



The PATH to  
Resiliency,  
Recovery and  
Independence

# Tennessee Statewide Housing and Homeless Services Conference

(A Virtual Conference)

April 23, 2021

Sponsored by



Department of  
**Mental Health &  
Substance Abuse Services**

In Partnership with



**tamho**  
tennessee association of  
mental health organizations

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# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

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## Tennessee Statewide Housing and Homeless Services Conference

*First Annual Conference*

### On Our Way Home

### The PATH to Resiliency, Recovery, and Independence

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), in partnership with the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO), is excited to announce the first annual Tennessee Statewide Housing and Homeless Services Conference! We are so happy to be able to come together in an effective virtual format that, while ensuring everyone is staying safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, provides the convenience of attending right where you are!

The theme for the conference this year is **On Our Way Home: The PATH to Resiliency, Recovery, and Independence**. We hope you join us for a magnificent 1-day event that brings together national, state and local leaders to participate in powerful discussions about various practices, principles and programs that guide our state on the journey toward effective housing outcomes for Tennesseans experiencing mental illness and substance use disorders.

The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services would like to extend their gratitude to every person serving in Housing and Homeless Services programs across the state, and would like to especially recognize the providers and professionals who serve as part of SAMHSA's Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program for the state of Tennessee. Thank you for your commitment, perseverance, compassion, and dedication to positively impact the lives of Tennesseans during their most vulnerable times as they fight against homelessness. We look forward to you using this opportunity to network, learn, share best practices, and expand vital partnerships that facilitate collaboration among all who work to help Tennesseans thrive.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Visit <https://www.tamho.org/tennessee-statewide-housing-and-homeless-services-conference> to access the:

- Link to the conference registration
- Conference Program – Conference Overview; Agenda; Session Descriptions; and, the Session Speaker and Panelist Listings, Photos, and Biographical Sketches
- Continuing Professional Development Details
- Links to the Session Evaluations
- Link to the Request for Documentation of Clock/Contact Hours Earned

# CONFERENCE AGENDA

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**8:15am – 8:45am**

Sign-In and Navigation Time

**8:45am – 10:00am**

OPENING GENERAL SESSION

The PATH to Resiliency, Recovery and Independence  
Homelessness and Health Care

**10:00am – 10:15am**

Break, Platform Navigation, Expo Hall

**10:15am – 11:15am**

- Breakout 1A – Systems Building, Evidence Based Solutions and Best Practices in Addressing and Preventing
- Breakout 1B – Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative: This is the Way

**11:15am – 12:00pm**

Lunch Break, Expo Hall

**12:00pm – 1:00pm**

- Breakout 2A – Don't You Want to Fly? Come SOAR with Us
- Breakout 2B – Hospital to Home: SPMI and Supportive Housing

**1:00pm – 1:15pm**

Break, Expo Hall

**1:15pm – 2:15pm**

- Breakout 3A – Walk A Mile In My Shoes
- Breakout 3B – Data Collection – Your Community's Real Story

**2:15pm – 2:30pm**

Break, Expo Hall

**2:30pm – 3:15pm**

CLOSING GENERAL SESSION

MULTIPLE PATHS, SAME DESTINATION: TELLING OUR OWN STORIES ABOUT THE ROAD TO RESILIENCY, RECOVERY & INDEPENDENCE

**3:15pm**

Adjourn

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

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## OPENING GENERAL SESSION

### The PATH to Resiliency, Recovery and Independence Homelessness and Health Care

HOMELESSNESS AND HEALTH CARE – THIS SESSION WILL PROVIDE AN EXPLORATION OF THE INTERSECTION OF HEALTH CARE, HOMELESSNESS AND EQUITY.

Join our guest speaker Bobby Watts, Executive Director of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (NHCHC) for a look at the relationship between mental illness, health care, and homelessness is steeped in societal inequities that will require structural solutions to solve.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this session, the participants will:

- 1) Understand some of the relationships between homelessness and health;
- 2) Understand some of the causes of mass homelessness;
- 3) Understand some of the structural inequities that lead to and maintain homelessness; and,
- 4) Have learned solutions that promote equity and health and can help end homelessness.

### Breakout 1A – Systems Building, Evidence Based Solutions and Best Practices in Addressing and Preventing Homelessness

BREAKOUT 1A - USING TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE, BEST PRACTICES, AND EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS WITH THE TRANSIENT POPULATION.

Evidence based practices have been implemented from research and proven results. Come hear about evidence-based practices to end and prevent homeless, how to implement successful interventions, and how COVID has impacted the homeless community. You will also learn how to help in the most productive way, by setting goals, building working relationships with community providers, and by knowing what should be in your “toolbox”.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will have:

1. Gained an understanding of a Housing Crisis Resolution System;
2. Become able to identify evidence-based interventions for preventing homelessness; and,
3. Become familiar with best practices and engagement with individuals experiencing homelessness.

### Breakout 1B – Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative: This is the Way

BREAKOUT 1B - CHI PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES FOR CREATION OF HOUSING OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DISORDERS.

The Creating Homes Initiative (CHI) seeks to assertively partner with local communities to educate, inform, and expand quality, safe, affordable, and permanent housing options for people with mental illness, substance use and/or co-occurring disorders. This model for strategic collaboration has enjoyed 20 years of success, leveraging over \$755 million to create more than 25,000 new housing opportunities across Tennessee. How does the CHI team do it?

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will:

1. Have an understanding of the Creating Homes Initiative model and the role of Regional Housing Facilitators;
2. Be able to identify key partnerships for collaboration and elements to sustain lasting, trusting partnerships, and understanding their critical value to the CHI model;
3. Have an understanding of the dynamics between funding sources and the challenges they present; and,
4. Have enhanced their knowledge for connecting with Regional Housing Facilitators in the various regions.

## Breakout 2A – Don't You Want to Fly? Come SOAR with Us

**BREAKOUT 2A – THIS SESSION WILL GO IN-DEPTH ON WHAT SOAR IS, EXPLAIN HOW IT WORKS, AND WHAT SOAR LOOKS LIKE IN TENNESSEE.**

SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) is a national program designed to increase access to the disability income benefits programs administered by the Social Security Administration for eligible adults and children who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or co-occurring substance use disorder. This session will go more in-depth on what SOAR is, explain how it works and what SOAR looks like in Tennessee.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will have:

1. Gained an understanding of what SOAR is and how this process differs;
2. Developed an insight to the benefits of adding SOAR to their service continuum and how to develop a SOAR network; and,
3. Become able to identify the outcomes of SOAR and what SOAR looks like in Tennessee.

