**2022 New York Statewide Early Intervention Meeting Speaker Bios**

**Bureau of Early Intervention**

***Raymond Pierce, Director, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYSDOH***

Ray Pierce is the Director of the Early Intervention Program in New York State which serves nearly 70,000 children and families.  He has over 20 years of experience helping people with disabilities to live independently in the community with appropriate services and supports.  His previous experience includes working at state rehabilitation and developmental disability agencies in NYS and Massachusetts.  In the nonprofit world, he enjoyed assisting people to access public benefits, employment, housing, and health care.  A Binghamton University graduate, Mr. Pierce concentrated his studies in human development, public administration, and leadership.

***Peter Baran, Associate Director, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYSDOH***

Pete is an Associate Director for the Bureau of Early Intervention and has been at the Department of Health for over three years.  He earned his Master of Public Administration at the University at Albany – Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy before working as a fiscal analyst at the NYS Senate Finance Committee.  After his time at the NYS Senate, Pete worked as Associate Budget Examiner with the NYS Division of the Budget for 11 years.

***Yan Wu, Associate Director, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYSDOH***

Yan is the Associate Director of the Bureau of Early Intervention and the IDEA Part C Data Manager for NY.  She has worked in the Bureau of Early Intervention since 2014.  She has a MS degree in Computer Science and Ph.D. degree in Statistics and Biometry from the University at Albany.

***Michael Iorio, Early Intervention Specialist, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYSDOH***

Michael is currently serving as an Early Intervention Specialist in the New York State Department of Health’s Bureau of Early Intervention (BEI) as the Manager of the Information Systems and Quality Improvement Unit teams. He has been actively involved working in the Early Intervention Program for over 19 years initially for a local municipal public health department then a provider agency prior to joining BEI. He received his Bachelor of Science majoring in Social Work from the College of Saint Rose.

***Ken Moehringer, Health Program Administrator, Fiscal Planning and Policy Unit, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYSDOH***

Ken Moehringer earned his Masters of Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison before working as a Senior Budget Examiner with the NYS Division of the Budget and as Chief Budgeting Analyst with the Department of Environmental Conservation. Ken has worked in the Bureau of Early Intervention since 2014 as a Health Program Administrator and oversees the Fiscal Planning and Policy Unit.

***Jessica Simmons Training, Technical Assistance, and Quality Improvement/SSIP Unit Manager, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYSDOH***

Jessica has been involved with the EIP for over 16 years. She has worked for the Bureau of Early Intervention for 10 years as an Early Intervention Specialist. Currently, she is the Training, Technical Assistance, and Quality Improvement/SSIP Unit Manager.

***Lauren Miller, Research Scientist, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYSDOH***

Lauren is a Research Scientist in the Bureau of Early Intervention. She earned her master’s and Ph.D. in Social Psychology at Syracuse University. Lauren currently analyzes data used for federal and grant deliverables for the Early Intervention Program and the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program.

***Zahra Alaali, EHDI Coordinator, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYSDOH***

Zahra has been working for the Bureau of Early Intervention since February 2021. She provides oversight of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program’s operations, activities, and contracts. Prior to that, Zahra worked for 5 years with the Division of Epidemiology at the New York State Department of Health. Zahra has a Master of Public health with a concentration in Health Policy from the University at Albany.

***Bin Zhu, Data and Program Evaluation Unit Manager, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYSDOH***

Bin has been working with the NYS Department of Health for over 20 years. He joined the Data Unit in the Bureau of Early Intervention in August 2018 as a data analyst. He has a M.S. degree in Statistics and Biometry and Ph.D. degree in Earth Science from the University at Albany. Currently, Bin is the Data and Program Evaluation Unit Manger.

**Public Consulting Group**

***Rob Lillpopp, Director of Operations and EI-Hub Project Manager, Public Consulting Group***

Rob Lillpopp is a media marketing and communications professional offering 20+ years of proven ability meeting diverse and ever-changing external and internal communications and marketing needs within various Business, Labor, State Government, Not-for-profit and Private Industry settings. He is highly successful in designing and implementing cost-effective, creative and influential marketing, communications and public relations strategies that generate revenue, improve retention and expand internal buy-in, media coverage and market share. He served as a PIO, communication staff person and project manager for two New York Governors.  In Addition to communication and marketing skills, Rob has a great deal of experience in project management and implementation. He currently serves as the Project Manager and Senior Operation Director for PCG with the New York Department of Health Early Intervention program. In that role he manages more than 50 FTEs for a system that bills and process more than 8 million payments worth more than $700 million annually. He has managed and helped implement Debit Card, EBT and direct deposit services for state and municipalities across the nation.

