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## Collaboration Between Community Behavioral Health Providers and Schools: Strategies and Opportunities to Support Student Access to Behavioral Health Care

Sheraton Framingham  
Thursday, November 21, 2024 at 10:00am – 3:30pm

### ***PRESENTER BIOS***

**Keith Asher** is Principal at Washington Elementary School in Springfield, Massachusetts, a position he has held since 2017. From 2005 to 2017, he was Assistant Principal at Washington Street Elementary School, and he taught middle school Social Studies at Springfield Public Schools beginning in 1997. He attended Springfield Public Schools and served in the Marine Corps from 1992 to 1996.

**Carla Azuakolam**, MA, is a healthcare leader with 25+ years of experience, specializing in clinical quality improvement, regulatory systems, health equity, social determinants of health, integrated care management, and policy alignment. In her current role as Director of School-Based Telebehavioral Health at the Brookline Center, Carla leads the strategic expansion of the program. Her focus is characterized by a commitment to excellence and a nuanced understanding of healthcare payor, provider, and population health dynamics.

Harnessing her equity-driven healthcare subject matter expertise, Carla plays a crucial role in empowering communities through the facilitation of key partnerships and impactful conversations that drive meaningful change. Her educational background includes master's degrees in Expressive Therapy (art, music, and dance) and Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Outside of her professional pursuits, Carla values quality time with her family, teaching mindfulness meditation, and studying human design.

**Aisha Barlatier-Bonny**, LCSW, is a seasoned clinician and passionate advocate for children's mental health with over 26 years of experience in behavioral health. She has dedicated much of her career to providing direct services to children and families across Connecticut, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. Her expertise in nonprofit leadership, community-based mental health, and school-based services enables her to develop a broad yet targeted vision for supporting mental health partnerships and fostering stronger alliances between parents, educators, and community providers. Aisha's commitment to school-based mental health is driven by her belief in the power of collaboration to improve outcomes for kids and families.

As Vice President for Behavioral Health and Outpatient Services at The Home for Little Wanderers, Aisha works alongside colleagues to build impactful partnerships with administrators and educators at Boston Public Schools, charter schools, and private schools, ensuring that every student and family has access to youth- and family-driven clinical and supportive services. She recognizes that successful partnerships between schools and community-based providers are essential to helping students thrive academically. Aisha holds a bachelor's degree in social work from Sacred Heart University and a master's degree in social work from Bridgewater State University. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her family.

in Brockton, where she lives with her husband, three children, and their dog, Louie. In her free time, Aisha loves exploring diverse music genres, Haitian compa dancing, and traveling.

**David Bjorklund**, LICSW, is the School-Based Behavioral Health Lead at Hilltown Community Health Center (HCHC). HCHC is a Federally Qualified Health Center nestled in the rural foothills, or “hilltowns,” of the Berkshire Mountains. Prior to his clinical work, David worked as Camp Director at YMCA Camp Hi-Rock, where he worked with children, families, and groups to support their growth through experiential education in a wilderness setting. David entered the MSW program at Westfield State University (WSU) and was accepted into the Interdisciplinary Behavioral Health Collaboration (IBHC) Fellowship. Through this fellowship, David learned more about Integrated Health Care and was introduced to the concept of school-based health centers. This was a transformative moment in his education, and he decided then that he would work in school-based health care. In 2019 David began working at Hilltown Community Health Center where he focused on school-based health, health equity, and transgender youth health.

David has clinical interests in healthcare workers' vicarious trauma and preventing burnout. He is an adjunct faculty member at Westfield State University's Master of Social Work program, where he received his MSW in 2018. David has continued working with WSU, conducting research on the experience of MSW students in integrated field placements with the intention of improving their educational experience.

**Lydia Conley**, JD, became President/CEO for the Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH) on July 1, 2019. As President/CEO, Lydia is responsible for setting the strategic direction of ABH in consultation with the Board of Directors. Lydia oversees the daily operations of ABH while also serving as ABH's primary representative to state agencies, the legislature, and regulatory bodies. In this role, Lydia works closely with ABH member organizations to accomplish ABH's mission in promoting and advocating for community-based mental health and addiction treatment services.

Lydia served as ABH's Vice President for Mental Health from 2014 - 2019 prior to becoming President/CEO, holding primary responsibility at ABH for oversight of managed care issues. Lydia led ABH's work in relation to MassHealth's implementation of its Delivery System Reform Incentive Program (DSRIP) during this period. Lydia also was ABH's point person working with the Department of Mental Health as it designed and implemented the Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) program.