## Breakout 3A – Walk A Mile In My Shoes

**BREAKOUT 3A – A REFLECTION OF LIVED EXPERIENCES ON THE JOURNEY TO RECOVERY AND HOUSING.**

Having someone who has been through hardships, diversity and who share a similar story to yours can have the most impact. Hear from those who have experienced homelessness, behavioral health challenges, and learn of their journey to recovery and how they help and encourage others today.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will have:

1. Gained an understanding of what a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist is and the importance of supportive services;
2. Explored and become familiar with the Wellness Services available across Tennessee; and,
3. Developed tools for their own self-care.

## Breakout 2B – Hospital to Home: SPMI and Supportive Housing

**BREAKOUT 2B – NAVIGATING HOUSING OPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SEVERE AND PERSISTENT MENTAL ILLNESS WHO ARE DISCHARGING FROM THE HOSPITAL.**

A serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI) may cause challenges for an individual with their activities of daily living, accessing and maintaining housing, and managing their mental health treatment. Sometimes hospitalization is needed to become stabilized, come learn about the difference between voluntary and involuntary treatment. There is a need for on-going treatment and services after discharge from the hospital. Hear about some of the different enhanced level residential programs in our state and learn about how enhanced services can be implemented to create successful supportive housing for individuals experiencing SPMI.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this session, participants will have:

1. Gained an understanding of SPMI and identifying associated barriers to housing options in the community;
2. Discovered ways to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary hospitalization, and treatment objectives for each to establish appropriate discharge to community living and outpatient care; and,
3. Learned how to advocate for people when their mental illness is the cause of them not being able to obtain housing.

## Breakout 3B – Data Collection -- Your Community's Real Story

**BREAKOUT 3B – A PANEL OF EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS DISCUSSING EFFECTIVE DATA ANALYSIS AS A COMPONENT OF STRATEGICALLY TARGETING RESOURCES.**

Data, in the simplest of terms, is a collection of facts that, if accurate and evaluated effectively, can provide a clear picture of the status of the matter at hand. Quality data gives us useful insight on how to improve our service delivery to the community and design systems that work better than before. This session welcomes a panel of experienced professionals from across the state to discuss effective data analysis methods as a component of strategic targeting of available resources to the most vulnerable. Learn about HUD's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and hear perspectives about the benefit of collecting quality data for optimal service provision to

Tennesseans in need as well as service providers and their communities.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

At the conclusion of this session, participants will have:

1. Learned how local data can assist in designing homeless systems focused on ending homelessness;

2. Discovered how data can provide the necessary information and insight for optimal utilization of existing resources; and,
3. Gained an understanding of the Homeless Information System (HMIS) and its purpose and value to the homelessness landscape in the community.

## **CLOSING GENERAL SESSION**

### **MULTIPLE PATHS, SAME DESTINATION: TELLING OUR OWN STORIES ABOUT THE ROAD TO RESILIENCY, RECOVERY & INDEPENDENCE**

**TELLING OUR OWN STORIES ABOUT THE ROAD TO RESILIENCY, RECOVERY & INDEPENDENCE**

Every one of us has our own personal journey toward greater freedom from the challenges, obstacles and burdens faced in life, a unique story that can deliver an empowering message to inspire others as they begin to write their next chapter. Being a light in the midst of darkness doesn't just illuminate your own path, but the paths of the people around you. Telling these stories of recovery is an essential element of the formula to achieve this independence, and is paramount to controlling the narrative for the benefit of our community. Director of Faith-Based Initiatives Dr. Monty Burks closes out this year's Housing and Homeless Services conference by holding up the torch for resiliency and recovery in the mental health and substance use community, including wellness, housing, and employment. This session is certain to resonate in our spirit and energize our souls as we keep moving closer to our destination!

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe and understand what resilience and recovery means;
2. Understand the significance and value of the personal recovery journey; and,
3. Explain the importance of telling the "Recovery Story" and controlling the narrative!

# SESSION SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS

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## OPENING GENERAL SESSION

### The PATH to Resiliency, Recovery and Independence Homelessness and Health Care



**Neru Gobin**



**Commissioner  
Marie Williams**



**Christy Spangler**



**G. Robert (Bobby) Watts**

## Welcome Remarks

**Neru Gobin**, Director, Office of Housing and Homeless Services, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

**Marie Williams, LCSW**, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

## Speaker Introduction

**Christy Spangler**, Program Manager, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

## Keynote Speaker

**G. Robert (Bobby) Watts, MPH, MS**, Chief Executive Officer, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Nashville, Tennessee

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## Breakout 1A – Systems Building, Evidence Based Solutions and Best Practices in Addressing and Preventing



**Melissa McGee**



**Amber Hampton**



**Beth Shinn**



**Judith Tackett**

## SESSION INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION:

**Melissa McGee, MS**, Director Children's Mental Health Advocacy, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, Nashville, Tennessee

## SESSION PANELISTS:

**Amber Hampton, LMSW**, Program Director, Mental Health America, and, Executive Director, Murfreesboro Cold Patrol, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

**Beth Shinn, PhD**, Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee

**Judith Tackett**, Director of the Homeless Impact Division of Metro Social Services, Nashville, Tennessee

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## Breakout 1B – Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative: This is the Way



**Neru Gobin**



**Jeanne Price**



**Stephanie Bullock**



**Erin Gillylen**

### SESSION INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION:

**Neru Gobin**, Director of Housing and Homeless Services, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

### SESSION PANELISTS:

**Jeanne Price, LCSW**, Director of Regional Housing Facilitators, Frontier Health, Kingsport, Tennessee

**Stephanie Bullock, MS CNP**, CHI 1.0 – Regional Housing Facilitator, Frontier Health, Johnson City, Tennessee

**Erin Gillylen**, CHI 2.0 – Regional Substance Use Housing Facilitator, CAPP Incorporated, Memphis, Tennessee

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## Breakout 2A – Don't You Want to Fly? Come SOAR with Us



**Christy Spangler**



**Dazara Ware**



**Ashley Blum**



**Benjamin P. Quigley**

### SESSION INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION:

**Christy Spangler**, Program Manager, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

### SESSION PANELISTS:

**Dazara Ware, MPC**, Assistant Director, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, Policy Research Associates, Inc., Delmar, New York

