master's degree in Social Work from the University of Nebraska in 1990. She became a Certified Care Manager in 2012. As Behavioral Health Director at CCLCF, Elissa has developed programs that incorporate behavioral health assessment and consultation into complex care management services provided by CCLCF. She leads CCLCF's efforts to promote behavioral health integration in primary care settings to breakdown silos between behavioral health and primary care. In 2018 she became the Director of Care Management for CCLCF.

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## **The Value of Lived Experience When Providing Family Support**

**Benjalee Pittman, Family Navigator, The Arc of NC**

Benjalee has a pediatric nursing and EMS background. She is a Master IEP/504 coach. She volunteers on many boards and committees within our communities. She is a Youth Advisor for her church. She is a mom of 3 boys, one of which has Autism and ADHD with behavior. She is also power of attorney for her uncle with mental health conditions as well as IDD. She is married

to her husband of 8 years, who is in the Military giving her much experience with all that follows a military family. She has advocated and navigated the system for both her uncle, son and others in all aspects of life.

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**Holly Connor**, *Family Navigator*, Easter Seals UCP NC

Holly has a background in education. She started out in the NC preschool program as an assistant teacher and then moved into the exceptional children classroom, working with children with a variety of different disabilities. Holly has her bachelor's in early childhood development and is a Council of Parents Attorney and Advocates (COPAA) trained parent advocate for special education. She has volunteered in numerous capacities for a variety of nonprofits and advisory committees in her local community. Holly has been married to her husband of 22 years, who is a retired Marine. Together they have four children. Holly's children have shaped her life by her oldest having autism and I/DD. His diagnosis along with his siblings' of ADHD and anxiety have given her valuable lived experience to support other families facing similar life challenges.

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**Kim Tizzard**, *Director of Family Support*, Autism Society of NC

Kim Tizzard has worked for the Autism Society of NC for over 16 years. In that time, she has worked with over 1,000 families regarding a variety of concerns and needs, including school issues, crisis situations, and developing positive strategies to overcome challenges in a variety of settings. In addition to her personal experience as the mother of a son with autism, Ms. Tizzard supports the Autism Resource Specialists and Chapters across the State and has been a lead in the development of the Family Support ECHO program. She also represents ASNC on several collaborative efforts and projects which focus on the immediate needs of those individuals and caregivers with ASD and I/DD.

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**Day Two: April 22**

**NC's Family Support ECHO Programs**

**Melinda Plue**, MSW, LCSW. *Director of Advocacy and Chapter Development*, The Arc of NC

Some of Melinda's current initiatives include the coordination of individual and legislative advocacy efforts, technical support of The Arc's network of twenty chapters, managing the NC Fetal Alcohol Prevention Program, coordinating conferences and the public relations and communications efforts for The Arc. Melinda has been a lead in the development of the Family Support ECHO program. Prior to this role with The Arc of NC, she served as the executive director of The Arc of Union County. Melinda has a B.A. in Special Education from UNC-Charlotte, her MSW from Winthrop University, and she is a licensed clinical social worker in the state of North Carolina. She lives in Monroe with her husband, two daughters, and her brother-in-law, Jake, who is the reason she ever found The Arc in the first place.

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**Kerri Eaker**, *Education and Outreach Coordinator*, Family Support Network of Mission Children's Hospital. Chair of NC Council on Developmental Disabilities

Kerri is the mother of an adult son with an intellectual disability, psychiatric disability, and chronic health conditions. Kerri has first-hand experience learning to navigate the complexities of the health care, disability, education, and employment systems. She works every day to share her knowledge and compassion with other families. She is known as a "go to advocate" who expects all systems of care to step up and meet the needs of children and families. Kerri is also the chair of the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities and has been a lead member of the Family Support ECHO in Western NC.

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**Julie Davis**, *Family Partner and Peer Support Specialist*, Vaya Health LME/MCO

Julie works with families and children with mental health, substance use, and intellectual and developmental disabilities, supporting families to have their voices heard, to identify supports and resources, and find hope and recovery in their journey. Julie has expertise and certifications in Peer Support training, Wellness Recovery Action Plans, Person Centered Thinking, and Systems of Care Child and Family teams. Julie is a lead member of the Western NC Family Support ECHO hub team. As the mother of a young adult with complex medical and developmental disabilities, Julie understands the struggles and confusion families face when trying to navigate the healthcare and disability service systems.

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Email Contact: [ktizzard@autismsociety-nc.org](mailto:ktizzard@autismsociety-nc.org)

Website: Autism Society of NC, <https://www.autismsociety-nc.org/>

### **Responding to Families Where They Are**

**Darragh Davis**, *Parent Navigator*, Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities, UNC-CH.

Darragh Davis has over 13 years of experience as a resource specialist for families of children with medical and developmental disabilities in pediatrics at UNC. She has a wonderful son who has autism and is 24 years old.