Prior to joining ABH, Lydia served in a number of leadership roles at the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, most recently as Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Programs, and External Relations. In this role, she engaged in public program and policy development on a range of issues affecting low-income individuals and families. Earlier in her career, she worked at ABH's predecessor organization from 2000 - 2008 first as a Program Specialist and eventually as Vice President for Public Policy, providing support on legislative, billing, and children's issues. She also worked in the Massachusetts Legislature for three years as a legislative aide to the House Vice-Chair of the Health Care Committee. Lydia holds a juris doctor degree from New England School of Law and is a member of the Massachusetts bar.

**Karen Darcy** is currently the Massachusetts Philanthropic Advisor for the Charles F. and Beatrice D. Adams Charitable Trust. The Adams Trust's focus in Massachusetts is Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health. The Adams Trust has a long history of funding innovations targeting the mental health and well being of children and youth. School behavioral health, support for children in foster care, systems reforms, and arts therapy are among their priorities.

Prior to her role with the Adams Trust, Karen was the Director of Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Policy in the Office of Government Relations at Boston Children's Hospital. Karen was one of the founding leaders of the Children's Mental Health Campaign in 2006. Under her leadership, the team had early and key legislative successes providing legal protections and supports for children and youth with behavioral health challenges.

**Shella Dennerly**, PhD, LICSW, is the Director of the Boston Children's Hospital Neighborhood Partnerships Program (BCHNP), a school-based behavioral health program in the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. Dennerly directs a comprehensive program in partnership with the Boston Public Schools. The program provides equitable and culturally responsive behavioral health services and supports to students and families in their educational home. The program also provides professional development and consultation locally and nationally to educators, school staff, behavioral health professionals, and administrators focused on social and emotional wellness, and behavioral health.

Dr. Dennerly has spent her career working in the field of school-based behavioral health and teaching and consulting on behavioral health-related topics in community settings. She partners with the Children's Mental Health Campaign to advocate for increased access to care and systemic change in behavioral healthcare for students across Massachusetts. Dr. Dennerly is adjunct faculty in Social Work at Boston College and is a Lecturer of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

**Bri Dewalt**, CAPM, is the Program Manager for the MA School-Based Telebehavioral Health Program at The Brookline Center for Community Mental Health. Bri started as a Project Coordinator in January 2022, filling in the project management function of the team. Bri became a Certified Associate Project Manager through the Project Management Institute in August 2023. In July 2024, she was promoted to Program Manager taking over the day-to-day management of the program and the team. They graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English (with a minor in gender studies) from Suffolk University in 2016 and completed the William James Behavioral Health Service Corps program in 2023. She has experience in data analysis (2017-2019) and production coordination in international education (2019-2021). As a member of the queer community, they hope to highlight the needs of this at-risk group of youth while serving the MA School-Based Telebehavioral Health Program.

**Brooke Doyle**, MEd, was appointed Commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) in October 2020. A Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), Commissioner Doyle has both clinical and management experience. She is a long-time champion for mental health parity and improving access to mental health treatment, and she is committed to addressing healthcare equity. Commissioner Doyle's previous experience in the fields of homelessness and substance use conditions is critical in ongoing efforts to reduce barriers to service access.

Previously, Commissioner Doyle served as Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health Services, where she oversaw DMH's adult service delivery system, led inter-agency planning and projects, and provided administrative and clinical leadership for all aspects of DMH statewide service compliance monitoring. Commissioner Doyle is an alumna of the University of Massachusetts.

**Robbie Goldstein**, MD, PhD, was appointed Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) by Governor Maura Healey in April 2023. A physician specializing in infectious diseases, Dr. Goldstein oversees a workforce of more than 3,200 individuals committed to health equity and dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of people across the state, preventing illness and

injury, and maintaining strong and vibrant communities. This work is carried out through a network of bureaus and offices responsible for priorities that include maternal and child health, nutrition, infectious diseases, injury prevention, climate and environmental health, substance use conditions, emergency preparedness and response, and problem gambling. DPH also licenses health professionals and health care facilities and operates the state public health laboratory and four public health hospitals.

Dr. Goldstein previously served as Senior Policy Advisor at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where he focused on public health emergency response, infectious diseases, and strategic policy initiatives. Prior to his work at CDC, he founded and was Medical Director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Transgender Health Program, a clinical resource offering a safe and affirming environment for the transgender and nonbinary community. His clinical interest involved caring for those living with and at risk for HIV, an experience that continues to drive his passion to identify and eliminate barriers to equitable access to care. Dr. Goldstein is a graduate of Tufts University, where he also earned his MD and PhD.