**Ashley Blum, LBSW, CPRP**, Director of Homeless Outreach Services, Park Center, Nashville, Tennessee

**Benjamin P. Quigley**, Disability Claims Supervisor 2, Tennessee Disability Determination Services, Nashville, Tennessee

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## Breakout 2B – Hospital to Home: SPMI and Supportive Housing



**Rob Cotterman**



**Chris Loftis**



**Sean McPherson**



**Lacy Hale**

### SESSION INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION:

**Rob L. Cotterman, MS**, Assistant Commissioner for Mental Health Services, Tennessee Department of

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

### SESSION PANELISTS:

**Chris Loftis, MSL**, Director of Hospital Services, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

**Sean McPherson, SPE-HSP**, Chief Clinical Officer, Tennessee Voices, Goodlettsville, Tennessee

**Lacy Hale**, Tennessee Move Initiative, Tennessee Voices, Goodlettsville, Tennessee

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## Breakout 3A – Walk A Mile In My Shoes



**Lisa Ragan**



**Dina Savvenas**



**Hope Reynolds**



**Sheila Patton Daniels**

### SESSION INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION:

**Lisa Ragan, MSSW**, Director, Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

### SESSION PANELISTS:

**Dina Savvenas, MA**, Statewide Peer Wellness Coach, Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO), Nashville, Tennessee

**Hope Reynolds, CPRS**, Recovery Services Care Coordinator, Cherokee Health Services, Knoxville, Tennessee

**Sheila Patton Daniels, CPRS, CADCI**, *Intervention Specialist, Restore Corps, Memphis Tennessee*

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## Breakout 3B – Data Collection -- Your Community's Real Story



**Ariana Postlethwait**



**Will Connelly**



**Rachel Cook**

### SESSION INTRODUCTION AND MODERATION:

**Ariana Postlethwait, MSW, PhD,**  
Professor, Middle Tennessee State  
University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

### SESSION PANELISTS:

**Will Connelly, CEO,** Park Center Nashville, Nashville, Tennessee

**Rachel Cook, MSW,** Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Administrator, Metro  
Nashville-Davidson County, Nashville, Tennessee

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## CLOSING GENERAL SESSION

### MULTIPLE PATHS, SAME DESTINATION: TELLING OUR OWN STORIES ABOUT THE ROAD TO RESILIENCY, RECOVERY & INDEPENDENCE



**Neru Gobin**



**Monty Burks**



**Christy Spangler**

### Introductory Remarks & Speaker Introduction

**Neru Gobin,** Director of Housing and Homeless Services, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

### Closing Keynote Address

**Monty Burks, CPRS, PLC, PhD,** Director of Faith-Based Initiatives, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

### Closing Remarks

**Christy Spangler,** Program Manager, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Nashville, Tennessee

# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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A certificate of continuing professional development for up to 6.00 contact/clock hours will be made available by TAMHO to all participants upon request for documentation of clock/contact hours earned during this conference.

- **National Association of Social Workers, Tennessee Chapter**

TAMHO has been approved by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS, TENNESSEE CHAPTER (Provider Number: NASWTN2021-0042) to provide up to 6.00 continuing education units for this conference. Documentation of hours earned will be provided upon request to participants who have successfully completed the program.

*Professionals in attendance at this conference are encouraged to review Chapter 1365-1 to ensure the workshop they are attending is applicable and appropriate to their professional development. The Tennessee Board of Social Work Certification and Licensure does not pre-approve continuing education programs. It is the responsibility of the LMSW/LCSW, using their professional judgment, to justify that the continuing educational program meets the guidelines of Chapter 1365-1 and is relevant to their professional practice.*

- **Professional Counselors, Marital and Family Therapists, and Clinical Pastoral Therapists**

As stated within the rules and regulations of the State of Tennessee Board for Professional Counselors (0450-01-.12-(5)-(a)-1-vi and vii), Marital and Family Therapists (0450-02-.12-(5)-(a)-1-vi and vii ), and Clinical Pastoral Therapists (0450-03-.12-(5)-(a)-1-vi and vii), the hours approved for this conference by APA and/or NASW are considered pre-approved hours acceptable for submission of documentation for continuing professional development for individuals licensed by this Board

- **Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (LADAC)**

As stated within the rules and regulations of the State of Tennessee Board of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (1200-30-01-.12), TAMHO is considered an authorized entity for continuing education courses, events, and activities related to the practice of alcohol and drug abuse counseling. Individuals are responsible for assessing and determining the appropriateness of session content as relates to LADAC continuing professional development requirements.

- **Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS)**

This event has been approved by the Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialist to provide up to 6.00 contact/clock hours with appropriate conference documentation.

- **Tennessee Certified Family Support Specialist (CFSS)**

This event has been approved by the Tennessee Certified Family Support Specialist to provide up to 6.00 contact/clock hours with appropriate conference documentation.

# SPEAKER AND PANELIST BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

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## OPENING GENERAL SESSION

### The PATH to Resiliency, Recovery and Independence Homelessness and Health Care

**Neru Gobin** | Mr. Gobin serves at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) as the Director of Housing and Homeless Services, an office which provides leadership and management of 12 service delivery programs that collectively provide supportive housing, housing support, and homeless outreach services across Tennessee. In this capacity, Neru also coordinates efforts with the Director of Regional Housing Facilitators, Ms. Jeanne Price, to promote the Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative (CHI) and the Creating Homes Initiative 2.0 (CHI 2.0), and collaborates with a variety of stakeholders to further the statewide efforts to positively impact homelessness and to provide safe, quality, affordable housing opportunities for Tennesseans experiencing mental illness, co-occurring disorders and substance use disorders. Mr. Gobin has previously served as Assistant Director for both the TDMHSAS Office of Housing and Homeless Services and the TDMHSAS Office of Crisis and Suicide Prevention Services, roles in which he was a major contributor to providing oversight of the grant programs and managing the day-to-day operations. His 20 years of professional experience in the behavioral health field also includes service in Tennessee's Crisis Services Continuum as a crisis responder in Middle Tennessee to help Tennesseans during the most vulnerable moments of their lives, many of whom cited homelessness or risk of homelessness as a precipitating factor, to determine the most appropriate means and level of intervention.

