

2023 MCH Conference Speakers



Corrie Whisner, PhD
Associate Professor
Arizona State University
MCHTRT Co-Director

Dr. Corrie Whisner is an Associate Professor of Nutrition in the College of Health Solutions at Arizona State University. Her journey in MCH began as an undergraduate research assistant on studies aiming to improve child and adolescent bone health. She is fascinated by periods of rapid growth and development and is eager to understand how nutrition and the microbiome interact to help mothers and children stay healthy and thrive. She is also Co-Director of the [Maternal Child Health Translational Research Team](#) at ASU along with Dr. Cady Berkel.

Cadey Berkel, PhD
Associate Professor
Arizona State University
MCHTRT Co-Director

Cady Berkel is an Associate Professor in the College of Health Solutions at Arizona State University, and is affiliated faculty with ASU's REACH Institute. She received her bachelor's from George Washington University and doctorate from the University of Georgia. Berkel focuses on reducing health disparities (including substance use, mental health, HIV and other STIs, and obesity) through research on the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based programs in community settings, health care and court systems. She also conducts basic research on risk (e.g., discrimination and poverty) and resilience (e.g., racial/ethnic socialization, identity, and cultural values) mechanisms associated with health disparities.



Liza Hita, PhD
Clinical Associate Professor, College of Health Solutions
Arizona State University

Liza Hita is a Clinical Associate Professor of psychology in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Her community-based participatory research examines the dissemination and implementation of preventive interventions for families experiencing major life transitions, including high conflict families, never married and divorcing parents, bereaved families, and families impacted by incarceration. Liza is also a full spectrum doula working with urban Indigenous families, focused on bridging health disparities through culturally restorative, holistic practices.

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Laura Luna Bellucci, MBA
Chief, Bureau of Women's and Children's Health
Arizona MCH & CSHCN Director
Arizona Department of Health Services

Laura Luna Bellucci is Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Women's and Children's Health and is Arizona's Maternal and Child Health Director. She also serves as the state's Children with Special Health Care Needs Director, and has represented Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) on several external committees. Laura has more than 15 years experience in public health with progressively responsible positions overseeing programs that serve children and families. She has been part of the Bureau of Women's & Children's Health team since 2011, starting as a teen pregnancy prevention program manager, then progressing to Child & Family Health Manager and the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program Director. In her previous role, Laura served as the Office Chief of the Office of Children's Health within the Bureau, overseeing several programs and more than \$16 million in state and federal funds. She has a Master's of Business Administration and has completed several leadership programs, including the Leaders Across Borders Program, Maternal and Child Health Public Health Leadership Institute, and Valley Leadership. Prior to her work at ADHS, Laura spent more than 11 years at Chicanos Por La Causa as the Prevention Services Coordinator.

Molly Strothkamp, MSW, LCSW, IMH-E®
Sr. Program Manager
Southwest Human Development

Molly Strothkamp is a child therapist, training coordinator at Southwest Human Development's Good Fit Counseling Center, and faculty member at the Harris Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Training Institute. Molly earned her MSW from Arizona State University in 2006 and completed a two-year Infant/Family Clinical Practice program in 2007. Molly provides mental health consultation to home visiting programs and trainings on infant mental health to parents, professionals, and community organizations. Molly is endorsed as an Infant Mental Health Specialist and has completed trainings to become rostered in Child-Parent Psychotherapy.



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Jennie Bever Babendure, PhD
Executive Director and Founder
4th Trimester

Jennie's interest in caring for moms and babies began when her first child was born while Jennie was still in graduate school. Despite a lot of knowledge and dedication, she struggled to nurse her baby. An International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) was able to help Jennie successfully breastfeed her son. Due to this experience, Jennie grew an intense desire to help other moms and babies reach their breastfeeding goals. After she finished her PhD, Jennie completed a rigorous course of didactic and clinical training through the University of California, San Diego Lactation Consultant Training Program, and became an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant in 2009.

Jennie is also a breastfeeding researcher and holds an appointment as an Assistant Research Professor in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation at Arizona State University. She is active in her professional organizations as Treasurer of the Central Arizona Lactation Consultant Association, and a member of the Marketing Committee of the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA). Jennie and her husband have 4 rambunctious children. When she's not chasing little ones, Jennie enjoys gardening, music, and spending way too much time on social media.

Kate Dobler, MEd, BS, CPM, IMH-E
PPW-PLT Project Director
AHCCCS

15+ years of progressively responsible experience driving positive bottom-line results for State of Arizona agencies by overseeing system development/improvement. Master of Education and award-winning, community-minded system change agent with deep experience in driving system change, building networks, and organizing grassroots community groups. Exemplary partner, transformational leader, team builder, staff and community partner, coach, and mentor. Mother of 2 terrific kids, 2 chocolate labs, and 4 brand new chicks!



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Shauna Anderson, BS
Education Services Supervisor
Hushabye Nursery

Shauna Anderson is the Education Services Supervisor at Hushabye Nursery with over 15 years of experience, both in the classroom working in Title 1 schools and working alongside parents in the nonprofit sector. She is a certified ACES trainer through the AZ Aces Consortium, has a Strengthening Families Framework certification, as well as level 4 and 5 certifications in the evidence based Triple P Parenting Program. She is currently pursuing her Masters of Nonprofit Leadership and Management through ASU's Lodestar Program.

Michael White, MCJ
Director of Community Programs
Hushabye Nursery

Michael White has worked in the field of substance abuse for over 9 years along with 4 years in family services. Michael specializes in program development between community agencies and judicial systems. Michael has developed, implemented, and supported the integration of Medication Assisted Treatment into county and state correctional facilities located in Alaska, Arizona, Montana, and North Dakota. His experience also includes working within family courts, Department of Child Safety, and obtaining resources for pregnant women with substance use disorders by collaborating with community partners. Mr. White has been spearheading an initiative to develop a Collective Impact Model for opioid dependent individuals and the community systems that interact with the needs of this demographic. Michael is a national presenter in the areas of Collective Impact as an effective tool for the continuum of care, pregnancy and opioid dependence, along with Opioid treatment within criminal justice systems. Mr. White studied at the University of South Florida, Iowa State University, Portland State University, and ultimately graduating from Arizona State University with a master's in criminal justice. Currently Mr. White is associated with the Maricopa County Correctional Health Coalition, a board member of Sonoran Prevention Works, an executive board member of Hushabye Baby, and is honored with being appointed as a board member to Governor Ducey's Substance Abuse Task Force.



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Susie Leo, MPH, RDN
Parent and Child Health Dietitian
Arizona Department of Health Services

Susie Leo is the Parent and Child Health Dietitian on the Emerging Nutrition Initiatives team in the ADHS Bureau of Nutrition and Physical Activity. She has worked in public health for over 20 years for many programs. Some of Susie's work includes managing the Power Me A2Z folic acid program, which provides free multivitamins with folic acid to people in Arizona who can get pregnant, to prevent neural tube defects. She also manages the ADHS Infant at Work program, which has been in place for over 20 years. This benefit allows ADHS employees to bring their infant to work up to the age of 6 months.

Liz Harrell, PhD
Clinical Associate Professor, College of Health Solutions
Arizona State University

Dr. Harrell is the director of Student Health Outreach for Wellness (S.H.O.W.) and an assistant clinical professor in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation at Arizona State University. She is a member of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau - Beta Upsilon Chapter, the Central Arizona Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Association and the American Psychiatric Nurses Association.

