

2nd Annual CDPH Lead Poisoning Prevention Conference

September 16th, 2025

Speaker Biographies



Jennifer Vidis

Jennifer Vidis is Deputy Commissioner and Chief Program Officer at the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), where she leads the development and implementation of strategy for improving maternal, infant, child and adolescent health outcomes with a focus on health equity and systems building. Under her leadership, CDPH is scaling a universal nurse home visiting program for families with newborns and expanding its programming in childhood lead poisoning prevention, reproductive health, school-based health services and nutrition. Prior roles include serving as a policy fellow at Chapin Hall and chief of schools at the Chicago Public Schools. Jennifer received her BA from Smith College and JD from Georgetown University.



Sharita Webb

Sharita Webb is the Director of Public Health Operations for the Lead Poisoning Prevention and Healthy Homes Program (LPPHH) for the Chicago Department of Public Health. She is responsible for programming oversight for the LPPHH program for the City of Chicago. This program encompasses nurse case management, environmental inspections, grant administration, community engagement and enforcement. The program has over 45 staff members.

Sharita has been a public servant for the City of Chicago for 25 years. She played a crucial role in securing an \$8.7 million dollar grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and \$45.3 million Bond Funding from the City of Chicago.

These funds will benefit the constituents of the City of Chicago by abating lead hazards in their home and addressing other healthy homes hazards.

Sharita was born and raised on the southside of Chicago. She obtained her master's degree in education from Governors State University. She is a co-founder of the Wonderful Woman Wednesday Chicago community organization. She is a proud member of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. Sharita was elected and served on the Morgan Park High School Local School Council for four years. Sharita has been married to her wonderful husband for 25 years. She and her husband have two amazing children and a loving dog name Rio Francisco.



Emile Jorgenson, MPH

Emile Jorgensen was trained in occupational and environmental epidemiology at the University of Illinois-Chicago School of Public Health. He received his MPH in 2005 and dropped out of the PhD program in 2010. He has worked in the Chicago Department of Public Health Lead Poisoning Prevention program since 2007.



Luster Lockhart

Luster Lockhart is a Building/Construction Inspector and Lead Assessor with the Department of Public Health. Before working with the Department of Public Health, he worked with lending institutions to repair and renovate their Real Estate Owned (REO) properties as well as mold remediation for buildings that experienced flooding or water leaks.

His current role with CDPH Lead Department is to find the source of lead at the homes of children with an Elevated Blood-Lead Level (EBL)



Ajanta Patel MD MPH

Ajanta Patel MD MPH is Medical Director overseeing the Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the Chicago Department of Public Health. She oversees community health outreach programs, chronic disease epidemiology and policy, and Chicago-based partnerships designed to improve conditions that lead to chronic disease. Her key initiatives have included standing up CDPH's Community Health Worker program, expansion of the Tobacco Program with Menthol and Vaping funds, and initiation of data modernization efforts with Chicago's CAPriCORN data network.

Dr. Patel is a board certified pediatric pulmonologist and practices at La Rabida Children's Hospital in Chicago. Prior to joining CDPH, Dr. Patel was as an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at The University

of Chicago and Medical Director of Informatics at University of Chicago Medical Center. She completed clinical residency and fellowship training at The University of Chicago. She is a graduate of Emory University School of Medicine and School of Public Health and holds a bachelor's degree from Amherst College.



Nick Peneff, DrPH

Nicholas Peneff, DrPH, completed academic study at UIC School of Public Health in 1986 with emphasis on EPA and OSHA health technical programming and public health policy and administration. As an undergraduate chemist, he worked one summer as a laboratory intern at the Chicago Board of Health. As principal of Public Health & Safety, Inc. and beforehand, he has consistently promoted community-based initiatives applicable to lead-poisoning prevention programs applicable to Chicago Public Schools, the state, county and city health departments and US EPA.

Also, he contributed to university and medical research and catastrophic planning programs, and devised healthy buildings smart-phone apps for inventory management of healthy homes

conditions. Lastly, he has testified on the technical and policy behalf of aggrieved workers, local school councils, community groups, and lead-poisoned children. He currently trains lead-paint risk assessors and contractors in programs set forth or accredited by HUD, IDPH, CDPH, Cook County and EPA Region 5.