Mr. Gobin has participated in a number of presentation opportunities, including nation-wide webinars for the National Housing Conference and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to showcase the Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative and address other critical aspects of mental health services. A native of Chicago, Illinois with family roots from Belize, Central America, Neru earned his Bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign with a degree in Psychology. Neru lives in Clarksville, Tennessee with his wife and is the proud parent of two adult sons.

**Marie Williams, LCSW** | Marie Williams, LCSW, was reappointed Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) by Governor Bill Lee on January 19, 2019. Ms. Williams was initially appointed to the position by Gov. Bill Haslam, effective October 22, 2016.

As Commissioner, Ms. Williams oversees and leads the department in its role as the state's public mental health and substance abuse authority with an annual budget of more than \$450 million. She provides leadership and oversight to 1,849 full-time positions that assist individuals to secure treatment and recovery services for serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbances, and substance abuse disorders. In all, the department serves approximately 350,000 Tennesseans annually. In her role as Commissioner, Ms. Williams has served as a leader in addressing several essential issues facing Tennessee including the opioid crisis, emergency psychiatric services, and criminal justice reform.

Commissioner Williams is the recipient of numerous professional and community awards from national and state groups including the Excellence in Advocacy Individual Achievement Award from the National Council for Behavioral Health, the George Goodman and Ruth P. Brudney National Social Work Award from Mental Health America, the Senator Douglas Henry Award for Service to Children and Families at Risk from the University of Tennessee College of Social Work, the Voice of Recovery

Award from the Tennessee Association of Alcohol Drug and other Addiction Services, and the Tipper Gore Legacy Award from Tennessee Voices for Children. Ms. Williams lives in Nashville, and she is the mother of Nicole Williams.

**Christy Spangler** | Christy Spangler has served at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services in various capacities, first as the Forensic Services Program Coordinator at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute (MTMHI) before serving in her current role as the Program Manager for the Office of Housing and Homeless Services at Central Office. As the State PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) Contact for Tennessee, Ms. Spangler coordinates with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to ensure execution of homeless outreach services within the PATH program are effective and in alignment with Federal guidelines. She also serves as the State Lead for SOAR (SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access, and Recovery) services, working with both national SOAR leaders and state regional coordinators to guide the work in expanding awareness of and access to SOAR services to increase opportunities for successful applications for SSA benefits in Tennessee. Additionally, Ms. Spangler provides leadership, management and oversight of the Department's Intensive Long-Term Support program and the Children and Youth Homeless Outreach Project (CYHOP). Prior to her time at the TDMHSAS, Christy served for six years at Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System as a PATH regional case manager, and then as the regional SOAR Coordinator; in this capacity, she began to establish and nurture partnerships with key community members and stakeholders across the state, in which she has continued to expand to effectively drive program initiatives and strategies at the state level. Christy's experience also includes a three-year term on the HUD Continuum of Care in Rutherford County (Housing, Health, and Human Services Alliance of Rutherford County), during which she served as the Chair of the Service Delivery Subcommittee and the Chair of the Executive Committee. Among her accomplishments with the HUD Continuum of Care, she contributed to the development of the Coordinated Entry System for Rutherford County. Christy earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN

**G. Robert (Bobby) Watts, MPH, MS** | Bobby Watts is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, which supports the 300 federally-funded Health Care for the Homeless programs and 100 Medical Respite providers with training, technical assistance, sharing of best practices, research, publications, and an active policy and advocacy program working to eliminate homelessness.

Bobby has 30 years of experience in administration, direct service, and implementation of homeless health services, beginning as a live-in counselor at the New York City Rescue Mission. He spent most of his career prior to joining the Council at Care for the Homeless, which operates clinics, shelters, and conducts policy analysis and advocacy in NYC, beginning as an intern, and serving as the Executive Director from 2005-2017. Under his tenure, the Federally Qualified Health Center agency tripled in size, adding major programs and initiatives –including constructing and operating a shelter for 200 mentally ill and medically frail women –and becoming licensed as a Diagnostic and Treatment Center in New York State. He has served on numerous boards, government-appointed task forces, and workgroups including serving as the Finance

Officer for the NYC HIV Health and Human Services Planning Council, on the NYS DOH Medicaid Redesign Team's Affordable Housing Workgroup and Value-Based Payment Workgroup on CBOs and Social Determinants of Health and as an inaugural member of the NYS Interagency Council on Homelessness, where he co-chaired its Health Committee. In February 2021, he was appointed as a member of the Biden-Harris Administration's COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force.

He is a graduate of Cornell University and the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health from which he holds a Master's in Public Health in health administration and a Master's of Science in epidemiology. He also earned a Certificate of Theological Studies from Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, NY.

## Breakout 1A – Systems Building, Evidence Based Solutions and Best Practices in Addressing and Preventing

**Melissa McGee, MS** | Melissa McGee is the Children's Mental Health advocacy Director with the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, where she works with statewide partners and advocates to move forward the mental health system for children and families. Melissa received her Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Counseling, Melissa has worked with high school students and their families as a therapist and case manager in both a traditional setting and an alternative learning setting for youth with mental health concerns, as well as a therapist in an adolescent residential setting. She is currently working toward her Licensed Professional Counselor – Mental Health Service Provider designation and is the dissertation phase of her doctoral program in Clinical Counseling at Trevecca in Nashville.

**Amber Hampton, LMSW** | Program Manager, Amber Hampton, graduated summa cum laude with her bachelor's degree in global studies from the honors college at Middle Tennessee State University. During her time in college, she spent her summers in El Salvador working with children in high-risk areas for gang violence. While planning to move to El Salvador full-time, she began building friendships with those experiencing homelessness in her community. It was here that she began to meet and work with survivors of trafficking. She noticed the work to be done in her own community and began working directly on the ground level with those who had experienced trauma.

She worked as the missions and community service coordinator for a non-denominational church in Murfreesboro, where she built partnerships with local nonprofits, built volunteer teams, developed training materials, and led trips to Central and South America. Upon finishing her master's degree, she transitioned into crisis counseling for youth and worked as a medical social worker for Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

She graduated in 2015 from The University of Tennessee College of Social Work with her master's degree in evidence based interpersonal practice and a graduate certificate in the treatment of trauma. She is certified in EMDR and TF-CBT. She currently co-leads Murfreesboro Cold Patrol, a community organization dedicated to working directly to find solutions and build relationships with those experiencing homelessness.

In her spare time, she enjoys running, traveling to visit her friends across the globe, and hanging out in the woods and under bridges with her street family.