***Paula Van Meter, Assistant Director of Operations and Assistant EI-Hub Project Manager, Public Consulting Group***

Paula Van Meter, MS AAPC COC, is a successful healthcare operation professional with 20+ years in the industry.  Her knowledge and experience related to complex medical record review, improvement of processes and coding matters has been gained through years of working on the provider, state contractor, state and federal levels.  She possesses a knowledge base in the areas of rehabilitation services for children - familiar with their medical, therapeutic and equipment needs.  This knowledge combined with years of preauthorization, utilization review, and resolution of complex billing issues related to Medicaid services for children allows her to produce high quality work and outcomes for the SFA.  Ms.  Van Meter has successfully developed, implemented and managed Medicaid preauthorization programs and coordinated large scale coding changes in operations and systems.  As a former Commonwealth of Virginia employee, she evaluated and resolved complex provider billing issues resulting in continued provider participation and positive provider relationships. She Currently serves as PCG’s Deputy Project Manager for the New York State Department of Health’s Early Intervention fiscal agent.

***Ryan White, Senior Manager of Communications, Public Consulting Group***

Ryan White, a Communications Manager at PCG, leads the communications and change management activities for PCG’s engagement with the Bureau of Early Intervention. Mr. White’s expertise is public sector communications and change management – bridging the gap between stakeholders and state agencies with creative strategies and meaningful messaging. He has worked with a variety of Health and Human Services agencies across the country, primarily in the areas of early education and childcare, aging and disability services, and child welfare. Prior to joining PCG, Mr. White held positions in the New York State Governor’s Office and the New York State Division of the Budget. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Rochester and holds a Prosci® Change Management Practitioner Certification.

***Lauren Zelinsky, Change Management and Communications Specialist, Public Consulting Group***

Lauren Zelinsky, a Change Management and Communications Specialist, has over ten years of experience working with non-profit and government organizations. Ms. Zelinsky’s expertise is working with clients to understand their pain points and communications needs and devising strategies to promote positive reasons for change. Most recently, Ms. Zelinsky has been supporting communications for the implementation of the EI-Hub Solution. Prior to joining PCG, Ms. Zelinsky held positions within the Mayo Clinic and Penn Medicine Healthcare Systems. She has a Bachelor of Arts in History Education from Montclair State University and holds a Prosci® Change Management Practitioner Certification.

***Courtney Pittman, Lead Training and Curriculum Specialist, Public Consulting Group***

Courtney Pittman serves as the Lead Training and Curriculum Specialist with Public Consulting Group. With 13 years of experience in the education sector, Ms. Pittman specializes in curriculum development, program evaluation, and instructional technology. Having lent her skillset to organizations such as Blue Cross and Arizona State University and contributed her expertise to several leading training publications including the Association for Talent Development (ATD) and Training Magazine, Ms. Pittman is inspired to impact educational, community, and health-based initiatives. Ms. Pittman earned her Master’s degree in Education with a dual certification in Adult and Community Education from the Johns Hopkins University and holds a Bachelor of Arts from Georgetown University.

**Panelists**

***Jessica Diabo, Sr. Assistant Health Services Coordinator & Early Intervention Official Designee, Monroe County Department of Public Health***

Jessica Diabo is an EIOD and supervisor for Early Intervention within the Monroe County Department of Public Health.  She believes that emotional and developmental help early on makes a difference for young children.  In addition to her work with families, she has training in Infant Mental Health and is currently assisting with her departments path to being Trauma informed.  When not at work, she enjoys spending time with her children.

***Heather Withall, MS,CCC-SLP, Evaluation Team Representative/Human Resources Manager, Bright Start Pediatric Services***

Heather Withall, MS, CCC-SLP is a Speech-Language Pathologist with 26 years of professional experience across the lifespan. She has been employed by Bright Start Pediatric Services for 16 years and is currently a supervisor in the Speech/Language Department as well as an Evaluation Team Representative. Most recently, Heather has added the role of Human Resource Manager to her responsibilities at Bright Start. She is passionate about early intervention and mentoring professionals in her field. Heather’s primary professional interests include motor-speech and orofacial myofunctional disorders.

***Scott Mesh, PhD, CEO/Co-Founder, Los Ninos Services***

Scott co-founded Los Ninos with fellow bilingual psychologist Edita Diaz in 1998 to serve the underserved bilingual population in New York City and Westchester. They now serve all communities in NYC & Westchester and maintain centers in Valhalla and Hawthorne. They serve about 2000 young children a year, mainly through the Early Intervention program and provide Service Coordination, Evaluations, Home and Center Services. Scott's specialty is assessment and he co-wrote A Practical Guide to Early Childhood Assessment. They also produce the Young Child Expo & Conference.