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**Samantha Parrow**, *Family Support & Outreach Coordinator; Family Navigator*, Mission Pediatrics-McDowell

Samantha provides resources, supports and system navigation to families raising children with Developmental Disabilities through Mission Children's Olson Huff Center and Mission Pediatrics-McDowell.

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**Mary Long**, *Family Partner*, Division of Child and Family Mental Health and Developmental Neuroscience, Duke University Medical Center

Through the shared experience of raising a child with health challenges, Mary gets to connect and support families impacted by developmental disabilities and/or chronic health conditions. Mary also serves as a Parent Facilitator for Adolescents Transitioning to Leadership and Success (ATLAS Leadership), a Duke mentoring program for both adolescents and young adults who experience chronic health challenges and their parents or guardians. To better serve her families,

Mary is completing a Behavioral Science undergraduate program at North Carolina Central University.

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**Remy Jodrey**, MS, LCMHC, CRC. *Therapeutic Coaching Team Lead*, NC START Central, Easter Seals UCP of NC & VA

Rémy Jodrey has been a part of the NC START Central team for the past five years and is currently the team lead for the NC START Therapeutic Coaching program. Rémy's values of promoting empowerment and agency inform their work as STC team lead. They work with coaches, individuals with IDD, and their systems to develop the skills and stability necessary to achieve higher quality of life, heal from trauma, and access greater community inclusion. Rémy's lived experiences as a survivor and person with multiple disabilities fuels their passion to make our communities safer and more accessible for all individuals living with disabilities.

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**Betsy MacMichael**, *Executor Director*, First In Families of NC

Betsy has worked in the field of Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities to promote self-determination, inclusion and positive community awareness of families and family support needs for the past 22 years, in both a service and policy context. FIF complements the formal service system by helping to meet the varied and changing needs of families and individuals impacted by disability, including those without formal services. FIF helps families avoid and manage crises, identify goals and dreams, contribute to community life, and plan for the future. Betsy holds a master's degree, lives in Durham, NC and has two daughters, one with IDD who lives with a housemate in an inclusive neighborhood in Durham.

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### **Strategic Opportunities Now and Moving Forward**

**Latoya Chancey**, MA, LCMHCA. *I/DD Team Lead*, NC Division of MH-DD-SAS.

Latoya has worked in the field of I/DD for more than 17 years. Prior to joining the Division in October of 2017, she served as the Chief Clinical Officer at a private provider agency that served individuals with I/DD. LaToya has a Bachelor of Science in Human Development & Family Studies, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. She also has a Master of Arts in Professional Counseling, as well as in Conflict Resolution. She is currently licensed as a Licensed Clinical

Mental Health Counselor Associate. Like many in the I/DD field, LaToya began as a direct care staff and has held several roles, including Qualified Professional and Clinical Director, with a focus on supporting individuals with co-occurring mental health diagnoses and/or behavioral challenges. She also has clinical experience supporting survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Through these roles, she has gained a wealth of knowledge and experience with navigating the MH/IDD/SU system.

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**Andrew Clendenin, MSW.** *Associate Director of Behavioral Health, UnitedHealthcare*

Andrew's background and passion centers on the integration of behavioral and physical healthcare and improving health outcomes in underserved populations. Previously, Andrew served as Vice President of Clinical Strategy and Innovation at Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC), leading both Care Management and Clinical Programs. Andrew joined CCNC in 2016 as the director of Behavioral Health and was previously the Director of Integrated Programs at Community Care of the Sandhills where he led quality improvement, pediatrics, maternal health, and behavioral health programs. Prior to his work with the CCNC enterprise, Andrew worked in a community hospital setting, Moore County Department of Social Services and began his career as a high school special education teacher and coach. Andrew holds a B.A. in sociology and a MSW from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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**Gary Maslow, MD, MPH.** *Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Co-Director of Child and Family Mental Health and Developmental Neuroscience, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, Duke Health*

Dr. Maslow completed residencies in pediatrics, psychiatry, and child and adolescent and psychiatry. Dr. Maslow's experience in direct patient care informs his research and enables him to serve as a bridge and translator between the pediatric, mental health and developmental disabilities communities. Within the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry field he is recognized as an expert on integrated pediatric care. He is known as a leader who values collaboration and innovation. His presentations and publications include adolescent health, pediatrics, school health, psychiatry, and internal medicine.

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**Stacy Sorrells, MSML.** *Director of Member Engagement and Outreach, Vaya Health LME/MCO*

Stacy works throughout Vaya's 22-county catchment area to ensure that the voices and perspectives of members, families, and communities are heard and valued. Stacy has over 25 years of experience working to advance public health, behavioral health, and educational opportunities. As the Director of Member Engagement and Outreach at Vaya Health, Stacy supervises Vaya's Family Partners and Peer Trainers, manages the Vaya Health Peer Support Training, and provides support to Vaya's Consumer and Family Advisory Committee and other stakeholder groups throughout the Vaya catchment area.

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