**Beth Shinn, PhD** | As a professor at Vanderbilt University, Dr. Marybeth (Beth) Shinn focuses on ways to prevent and end homelessness and create opportunities for groups that face social exclusion.

She is co-principal investigator of the Family Options Study, a 12-site experiment comparing the success of different strategies to house families

experiencing homelessness. Conducted together with colleagues at Abt Associates, the study followed 2,300 families for three years to understand how the strategies affected housing stability, self-sufficiency, family preservation, and adult and child well-being. Beth and students also analyzed qualitative interviews with 80 of the families across four study sites to understand families' experiences in the homeless service system, how they make housing decisions, and why so many parents become separated from their children.

One of Beth's particular areas of expertise is developing tools to predict who among populations in deep poverty and experiencing various forms of psycho-social distress will become homeless. With her students, she has developed targeting models to help New York City direct homeless prevention services available through the HomeBase program to the people most likely to become homeless without them. With colleagues at the Urban Institute, she is also studying whether supported housing can avert child out-of-home placement among families where homelessness contributes to risk.

Past collaborations with community organizations and research institutes include an experimental study of the Pathways Housing First intervention with adults who experience both chronic homelessness and serious mental illness, a survey of older adults in poverty to understand why some become homeless, an evaluation of New York City's street count, and an experiment to determine whether rapid re-housing with transitional services fostered positive outcomes for children who were homeless with their families.

In 2020, along with founding director for the Center on Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness Dr. Jill Khadduri, she co-authored the book [In the Midst of Plenty: Homelessness and What To Do About It](#), which is a powerful delivery to the national community about how to end the homelessness crisis in our country, including strategies and the sharing of solutions that can be applied at all levels, and how to prevent vast numbers of people from reaching the most severe circumstances of homelessness, including sleeping on the streets.

**Judith Tackett** | Judith Tackett is the director of the Homeless Impact Division of Metro Social Services in Nashville, TN. In her position, she works on building cross-sector collaborations with organizations representing the government, nonprofit, and business sectors to build an effective Housing Crisis Resolution System. The Homeless Impact Division serves as the backbone organization to assist partners with implementing a coordinated entry process that prevents homelessness when possible and links individuals, families with children, Veterans, and youth who experience homelessness with housing and services. Since 2018, the Homeless Impact Division also serves as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead for Nashville-Davidson County.

## Breakout 1B – Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative: This is the Way

**Neru Gobin** | Mr. Gobin serves at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) as the Director of Housing and Homeless Services, an office which provides leadership and management of 12 service delivery programs that collectively provide supportive housing, housing support, and homeless outreach services across Tennessee. In this capacity, Neru also coordinates efforts with the Director of Regional Housing Facilitators, Ms. Jeanne Price, to promote the Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative (CHI) and the Creating Homes Initiative 2.0 (CHI 2.0), and collaborates with a variety of stakeholders to further the statewide efforts to positively impact homelessness and to provide safe, quality, affordable housing opportunities for Tennesseans

experiencing mental illness, co-occurring disorders and substance use disorders. Mr. Gobin has previously served as Assistant Director for both the TDMHSAS Office of Housing and Homeless Services and the TDMHSAS Office of Crisis and Suicide Prevention Services, roles in which he was a major contributor to providing oversight of the grant programs and managing the day-to-day operations. His 20 years of professional experience in the behavioral health field also includes service in Tennessee's Crisis Services Continuum as a crisis responder in Middle Tennessee to help Tennesseans during the most vulnerable moments of their lives, many of whom cited homelessness or risk of homelessness as a

precipitating factor, to determine the most appropriate means and level of intervention.

Mr. Gobin has participated in a number of presentation opportunities, including nation-wide webinars for the National Housing Conference and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to showcase the Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative and address other critical aspects of mental health services. A native of Chicago, Illinois with family roots from Belize, Central America, Neru earned his Bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign with a degree in Psychology. Neru lives in Clarksville, Tennessee with his wife and is the proud parent of two adult sons.

**Jeanne Price, LCSW** | In 2002, Jeanne Price, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, started working as a Regional Housing Facilitator in Region 1, representing the eight counties of Northeast Tennessee which include Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi, Sullivan, and Washington counties. In 2017, Mrs. Price accepted the newly created position of Director of Regional Housing Facilitators and has provided training and on-going mentoring to thirteen regional housing facilitators with the Creating Homes Initiative program. While raising two children, Mrs. Price completed her undergraduate degree in Social Work from East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee, and her Master's degree in Social Work and School Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. In 1992, Mrs. Price was hired by Central Appalachian Services which later became Frontier Health as a Housing Developer to locate decent, safe, and affordable housing for clients with mental illness and co-occurring disorders. After leaving this position, Mrs. Price was employed as the Director of Social Services at The Wexford House, a 172-bed nursing home facility in Kingsport, Tennessee. Jeanne provided individual, group, and family therapy to help individuals cope with diseases associated with the geriatric population, the guilt of placing a loved one in nursing home, and the uncertain future of a loved one in frail health. After three years in the nursing home facility, Jeanne started working as Chief Clinician on the Geriatric/Psychiatric unit at Indian Path Medical Center for Horizon Mental Health Management. Discharges from the hospital often proved to be a challenge due to the lack of appropriate housing, lack of finances for the patient, inappropriate behavior of the patient, and the lack of supportive services. Mrs. Price was honored to receive the award for Clinician of the Year in 1999 in the Southeast Region.

**Stephanie Bullock, MS CNP** | In 2017, Stephanie Bullock began serving as the Creating Homes Initiative's Regional Housing Facilitator for Region 1, which covers the upper east portion of Tennessee. Prior to serving in this role, Mrs. Bullock managed four offices while employed as

an Inside Sales Manager at General Shale. Mrs. Bullock graduated from East Tennessee State University in 1997, obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. Inspired by the work performed by nonprofit organizations and evident impact of nonprofit work, Mrs. Bullock earned a Master of Science in Nonprofit Administration from Louisiana State University-Shreveport in 2019. Mrs. Bullock serves on the United Way of Greater Kingsport Senior Vision Council, the United Way of Greater Kingsport Housing Committee, Johnson City Homeless Task Force, and is a member of eight Children Advocacy Boards. By serving as a partner with agencies who create affordable housing units and provide rental assistance to individuals who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness, Mrs. Bullock has contributed to the creation and preservation of 1,281 units of housing for her region and has leveraged funding exceeding 10 million dollars. Additionally, Mrs. Bullock partnered with three agencies to create 20 units of recovery housing, establishing a foundation in Region 1 for the onset of CHI 2.0, the expansion of the Creating Homes Initiative to include housing for Tennesseans in substance use recovery.