***Jo Ann Schallert, Family Services Specialist, Otsego County Department of Health***

JoAnn began her career at the Department of Social Services where she worked as a caseworker for 9 years.  She then transferred to the Health Department to become an EI Service Coordinator.  She has served the children and families of Otsego County for over 30 years.

***Lidiya Lednyak, Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Early Intervention, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene***

Lidiya Lednyak is the Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Early Intervention in the Division of Family and Child Health. In this role, she leads a staff of 240 and a program that provides services to approximately 30,000 NYC children ages birth to three with developmental delays or disabilities each year.

Lidiya’s interest in disability advocacy began with her work at the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, where she developed a commitment to equity for individuals with developmental disabilities. She has been with the Department for more than 12 years, and with the Bureau of Early Intervention for 9 years. In her most recent role as the Bureau’s Senior Director of Policy and Program Initiatives, Lidiya created policies governing not only the work of the Bureau’s five Regional Offices, but also of the 165 contracted agencies and 8,500 teachers and therapists who provide EI services to NYC children. This included engaging stakeholders to enact changes to State and Federal regulations, Public Health Law, the New York City Charter, and New York City Health Code.  She also initiated partnerships with six NYC-area universities to develop specialties and certificate programs to improve EI service delivery and expand service capacity in NYC. Most recently, Lidiya has advanced the Bureau’s equity agenda through new partnerships with community organizations, collective impact projects, hospital systems, and other child serving agencies.

Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic Lidiya has led the Bureau’s response and recovery efforts which has included shifting policy and service delivery models, developing, and disseminating clinical guidance to ensure continuity of care for the children and families currently in the Program and those yet to be referred. Her approach to pandemic response and program recovery has been data-driven and stakeholder informed.

Lidiya holds a B.A. in Political Science from the State University of New York at Albany, a master’s degree in Public Law and Policy from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy and a Juris Doctorate from the City University of New York School of Law.

**Other Speakers**

***Mike Royster, MD, MPH, FACPM, Senior Vice President, Institute for Public Health Innovation***

Dr. Royster’s career has spanned clinical medicine, environmental epidemiology, community health, health policy, health equity and racial justice. He is currently the Senior Vice President for the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI), a member of the National Network of Public Health Institutes. Prior to IPHI, he served in various public health positions: Director of the VDH Office of Health Equity, Director of the Crater Health District, President of the Virginia Public Health Association, epidemiologist for the Environmental Protection Agency, and post-doctoral fellow in the W.K. Kellogg Community Health Scholars Program. He completed undergraduate training at the University of Virginia, medical school at Duke University, public health training and residency at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and he is a fellow of the American College of Preventive Medicine.

***Christine R. Stewart, MPH, Senior Program Manager, Institute for Public Health Innovation***

Christine Stewart has 20 years of experience within public health, with experience with diverse stakeholders, from Federal and State agencies, to Federally-Qualified Health Centers and Community-Based Organizations. Ms. Stewart has been with Institute for Public Health Innovation since 2013, and currently serves as a Senior Program Manager. While at IPHI, Ms. Stewart has worked on programs sponsored by the DC Department of Health and led IPHI’s partnership with the DC Health Benefit Exchange where she helped design and administer the DC Health Link health insurance Assistor and Navigator programs. Additionally, Ms. Stewart has provided backbone support for coalitions, and has managed implementation of IPHI community health worker (CHW) initiatives. More recently, Christine has coordinated emergency response team training in Fairfax County, Virginia and provides oversight to a HRSA-funded CHWs and COVID-19 initiative in Washington, DC, and Prince George's County, Maryland, and a newly awarded HRSA CHW training program. Over the last three years, Ms. Stewart has been part of IPHI’s health equity training and technical assistance team. She also serves as the co-chair for the Prince George's County Healthcare Action Coalition (PGHAC) Health in All Policies (HiAP) subcommittee of the Health Equity workgroup.

Ms. Stewart earned a Bachelor of Science in Community Health Education from University of Maryland and a Masters of Public Health in Health Policy from George Washington University. She is currently working on a graduate certificate in Systems Thinking.

***Cynthia Stewart, MS, Ramirez June Developmental Disabilities Navigator, NYS Office for New Americans***

Cynthia Stewart, M.S. is the Ramirez June Developmental Disabilities Navigator at the NYS Office for New Americans (NYS ONA). Leading the ONA Ramirez June Initiative, Cynthia builds capacity at the state level for new Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families to connect with vital resources, information, and services in New York State. Cynthia has a Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling and has provided therapy for individuals with I/DD as a clinical intern. As a direct support professional for the ARC Mid-Hudson, she has supported individuals with I/DD to achieve their goals.

