



# UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Child Advocacy Center APRIL 3, 2025 and APRIL 4, 2025

## **The Pittsburgh Child Advocacy Center Mission**

At the Child Advocacy Center at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, it is our mission to protect children and promote healthy families. We strive to accomplish this mission by adhering to standards of excellence in assessment of child maltreatment and in medical care of vulnerable children. We also work in collaboration with and in support of the efforts of other child protection professionals, by providing acute and primary medical care, case management, medical consultations, court testimony and SCAN and multidisciplinary team meetings.

### **Conference Goals**

- To provide information and skill-building for Child Protection/Welfare Professionals and those concerned about the well-being of our children
- To provide a forum for sharing information by national and local experts
- To provide an opportunity for inter-agency staff networking

### **Target Audience**

All individuals who touch the lives of maltreated children to include but not limited to Physicians, Advanced Practice Practitioners, Nurses, Allied Health Care Workers, Social Workers, Child Protective Services, Councilors, Advocates, Case Workers, Law Enforcement, Attorneys and Judges

## **Conference Registration Information**

**Registration will be completed online**

**at**

**<https://cvent.me/X7Av7a>**

## **Registration FEES**

### **Two-Day Registration April 3-4, 2025**

**Early Registration Fee by 3/1/25 \$275.00**

**Registration Fee After 3/1/25 \$325.00**

### **One-Day Registration- April 3, 2025 Thursday OR April 4, 2025 Friday**

**Early Registration Fee by 3/1/24 \$200.00**

**Registration Fee After 3/1/24 \$250.00**

**All payments must be received prior to the conference in order to attend unless special arrangements are made with Naama Balass at [balassn3@upmc.edu](mailto:balassn3@upmc.edu) or 412-692-8338**

## **Continuing Education Units/Co-Sponsorship**

### **CONTINUING LAW ENFORCEMENT EDUCATION (CLEE)**

This program is approved for 11 CLEE credits by the MUNICIPAL POLICE OFFICERS' EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMISSION. It is the responsibility of police chiefs or their designee to data enter MPOETC-approved CLEE courses into their officers' training records within the web-based Training and Certification System (TACS). A certification of completion will be issued with approved CLEE course information at the conclusion of the conference.

### **Continuing Legal Education (CLE)**

This program will be offered for CLE credit (5.5 hours for 4/3/2025 [including 1.0 hr. of ETHICS] and 6 hours for 4/4/2025 for a possible total of 11 hours). Conference participants will complete a credit request form and submit it along with payment to Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board to receive their credit hours. The total payment due for all will be on forms. Forms will be available at the conference when participants sign in for hours.

### **CME Accreditation and Designation Statement**

In support of improving patient care, the University of Pittsburgh is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

#### **Physician (CME)**

The University of Pittsburgh designates this live activity for a maximum of 11 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

#### **Nursing (CNE)**

The maximum number of hours awarded for this Continuing Nursing Education activity is 11 contact hours.

#### **Physician Assistant (AAPA)**

The University of Pittsburgh has been authorized by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA) to award AAPA Category 1 CME credit for activities planned in accordance with AAPA CME Criteria. This activity is designated for 11 AAPA Category 1 CME credits. PAs should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation.

#### **Social Work**

As a Jointly Accredited Organization, University of Pittsburgh is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Organizations, not individual courses, are approved under this program. State and provincial regulatory boards have the final authority to determine whether an individual course may be accepted for continuing education credit. University of Pittsburgh maintains responsibility for this course. Social workers completing this course receive 11 continuing education credits.

Other health care professionals will receive a certificate of attendance confirming the number of contact hours commensurate with the extent of participation in this activity.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr. Barbara Knox, MD, FAAP is a Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Florida College of Medicine in Jacksonville and a Child Protection Team physician for the University of Florida First Coast Child Protection Team. She is Chief of the Division of Child Protection and Forensic Pediatrics and the Fellowship Director for the Child Abuse Pediatrics Fellowship and Associate Fellowship Director for the Child Abuse Pediatrics/Pediatric Emergency Medicine Fellowship. Dr. Knox received her medical degree from the University of Wisconsin. She completed a residency in General Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. She then completed a fellowship in Child Abuse Pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Knox is board certified in both General Pediatrics and Child Abuse Pediatrics. Dr. Knox has been working in the field of child abuse for 20 years. She has consulted with the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit III in Quantico, Virginia regarding violent crimes against children for many years. Areas of research interest for Dr. Knox include child physical/psychological torture as a form of child abuse and sexual torture as a form of child abuse. Dr. Knox was the lead author on the 2014 seminal research and publication on Child Torture as a Form of Child Abuse. Dr. Knox has published on many topics in child maltreatment, including child torture as a form of child abuse, burns of abuse, abusive head trauma, and is currently conducting research with the FBI's BAU III on various aspects of child torture. Dr. Knox is recognized nationally and internationally for her work in child abuse and child maltreatment prevention.



Dr. Elizabeth Zona is a double board-certified physician, specializing in both Anesthesiology and Addiction Medicine. She is a medical director for Anesthesiology at Three Rivers Endoscopy Center and Medical Director for Addiction Medicine Services at Laurel Care Treatment Center, both in the Coraopolis, PA area. She earned a BS in Pre-Medicine with Honors in Chemistry from Penn State's Eberly College of Science in 2002. She earned her medical degree from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2006. After completing an additional 4 years of residency training at UPMC-Mercy she became board certified in Anesthesiology in 2011 and has been a practicing anesthesiologist for over 13 years. In 2016, after losing a friend to opioid overdose, Dr. Zona decided to take on the additional education and training in Addiction Medicine and became board certified in 2019. She has been active with addiction prevention efforts and treatment, while advocating for those in recovery, for over 6 years now. She is happy to speak further about medical school, the fentanyl epidemic, the dangers of counterfeit pills, alcoholism, nicotine dependence and more. Please feel free to connect with her on INSTAGRAM or TikTok, @addictiontokdok.



Mr. Mandeep Gill was Head of Service for screening and investigations of child abuse and neglect in London's borough of Croydon, which has the largest population of children and youth in the city. Mr. Gill has headed each of the major aspects of local child protective services in the United Kingdom, including investigations and assessments, child placement and protection, prevention and other services to families, and adoption/ permanency. Mr. Gill was educated as a social worker and also earned a Certificate in Law and an Executive MBA. Mr. Gill cares about running a quality system for children and families.



Mr. Bruce Noel oversees the operation of the Intake Office in Allegheny County Children, Youth and Families. Mr. Noel participates in the multidisciplinary review of child fatality and near fatality reports. Mr. Noel has been involved in community education on recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. Mr. Noel is a trainer with the PA Academy of Pediatrics for Educating Physicians in The Community Program. Mr. Noel is a licensed social worker with a Master of Social Work Degree from the University of Pittsburgh.

## **Schedule of Events**

### **Thursday, April 3, 2025**

8:30–9:00 AM	Registration and Continental Breakfast, Exhibits and Posters
9:00-9:30 AM	Opening Address - Dr. Michelle Clayton
9:30-10:30 AM	Ethics - A Panel Discussion
<i>10:30-10:40 AM</i>	<i>BREAK, Exhibits and Posters</i>
10:40-11:00 AM	Awards - Champion of Hope and Healing
11 AM	Lunch (provided) – <i>available during keynote address</i>
11:15 AM-12:15 PM	Keynote address: Child Torture as a Form of Child Abuse – Dr. Barbara Knox
<i>12:15 PM-12:30 PM</i>	<i>BREAK - Exhibits and posters</i>
12:30-1:30 PM	Workshop I
<i>1:30-1:45 PM</i>	<i>BREAK - Exhibits and posters</i>
1:45-2:45 PM	Workshop II
<i>2:45 PM-3:00 PM</i>	<i>BREAK - Exhibits and posters</i>
3:00-4:00 PM	Workshop III
4:00 PM	Adjournment

### **Friday, April 4, 2025**

8:30-9:00 AM	Registration and Continental Breakfast
9:00-10:00 AM	Keynote address: Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse – Implicit Bias leading to Disproportionality – Mandeep Gill & Bruce Noel
10:10-11:10 AM	Keynote address: Street drugs - trends, bends, and dangers – Dr. Elizabeth Zona
<i>11:10-11:30 AM</i>	<i>BREAK - Exhibits and posters, pick up lunch (provided)</i>
11:30-12:30 PM	Workshop IV
<i>12:30-12:40 PM</i>	<i>BREAK – Exhibits and posters</i>
12:40-1:40 PM	Workshop V
<i>1:40 – 1:50 PM</i>	<i>BREAK – Exhibits and posters</i>
1:50-2:50 PM	Workshop VI
<i>2:50-3:00 PM</i>	<i>BREAK - Exhibits and Posters</i>

3:00-4:00 PM

Workshop VII

4:00 PM

Adjournment

<b><u>Presentation Summaries and Objectives</u></b>
<b>Thursday, April 3, 2025</b>
<b>9:00 AM- 4:00 PM</b>

<b>Opening Address</b>	<b>9:00- 9:30 AM</b>
------------------------	----------------------

<b>Presenter: Michelle Clayton, MD, MPH</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
Dr. Clayton will provide an update on the state of the Child Advocacy Center and update on programs and new ideas.	