Michael Wahl, MD, FACEP, FACMT

Dr. Wahl is the Medical Director of the Illinois Poison Center, a program of the Illinois Health and Hospital Association and is responsible for the medical oversight of the statewide poison control center. Dr. Wahl's interests include strategic responses to emerging poisoning and toxic public health threats, acute care toxicology and new and novel drugs of abuse. He is a board certified emergency physician on staff at Endeavor Health and a board certified medical toxicologist with toxicology consulting privileges at John H. Stroger Jr Hospital of Cook County.



Jordan Kamrad

As a registered nurse with Family Connects Chicago, I have the privilege of supporting families during one of life's most important transitions—the arrival of a newborn. Through our free in-home nurse visits, I provide personalized care for parents and babies around three weeks after birth. My role includes checking on the health and well-being of both mom and baby, offering guidance on infant care, supporting breastfeeding and postpartum recovery, and connecting families with community resources that promote long-term health.

I am passionate about making sure every family feels supported, encouraged, and empowered in those first few weeks, whether it's answering questions about feeding, helping with safe sleep practices, or simply being a listening ear. Every parent deserves care and connection—and I'm proud to be part of a program that makes that possible at no cost to families.



Arlene Jackson, MBA, BSN, RN

I'm Arlene Jackson, MBA, BSN, RN. I work as a PHN II and Nurse Case Manager with the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and have been with the Chicago Department of Public Health for over 28 years. I am also a psychiatric and substance abuse nurse with 20 years of experience. I earned my nursing degree from Chicago State University and my MBA in Health Administration from St. Xavier University. When I'm not working, I love traveling, going to concerts, and catching Broadway shows.



Monica Broadie MS, BSN, RN

Monica R. Broadie MS, BSN, RN is a Public Health Nurse II with CDPH in the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. In her current role she provides case management services to children with elevated blood lead levels living within the City of Chicago. Monica earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Chicago State University in 1996 and a Master of Science in Leadership and Community Health from Saint Xavier University in 2003. She's been with CDPH for 28 years and with the Lead Program for more than 7 years. In her free time, she enjoys fine dining, singing and listening to house music.



Andy McMahon

Andy McMahon is a Supervising/Construction Inspector with the Chicago Department of Public Health, bringing over seven years of experience in lead abatement and public health, including three years in a supervisory role. His professional background includes subcontract work with the Chicago Housing Authority from 2011 to 2018, where he served as a quality control supervisor and training manager. Andy holds a BA in Business from Lewis University and multiple credentials, including IDPH Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor, EPA Lead Renovator(RRP), Housing Quality Standards and Uniform Physical Condition Standards certifications."

Over the course of his career, he has conducted hundreds of inspections, developed HUD tracking spreadsheets, and led homeowner workshops to educate residents on lead safety. Andy is deeply committed to protecting Chicago families by building trust with homeowners and ensuring they understand both the risks of lead exposure and the steps needed to create safe living environments. His leadership has contributed to faster inspection turnaround times and stronger program effectiveness across the city.



Kevin Comer

Kevin Comer is a Bond Supervising/ Construction Inspector with the Chicago Department of Public Health, bringing over 31 years of experience in housing safety, lead abatement, and public health. He holds an Associate of Science degree from the Waterford Institute of Technology in Ireland and has built a career defined by leadership, enforcement, and dedication to protecting families across Chicago. Over his career, Kevin has conducted thousands of inspections, served as an expert witness in court cases and successfully consolidated inspection processes to improve efficiency. In 2024, he led the rollout of the City of Chicago's Bond inspection program for lead abatement and Health Healthy Homes, a significant milestone in the city's public health efforts. Currently, he leads inspectors in

the Bond grant department, ensuring projects move from start to finish with accountability and care. Born in Ireland, Kevin also lived in England where he worked as a lab technician at Fuller's Brewery in London before moving to Chicago in 1993. He is a proud husband and father of four, and he finds great joy in helping families transform unsafe homes into healthy environments.



