



Autism Awareness Interagency Roundtable

April 2, 2021

SPEAKER BIOS

Autism Speaks

Pamela Dixon, PhD

Director, Clinical Services and Inclusion

pamela.dixon@autismspeaks.org

Dr. Pamela Dixon's Autism Speaks portfolio includes serving as the technical lead for the Caregiver Skills Training Program (CST), the Autism Speaks/WHO collaboration that provides training to caregivers of children with developmental delay/disorders. Dr. Dixon also participates in the design and implementation of training materials for Global Autism Public Health (GAPH) initiatives and manages a global advocate network.

As a clinical psychologist, Dr. Dixon's previous work focused on leading clinics in the development of autism diagnostic services. Her research and clinical interests are in building capacity for the improved identification and treatment of children with neurodevelopmental disorders in low-resource settings.

Arun Karpur, MD, MPH

Director, Data Science and Evaluation Research

arun.karpur@autismspeaks.org

Dr. Arun Karpur is a medical doctor and an epidemiologist specializing in education, healthcare and workforce programs, and policies for people with disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Leveraging his extensive expertise in quantitative methods, Dr. Karpur is establishing data science approach in identifying effective practices and programs improving health, well-being, community living, and participation. He is directing evaluation of various Autism Speaks initiatives in public health and supports and services teams.

Prior to joining Autism Speaks, Dr. Karpur was a research faculty at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations in the Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, where he was a co-investigator for a large-scale randomized clinical trial program aimed to improve employment, education, and economic outcomes for youth with disabilities who receive supplemental security insurance. He has received funding support for his research from the United States Department of Energy, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Administration for Community Living, National Institutes of Health, and the World Bank.

Andrew Nelson, EdD

Director, Autism Response Team

andrew.nelson@autismspeaks.org

Dr. Andrew Nelson is the Director of the Autism Response Team (ART) at Autism Speaks, where he and his team provide best-in-class information and referral resources for the autism community. He is also leading efforts to expand multi-tiered support options through the ART. Dr. Nelson works locally and



Autism Awareness Interagency Roundtable

April 2, 2021

globally to help grow autistic leadership, train others in self-advocacy principles, and teach theatre-based approaches in the autism community. He founded the Autism Theatre Network and is the author of several papers and chapters on autistic resilience, self-advocacy, theatre, and role play.

Federal Panel

Miranda Carman, LCSW
Public Health Advisor, Division of Behavioral Health
Indian Health Service
Miranda.Carman@ihs.gov

Ms. Carman is an enrolled member of the Muscogee Creek Nation in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. She began her federal career with IHS as a Public Health Advisor in 2011 and currently serves as the Mental Health Lead for the Division of Behavioral Health at IHS. She oversees several projects focusing on behavioral health integration, mental health, and trauma informed care in American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) communities. Preceding her federal career, she worked for the Muscogee Creek Nation as a licensed clinical social worker and grants coordinator providing clinical services to AI/AN youth and adults within the community. She has a B.S. in Sociology from Oklahoma State University and a Masters of Social Work from the University of Oklahoma. Ms. Carman is a parent of a child on the autism spectrum.

Susan Daniels, PhD
Director, Office of Autism Research Coordination
Executive Secretary, Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee
National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Mental Health
sdaniels@mail.nih.gov

Dr. Susan Daniels is Director of the Office of Autism Research Coordination (OARC) at the National Institute of Mental Health and serves as the Executive Secretary of the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC), a federal advisory committee created by Congress to coordinate federal activities and provide advice to the Secretary of Health and Human Services on issues related to autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The committee, composed of public stakeholders and federal officials, works on a wide variety of issues related to ASD research, services, and policy and provides a public forum for discussion of issues related to autism. The OARC provides support to the IACC in its strategic planning, operations, and communications, including the publication of the IACC Strategic Plan for ASD, the IACC Summary of Advances in ASD Research, and the IACC ASD Research Portfolio Analysis Report. Dr. Daniels holds a Ph.D. in molecular and cell biology from Brandeis University.



Autism Awareness Interagency Roundtable

April 2, 2021

Jennifer Johnson, PhD

Deputy Commissioner, Administration on Disabilities and Director, Office of Disability Service Innovations

Administration for Community Living

Jennifer.Johnson@acl.hhs.gov

Dr. Jennifer Johnson is the Deputy Commissioner of the Administration on Disabilities (AoD), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living. She is also the Director of AoD's Office of Disability Service Innovations. AoD's mission is to equip individuals with disabilities of all ages with opportunities, tools, and supports to lead lives of their choice in their community. Its programs are working to create change and improve the lives of the estimated 61 million individuals with disabilities living in the U.S. by advancing opportunities for inclusion and participation in the community, employment and financial well-being, and independence and self-determination.

Dr. Johnson has served as the Deputy Commissioner since September 2019, with a focus on improving the quality, accountability, and evidence base of AoD's programs and initiatives. She supports planning and oversight of AoD's \$330 million budget that funds a number of disability programs and projects across the U.S. and its territories. Her 30-year career in government, academia, national organizations, and local school systems demonstrates a clear commitment to improving opportunities for people with disabilities to lead full lives in the community, with emphases on diversity, inclusion, and advancing a diverse array of programs for underserved and unserved individuals and communities.