<b>Ethics Panel: Bias in reporting, investigations and interventions as it relates to family backgrounds, socioeconomic stability and/or family choices</b>	<b>9:30- 10:30 AM</b>
---	-----------------------

<b>Presenters: Jennifer Wolford, DO, MPH, Michelle Clayton, MD, MPH, Victoria Filingeri, MSW, Sheila Hahner, MSN, RN, Wanda Beasley, MSW, and Genafie McKnight, MSW, LCSW</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
---	---------------------

**Description:** This ethics panel will explore the challenges of individual and systemic bias in reporting, intervention practices and investigations of child maltreatment. Additionally, the panel will discuss associated bias when considering child neglect in the context of poverty. Participants will listen and be able to participate in this conversation between ethicists, physicians and child welfare professionals.

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Increase understanding of how implicit bias may affect outcomes and how participants can make efforts to mitigate these biases when identified.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Consider one's own attitudes when child health or environment are different than personal preferences or benchmarks of society norms vs neglect of child's needs.

<b>Champion of Hope and Healing Presentation</b> No CME credit Awarded	<b>10:40-11:00 AM</b>
--	-----------------------

<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Child Torture as a Form of Child Abuse</b>	<b>11:00- 12:00 PM</b>
--	------------------------

<b>Presenter: Barbara Knox, MD, FAAP</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
--	---------------------

**Description:** A multidisciplinary approach is crucial in the success of a child torture assessment. This interactive session will serve to educate the multidisciplinary team on the recognition, diagnosis, and treatment of child torture as well as discuss offender dynamics. The presentation will highlight the common medical features of child torture and its unique differences from traditional child maltreatment. Interviews and digital evidence will assist in addressing best practices.

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Apply knowledge of key concepts for recognizing the physical and psychological aspects of child torture as a form of child abuse.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Understand how to use and apply the Common Elements of Child Torture as a Form of Child Abuse checklist as a tool for enhanced recognition and response to cases.
	3. Learn important elements of child victim and witness histories and interviews and demonstrate how to apply this knowledge to cases.

<b>Workshop Session I • 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM</b>
---

<b>1A. The Humanity of Our Approach to the Prevention and Treatment of Child Maltreatment Matters</b>
---

<b>Presenter: Pat J. Bruno, MD, FAAP</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
--	---------------------

**Description:** A more holistic and robust multigenerational, multidisciplinary approach to evaluating and treating victims of child maltreatment and their caregivers is needed. We all must collectively work together in an upstream approach to humanely evaluate and treat victims of child maltreatment. The GROW (Gaining Resilience and Obtaining Wellness) Initiative would bring together specialists to meet children and families where they are and help them lead healthier lives.

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Recognize that a more holistic and robust multigenerational, multidisciplinary approach to evaluating and treating victims of child maltreatment and their caregivers is needed
<b>60 min</b>	2. Learn about the GROW (Gaining Resilience and Obtaining Wellness) perspective, which brings together specialists to meet children and families where they are and help them lead healthier lives 3. Understand that an upstream humane approach is necessary to prevent child maltreatment
<b>1B. Alleviating long-term adverse effects driven from traumatic experiences</b>	
<b>Presenter: Genafie McKnight, MSW, LCSW</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Information will be provided about treatment approaches that help to alleviate long term adverse effects rooted in maltreatment and trauma. This session will also provide additional approaches about methods to implement when serving children and families who have experienced various forms of trauma and maltreatment.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Learn about trauma, maltreatment, and long-term adverse effects
<b>60 min</b>	2. Review EMDR and other mental health treatment approaches for children experiencing trauma 3. Learn about methods which professionals can implement to best serve children and families who have experienced different forms of trauma and maltreatment
<b>1C. Substance use disorder and child welfare work</b>	
<b>Presenter: RoseAnn Hill, MA, CAADC</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> This presentation is a discussion about the insidious disease of addiction with its complex effects on the brain and on the family as a whole. The need to normalize and get comfortable with education, prevention, and intervention will be highlighted, as this can aid recovery. The importance of checking biases and speaking out against stigma will be addressed. The ever-changing illicit drug supply will also be discussed.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Understand the Level of Care Assessment and various resources to connect people with services.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Understand how Harm Reduction, Contingency Management, and the toxicity of the current illicit drug supply affects vulnerable populations. 3. Identify levels of safety threats if a caregiver has addictive patterns which create unsafe situations.
<b>1D. Kids in the Courtroom</b>	
<b>Presenter: Lila Harris, JD</b>	
<i>Audience-ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Pennsylvania requires that kids come to court at least every six months, but how much should they participate in proceedings? We'll review issues related to children's testimony and representation, including the tender years exception, the best evidence rule, in camera examination, and the appointment of legal ('JKM') counsel. We'll discuss strategies for mitigating disruption and trauma when a child's participation is unavoidable. Attendees will role play real-life scenarios and discuss potential courses of action.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Understand PA law related to children's participation in and representation for dependency proceedings.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Develop strategies for presenting children's testimony/evidence involving children. 3. Examine real-life case scenarios and employ strategies to mitigate disruption and trauma.

## Workshop Session II • 1:45 PM to 2:45 PM

### 2A. Accidental or Intentional? Pediatric Burn Patterns and Care Strategies

**Presenter: Michele Buraczewski MSN, RN, CBRN**

*Audience-ALL*

**Description:** This presentation will discuss the assessment and management of pediatric burn patients. Pediatric burn cases will be shared for the audience to decide whether the burn was an accidental or non – accidental injury. Daily burn wound care and surgical management of burn wounds will also be discussed.

**Participants will be able to:**

**60 min**

1. Distinguish the different types of burn wounds in pediatric patients.
2. Identify burn wound treatment and surgical management of burn wounds.
3. Discuss the patterns of accidental vs. non-accidental burn injuries

<b>2B. Trauma Informed Approached for Frontline Providers</b>	
<b>Presenter: Alissa Klugh, MS, LPC</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
Description: Trauma-Informed Approaches for Frontline Providers is a brief training on understanding trauma, how to identify it, and how to approach clients who have a trauma history while being mindful of our role in their lives and care. This training will include psychoeducation on trauma, resourcing for providers on identifying and handling their own dysregulation, and how to approach clients who have experienced trauma in a way that is supportive to their care.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define Trauma and Trauma Informed Care</li> <li>2. Increase understanding of Trauma Informed Approaches in working with clients with trauma history.</li> <li>3. Apply Trauma Informed Practices with self and clients.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	
<b>2C. A Visit Can Save a Life: How CPS caseworkers can help decrease unsafe sleep</b>	
<b>Presenters: Devon George, MSN, RN and Rachel Berger, MD, MPH</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Presenters will deliver a targeted training to child protective services (CPS) about safe infant sleep and the opportunity to protect vulnerable infants that each home visit provides. The training includes discussion about current local and national rates of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), risk and protective factors for SUID, and strategies for assessing sleep practices. This training is part of a program funded by the PA Department of Human Services to help decrease unsafe safe sleep.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain why substance-exposed infants are at higher risk of sleep-related deaths and injuries.</li> <li>2. Assess a family’s knowledge and practice of safe sleep by using open-ended questions and other non-judgmental strategies.</li> <li>3. Determine a family’s unique needs and provide them with personalized resources to promote safe sleep.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	
<b>2D. Child Torture as Form of Child Abuse: A Guide for Recognition and Response</b>	
<b>Presenters: Joy Shelton and James Hardie</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Torture has traditionally been described in the context of politically motivated abuse. Torture of children in the familial context is a less studied phenomenon, with research focusing on legal or medical viewpoints. A front line professional's perspective will be discussed using the results of a recent FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit study of 42 offenders. Case examples will be presented.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define child torture as form of child abuse assisting in improved identification of these unique types of cases.</li> <li>2. Gain a better understanding of the types of torture and injuries commonly associated with CT victims.</li> <li>3. Receive a variety of investigative recommendations related to crime scene processing, child and adolescent forensic interviews, offender interview and prosecution.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

<b>Workshop Session III • 3:00 PM- 4:00 PM</b>	
<b>3A. Sentinel Injuries in Childhood and Infant Distress</b>	
<b>Presenter: Barbara L. Knox, MD, FAAP</b>	<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> This presentation will discuss the importance of sentinel injuries in infants and address how the literature transcends to field and clinical practice. Skin findings that suggest child physical abuse will be presented and learners will understand the importance of the TEN-4-FACES locations and research. This presentation will also review the medical workup employed in cases of child maltreatment and why this is needed.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognize the importance of sentinel injuries in infants</li> <li>2. Learn about cutaneous findings that suggest physical abuse</li> <li>3. Understand the importance of the TEN-4-FACES locations/research</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	



**3B. The impact of parental substance use on child outcomes: Insights from neurobiology, animal models, and clinical data**

<b>Presenter: Paul McPherson, MD</b>		<i>Audience-ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> We will discuss the neurobiology and neural chemistry of addiction, analyze animal models of parental neglect and their impact on offspring development, and examine the outcomes of children exposed to parental substance abuse. The session will also discuss potential interventions to mitigate the physical, emotional, and developmental consequences faced by these children.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the neurobiology and neural chemistry of addiction</li> <li>2. Analyze animal models of parental neglect and its impact on offspring development and outcomes</li> <li>3. Examine the outcomes of children exposed to parental substance abuse, including physical, emotional, and developmental consequences, and discuss potential interventions</li> </ol>	
<b>60 min</b>		

**3C. Mandating continued mental health and treatment oversight for juvenile sexual offenders at risk of re-offending: Navigating Act 21**

<b>Presenters: Eli Zlokas, Esq, and James Robertson</b>		<i>Audience- ALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> Act 21 provides a process for the civil commitment of juvenile sex offenders who are about to turn 21 but may still be in need of further treatment before they return to their community. This Act details the process by which juvenile sex offenders are committed to a program designed to provide specialized treatment. This session will present the Act, how and why Act 21 comes into play, the hurdles encountered when Act 21 is applied, and the lengthy process to satisfy its requirements.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify how a minor gets to Act 21</li> <li>2. Overview the work needed to avoid Act 21</li> <li>3. Summarize the steps needed to comply with Act 21</li> </ol>	
<b>60 min</b>		