**Jordan G. Hampton**, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC, Nurse Practitioner, was born on Long Island, NY. After spending several years in London and Paris as a child, she returned to Long Island where she attended high school in Port Washington. Always interested in other cultures, Jordan majored in French and Spanish at Williams College, spending summers working and traveling abroad. Her first job after college was teaching French at TASIS, an American boarding school in Switzerland. From there, she taught for 7 years at Harvard-Westlake School in Los Angeles. She taught French and Spanish, but quickly realized that what she loved about working with teens was talking to them about their lives outside of academics. Jordan wrote the curriculum for and taught most sections of the 10th grade health classes, started a peer counseling program, and was named Assistant Dean of the Senior Class. While teaching, Jordan attended evening classes and received a master's degree in education with a concentration in Counseling and Guidance from California Lutheran University.

When Jordan heard about School-Based Health Centers, she knew that would be the perfect setting for her to use her skills to help young people. She attended Yale School of Nursing to become a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP) and received a master's degree in nursing in 1998. Her first job as a PNP was running a school-based health center at Hillhouse High School in New Haven, CT. In March of 2000, she began working for MGH Chelsea, running the School-Based Health Center (SBHC) at Chelsea High School (CHS). In that role, Jordan provides comprehensive primary care for CHS students, focusing in the areas of sexual health, behavioral health, and substance use to support students in maximizing their education and achieving their potential.

**Katherine Houle**, LICSW, is Director of District and School Support at bryt, where she has worked for the last nineteen years. bryt is a program of The Brookline Center for Community Mental Health and provides tools and resources, professional learning opportunities, and technical support to schools implementing the bryt Tier 3 intervention. Katherine spent the first six years of her time with bryt as the clinical coordinator of the Brookline High School bryt intervention. In this role, she worked directly with students and families to provide them with intensive support during a period of critical need and in close collaboration with the wider school staff.

For the last thirteen years, Katherine has been supporting schools across Massachusetts and beyond in developing and continuously improving bryt-model interventions and has seen the bryt network grow to 280 schools. Katherine appreciates the opportunity to learn from each school that she works with and

has a deep commitment to helping schools increase their capacity to support the mental health needs of their students and, in particular, their most vulnerable populations.

**Russell D. Johnston**, PhD, became Acting Commissioner of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on March 16, 2024. He was previously a Deputy Commissioner, a role in which he oversaw special education, instructional support, and a variety of initiatives to identify interventions and monitor improvement. Since joining the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in 2014, Acting Commissioner Johnston's work has included leading the team that provides direct support to the Lawrence, Holyoke, and Southbridge schools; working closely with school districts on a variety of COVID-19 mitigation measures that helped keep students in school; meeting regularly with special education stakeholders to improve services to students with disabilities before, during, and after the pandemic; helping to pass policies that led to a reduction in the use of restraints and increased public reporting of their use; collaborating on improvements to the Individualized Education Program process for students with disabilities; and providing leadership to the instructional support staff who work to strengthen teaching and learning for all students.

Acting Commissioner Johnston's previous positions include serving as Superintendent of the West Springfield Public Schools, Special Education Director for West Springfield, and head of the Elementary Special Education Department for the Wellesley Public Schools. Acting Commissioner Johnston lives in Melrose with his family and holds a bachelor's degree in education from DePaul University in Chicago, a master's degree in education from Boston College, and a doctorate in philosophy and education, also from Boston College.

**Cheryl Marino-Page** has been supporting families, parents, and caregivers since 2007, when she became one of the Commonwealth's first Care Partners in a UMass Medical School pilot program providing "wraparound" services for families of children with behavioral health needs who entered the juvenile court system. Since then, she has continued delivering the wraparound method of care as a Family Partner and supervisor with the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI). She serves as a family trainer on issues ranging from navigating the juvenile justice system to self-care, and as a critical member of a mobile crisis team. In all these roles, Cheryl has drawn on her own lived experience as the parent of three daughters and former guardian of a grandchild, using her story to guide and educate caregivers who are accessing support from state agencies, special education, and the behavioral health systems, empowering them to advocate effectively for themselves and their children.