**Erin Gillylen** | Ms. Erin Gillylen, serves as the CHI 2.0 Regional Substance Use Housing Facilitator for Region VII. As the CHI 2.0 Regional Substance Use Housing Facilitator for Region VII, to achieve the goal to create new quality, safe, affordable permanent housing for individuals experiencing substance use disorders. Ms. Gillylen has extensive experience in the affordable housing nonprofit sector, Erin continues to build the foundation of her career by working with local nonprofits empowering organizations to become financially self-sustainable. Erin is proud to use her experiences to help create the successes of nonprofits and quasi government entities. With her accounting background, Erin has provided consultations with organizations to assist them with solutions to grow and develop by creating a solid financial foundation. Erin brings extensive experience in private foundation, public organization, and federal level grant writing to this role. Additionally, she has specialized in advising management and nonprofit board of directors on strategy, operations, organizational development, and financial planning.

Throughout her career as a housing specialist, Erin has developed a positive rapport with the City of Memphis' Division of Housing and Community Development, and is also a member of Memphis' HUD Continuum of Care. In her role as the CHI 2.0 Regional Substance Use Housing Facilitator for Region VII she brings her career experience and community relationships to her role at CAAP, Incorporated and the Creating Homes Initiative as CHI 2.0 Regional Substance Use Housing Facilitator for Region VII.

## Breakout 2A – Don't You Want to Fly? Come SOAR with Us

**Christy Spangler** | Christy Spangler has served at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services in various capacities, first as the Forensic Services Program Coordinator at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute (MTMHI) before serving in her current role as the Program Manager for the Office of Housing and Homeless Services at Central Office. As the State PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) Contact for Tennessee, Ms. Spangler coordinates with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to ensure execution of homeless outreach services within the PATH program are effective and in alignment with Federal guidelines. She also serves as the State Lead for SOAR (SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access, and Recovery) services, working with both national SOAR leaders and state regional coordinators to guide the work in expanding awareness of and access to SOAR services to increase opportunities for successful applications for SSA benefits in Tennessee. Additionally, Ms. Spangler provides leadership, management and oversight of the Department's Intensive Long-Term Support program and the Children and Youth Homeless Outreach Project (CYHOP). Prior to her time at the TDMHSAS, Christy served for six years at Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System as a PATH regional case manager, and then as the regional SOAR

Coordinator; in this capacity, she began to establish and nurture partnerships with key community members and stakeholders across the state, in which she has continued to expand to effectively drive program initiatives and strategies at the state level. Christy's experience also includes a three-year term on the HUD Continuum of Care in Rutherford County (Housing, Health, and Human Services Alliance of Rutherford County), during which she served as the Chair of the Service Delivery Subcommittee and the Chair of the Executive Committee. Among her accomplishments with the HUD Continuum of Care, she contributed to the development of the Coordinated Entry System for Rutherford County. Christy earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN

**Dazara Ware, MPC** | Dazara Ware, MPC is the Assistant Director of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center. Her areas of expertise include assisting with the implementation of SOAR in criminal justice settings and reentry plans for state Departments of Corrections facilities. Prior to joining PRA, she served as the State of Georgia's SOAR Program Coordinator and State Team Lead at the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). While there, she led a pilot program to implement SOAR in Georgia's state

hospitals, jails, and prisons to promote successful transitions to community living. Dazara earned her MPC at Argosy University.

**Ashley Blum** | Ashley Blum is a Nashville native and received her bachelor's degree in Social Work from Belmont University in 2006. She is the Director of Park Center's Homeless Outreach Services. Park Center is a non-profit mental health organization in Nashville that empowers people to live and work in their communities. She has been with Park Center since 2007, where she started as a case manager. In 2009 Ashley transitioned onto the Homeless Outreach team where she was one of two SSI/SSDI, Outreach Access and Recovery (SOAR) Coordinators, assisting people obtain disability benefits through the Social Security Administration using the National SOAR process. In 2010, she was chosen to attend the SOAR Train the Trainer training through Policy Research Associates and began building and maintaining the SOAR Network in Nashville, where she continues to play a significant role today. She became the supervisor of the program in 2012 and after growing the program, became the Director. The team has grown to an 18-person team, and Ashley provides oversight to, 3 Supervisors, 4 SOAR Coordinators, 5 Outreach Workers, 3 Housing Navigators and 2 Data staff who work with some of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in Nashville. The team provides outreach to

people experiencing homelessness and outreach to people in the TN State Hospital to help connect them to services to meet their basic needs, like income and insurance through SOAR, SNAP, mental or substance use treatment, employment, and housing. Throughout her career, she has worked very hard to fill gaps in the Nashville community by bringing essential programs to Park Center, like the partnerships with hospitals and clinics to provide outreach medical and mental health care to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Nashville. One of her favorite accomplishments in this work, is that she has been part of assisting over 1,000 people experiencing homelessness access disability benefits and insurance through SOAR, since 2009, in an average of 51 days.

**Benjamin P. Quigley** | Ben Quigley is a regional director at Disability Determination Services for the state of Tennessee. He provides oversight to 6 units of social security disability examiners including multiple examiners that specialize in SOAR claims. As an examiner he also processed SOAR claims for approximately 3 years. He is the primary contact at the TN DDS for SOAR claims. He earned his degree at Western New England University in Massachusetts.

## Breakout 2B – Hospital to Home: SPMI and Supportive Housing

**Rob L. Cotterman, MS** | Rob Cotterman is a 35 year veteran of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, having dedicated service to Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute in Chattanooga, Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute, and the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS). Rob has served as a Psychiatric Technician, Rehabilitation Therapist and Supervisor, Program Director, Assistant Superintendent for Program Services, Chief Executive Officer, Director of Hospital Services and most recently Assistant Commissioner of Mental Health Services. In addition to his responsibilities with TDMHSAS, Rob has served as an Ancillary Professor in the Graduate School of Psychology for the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, a Day Treatment Counselor for the former Fortwood Center, and as an organizational development consultant. Rob is a graduate of Tennessee Government Executive Institute and holds a Master of Science degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Rob has served on the Board of Directors for several community organizations, including the AIM Center, Hamilton County Homeless Healthcare Center, and Hamilton County Mental Health Court Advisory Board. Rob lives in La Vergne where he and his partner spoil their two toy poodles.