**3D. Understanding Sadistic Online Exploitation (SOE): Behavioral Insights and Investigative Challenges**

<b>Presenters: Brianna Grant and Melissa Stormer, PsyD</b>		<i>AudienceALL</i>
<b>Description:</b> The FBI’s Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) has observed a rise in online child exploitation (CE) with sadistic elements. Sadistic Online Exploitation often involves a spectrum of abusive behaviors, including extortion, forced or coerced self-harm, production of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), animal cruelty, and harm to others. This presentation focuses on offender behaviors, characteristics, and comparisons with other CE offenders and examines victimology, the psychological impact on victims, disclosure barriers, and investigative considerations.		
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and explain common characteristics and behaviors of sadistic online exploitation offenders.</li> <li>2. Identify commonalities and differences between sadistic online exploitation offenders and other online child exploitation offenders.</li> <li>3. Describe victimology and the psychological and emotional impact on victims.</li> </ol>	
<b>60 min</b>		

<b>Friday, April 4, 2025</b>	
<b>9:00 AM to 4:00 PM</b>	
<b>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse – Intrinsic Bias Leading to Disproportionality</b>	<b>9:00- 10:00 AM</b>
<b>Presenter: Mandeep Gill and Bruce Noel, MSW</b>	<i>Audience- all</i>
<b>Description:</b> This session will overview mandated reporting, with a discussion regarding the influences affecting reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. The presentation will also explore how disproportionate outcomes can result for children and families when intrinsic bias goes unrecognized. Data analysis from Allegheny County will be incorporated for learning.	

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the legal obligation for Mandated Reporters to recognize and report child abuse.</li> <li>2. Recognize the influences that effect the how and when mandated reporters generate reports of suspected child abuse and neglect.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate an understanding of the disproportioned outcomes for children and families when intrinsic bias is not recognized and addressed.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Street drugs - trends, bends, and dangers** **10:10- 11:10 AM**

**Presenter: Elizabeth Zona, DO** *Audience- ALL*

**Description:** This presentation will cover street drugs, trends over last 30 years, what's new, what's dangerous, overview community and parent advocacy opportunities.

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define and examine the rapidly changing profile of street drugs</li> <li>2. Become more aware of different counterfeit drugs/medications</li> <li>3. Enhance knowledge of speaking to adolescents about these dangers</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

**Workshop IV • 11:30 -12:30 PM**

**4A. How to professionally document child maltreatment concerns in the medical record**

**Presenter: Ashleigh Welko, MD, MPH** *Audience-ALL*

**Description:** Documenting concerns for child maltreatment can be tricky, especially when parents/guardians have easy access to the electronic medical record and when the documentation is often used in court. This presentation will help in navigating those choppy waters. Attendees will be able to identify frequently used words and phrases that inadvertently convey bias; Attendees will also accumulate practical words and phrases they can use to communicate maltreatment concerns accurately but objectively.

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognize the psychosocial, medical, and legal importance of the accuracy of their documentation</li> <li>2. Identify the common words and phrases that can be perceived as biased for or against caregivers</li> <li>3. Discuss and share words, phrases, and other scripted language that may be used to convey maltreatment concerns in a professional and objective manner</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

**4B. You Have the Power to Save a Life: A Strength-Based Approach to Opioid Overdose Prevention**

**Presenters: Nicole Masters, PA-C & Cheyanne Neuenschwander, LSW** *Audience- ALL*

**Description:** As pediatric healthcare providers, we have a unique opportunity to address the opioid crisis by ensuring our patients have access to naloxone, a life-saving medication that can reverse opioid overdoses. This presentation explores a strength-based approach to opioid overdose prevention that focuses on empowering adolescents and their families. By emphasizing adolescents' potential to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities, we move away from fear-based strategies and instead build trust and resilience. Practical guidance for implementing universal naloxone distribution within pediatric care settings will be discussed, highlighting the importance of reducing stigma, enhancing accessibility, and supporting adolescents' role as advocates for safety and health in their communities. Together, we can transform how we approach opioid overdose prevention and give our patients the tools they need to save lives.

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the rationale for shifting from selective to universal naloxone distribution in pediatric healthcare settings to reduce stigma, enhance accessibility, and foster open discussions about substance use.</li> <li>2. Identify how to implement strategies that emphasize adolescents' strengths and empower them to act as advocates for the safety of themselves, their families, and their communities in the event of an opioid overdose.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

	3. Acquire practical skills and communication techniques to incorporate naloxone distribution into routine care, avoid fear-based messaging, and create nonjudgmental environments for patients and families.
<b>4C&amp; D. Recognizing and Combatting Child Sex Trafficking</b>	
<b>Presenters: Presenters: Summer Carroll, JD, and Jim Hindinger</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description: Description:</b> This session will teach participants how to recognize potential situations of child sex trafficking and provide an understanding of how they should respond. It will start with an overview of red flags and indicators participants may encounter in the field. It will detail best practices for law enforcement: collecting potential evidence, conducting trauma-informed interviewing and identifying corroborating evidence. It will provide an overview of the Pennsylvania human trafficking statute.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Identify red flags and indicators of child sex trafficking
<b>60 min</b>	2. Best practices for law enforcement in an investigation
	3. Overview of PA human trafficking statute and case study

<b>Workshop Session V • 12:40 PM to 1:40 PM</b>	
<b>5A. Pediatric Illicit Drug Exposure</b>	
<b>Presenters: Maria Antonucci, MD, Anthony Pizon, MD, and William Trautman, MD</b>	
<i>Audience-ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> This session will be an introduction to illicit drug exposure in pediatric population, review how urine testing reports positive results and include clinical case correlates to illustrate the common adverse events that follow these exposures.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Identify common signs and symptoms of ingestion/overdose.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Identify the types of illicit substances for which the Urine Drug Screening (UDS) and Comprehensive Urine Drug Screening (CUDS) screen and confirm with more specificity.
	3. Understand the general timeframe that drugs remain in a child's system and cause symptoms.
<b>5B. Answering the Need: Creating Walk-in Behavioral Health Access</b>	
<b>Presenter: Elizabeth Grandelis, PsyD, and Kristen Straka, DNP, RN, CPN, NEA-BC</b>	
<i>Audience-ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> This session will review the current crisis need of behavioral health services for children and teens, including review of recent national trends. Additionally, the session will provide an overview of behavioral health services and modalities to access care. Finally, the overview of the development of the walk in behavioral health clinic and early outcome data will be reviewed.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Identify factors contributing to the growing need for pediatric behavioral health services and access.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Discuss methods to access care including referral process for the region's walk in clinic.
	3. Review data of outcomes, needs and opportunities for further growth of day-of behavioral health walk-in clinic
<b>5C. Hello Baby: A Network to Strengthen Families with Newborns in Allegheny County</b>	
<b>Presenters: Amy Malen, MPP, and Angela Gresse</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> This presentation will first review the research around child welfare involvement for intimate partner violence survivors and their children. Then, it will provide best-practice guidelines for multidisciplinary clinicians around the complexities of when to file a report in the context of IPV and how to support survivors when a report is necessary.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Understand how data can be utilized provide more intensive supports to families who are at highest risk within a population-level approach
<b>60 min</b>	2. Understand how upstream approaches to support can help families before and ideally instead of waiting for crisis

	3. Acquire strategies for successful collaboration with community partners in supporting the complex care of families.
<b>5D. CE-CERT Model: Strategies to Restore Joy and Reduce Secondary Traumatic Stress and Burnout</b>	
<b>Presenters: Drew Krantz, PsyD, LPC, NCC, CATP</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Addressing and mitigating secondary traumatic stress and burnout continues to be essential for those in the helping fields. Components for Enhancing Career Experience and Reducing Trauma (CE-CERT) is a model developed by Dr. Brian Miller which is different from the traditional “self-care” model. The CE-CERT model focuses on an active approach and five skill domains that helpers can implement throughout their workday. Many CACs and MDIT partner agencies are implementing this model.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Summarize the five skill domains in the Components for Enhancing Career Experience and Reducing Trauma (CE-CERT)
<b>60 min</b>	2. Identify how to apply the CE-CERT skills in the workplace and practice initiation. 3. Compare and understand the differences between the CE-CERT model and traditional self-care approaches.