In her current role as a Family Partner at Riverside Community Care, Cheryl supports families whose children receive school-based services under a pilot grant program designed to facilitate timely behavioral health urgent care for students. She focuses on family strengths and their cultures when coaching and modeling for caregivers to find and use their voices when navigating school and behavioral health services. Cheryl's own journey inspired her to pursue work that allowed her to offer hope and support to other families traveling a similar road. Cheryl holds an associate's degree from Newbury College and a bachelor's degree from Framingham State University. She has also worked as a social worker, Community Health Worker, and paralegal.

**Danna Mauch**, PhD, is President and CEO of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health (MAMH). Dr. Mauch brings to this position organizational leadership, operations management, evaluation research and strategic consulting experience gained in private and public sector enterprises. Her prior service in the private sector includes ten years as Senior Fellow/Principal Associate at Abt Associates, Inc. She worked on behalf of foundations and governments and provided policy, evaluation, and implementation

assistance addressing insurance, service delivery, and financing reforms targeted to individuals with complex health risks and disabling health conditions. Skilled in linking large data sets to advance accountability, clinical, and cost improvements, Dr. Mauch contributed to designing system solutions for government clients' compliance with legal and regulatory reforms. Prior to joining Abt, Dr. Mauch was Chief Administrative Officer for Comprehensive NeuroScience, Inc., Founding President and Chief Executive Officer for Magellan Public Solutions, Inc., and Founder and President of Integrated Health Strategies, Inc.

Dr. Mauch has a long career in public service. She serves as Court Monitor for the U.S. District Court of Western Washington, addressing forensic services reforms at the junction of the health, disability, and justice systems. Her prior service includes Special Master for the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia; Executive Director of the Rhode Island Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals; and Assistant Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, overseeing the Divisions of Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Forensic Medicine. Her population-focused work addresses a broad range of at-risk and vulnerable groups of children, adults, and older adults, including persons with autism spectrum disorders, behavioral health conditions, HIV/AIDS, multiple chronic conditions, criminal justice involvement, military and veteran status, and homelessness. She is a published author of government and foundation reports, book chapters, and journal articles on the organization, financing, and delivery of care to vulnerable populations. She has served as a volunteer officer of several governing boards, including a regional healthcare conversion foundation, a national youth development and prevention organization, an urban elementary and middle school, and state healthcare reform initiatives. Dr. Mauch holds a PhD in Social Policy from the Heller School at Brandeis University.

**Joan Mikula** serves as a Senior Consultant to the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health (MAMH), providing consultation regarding the effective delivery of youth mental health services and leading technical support for grantees providing behavioral health urgent care through partnerships between Community Behavioral Health Centers and schools. Joan's creativity, passion, and tireless advocacy for those who are often marginalized shaped her philosophy and a career marked by innovation and achievement. Early on she taught children with special needs, counseled young adults with co-occurring substance use conditions and mental health challenges, led efforts to provide opportunities for youth in the criminal justice system to thrive in communities, and assumed leadership roles in not-for-profit agencies in both Philadelphia and in Massachusetts.

Joan joined the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH), where she spent 30 years as Deputy Commissioner for Child/Youth and Family Services before serving as DMH Commissioner for five years. Through each of her varied roles, her belief in the power of individuals to grow and change never wavered and was a driving force during her 35 years at DMH. Since her retirement in 2020, Joan is an active and engaged volunteer in her community working on a range of issues.

**Jhianina Montes Rivera** is originally from Puerto Rico and serves the Hispanic community, helping families overcome cultural and language barriers to services and connecting them with resources, information, and tools to avoid isolation that these barriers can cause. She has been a crucial part of Behavioral Health Network (BHN) since 2017, when she provided administrative assistance while also accessing services for her daughter. In June 2018, she became a Family Partner, using her own experience and knowledge to guide, educate, model, and coach families on how to explore the diversity of raising a child with special needs.



Currently, Jhianina works both as a Family Partner with the wraparound process and as a School Family Support Navigator in the school system. In her role as School Family Support Navigator, Jhianina helps families feel supported and not judged while their children are facing difficult times in school related to behavioral concerns. Jhianina provides parents with emotional support, self-care, and educational resources, and she helps walk them to a better understanding on school systems. Jhianina's own experiences as a parent of a special need child led her to become knowledgeable in resources available in the community and motivates her to share her expertise with others. Jhianina has an associate's degree in theater and respiratory therapy.