State. Chris is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) and holds a Bachelor's in Psychology. In addition, Chris is pursuing a Masters of Science in Leadership (MSL) from Austin Peay State University (APSU) with an anticipated graduation date of December 2021.

**Sean McPherson, SPE-HSP** | Sean McPherson, has joined TN Voices as the Chief Clinical Officer. He has 18 years of experience in the behavioral health field serving as a Case Manager, Therapist, Diagnostician and Administrator having worked in residential youth care, community mental health and prison mental health. Sean specializes in work with the severe and persistent mentally ill, program development, crisis management and innovative treatment approaches. He earned his Bachelor's of Science in Psychology from David Lipscomb University, a Master's in Counseling Psychology from Trevecca University and is currently licensed as Senior Psychological Examiner.

**Chris Loftis, MSL** | Chris Loftis has worked with the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) for the past 7 years both in Central Office and with Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute (MTMHI). Chris has held many positions during his tenure with the Department including; Program Coordinator for Admissions at MTMHI, Forensics Services Coordinator at MTMHI, Forensic Services Director at MTMHI, and more recently, Director for the Division of Hospital Services in Central Office. Prior to working with the TDMHSAS, Chris began his career as a Case Manager in the community providing services to people with severe and persistent mental illnesses. Chris was also employed at Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital as a Mental Health Specialist and later served as their Discharge Planning Coordinator before transitioning to the

**Lacy Hale** | Lacy Hale is with TN Voices as the Tennessee Move Initiative (TMI) Program Manager with their adult services program. She has been in this field for 6 years and has been with the TMI Middle Tennessee team since it started in December 2016 as the care coordinator. Due to the success of her team the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services decided to increase the Middle Tennessee TMI team to two teams. Lacy works with the severe and persistent mentally ill, with crisis management, finding appropriate housing and connecting members to community resources. Her and her team are on-call 24/7 for the members they support. Prior to working in this field, she worked with Community Options a provider agency with the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for 12 years in various roles including DSP, Program Manager, Supported Employment Specialist, and Residential Coordinator.

## Breakout 3A – Walk A Mile In My Shoes

**Lisa Ragan, MSSW** | Lisa Ragan is the Director of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services for Tennessee's Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Ms. Ragan joined the Department in 2005 and was promoted to Director in 2008. She manages \$8 million in state contracts for peer support programs, oversees the state certification program for Certified Peer Recovery Specialists, and supervises a staff of advocates who operate the Department's Helpline. As a person living a life of recovery from mental health challenges, Ms. Ragan says that she did not know life without depression and anxiety until she began her own

recovery in her late twenties. A volunteer experience on a suicide hotline inspired her to abandon a career in publishing to pursue a master's degree in social work. Upon graduation from the University of Tennessee's College of Social Work, she received the Chancellor's Award for Professional Promise. Ms. Ragan is thrilled to have found a niche in state government that allows her to serve Tennesseans statewide. Her passion and vision for the future of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists in Tennessee fuels her work every day.

**Dina Savvenas, MA** | Dina Savvenas, a Johnson City, TN native, is a CPRS and a CPRS Trainer. She holds two Bachelor's Degrees in Psychology & Philosophy and an MA in Storytelling from ETSU. She began working at Frontier Health as a Peer Wellness Coach for the TDMHSAS Wellness Initiative My Health My Choice My Life in 2015. She received several honors in this position, including the "Advocate of the Year" award at the 2018 Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Conference in Manchester, TN. Dina began serving as the Statewide Peer Wellness Coach & Trainer in November, 2018, and she is committed to serving peers receiving services in the state of Tennessee and also to her team of Peer Wellness Coaches, and she serves currently as the Consumer Advisory Board Chair and President of the Tennessee Association of Peer Specialists. Dina is personally committed to wellness, enjoys acting and theatre, watercolor arts, belly dance, drumming, and being active in the great outdoors.

**Hope Reynolds, CPRS** | Hope Reynolds, Knoxville, TN, is a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist at Cherokee Health Systems. She has worked at CHS for nearly 4 years and is a key component in the addiction services offered there. She is a person in long term recovery who is passionate about helping others' find sobriety as well. She has recently been promoted to Recovery Services Care Coordinator at Cherokee and is now

## Breakout 3B – Data Collection -- Your Community's Real Story

**Ariana Postlethwait** | Ariana Postlethwait, MSW, PhD, is a Professor in the Department of Social Work at Middle Tennessee State University. She has expertise in program evaluation and teaches multiple courses in research and data analysis. Her students work with local social service agencies by analyzing agency data and producing reader-friendly findings for the agency's use. Dr. P is also Board President of the Murfreesboro Cold Patrol.

**Will Connelly** | Will Connelly is the CEO of Park Center, Inc., a nonprofit mental health organization in Nashville, TN, that provides affordable housing, employment services, street outreach, and other supports to empower people in their journeys in recovery. Prior to joining Park Center, Will helped build systems to end homelessness in Denver, CO, as the Executive Director of the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, a seven-county Continuum of Care. As ED there, Will helped raise enough money and political will to create a statewide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and governance structure. Will was also the Director of the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission (now called the Metro Homeless Impact Division) in Nashville under two mayors, and has worked for two federal technical assistance (TA) centers funded by SAMHSA – the Service Members, Veterans and their Families TA Center (focused on suicide

charged with ensuring there are no gaps in care for patients and that the addition services offered all mesh well.

**Sheila Patton Daniels, CPRS, CADCI** | Restore Corps is West Tennessee's first point of contact for human trafficking victims. They work closely with FBI, TBI and MPD to keep trafficking victims safe and to put traffickers behind bars. She has been the Intervention Specialist for 5 years at Restore Corps. She walks along-side trafficking victims helping them gain control of their lives. Traffickers often target victims of homelessness in that vulnerable state and through coercion and deception victimize them even more. Mrs. Daniels is a recovering addict and survivor of trafficking and knows too well the problems that come through homelessness. She works hard to help victims with Restore Corps wrap-around services that include trauma therapy, IOP, life skills training, therapy with a licensed therapist, recovery guidance, and educational components. Restore Corps also has two residential safe houses. One is long-term 9 months to a year (6 Survivor) and then a short-term residence (5 Survivors). Restore Corps partners with other organizations depending on survivor needs. Mrs. Daniels has a network of recovery organizations that work closely with her and Restore Corps to keep survivors from sleeping on the streets.

prevention) and the SOAR TA Center (increasing access to SSI/SSDI for people experiencing homelessness). Will is a street outreach worker by trade and has led multidisciplinary street-based teams in Nashville and D.C. He is also a proud co-founder of the street newspaper, The Contributor, and has organized multiple street-based foot health clinics.