***Susan Strum, PhD, Associate Professor and Program Director of Graduate Inclusive Early Childhood & Childhood Education Programs, Rochester Scholars for Early Intervention, Nazareth College***

Dr. Susan Sturm has degrees in childhood education, library and information sciences, and curriculum and instruction. She has taught grades one through three in public elementary schools in New York State and has conducted research into early childhood literacy curricula in Kindergarten and first grade classrooms. She is the Program Director of the graduate inclusive early childhood and childhood education programs at Nazareth College where she also teaches undergraduate and graduate courses and supervises students in fieldwork. Susan’s teaching is focused on early childhood and childhood literacy and assessment as well as methods for instruction in English language arts and diversity, equity, and inclusion in education. Susan also Co-Direct Project RISE where she facilitates the reflective practice seminar and oversees the curriculum.

***Lisa Hiley PhD, CCC-SLP Associate Professor, Coordinator of the Developing Child and Families Minor in Communication Sciences & Disorders, Rochester Scholars for Early Intervention, Nazareth College***

Dr. Lisa Hiley is an associate professor at Nazareth College in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Lisa is Nazareth’s coordinator of the ‘Developing Child and Families’ minor, co-advisor on the 'Child Life Specialist Track,' and the Co-Director of Project RISE. Lisa teaches undergraduate and graduate coursework in speech-language acquisition, child language disorders, methods of evaluation and both language and phonological disorders classes; further, Lisa supervises teams of undergraduate and graduate student clinicians in clinical fieldwork across the Rochester community. Within Project RISE Lisa facilitates the Planning for Change seminar and serves as the community-partner liaison.

***Debbie Cheatham, RN, MS, DNP, Senior Policy Technical Assistance Specialist, ZERO TO THREE***

Debbie Cheatham is a Senior Technical Assistance (TA) Specialist at ZERO TO THREE. Debbie supports the National Institute for Child Health Quality (NICHQ) to implement the HRSA Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network Coordination Center (ECCS CoIIN CC).

In her current role as Senior TA Specialist, Dr. Cheatham assists NICHQ with developing content and providing training and technical assistance to ECCS Impact grantees and CoIIN teams. The project includes 12 grantee states and 28 place-based communities, and it aims to increase the developmental skills of children at age 3 via thematic webinars, communities of practice, developing written materials and assisting in the planning, coordinating, and facilitating in-person and virtual meetings of the grantees.

Prior to her work with ECCS, Debbie served as a Resource Specialist, Project LAUNCH, for the National Resource Center on Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention at ZERO TO THREE, and provided technical assistance and support to state and territorial grantees and served as the subject matter expert on developmental screening and assessment, one the five required strategy areas for LAUNCH.

Prior to joining ZERO TO THREE, Dr. Cheatham served as the Clinical Director of the Office of Child Health at the Georgia Department of Public Health, and the Title V funded Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Director. Before moving to Georgia, Dr. Cheatham served as a Health Planning Administrator for the Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Early Intervention Services, where she managed many early childhood programs including the Part C early intervention program of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Dr. Cheatham received her BSN and DNP from Vanderbilt University; and, MS in Nursing from The Ohio State University. She has over 30 years of nursing

***Andy Gomm, MSW, Consultant, ECTA Center***

Andy Gomm, MSW, is a leader in early intervention, with a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of East London, and has worked in early intervention in Arizona and New Mexico, where he was state director (IDEA Part C Coordinator) for over 20 years. Andy is a past President of the IDEA and has presented at numerous national conferences. Andy played a key role in the creation of the new Early Childhood Education and Care Department in New Mexico before leaving to provide early childhood consulting for states and municipalities. Andy's work with ECTA has included helping develop the TA response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the promotion of tele-intervention and he is facilitating a cross-agency workgroup (with the Alliance for Advancement in IMH, ITCA, NCCP, NCPMI, Georgetown University and Zero To Three) to promote Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) policies and practices in early intervention to support the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers within the context of the parent-child relationship. Andy is also a consultant with Public Consulting Group (PCG) working with states on a variety of early learning and care systems issues.

***Evelyn F. Shaw, MEd, Technical Assistance Specialist, Early Childhood TA Center, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, UNC-Chapel Hill***

Evelyn Shaw, MEd, is a technical assistance specialist at FPG where she works on the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center, providing technical assistance to the CDC team supporting the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Functional Outcomes Committee to support collaboration with Part C regarding data sharing to improve outcomes for deaf or hard-of-hearing young children. She is the topic specialist on ASD and early identification and works on issues related to child find and use of data to target improvements and currently is a senior advisor on an OSEP funded child find demonstration project, Child Find Access. She has worked in technical assistance more than 30 years. Her research interests focus on the translation of research on evidence-based interventions and practices to fidelity of implementation of these practices at multiple levels (e.g., home, community, provider, program, state). She has worked on multiple projects at FPG related to autism spectrum disorders.