**Vanessa Nason**, LCSW, is a clinical social worker at Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA). In addition to providing individual and group therapy in a school-based health center, Vanessa has helped implement innovative interventions at Somerville High School through her role with the Pediatric Behavioral Health Urgent Care grant, which aims to provide early intervention for emerging mental health concerns, ultimately reducing suspensions, expulsions, and class avoidance, as well as bridge communication between school staff and CHA to provide continuity of care. Vanessa also provides crisis assessments at CHA's behavioral health urgent care center. Vanessa received her MSW from Simmons University, where she completed internships with the Boston Emergency Services Team and Dearborn STEP, a 45-day therapeutic educational program.

**Claudia Ortiz** is a dedicated family support specialist at Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) and primarily works on the Pediatric Behavioral Health Urgent Care team at Somerville High School. Claudia began her career after earning her certification as a medical assistant from the Bryman Institute. For over 23 years, she served as both a certified medical assistant and receptionist at three of CHA's school-based health centers. Her years there provided extensive hands-on experience and deep community connections that continue to inform her work today. Motivated by a desire to make a broader impact, Claudia transitioned into her role as a family support specialist, where she is passionate about assisting families with behavioral health needs, helping them to access resources, navigate the different systems, and advocate for their children.

**Melanie Rice**, MA, joined the MA School-Based Telebehavioral Health team at The Brookline Center for Community Mental Health as the training and technical assistance specialist in May 2022. She holds a MA in Psychology with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Antioch University Seattle and a BA in Psychology from Clark University. Her past work includes research and event coordination, grant management, user experience design/user interface design (UX/UI), and education. She is passionate about increasing youth access to mental health support, social-emotional learning programs, and prioritizing communities' needs.

**Ellie Richards**, PhD, is a child and adolescent psychologist and serves as the team lead for school-based mental health at Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA). Dr. Richards specializes in providing care to high-risk adolescents, particularly those who are multi-system involved. She provides consultation and professional development to several school districts, has helped to launch an urgent care service at Somerville High School, and co-leads a NIMH-funded research project on stress and coping among high school students. Dr. Richards is also an active member of the Cambridge Police Department's Safety Net Collaborative, a community partnership to prevent and reduce juvenile delinquent behaviors through case consultation, collaboration, and connection to services and supports.

Dr. Richards is a graduate of Boston University and trained at CHA, where she completed both her internship in school-based mental health and pediatric primary care as well as her postdoctoral

fellowship in adolescent risk assessment and violence prevention. She received her bachelor's degree from University of Virginia and her master's in counseling from Loyola University Maryland.

**Lee Robinson**, MD, is a passionate and committed leader in public sector behavioral health. Dr. Robinson is a trained and practicing child and adult psychiatrist who held clinical, academic, and administrative leadership roles before joining MassHealth in January of 2022. In his current role as Associate Chief for Behavioral Health, Dr. Robinson oversees behavioral health policy development and implementation for MassHealth. Dr. Robinson graduated with a BA from Washington University in St. Louis and received his MD from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. Dr. Robinson completed training in general psychiatry at Columbia University-New York Presbyterian Hospital in New York, NY and completed his child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship training at Cambridge Health Alliance in Cambridge, MA.

**Katharine Tyler**, LMHC, is an Assistant Vice President in the Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Division at Riverside Community Care. Katie has been in non-profit leadership for over ten years. She has experience expanding adult programs in the areas of substance use, domestic violence, and human trafficking, and she enjoys finding creative solutions to increase impact. At Riverside, Katie works to identify gaps in programming, enhance quality, and improve systems of care throughout the BHS division. Outside of work, she loves to debate the quality of the latest book club read and cheer on her kids at their soccer and gymnastics events.

**Sara Whitcomb**, PhD, is Associate Director of Research and Evaluation of the Boston Children's Neighborhood Partnerships Program. In this role, she leads research and evaluation efforts conducted in partnership schools, with a focus on school-based behavioral health. Prior to this role, Dr. Whitcomb was a Professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Department of Student Development, College of Education. Her research and clinical interests were in mental health promotion and positive behavioral support systems in schools, social-emotional learning, and behavioral and instructional consultation. Dr. Whitcomb was the program director and taught courses in social-emotional and behavioral assessment and consultation. In addition, Dr. Whitcomb coordinated and supervised the third- and fourth-year practicum. Dr. Whitcomb received her doctoral degree from the University of Oregon's APA-accredited program in school psychology in 2009. She completed her predoctoral APA/APPIC accredited internship at the May Institute and her postdoctoral fellowship at UMass' Psychological Services Center.