<b>Workshop Session VI • 1:50 PM to 2:50 PM</b>	
<b>6A. It’s not medical simplicity: A case-based exploration of medical child abuse and neglect in children with medical complexity</b>	
<b>Presenters: Matthew Valente, MD, and Amber Hoffman, MD, FAAP</b>	
<i>Audience-ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Children with medical complexity are particularly vulnerable to both overmedicalization and medical neglect due to the intensity of health care needs, frequency of care, and reliance on caregiver history. In this case-based lecture, Drs. Hoffman and Valente will review the bookends of maltreatment in this population with attention to helping community partners recognize maltreatment and communicate appropriate health care needs.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Differentiate between neglect and medical child abuse in children with complex health care needs
<b>60 min</b>	2. Utilize the medical record to guide conversations with medical providers about the needs of children in this population. 3. Identify potential consequences of unnecessary medical intervention or neglected follow up and care in children with medical complexity
<b>6B. Economic Justice Framework: Addressing financial abuse of adolescents</b>	
<b>Presenters: Shenoa Jamieson, CRNP</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Economic abuse is a deliberate pattern of control in which individuals interfere with their partner’s ability to acquire, use and maintain economic resources. The impact of economic abuse – sabotage, exploitation and control – have life-long impacts and could have devastating consequences for young people before they even begin their independent, adult lives. This session will explore how to talk to adolescents and young adults about economic abuse and implementation of economic justice.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Develop a basic understanding of Neurodivergence.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Identify Neurodivergence from a culturally sensitive approach. 3. Identify moments in the forensic interview process where DEI accommodations can be made to support neurodivergent clients.
<b>6C. Chaos Coordinator &amp; Related Results: A Workday for an Investigations Caseworker</b>	
<b>Presenters: Jason Ware and Nadine Artman</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> This session will review the basics of the approach to CPS and GPS investigations through the lens of county agency caseworkers. The timeline, CPSL requirements of each investigation, possible outcomes and next steps will be discussed. There will be learning opportunities about times to partner and provide information to CPS and how community members' cooperation is protected by CPSL.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Increase knowledge of types of child welfare evaluations and investigations, including necessary steps and terminology for required elements.

<b>60 min</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss ways to communicate professionally with county agency workers and the CPSL that outlines this cooperation.</li> <li>Learn, through examples, of how families may engage and benefit from interactions with county CPS agency.</li> <li>Increase understanding of the types of outcomes related to a CPS/GPS investigation.</li> </ol>
<b>6D. Homeland Security Pro Tips: For parents and other professionals to protect kids from exploitation</b>	
<b>Presenter: Brittany Liptak, MS, Candice Cooper, LMSW, and Travis Summer</b>	
<i>Audience - ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Project iGuardian is the in-person educational program of the Know2Protect campaign. Project iGuardian is led by Homeland Security Investigations. iGuardian discusses the threats of online activity, online exploitation, and sextortion. It uses local case examples and videos to illustrate online danger, as well as what to do if it happens in your home.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase recognition of insidious threatening online activity</li> <li>Recognize the warning signals of online exploitation and high-risk taking behavior</li> <li>Define sextortion and identify prevention strategies</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	

<b>Workshop Session VII • 3:00 PM- 4:00 PM</b>	
<b>7A. Maintaining a therapeutic alliance with families when you have to Childline</b>	
<b>Presenters: R. Maggie Whelan, MD, PhD, Emily O’Conly, and Kelly Foreman, LCSW</b>	
<i>Audience-ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> Filing a report with Child Protective Services about a patient/client, while necessary, can be very difficult. In many instances, this act can seriously harm the therapeutic relationship. In this presentation we will present general strategies as well as real-world examples of filing ChildLine Reports while maintaining the therapeutic alliance. We will include approaches from three different points of view - Family Peer, Therapist, and Physician.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide participants a brief overview of the Childline process, when to Childline, who must Childline.</li> <li>Present strategies for maintaining a therapeutic alliance through the Childline process from a Family Peer perspective.</li> <li>Present strategies for maintaining a therapeutic alliance through the Childline process from a Provider (Physician and Therapist) perspective</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	
<b>7B. Neurodivergence and the Forensic Interview Process</b>	
<b>Presenter: Jamie Mesar, MSW, and Aprilynn Artz, MS, LPC, NCC</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> The presenters will bring their experience of working in the Neurodivergent Community and facilitation together to examine ways the forensic interview process can be modified to support Neurodivergent clients. Participants will gain a basic understanding of neurodivergence and understand the community in a culturally appropriate manner. The presentation will then review each step of the forensic interview process and identify accommodations that can easily be made to make the process more inclusive.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a basic understanding of Neurodivergence.</li> <li>Identify Neurodivergence from a culturally sensitive approach.</li> <li>Identify moments in the forensic interview process where DEI accommodations can be made to support neurodivergent clients.</li> </ol>
<b>60 min</b>	
<b>7C. The Impact of High-Conflict Co-Parenting on Children</b>	
<b>Presenters: Amanda Taylor, LMFT, CCPT, and Stephanie Wijkstrom, MS, LPC, NBCC</b>	
<i>Audience- ALL</i>	
<b>Description:</b> This presentation explores how high-conflict co-parenting impacts children’s emotional, psychological, and developmental well-being. Attendees will learn about the behavioral and relational challenges children face, as well as the long-term effects of exposure to parental conflict. The session provides evidence-based strategies to reduce conflict, foster healthy communication, and support children’s resilience, equipping professionals to promote healthier family dynamics effectively.	

<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Learners will explore how high-conflict co-parenting impacts children's emotional well-being, including increased risks for anxiety, depression, and behavioral issues.
<b>60 min</b>	2. Learners will examine how exposure to parental conflict influences children's developmental milestones, social relationships, and academic performance. 3. Learners will gain practical tools and intervention strategies to help parents reduce conflict, foster healthy communication, and support children in navigating co-parenting dynamics.
<b>7D. Controversies in the diagnosis of Abusive Head Trauma: It's all in the media</b>	
<b>Presenters: Michelle Clayton, MD, MPH, and Jennifer DiGiovanni, JD</b>	<b>Audience- ALL</b>
<b>Description:</b> This is a discussion of the diagnosis of abusive head trauma, with exploration of the media controversies surrounding this diagnosis. Dr. Clayton and Ms. DiGiovanni will overview defense theories in head trauma cases and will discuss various strategies for court when a head trauma diagnosis is contested.	
<b>Participants will be able to:</b>	1. Understand the diagnostic approach to abusive head trauma
<b>60 min</b>	2. Recognize when medical conditions may mimic abusive head trauma 3. Understand the theories used to defend abusive head trauma cases, and how to counteract them

## Conference Location and Hotel Information



David Lawrence Convention Center  
1000 Fort Duquesne Blvd, Pittsburgh PA 15222  
412-565-6000

### HOTEL INFORMATION

**Hampton Inn & Suites Pittsburgh – Downtown**  
1247 Smallman St.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

**Room block:** UPMC 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Pittsburgh Conference  
**Available nights:** April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025  
**Last day to book:** Sunday, March 7, 2025  
**Price:** \$159 USD per night (plus tax)

**[Book your group rate for Child Maltreatment  
Conference 2025 Here](#)**

## Presenter Biographies

### **Maria Antonucci, MD**

**Assistant Professor, Pediatrics, Divisions of Emergency Medicine and Child Advocacy Center, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Dr. Antonucci is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and holds a joint appointment in the divisions of Emergency Medicine and Child Advocacy. She completed a BS degree in Neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh and completed her medical degree at Ross University School of Medicine. She completed her pediatrics residency at the University of Louisville, Kosair Children's Hospital, and pediatric emergency medicine fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. She has been practicing in Pittsburgh since finishing her fellowship in 2015.

### **Nadine Artman**

**Assessment County Caseworker, Westmoreland County Children's Bureau**

Nadine Artman serves as an Assessment County Caseworker 3 for Westmoreland County Children's Bureau. Nadine has been with the county for four years. Nadine holds a bachelor's degree in child and Family Studies from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Nadine enjoys being a dog mom of two golden retrievers and spending time with her nieces and nephews.

### **Aprilynn Artz, MS, LPC, NCC**

**President, Connection Counseling & Consultation Inc**

Aprilynn (April) Artz, LPC operates a private counseling and consultation practice; Connection Counseling & Consultation Inc. and she and her team provide (1) outpatient therapy (2) group therapy (3) adult autism assessments (4) inclusion consultation to the JCC of Greater Pgh and Hillel Academy (5) trainings on all things related to neurodivergence and autism. April is a licensed professional counselor (LPC) who earned her master's degree in professional counseling from Carlow University. April has been working with children and their families since 2001 in varying capacities. Her first experience in the helping profession began at Pressley Ridge in what was then called BHRS or wraparound. April worked for over 6 years as a Therapeutic Staff Support, Behavior Specialist Consultant and Mobile Therapist, and through that work, learned a tremendous amount about how to support children in their homes, schools, and communities. Working at Pressley Ridge helped April recognize she wanted to continue to help those who are neurodiverse, and so she then entered the Master of Counseling program at Carlow University. She has many years of experience related to designing curriculum for, and running, play-based and therapeutic social skills groups for children on the autism spectrum at both Pressley Ridge and The Watson Institute. She also worked for several years at WPIC's Merck Outpatient clinic where she conducted outpatient therapy, started social skills groups, and learned how to diagnose autism via the ADOS. For 10 years (2012-2021) she was the Director of Quest Camp in Pittsburgh. Quest Camp served youth ages 6-18 with invisible disabilities like ADHD, Autism, OCD, etc.

### **Wanda Beasley, MSW**

**Interim Assistant Director & Regional Office Director Central Regional Office, Children, Youth, & Families (CYF)**

With 18 years of experience in child welfare, Wanda E. Beasley is a conscientious and intentional leader who is deeply committed to improving the lives of children and families. In her role as Interim Assistant Director and Regional Office Director, Wanda provides strategic leadership to drive program effectiveness, foster positive outcomes, and ensure the highest standards of care and support for vulnerable populations. Known for her thoughtful decision-making and proactive approach, she consistently prioritizes the needs of those she serves while cultivating a collaborative and supportive work environment.

As an intentional leader, Wanda focuses on creating meaningful, sustainable change through careful planning, clear communication, and a commitment to professional development for staff and stakeholders alike. Their leadership is guided by a strong ethical foundation, a dedication to equity, and a relentless drive to empower communities. Outside of work, Wanda enjoys reading, spending time with their teenage son and fur buddy, Leo, and walking, finding peace and inspiration in the simplicity of nature.