**Rachel Cook** | Rachel Cook is the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Administrator for the Nashville-Davidson County Continuum of Care. In this role, she is responsible for oversight and management of data and reporting for Nashville's homeless service agencies. Before joining the Metro Homeless Impact Division, Rachel earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Pepperdine University and a master's in Social Work from the University of Tennessee. Prior to honing her interests and skills in data management and reporting, Rachel held roles in a range of homelessness services agencies including drop-in center, transitional shelter, and domestic violence emergency shelter settings. These experiences provided invaluable insight and lit the path for her growing interest in data's important role in ending homelessness. Rachel is particularly interested in capacity building, expanding Nashville's homeless services' data collection efforts, making data make sense, and producing creative and actionable reports.

## CLOSING GENERAL SESSION

### MULTIPLE PATHS, SAME DESTINATION: TELLING OUR OWN STORIES ABOUT THE ROAD TO RESILIENCY, RECOVERY & INDEPENDENCE

**Christy Spangler** | Christy Spangler has served at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services in various capacities, first as the Forensic Services Program Coordinator at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute (MTMHI) before serving in her current role as the Program Manager for the Office of Housing and Homeless Services at Central Office. As the State PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) Contact for Tennessee, Ms. Spangler coordinates with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to ensure execution of homeless outreach services within the PATH program are effective and in alignment with Federal guidelines. She also serves as the State Lead for SOAR (SSI/SSDI, Outreach, Access, and Recovery) services, working with both national SOAR leaders and state regional coordinators to guide the work in expanding awareness of and access to SOAR services to increase opportunities for successful applications for SSA benefits in Tennessee. Additionally, Ms. Spangler provides leadership, management and oversight of the Department's Intensive Long-Term Support program and the Children and Youth

Homeless Outreach Project (CYHOP). Prior to her time at the TDMHSAS, Christy served for six years at Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System as a PATH regional case manager, and then as the regional SOAR Coordinator; in this capacity, she began to establish and nurture partnerships with key community members and stakeholders across the state, in which she has continued to expand to effectively drive program initiatives and strategies at the state level. Christy's experience also includes a three-year term on the HUD Continuum of Care in Rutherford County (Housing, Health, and Human Services Alliance of Rutherford County), during which she served as the Chair of the Service Delivery Subcommittee and the Chair of the Executive Committee. Among her accomplishments with the HUD Continuum of Care, she contributed to the development of the Coordinated Entry System for Rutherford County. Christy earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN

**Monty Burks, CPRS, PLC, PhD** / Monty Burks, CPRS, PLC, PhD, serves as the Director of Faith-Based Initiatives for the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, where his role is engaging

and connecting Tennessee's faith communities to the behavioral health care system, with the goal of expanding addiction and mental health support services across the state. He also oversees the Tennessee Lifeline Peer Project, a state program aimed at reducing the stigma associated with people who suffer from addiction and the Tennessee Faith Based Community Coordinators, whom seek to help congregations build their capacity to combat addiction and mental health issues in their respective community. Dr. Burks earned his master's degree in criminal justice from Middle Tennessee State University, his Doctorate in theology from Heritage, and wears the honorable badge of Certified Peer Recovery Specialist. Burks has more than 20 years' experience working with the criminal justice system in various roles, including adjunct criminal justice professor at Motlow State Community College, Criminal Justice Student Research Analyst at Middle Tennessee State University, and Criminal Justice Program coordinator and adjunct professor at Tennessee State University. Previously, Dr. Burks served as a program coordinator, job placement specialist, and cognitive skills instructor with Middle Tennessee Rural Reentry, earning national recognition as the "Outstanding Professional of the Year" from the Southern Criminal Justice Association for helping ex-offenders break down employment barriers. Dr. Burks belongs to several professional organizations including the Tennessee Supreme Court: Access to Justice Commission, Tennessee Government Leadership Council, Southern Criminal Justice Association (SCJA), Child Development and Family Studies Advisory Board (MTSU), Meharry Vanderbilt Faith Alliance, Congregational Health Network (CHEN), and The Davidson County Behavioral Health Advisory Committee (BWAC). In his spare time, Dr. Burks practices and teaches Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Mixed Martial Arts, and Muay Thai kickboxing. Utilizing martial arts as a platform to discuss, promote, and engage diverse communities on the conversations around mental health and emotional fitness!

**Neru Gobin** | Mr. Gobin serves at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) as the Director of

Housing and Homeless Services, an office which provides leadership and management of 12 service delivery programs that collectively provide supportive housing, housing support, and homeless outreach services across Tennessee. In this capacity, Neru also coordinates efforts with the Director of Regional Housing Facilitators, Ms. Jeanne Price, to promote the Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative (CHI) and the Creating Homes Initiative 2.0 (CHI 2.0), and collaborates with a variety of stakeholders to further the statewide efforts to positively impact homelessness and to provide safe, quality, affordable housing opportunities for Tennesseans experiencing mental illness, co-occurring disorders and substance use disorders. Mr. Gobin has previously served as Assistant Director for both the TDMHSAS Office of Housing and Homeless Services and the TDMHSAS Office of Crisis and Suicide Prevention Services, roles in which he was a major contributor to providing oversight of the grant programs and managing the day-to-day operations. His 20 years of professional experience in the behavioral health field also includes service in Tennessee's Crisis Services Continuum as a crisis responder in Middle Tennessee to help Tennesseans during the most vulnerable moments of their lives, many of whom cited homelessness or risk of homelessness as a precipitating factor, to determine the most appropriate means and level of intervention.

Mr. Gobin has participated in a number of presentation opportunities, including nation-wide webinars for the National Housing Conference and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to showcase the Tennessee Creating Homes Initiative and address other critical aspects of mental health services. A native of Chicago, Illinois with family roots from Belize, Central America, Neru earned his Bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign with a degree in Psychology. Neru lives in Clarksville, Tennessee with his wife and is the proud parent of two adult sons.