Before assuming her current role as AoD's Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Johnson served as the Deputy Director of the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) from July 2015 through August 2019, where she oversaw AIDD's \$185 million budget and the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, a Federal Advisory Committee. In this role, she provided strategic vision to ensure quality oversight and that programs were achieving sustainable results. During her federal career, she has contributed to multiple interagency committees and initiatives to ensure representation of the perspectives of individuals with disabilities in Departmental efforts. She is currently leading AoD's interagency initiative to improve the availability of health and prevalence data on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Prior to her tenure at AoD, Dr. Johnson conducted policy research at The George Washington University's Graduate School of Education and Human Development and taught graduate level classes on research methods, bilingual special education, and disability policy. She has also held positions in the Arlington County Public School system, at the Council for Exceptional Children, and at the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Dr. Johnson earned her doctorate in Special Education from The George Washington University and has a Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education from The George Washington University. She earned her Bachelor's Degree from Hollins University.



Autism Awareness Interagency Roundtable

April 2, 2021

Lauren Raskin Ramos, MPH

Director, Division of Maternal and Child Health Workforce Development

Maternal and Child Health Bureau/Health Resources and Services Administration

LRamos@hrsa.gov

Ms. Lauren Raskin Ramos is the Director of the Division of Maternal and Child Health Workforce Development at the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). In this role, she leads federal efforts to educate and train the current and future maternal and child health workforce. Ms. Raskin Ramos is also the lead for MCHB's Autism investments in training, research, and state systems development. Previously, she held leadership roles at the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. Ms. Raskin Ramos has also worked at the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health at Georgetown University on the Bright Futures Project, and at the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. She served as an Officer of the Maternal and Child Health Section of the American Public Health Association (APHA) and as a Board member of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition. Ms. Raskin Ramos completed her MPH at the UCLA School of Public Health with a concentration in Community Health Sciences, and received her BA in Sociology and a Certificate in Community Health from Tufts University. She is a recipient of APHA's Maternal and Child Health Young Professional Award.

Scott Robertson, PhD

Policy Advisor

U.S. Department of Labor

Robertson.Scott.M@dol.gov

Dr. Scott Michael Robertson, an autistic adult, serves as a senior policy advisor in the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). Dr. Robertson orchestrates ODEP's \$3.5 million Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship (PIA) initiative as the federal project manager to drive access to career pathways for high-growth, high-demand fields, such as information technology and healthcare. He spearheads ODEP's work to support neurodiversity at work, enhance national autism policy, and increase access to gainful employment for youth and adults on the autism spectrum. Dr. Robertson also advises on national policies and practices to advance accessible and emerging technology, such as artificial intelligence and automated vehicles. During his career, he has presented 243 presentations, including 32 invited keynote addresses. His honors include a 2020 Service to the Citizen Award from Dorris Consulting International and the American Public Health Association's 2011 Jay S. Drotman Memorial Award for emerging leadership to promote health policy and practices.

Before joining ODEP in 2015, Dr. Robertson worked as a Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Fellow for U.S. Senator Tom Harkin in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP). He served as the Founding Vice President of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), a national nonprofit organization, and as a Council Member on the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council. He also served as a Public Member of the U.S. Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee under an appointment by the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services. Dr. Robertson earned his PhD in information sciences and



Autism Awareness Interagency Roundtable

April 2, 2021

technology at Penn State University. He completed his master's degree in human-computer interaction (HCI) in the HCI Institute at the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University. Upon earning his bachelor's degree, he graduated summa cum laude from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a minor in human factors psychology.

Blythe Ryerson, PhD, MPH

Acting Director, Division of Human Development and Disability, NCBDDD, CDC

Ztq6@cdc.gov

Dr. Blythe Ryerson is the Associate Director for Science, and current acting Director for the Division of Human Development and Disability, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In her permanent role she oversees and directs the Division's diverse science agenda, including CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network and the Study to Explore Early Development (SEED). The ADDM Network is a group of programs funded by CDC to estimate the number of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities living in different areas of the United States. SEED is currently the largest study in the United States to help identify factors that may put children at risk for autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. Dr. Ryerson is an epidemiologist with 20 years of public health experience at CDC.

Lawrence J. Wexler, EdD

Director, Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs

U.S. Department of Education

Larry.Wexler@ed.gov

Dr. Larry Wexler has been a special educator for 50 years as a teacher of students with significant disabilities, principal, state specialist for intellectual disabilities, chief of staff for the State Director of Special Education, director of state monitoring, Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) s project officer, Deputy Director of the Monitoring and State Improvement Planning Division and Associate Division Director responsible for OSEP's National Initiatives Team. Dr. Wexler is currently the Director of OSEP's Research to Practice Division where he manages the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) \$260 million discretionary grants program. In addition, he has represented the Department of Education on the Council of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO's) International Bureau of Education, led United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) sponsored delegations to South Africa and Lesotho and currently represents the Department of Education on the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee and serves as the Department of Education's policy expert on restraint and seclusion. He holds a doctorate with a concentration in severe disabilities from the Johns Hopkins University.