### **Rachel Berger, MD, MPH**

**Medical Director, Office of Children, Youth, and Families, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services**

Rachel Berger, MD, MPH serves as the Medical Director for the PA Office of Children, Youth, and Families. She received her undergraduate degree in biochemistry from Harvard University and her MD from Columbia University. She completed



her pediatric internship and residency and a fellowship in general academic pediatrics at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and received a master’s in public health at the University of Pittsburgh. As child abuse pediatrician and Professor of Pediatrics, she also served as chief of the division of Child Advocacy at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh from 2013 until 2022. In addition to her clinical work evaluating children with concerns for abuse and neglect, she has spent over 20 years as a clinical researcher. Her research has focused on decreasing fatalities and near-fatalities in young children due to child maltreatment and unsafe sleep. Her child maltreatment research has focused on improving identification of suspected physical abuse using serum biomarkers, clinical decision rules and the electronic health record. Her work related to unsafe sleep has focused on improving consistent investigation and data collection and developing safe sleep education for high-risk populations. She led the Allegheny County Infant Child Death Review Committee from 2017-2022. Her research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Beckwith Institute, the Hillman Foundation and others. She has co-authored over 130 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters and was the first child abuse pediatrician to be elected to ASCI (American Society for Clinical Investigation). She has also been involved child abuse-related policy and served on the Pennsylvania Task Force for Child Protection, as the research lead for the Federal Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (CECANF) during the Obama administration and as a senior policy fellow for Casey Family Programs in 2019.

**Pat Bruno, MD, FAAP**

**Child Abuse Pediatrician, Geisinger Health System**

BS Biology - Juniata College - 1966 MS Physiology - Rutgers University - 1968 MD Penn State Hershey - 1972 Pediatric Residency - Ohio State University - 1972-75 Board Certified in General Pediatrics 1976-2024 Solo General Pediatric Practice - 1977-2004 Established Center for Child Protection at the Sunbury Community Hospital - 1988 Established Children's Advocacy Center at the Sunbury Community Hospital - 2003 Medical Director of the Children's Advocacy Center at the Sunbury Community Hospital -1988-2003 General Pediatric Practice - Geisinger Medical Center - 2004-2024 Child Abuse Pediatrician - Geisinger Medical Center - 2004-2024 Board Certified in Child Abuse Pediatrics - 2012-2024 Medical Director of the Children's Advocacy Center of the Geisinger Medical Center - 2004-2024 Director of the Division of Child Safety and Advocacy at the Janet Weis Children's Hospital of the Geisinger Health System - 2016-2024 Over 45 years of experience in General Pediatrics and Child Abuse Pediatrics Multiple national speaking engagements about Child Maltreatment - San Diego Children's Conference on Child Maltreatment twice; Shaken Baby Conference in Salt Lake City; Child Maltreatment Conference In Pittsburgh last year Multiple local and statewide lectures to physicians, medical students and residents about child maltreatment Multiple op/eds in newspapers relating to Pediatrics. Recently published a book entitled "How Can I Not? Reflections on a Life Evaluating and Treating Victims of Child Maltreatment." Work keeps me busy. But I do enjoy reading, writing, gardening, traveling, tennising, biking, hiking, restauranting, movieing, laughing, anything Italian, adventuring, sculpting large whimsical metal pieces.

**Michele Buraczewski MSN, RN, CBRN**

**Burn Programmatic Nurse Specialist, Burn Unit, UPMC Mercy Hospital**

Michele Buraczewski MSN, RN, CEN,CCRN,TCRN, CBRN is the Burn Programmatic Nurse Specialist for UPMC Mercy Burn Center. Michele has been a nurse for over 38 years with a background in emergency nursing and nursing education at UPMC Mercy. As the burn programmatic nurse specialist for the Burn Center, she interacts daily with the burn patients in the hospital as well as those in the outpatient setting. She frequently lectures on burn care to medical and nonmedical audiences including firefighters, pre-hospital providers, and community hospital providers. She is an ABLS instructor and national faculty member on training for ABLS. She has been an item writer for the Certified Burn Nurse test for the past 3 years. She is an active member of the nursing committee for the ABA (American Burn Association).

**Summer Carroll, JD**

**Assistant Chief Deputy Attorney General, Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General-Human Trafficking Section**

Assistant Chief Deputy Attorney General Summer Carroll is a 2007 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. While in law school, she realized she wanted to be a prosecutor, completing an externship at the Mecklenburg County District Attorney’s Office in Charlotte, NC. Upon graduation, she worked as an Assistant District Attorney in Allegheny County ultimately specializing in violent crimes (including homicides) committed with a firearm. In 2016, she joined the PA Office of Attorney General in the Medicaid Fraud Unit where she developed several cases against doctors for overprescribing opioids. She then moved to the Organized Crime Unit where she maintained a diverse case load including corrupt organizations, human trafficking, drug and gun trafficking, burglary rings, money laundering/financial crimes, and public corruption. Attorney General Michelle Henry started the Human Trafficking Section at the PA Office of Attorney General in

2024, and Summer moved to the section to continue her focus on anti-trafficking work. She continues to work her cases as organized crime investigations- working to build a case with as much corroborating evidence as possible to take the pressure off vulnerable human trafficking victims. In addition to handling state human trafficking cases throughout the Western region of PA, Summer is also cross designated as a Special Assistant United States Attorney for the Western District and has several pending federal cases as well.

**Michelle Clayton, MD, MPH**

**Chief, Division of Child Advocacy, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Dr. Michelle Clayton is a board-certified specialist in Child Abuse Pediatrics. She is the Division Director of Child Advocacy at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. She completed medical school at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and completed a residency in Pediatrics at Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS)/Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters (CHKD) in Norfolk, Virginia. Dr. Clayton completed a fellowship in Forensic Pediatrics (now called Child Abuse Pediatrics) at EVMS/CHKD. She is an Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and is a member of the AAP Section on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) and the Helper Society (an honorary society for doctors specializing in child abuse and neglect). She frequently lectures to medical, investigative, and judicial audiences about child abuse and neglect, and its consequences. Dr. Clayton has received awards recognizing her work on behalf of abused and neglected children. She has performed thousands of consultations regarding abused and neglected children, and frequently provides expert court testimony.

**Candice Cooper, LMSW**

**Victim Assistance Program Specialist, Homeland Security Investigations**

Candice is a Victim Assistance Program Specialist with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Candice has an undergraduate degree in Psychology with a master's degree in social work from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. She began her career as a Forensic Interviewer and Victim Advocate in western Kansas, where she worked at a Children's Advocacy Center with victims of child sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect. She then moved back to Detroit to continue her career as a Forensic Interviewer at Kids-TALK Children's Advocacy Center, and eventually began training new Forensic Interviewers on conducting interviews with victims of child abuse, human trafficking, and witnesses to violent crimes. Candice has also spent time working with children and adult clients as a Clinical Therapist, specializing in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Candice joined the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2019 as a Forensic Interview Specialist in Washington, D.C. and is currently a Victim Assistance Program Specialist in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. With DHS she works cases involving child exploitation, human trafficking, and human rights violations. She has conducted over 1500 forensic interviews and has testified in court many times as an expert witness.

**Jennifer DiGiovanni, JD**

**Deputy District Attorney, Allegheny County District Attorney's office**

Jennifer DiGiovanni joined the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office in 1998. She is the Deputy District Attorney supervising the Child Abuse and Crimes/Persons trial units. In that capacity, Jennifer supervises 11 Assistant District Attorneys who prosecute cases involving physical and sexual assaults against adult and child victims. Jennifer has prosecuted child abuse cases since 2005 and maintains a personal caseload involving physical and sexual assaults against children as well as child fatality cases. She is a member of the Allegheny County Child Abduction Response Team, the Allegheny County Child Fatality/Near Fatality Review Team, the Allegheny County Child Death Review Team, the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Institute Education & Training Committee, and the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Institute Special Victims Prosecutors Network. Jennifer is also an adjunct professor at the Duquesne University School of Law and has taught the Criminal Prosecution Externship for over 10 years. She also trains police officers and detectives in the investigation of physical and sexual assaults on child and adult victims. Jennifer received her undergraduate degree from Hofstra University and graduated from the Duquesne University School of Law.

**Victoria Filingeri, MSW**

**Social Worker, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, Division of Palliative Medicine and Supportive Care**

Victoria Filingeri received her master and doctorate in social work from the University of Pennsylvania. She is currently a social worker at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh in the Division of Palliative Medicine and Supportive Care, and she is faculty with the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities and Related Disorders (LEND) with the University of Pittsburgh and UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. She had been a social worker for 8 years with a specific interest in pediatrics, neurodevelopmental disabilities, health equity, and health related social needs.

**Kelly Foreman, LCSW**

**Behavioral Health Therapist II, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Whole Child Wellness Clinic**

Kelly Foreman is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Board-Certified Behavior Analyst with over 20 years of experience in the mental health field. Specializing in working with children and adolescents across school, outpatient and partial hospitalization settings, her passion extends to empowering families and advocating for underserved communities, ensuring access to quality care and resources. With a career grounded in compassion and expertise, Kelly continues to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those she serves.

**Devon George, MSN, RN**

**Chief Programs Officer, Cribs for Kids**

Devon George, MSN, RN, is the Chief Program Officer at Cribs for Kids. She joined the agency in 2019 following her work in pediatric and academic nursing. At Cribs for Kids, Devon oversees the National Infant Safe Sleep Hospital Certification program while collaborating with colleagues to develop safe sleep training and education initiatives including a safe sleep lullaby, live webinars with safe sleep experts, and most recently Cribs for Kids 8th National Infant Safe Sleep Conference.