Kert McAfee

I have worked for the Illinois Department of Public Health Lead Program since 2001 and have been the Program Manager since 2012. Prior to that, I worked for one year in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and before that held several jobs briefly in the private sector. I have two Bachelor's Degrees in Environmental Biology and Geography from Eastern Illinois University. My wife, Emily, and I have four children and welcomed our third grandchild in June.



Dr. Olusimbo (Simbo) Ige

Dr. Olusimbo (Simbo) Ige's public health career spans nearly two decades. Before her appointment as the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, she served as the Managing Director of Programs at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Dr. Ige oversaw partnerships with health organizations nationwide working towards making public health and health care systems accountable and equitable. She also previously served as the Assistant Commissioner for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, where she provided oversight to a wide range of programs, including the city's pandemic response, food security programs, housing and health initiatives, mental health programs, violence prevention, and the Public Health Corps initiative.

Dr. Ige received her Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery and her Master of Science in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. She received her Master's in Public Health from the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom.



Lakisha McFadden

Lakisha McFadden is the Chief Executive Officer of Centers for New Horizons, a historic Black-led nonprofit organization serving Chicago's South Side for over 50 years. A Chicago native born and raised in Cabrini Green, McFadden brings more than eight years of leadership within Centers and a lifelong passion for community empowerment. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and Teaching from DePaul University and has extensive experience in nonprofit management, early learning, workforce development, youth programs, and community outreach. Under her leadership, Centers continues to expand its impact through initiatives such as early childhood education, violence interruption, senior services, and the upcoming renovation of the historic Elam House to serve women affected by domestic violence. Recognized for her commitment to both programmatic excellence and strategic growth, McFadden is dedicated to building on Centers' strong foundation while creating new opportunities for families and individuals to thrive.



Hector Gonzalez

Hector Gonzalez is the Director of Construction Services at Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago (NHS), where he has dedicated more than 26 years to advancing safe, healthy, and sustainable housing across the city. With extensive experience in inspection, construction management, and quality control, Hector has overseen countless residential rehabilitation and lead abatement projects, ensuring compliance, safety, and excellence in every phase of construction. He previously served as a Senior Testing Technician at the American Dental Association before joining NHS in 1998. Hector holds a Business Administration degree from Northeastern Illinois University and professional certifications as a BPI Analyst, Envelope Professional, Illinois Home Inspector, and Lead Risk Assessor. Widely respected for his leadership and technical expertise, Hector continues to play a critical role in building healthier homes and stronger communities throughout Chicago.



Maria Oquendo

As the Assistant Commissioner for the Department of Water Management, I'm dedicated to leading impactful projects that ensure safe water delivery for all our communities. I oversee the leaks and breaks lead service line replacement program, having successfully managed nearly 8,000 replacements since 2024. My journey started with the City of Chicago in 2018 as Project Administrator in Meter Services to leading this crucial initiative emphasizes my commitment to enhancing Chicago's water quality through effective contractor, city worker and property owner collaboration.

#WaterManagement #CommunityImpact #Leadsafechicago



Jeffery Reed

Jeff Reed is a Lead Inspector with the Chicago Department of Public Health, specializing in HUD inspections and dedicated to ensuring safe, healthy homes where children and families can thrive. With over 20 years of experience as a proud union carpenter, Jeff brings a deep understanding of construction into his inspection work, using that expertise to oversee projects, guide contractors, and support fellow inspectors with construction-related concerns. Throughout his career, he has taken numerous cases from initial inspection to full compliance — whether through property owner remediation or, his preferred path, securing grant funding to help families achieve lead-safe housing. Born and raised in Chicago, Jeff is a proud Chicagoan who treats every family he serves as his own, demonstrating his

commitment to public health and safety in every inspection.



Dr. Stacy Laurent

Dr. Stacy Laurent is board-certified in pediatrics with clinical and research interests in newborn care, health equity, and resident education. Dr. Laurent is an associate professor of clinical pediatrics at UIC, associate program director for the Pediatrics residency program and the medical director of the mother baby unit. She graduated from medical school at Midwestern University in Glendale, Arizona and completed her pediatrics residency at the Children's Hospital University of Illinois at Chicago.