Devon works across the country to promote infant safe sleep. She sits on several state perinatal quality initiatives, is a member of both the AAP's National Collaborative for Safe Infant Sleep, JPMA Cares Safe Sleep Collaborative, and the ASTM Infant Products Committee, working towards safety standards for wearable blankets. In Pittsburgh, PA, where Cribs for Kids is headquartered, Devon is a member of the county's Child Death Review Community Action Team, leads a safe sleep partnership with Healthy Start, and collaborates with UPMC Children's Hospital Child Advocacy Center. She also serves on the executive committee for the Brashear Association and is a member of the Greater Pittsburgh Association of Nursing Professional Development. She is immeasurably grateful to work in the field of infant safe sleep.

**Elizabeth Grandelis, PsyD**

**Psychologist III, Behavioral Science Division, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Elizabeth Grandelis, Psy.D., is a licensed psychologist at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Dr. Grandelis is an embedded psychologist supporting behavioral health needs for patients within the CHP division of Pediatric Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism. Dr. Grandelis has worked to develop a pediatric peer support network for the CHP diabetes patient population. Dr. Grandelis has also clinically supported the operation of the CHP Behavioral Health Walk-in Clinic since it opened in February 2023. Dr. Grandelis accepted a leadership role in the clinic in May 2024 and has since served as the Walk-in Clinic supervisor. Dr. Grandelis also serves on the CHP Behavioral Science Division Training Committee as the Practicum Training Director. Dr. Grandelis earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh and her master's degree in counseling psychology from Chatham University. She obtained her doctorate in Counseling Psychology (Psy.D.) from the APA (American Psychological Association)-accredited doctoral program through Carlow University. Dr. Grandelis is a member of the American Psychological Association, the Pennsylvania Psychological Association, and the Society of Pediatric Psychology.

**Briana Grant**

**Supervisory Special Agent, FBI**

SSA Grant has been an agent with the FBI for over 14 years. She has been assigned to the Behavioral Analysis Unit since 2021 and provides operational support on crimes against children investigations. SSA Grant also conducts psychological assessments for the FBI's Safeguard Unit. SSA Grant served as a program manager and training coordinator for the FBI's Indian Country Crimes Unit for three years. As a training coordinator, she worked with numerous agencies to provide training to federal, state, and tribal partners. She provided instruction on sex abuse investigations, trauma, and suicide prevention.

SSA Grant was at the forefront of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) initiative and provided integral guidance for the FBI's MMIP investigative protocol. SSA Grant has experience investigating sex crimes, domestic violence, and CAC to include homicide and physical and sexual abuse on several Indian reservations. SSA Grant was an Arizona Child Abduction Response Coordinator and an Evidence Response Team member. Prior to joining the FBI, SSA Grant worked as a therapist at a boarding school, provided substance abuse treatment and re-entry services to male offenders in prison, and worked with children in residential treatment facility. SSA Grant holds a master's degree in forensic psychology. SSA Grant and Dr. Melissa Stormer are currently conducting research on Sadistic Online Exploitation.

**Angela Gresse**

**Hello Baby Priority Program Director, Healthy Start Pittsburgh**

Angela has dedicated more than 25 years of her professional career to empowering families with young children, with a specialized focus on the development, implementation, and evaluation of home and community-based programs and initiatives. She brings extensive expertise in collaborating with both local and national organizations dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect by addressing and supporting the unmet needs of families. In her current role as Director of Hello Baby at Healthy Start, Angela works closely with county leaders to ensure that families facing complex challenges receive critical support, resources, and practical assistance as they adjust to life with a new baby.

**Sheila Hahner, MSN, RN**

**Clinical Education Specialist**

Sheila A. Hahner is a Clinical Education Specialist that works with a specialist group to increase ethical knowledge among nurses at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh.

**James Hardie**

**Supervisory Special Agent, Federal Bureau of Investigation - Behavioral Analysis Unit**

SSA Hardie is currently assigned to the FBI’s Critical Incident Response Group, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Behavioral Analysis Unit - 3, responsible for providing operational support to local, state, federal, and international law enforcement investigating crimes against children matters. SSA Hardie entered on duty with the FBI in 2001 and has worked crimes against children matters for most of his career. Prior to joining BAU-3, SSA Hardie served in the San Diego Field Office, the Cleveland Field Office - Toledo Resident Agency, and as the FBI’s Detailee the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, located in Alexandria Virginia.

**Lila Harris, JD**

**Attorney, KidsVoice**

Lila Harris has practiced child advocacy law at KidsVoice since 2011. She has been a Supervising Attorney since 2017.

**RoseAnn Hill MA, CAADC**

**Substance Use Disorder Consultation Specialist, Office of Children, Youth and Families, PA Department of Human Services**

RoseAnn is the Substance Use Disorder Consultation Specialist for Children Youth and Families in Allegheny County. The Office of Children, Youth and Families protects children from abuse and neglect and works with families to provide a safe and loving permanent home for children. RoseAnn’s role is to partner with SUD community providers to develop a full continuum of services, including residential treatment services for OCYF-involved families with substance use challenges.

RoseAnn is a certified advanced alcohol and drug counselor (CAADC) with a Masters in Counseling Psychology from Michigan State University. RoseAnn has served as a therapist, assessor, case manager and liaison.

**Jim Hindinger**

**Supervisory Special Agent, Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General-Human Trafficking Section**

Jim Hindinger is a Supervisory Special Agent with the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General’s Human Trafficking Section. With over 14 years of law enforcement experience, Agent Hindinger also served in the Organized Crime and Gaming Enforcement Sections of the agency. He is cross-designated as a Task Force Officer with the United States Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations detailed to the Pittsburgh Field Office – Human Trafficking Group. His extensive career is supported by a master’s degree in legal studies from the California University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Columbia Southern University. In addition to his civilian law enforcement work, Agent Hindinger is a retired Master Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force.

**Amber Hoffman, MD, FAAP**

**Professor of Pediatrics, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Amber M Hoffman, MD, FAAP is a Professor of Pediatrics at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and a member of the Paul C. Gaffney Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine. Dr. Hoffman earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Duquesne University and completed medical school at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. She completed residency at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and was later grandfathered into a fellowship of Pediatric Hospital Medicine. Dr. Hoffman returned in 2023 to Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh after leaving in 2008 to pursue positions at Children’s Mercy Hospital-Kansas City and Nemours Children’s Hospital-Florida. Dr. Hoffman has a special interest in children with medical

complexity and pediatric education. She has served as an Associate and Program Director in numerous programs. She additionally founded and directed two consultative medical homes for children with medical complexity, The Beacon Program in Kansas City and the Medically Complex Coordination Clinic in Orlando.

**Shenoa Jamieson, CRNP**

**Nurse Practitioner, Child Advocacy Center and Adolescent Medicine, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Shenoa Rose Jamieson is employed as a nurse practitioner in a dual role with the Child Advocacy Center and Adolescent Medicine at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh. She is a Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner in Primary Care and nationally certified as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner for Pediatrics and Adults/Adolescents. In her position she provides abuse evaluations, primary care and urgent care for young people with complex social situations, and adolescent and young adult gynecological care and gender-affirming care. In addition to the Child Advocacy Center hospital-based clinic and the Center for Adolescent and Young Adult Health outpatient clinic, Shenoa provides care in unique community-based settings, including a clinic in the county courthouse, a young adult drop-in center, a mobile care mobile, emergency shelters, the community intensive supervision program, a residential substance use program, and a safe-house for trafficked youth. Her passion is strength-based care for all young people particularly system-involved children, adolescents and young adults.

**Alissa Klugh, MS, LPC**

**Owner, Psychotherapist, Pittsburgh Psychotherapy Associates, LLC**

Alissa Klugh, MS, LPC, CCTP-II, CIMHP, CTMH, EMDR Trained, is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the states of Pennsylvania and Virginia who is a co-owner of Pittsburgh Psychotherapy Associates, LLC, in the North Hills of Pittsburgh and owner of Intrinsic Drive Wellness. She has over 16 years of experience in the mental health field, working with children, adolescents, and their families, couples, and individuals of many ages and backgrounds on their growth and change. She has worked with individuals struggling with depression, anxiety, mood disorders, anger management, self-improvement, co-parenting after separation/divorce, working through major life stressors, trauma, and building self-esteem by helping them find a new path. She has worked in direct care and managers a mental health program for individuals with severe mental health needs. An alumnus of the University of Pittsburgh, Alissa obtained her master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and a bachelor’s degree in psychology. Her love and interest for working with people who have experienced all types of trauma (both "big T" and "little t") began in a trauma-informed program in community mental health and has expanded to a trauma-informed approach with clients in other settings. Alissa is a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (CCTP-I&II) after witnessing how this type of care could help support anyone, not just survivors of severe trauma. Along the lines of trauma-informed care, Alissa has completed the EMDR therapy basic training as of fall 2024. Alissa is a Certified Integrative Mental Health Professional (CIMHP) and has a minor in Biology, as there is a major connection how the body’s systems work together. In alignment her overall approach to health and healing, she is also a Reiki Master (Level III). Alissa has facilitated many trainings with community mental health agencies and has also co-led a Trauma Informed Yoga Workshop with a local Yoga Studio.

**Drew Krantz, PsyD, LPC, NCC, CATP**

**Supervisor/Therapist/Trainer, UPMC Child Advocacy Center of Central PA & Restoring Joy Counseling & Consulting Services, LLC**

Drew Krantz, PsyD, LPC, NCC, CATP is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and is the Behavioral Health Supervisor at the UPMC Child Advocacy Center of Central PA. He is also the owner of Restoring Joy Counseling & Consulting, LLC, a practice that provides therapy, consultation, and training in secondary traumatic stress. He has a PsyD in Behavioral Health Leadership from Walden Leadership. He is certified in multiple evidence-based treatment modalities for treating trauma. He is a certified trainer in the Components for Enhancing Career Experience and Reducing Trauma (CE-CERT) model. He is the co-chair of the Trauma Informed Care Steering Committee of UPMC Central PA and the Executive Director of the ACE Committee of Dauphin County, PA.

**Brittany Liptak, MS**

**Forensic Interview Specialist, Homeland Security Investigations**

Brittany Liptak is a Forensic Interview Specialist within Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Investigative Services Division (ISD), Victim Assistance Program (VAP). Brittany is stationed at ASAC-Pittsburgh. Brittany started her child welfare career in 2010 as an intake caseworker for Fayette County Children and Youth Services in Pennsylvania. In 2015 Brittany pursued a career in forensic interviewing with A Child’s Place, PA (ACP)-one of Allegheny County’s two Child Advocacy Centers. Brittany spent nine years as a Forensic Interviewer where she interviewed over 1400 children who have

alleged maltreatment, sexual abuse, physical abuse, exploitation, or have witnessed violence. Because ACP serves six counties, Brittany was an active member of many Multi-Disciplinary Teams and Human Trafficking Taskforces, as well provided ongoing collaboration, training, and education to Child Protection Services caseworkers, law enforcement, counselors, and the public.

**Amy Malen, MPP**

**Assistant Director Office of Community Services, Allegheny County DHS**

Amy Malen is the Assistant Director of the Office of Community Services at the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, where she focuses on supporting families and children through investments in family centers and home visiting programs, early learning programs and the childcare subsidy, out-of-school time and transition-aged youth programming and support with basic needs. Prior to joining DHS in 2017, Amy worked in urban education, as a teacher in Washington DC and Boston, in school district central office administration in Oakland, CA and in Pittsburgh, and in nonprofit management at Teach for America and OneGoal. Amy is a graduate of Princeton University and has a master's in public policy from UC Berkeley.

**Nicole Masters PA-C**

**Physician Assistant, Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Health, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Nicole Masters is a physician assistant with UPMC Children's Hospital Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Health (Adolescent Medicine). Nicole obtained her Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience from Allegheny College followed by a Master of Physician Assistant Studies at Chatham University. Prior to working with the Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Health, Nicole worked at the Child Advocacy Center where she served as the forensic coordinator for the Children's Hospital Emergency Department Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) team. Nicole has a passion for strength-based care and harm reduction strategies for youth.

**Genafie McKnight MSW, LCSW**

**Founder/Lead Clinician, GSM Therapeutics & Consulting Services**

Genafie McKnight is a Pittsburgh native, mother, kinship caregiver, community board member, and Licensed Therapist. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work with a master's degree, which is one of the top ten schools nationally in that field of study. She spent most of her professional years employed as a Certified Child welfare worker at Allegheny County Children Youth and Families where she worked diligently to serve children and families. In 2019 Ms. McKnight transitioned to become a Licensed therapist in which shortly after she became the founder and lead clinician of GSM Therapeutic and Consulting Services LLC where she is currently employed as Licensed Clinical Social Worker and practicing therapist. Ms. McKnight prioritizes EMDR, psychoanalysis, cognitive behavioral, and narrative therapeutic approaches to serve clients and is committed to ensuring positive treatment outcomes. To continue to drive and provide maximum positive treatment outcomes, Ms. McKnight is currently on her journey to obtain a Doctoral Degree as a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner.

**Paul McPherson MD**

**Chief, Division of Child Protection and Child Abuse Pediatrician, Akron Children's Hospital**

Dr. Paul McPherson's journey in medicine began in Philadelphia, where he graduated from medical school in 2002. He then completed a three-year pediatric residency at Akron Children's Hospital in Akron, Ohio, followed by a two-year fellowship in Child Abuse and Neglect at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. Returning to Akron Children's Hospital, Dr. McPherson served as an attending physician at the Mahoning Valley campus for four years, specializing in Child Abuse and Neglect and working in the Emergency Department. In July 2011, he moved to Idaho to become the Medical Director for the CARES program at St. Luke's Children's Hospital in Boise.

In 2016, Dr. McPherson returned to Ohio to take on the role of Chief of the Child Protection and Child Abuse Prevention Division at Akron Children's Hospital. Throughout his career, he has delivered numerous presentations on Child Abuse and Neglect and has been recognized as an expert witness in Child Maltreatment across multiple states. His research contributions and publications in the field of child abuse are notable, and he has evaluated over 2,000 children. Additionally, Dr. McPherson is dedicated to training physicians and other medical professionals.

Dr. McPherson and his wife are proud parents of six boys.

**Jamie Mesar, MSW**

**Clinical Instructor, WVU School of Social Work**

Jamie received her MSW and BSW from the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. Jamie has spent the majority of her Social Work career working in multiple areas of Child Welfare. She has been a Child and Adolescent Forensic Interviewer at a county run Child Advocacy Center, UPMC- Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Child Advocacy Center and for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Jamie was also a Program Manager at UPMC CHP CAC for several years and has experience in management, program development and grant writing. Jamie has also been certified as an Expert Witness in multiple counties as well as the federal court system.

**Cheyenne Neuenschwander, LSW**

**Social Worker, Child Advocacy Center, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Cheyenne Neuenschwander is a dynamic social worker driven by a passion for transformative change. With a background in Communications and Theatre, followed by a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Pittsburgh, Cheyenne's journey led her to work at UPMC Children's Hospital's Child Advocacy Center. Beyond her professional accolades, Cheyenne is a dedicated advocate, participating in global conferences like the Talitha Kum Human Trafficking Conference in Rome and speaking at Passavant's 11th Annual Domestic Violence Conference as well as the Pathways to Prevention Conference in Baltimore. Her expertise extends to guest lecturing for the University of Pittsburgh's MSW Program, emphasizing her commitment to fostering positive change in society.

**Emily O'Conly**

**Family Peer Support Partner, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Whole Child Wellness Clinic**

Emily O'Conly is a Family Peer Support Specialist at the Whole Child Wellness Clinic, where she leverages her lived experience as the mother of a child with a behavioral and developmental health diagnosis to help build bridges between caregivers, their child's care team, and other systems of care. She serves on the Family Advisory Council for the Pediatric Feeding Disorder Alliance and in her spare time enjoys volunteering with United Way, as well as within the Mon Valley region.

**Anthony Pizon MD**

**Chief of Medical Toxicology Division, Department of Emergency Medicine, UPMC**

Dr. Anthony (Tony) Pizon received his medical degree from the University of Toledo School of Medicine in 2001. He then completed his Emergency Medicine Residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in 2004 and his Medical Toxicology Fellowship at Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona in 2006. Dr. Pizon is currently a Professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine, Division of Medical Toxicology at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine. He serves as Chief of the Division of Medical Toxicology and Director of the Medical Toxicology Fellowship at UPMC. He is also Assistant Medical Director of both the Pittsburgh and West Virginia Poison Centers. Yet, most importantly, he is blessed with amazing wife, Caryn, and four wonderful children (Benjamin, Elizabeth, Gabriela, and Seraphina).

**James Robertson**

**Law clerk, Judge Rangos, Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas**

Jim Robertson has been representing children and parents for 30 years. He began his career at Legal Aid for Children, where he eventually attained the position of Senior Staff Attorney. Next, he worked at the Allegheny County Bar Foundation, Juvenile Court Project as a Supervising Attorney before moving full time into private practice. He has also for the past 17 years served as the law clerk to the Honorable Jill E. Rangos.

**Joy Shelton**

**Crime Analyst, Federal Bureau of Investigation - Behavioral Analysis Unit**

Mrs. Shelton joined the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) in 1999. Currently, she is a Crime Analyst within the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit 3- Crimes against Children, a component of the NCAVC. She has served as the Principal Researcher and contributor for a variety of FBI research projects to include maternal filicide, child torture as

form of child abuse, suicide among child sex offenders, and residential child abduction. She has authored over 20 BAU academic articles and law enforcement publications on various crimes against children's topics. In addition, she provides analytical and operational support for active investigations. Mrs. Shelton presents at a wide variety of national training venues. She has also instructed at the FBI's National Academy at Quantico, VA.

**Melissa Stormer, PsyD**

**Supervisory Special Agent, FBI**

Dr. Melissa Stormer is a Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) with OSI and a Clinical/Forensic Psychologist. She has been an OSI agent for 20 years and has experience working and advising on investigations regarding violent crimes, sex crimes, crimes against children, and national security matters. As a clinical/forensic psychologist, her education and experience has focused on serious mental illness, personality disorders, sexual deviancy, and predatory behavior. Dr. Stormer also conducts court-ordered evaluations regarding violence risk, sexual risk, competency to stand trial, and mental status at the time of the offense for the Commonwealth of Virginia. She was assigned to the FBI BAU in February 2022. Dr. Stormer and SSA Briana Grant are currently conducting research on Sadistic Online Exploitation.

**Kristen Straka, DNP, RN, CPN, NEA-BC**

**Senior Director, Behavioral Science Division and Rehabilitative Services, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Kristen Straka, DNP, RN, CPN, NEA-BC is the Senior Director, Emergency Department, Rehabilitation Services and Behavioral Science Division at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. In this role, she provides oversight over the ED with over 80,000 visits annually, rehabilitation and behavioral health services including the inpatient rehabilitation unit, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, Audiology, and Behavioral Health both inpatient and outpatient at the Lawrenceville campus and satellite locations. Dr. Straka has over 25 years of healthcare experience, having held previous roles as staff nurse, Nurse Educator, Director of Nursing Education, Director of Ambulatory and Director of the Heart Institute. In her current role, she is responsible for developing a strategic plan that is consistent with, and incorporated into, the Hospitals and Nursing Divisions' strategic plan, focusing on key priorities to meet market demand coupled with needs of the region for rehab services. Dr. Straka works collectively with Executive Leadership and Physicians at UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital to establish programming providing access to behavioral health services through embedded models of care and co-branding. Dr. Straka has a master's degree in nursing administration, a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from Duquesne University, and a Doctorate in Nursing Practice from Chatham University. She has published and co-authored numerous articles, served as Principal Investigator on several IRB studies, presented at national nursing and leadership conferences, as well served in the role as National President of the Society of Pediatric Nurses (2014-2018). Dr. Straka holds a certification as a Pediatric Nurse and Nurse Executive Advanced, is adjunct faculty at Chatham University, and is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives. She has received numerous honors and awards throughout her tenure including Pittsburgh Magazine Nurse of the Year Nurse Executive/Leader nominee.

**Travis Sumner**

**Special Agent, Homeland Security Investigations**

Travis Sumner is currently a Special Agent with Homeland Security Investigations in Pittsburgh, PA. Special Agent Sumner is assigned to the Child Exploitation, Human Trafficking and Cyber Crimes investigative group. Special Agent Sumner has been employed with Homeland Security Investigations since 2020.

**Amanda Taylor, LMFT, CCPT**

**Director of Family Counseling Services, Counseling and Wellness Center of Pittsburgh**

Angel Pratt (née Amanda Taylor), LMFT, CCPT (pronouns: they/them), an LGBTQ Therapist, is an out and proud member of the LGBTQIA+ community and is master's educated in Marriage and Family Therapy. Angel's experience in the field of mental health includes but are not limited to trans persons seeking hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgery, couples of all configurations (kink, non-monogamous, etc.), children as young as 5, neurodivergence, trauma, and substance abuse. Their treatment approach incorporates a person-centered and narrative approach, assisting patients in re-authoring their personal narratives from a strength-based perspective to build greater understanding and lessen symptoms and distress. In addition, Angel utilizes psychoeducation to inform patients of the scientific theories that can help them make sense of what they are experiencing and then impart skill-building to directly address these symptoms and build resilience throughout the process. Angel graduated from Syracuse University in 2012 with a Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy. From there they had a wealth of experiences starting with Multisystemic Therapy for youth released from juvenile facilities and their families, servicing them directly in the community. Next, they spent three and a half years in outpatient substance abuse counseling



facilitating both individual and group therapies during the height of the opioid crisis. What followed was a brief experience in a comprehensive health clinic working with a multidisciplinary team to achieve whole-patient health. The transition to private group practices was a smooth one that opened many opportunities including couples work, family work, and specializing in Autism Spectrum, ADHD, and LGBTQIA+ populations. Angel is excited to add Counseling and Wellness Center of Pittsburgh to their experiences, serving the Pittsburgh area through online therapy. Virtual counseling opens up more opportunities and access to therapy than ever before. Angel is currently licensed in both New York State and Pennsylvania as a Marriage and Family Therapist. Angel was promoted to the role of Marriage & Family Therapy Supervisor in 2023. Angel provides comprehensive systemic supervision to licensed and pre-licensed therapists. With a keen emphasis on the therapist's self-awareness, Angel explores the parallel dynamics present within therapeutic relationships and facilitates the integration of contemporary clinical practices. After a year as an AAMFT Certified Supervisor, Angel was promoted to the role of Director of Family Counseling Services in 2024. Their mission is to create and deliver services and support to the families and couples that need them the most, and they are honored to deliver those services. In their spare time Angel enjoys both running and long walks listening to podcasts and therapy-themed audiobooks. They're also a proud nerd who enjoys all types of gaming including video games (console and PC), tabletop games, and roleplaying games. You'll also find them working on a crochet project or two as a creative outlet, and they love to write (fiction, nonfiction, etc.).

**William Trautman, MD**

**Physician, Medical Toxicology and Emergency Medicine, UPMC and Clinical Instructor of Emergency Medicine, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine**

Will Trautman is a Medical Toxicology and Emergency Medicine Attending at UPMC treating both children and adults. He completed his Emergency Medicine Residency as well as a Medical Toxicology Fellowship at UPMC and joined the Emergency Medicine and Toxicology faculty in 2023. He currently serves as the Assistant Fellowship Director for the Medical Toxicology Fellowship and as a Clinical Instructor of Emergency Medicine for the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

**Matthew Valente, MD**

**Child Advocacy Center and Pediatric Hospital Medicine Physician, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Dr. Valente, MD is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh and shares clinical time between The Paul C. Gaffney Division of Pediatric Hospital Medicine and Division of Child Advocacy. He attended medical school at the SUNY Upstate Medical University College of Medicine and completed pediatric residency at the UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, where he also served as a Pediatric Chief Resident. He is Associate Program Director for the Pediatric Residency Training Program at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. His main interest is in the intersection between care of hospitalized children and maltreatment with emphasis on children with complex health care needs.

**Jason Ware**

**Assessment County Casework Manager, Westmoreland County Children's Bureau**

Jason Ware serves as the Assessment County Casework Manager for Westmoreland County Children's Bureau and oversees all of the investigations conducted by the Children's Bureau. Jason has been with the Children's Bureau for 20 years and has held the positions of assessment caseworker, program specialist, and assessment supervisor. Jason is a 2023 Champion of Hope and Healing Award recipient. Jason holds a degree in Physics from St. Vincent College and resides in Scottdale, Pa with his wife, two kids, and bluetick coonhound.

**Ashleigh Welko, MD, MPH**

**Physician, Akron Children's Hospital**

Ashleigh Welko, MD, MPH is a board-certified pediatrician who practices both pediatric hospital medicine and child abuse pediatrics at Akron Children's Hospital. She received her undergraduate degree from Allegheny College in Meadville, PA and later earned her medical degree and master's degree in public health through the Physician Leadership Development Program at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Welko completed her residency training in pediatrics at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (back when that was the name of the hospital). She now holds an assistant professorship appointment at the Northeast Ohio Universities College of Medicine.

**R. Maggie Whelan, MD, PhD**

**Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Whole Child Wellness Clinic**

Rachel "Maggie" Whelan is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. She attended the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine as a student in the Medical Scientist Training Program. She earned a PhD in Epidemiology from the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health along with an MD. She completed the "Triple Board" residency program at Tulane University in New Orleans which included residencies in pediatrics and general psychiatry and a fellowship in child and adolescent psychiatry. Currently, she works in the outpatient setting seeing child psychiatry patients at Matilda Theiss Early Childhood Mental Health Clinic, where she is Medical Director. She sees patients as both a pediatrician and child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Whole Child Wellness Clinic, which follows the medical home model to provide both pediatric and behavioral health care to children with complex needs. Her interests include infant mental health, early childhood behavioral health, integrated pediatrics and mental health care, the impact of medical illness and prematurity on attachment and development, and dyadic modalities of treating caregivers and their children. She also serves as the faculty advisor to the medical school Human Rights Clinic, conducting asylum evaluations in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh Law School.

**Stephanie Wijkstrom, MS, LPC, NBCC**

**Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Counseling and Wellness Center of Pittsburgh**

Stephanie Wijkstrom, MS, LPC, NBCC believes in our human capacity for boundless change and growth and is honored to guide others toward the profound serenity and joy that results when we create peace and connection in our lives. As CEO and founder of The Counseling and Wellness Center of Pittsburgh, she can offer her trusted competencies in working with couples and clients who are experiencing emotional concerns such as anxiety, anger, depression, grief, trauma, and a myriad other intimacy and relationship troubles. She is passionate about providing effective Marriage Counseling to couples. Stephanie utilizes Mindfulness, Humanistic Therapy, Psycho-dynamic Therapy, and Gottman Method Couples Counseling. By using these scientifically proven methods of healing, Stephanie will help you to create balance, wholeness, greater connection and deeper meaning in your life and relationships. Stephanie is also ranked as the Top Therapist in Pittsburgh for Marriage Counseling and Relationship concerns (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020). Stephanie earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from The University of Pittsburgh, graduating Magna Cum Laude and then onward she earned a Master of Professional Counseling Psychology. After completing her education and program and earning her Pennsylvania license and National Board Certifications Stephanie was enthusiastic to begin counseling in the private practice setting. In her personal time, Stephanie enjoys reading, practicing vinyasa yoga, preparing delicious meals for her family, friends, and listening to a range of musical melodies.

**Jennifer Wolford, DO, MPH**

**Child Abuse Pediatrician, Child Advocacy Center, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh**

Dr. Wolford joined the Division of Child Advocacy at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC in 2011, after completing her pediatric training at Children's and serving as chief resident. She has a Master of Public Health degree at University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, and a medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Her primary interests are in health care for underserved children, and she is the faculty advisor for the Pediatric training program called CORE (Community Oriented Resident Education).

**Eli Zlokas, Esq**

**Attorney**

Eli was born and raised on Pittsburgh's historic Southside. He graduated from the University of Dallas in 1973. Over the next ten years, Eli worked in the trade unions as a Piledriver during which he attended Duquesne Law School at night, earning his JD in 1983. Eli has been representing minors since 1990.