

Presenter Biographies

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Catherine Vladutiu

Senior Epidemiologist
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)

Dr. Catherine Vladutiu is a Senior Epidemiologist in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). In this role, she provides substantive and methodological expertise and leadership in maternal health and perinatal epidemiology. She also provides scientific leadership and consultation on performance measurement, program evaluation, and other data and research-related needs for MCHB's maternal health investments.

Dr. Vladutiu has contributed to several federal initiatives on maternal health, such as the *Surgeon General's Call to Action to Improve Maternal Health* and the *White House Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis*. She has received numerous federal awards for her maternal health work.

Dr. Vladutiu has conducted epidemiologic research pertaining to women's and maternal health for over twenty years and has published more than 80 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. She has a PhD in Epidemiology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an MPH in Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology from the University of Rochester.

Dr. Vladutiu holds additional positions, including as Associate Professor in the Departments of Epidemiology and of Obstetrics & Gynecology (Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine) at UNC Chapel Hill.



Dr. Michele Lauria

Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Clinical Informatics
University at Buffalo School of Medicine
Division of Maternal Fetal Medicine

Dr. Lauria is Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology as well as Clinical Informatics at SUNY Buffalo. She is board certified in Clinical Informatics, Maternal Fetal Medicine and Obstetrics & Gynecology. Dr. Lauria is Co-Founder and former Medical Director of the Northern New England Perinatal Quality Improvement Network (NNEPQIN), an award-winning tri-state group of organizations that provide perinatal services. Her informatics career has focused on provider education, EHR and data governance as well as the clinical design of the EHR. Her current research focus is care of marginalized populations and the impact of events in pregnancy on the future health of a

woman.

Dr. Lauria obtained her MD from the University at Buffalo School of Medicine in 1988, and also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Chemistry from Hamilton College, and a Master of Science in Process Improvement from The Dartmouth Institute.

Doula Panel Presenters



Jill Kaczor

Public Health Program Nurse
New York State Department of Health

Jill Kaczor, RN, BSN, MEd, has been a Registered Nurse for almost 40 years as well as a certified teacher K-12 in Health Education. She has a wide range of nursing experience and is presently working for the New York State Department of Health as a Public Health Program Nurse covering the 17 counties of the Western Region. She has always been passionate about the health of others and a strong patient advocate for the most vulnerable populations. She has a strong belief in health prevention through education. She was recognized for her commitment to health by being an honored nominee for the Nurse of Distinction Award by the Professional Nurses Association. Jill enjoys being outdoors skiing, golf, gardening, hiking, and spending time with her family.



Shavonne Stevens

Founder
Love What I Doula

Shavonne Stevens, CD, CLC, is the founder of Love What I Doula, a culturally sensitive birth and postpartum support service based on the Cattaraugus Reservation. With her specialized training in Full Spectrum Indigenous Doula support, Shavonne delivers personalized care to Indigenous families addressing their unique needs and preferences.

Through partnerships with the Genesee Community Doulas and Erie Niagara AHEC, Shavonne is bridging gaps in doula access, addressing systemic disparities, and redefining the birth experience for Indigenous communities.

With a compassionate and empathetic approach, Shavonne provides expert guidance and support throughout pregnancy, birth, and postpartum, empowering birthing families to navigate their journey with confidence and resilience.



Shannon Johns

Founder
Calming Nature Doula Service & Center

Calming Nature Doula Services was founded in 2014 as an independent doula service, inspired by own founder, Shannon Johns, childbirth experience, which lacked the personalized assistance she needed. Realizing that many others in her community shared this challenge, she began assisting friends and family with their births, leading to the establishment of Calming Nature Doula Services. In 2017, she expanded

our services by launching a non-profit Doula Center, allowing us to provide support to those in need who could not afford doula services.



Kalia McCray

Birth Equity Project Manager
Erie Niagara Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

Kalia McCray is the Birth Equity Project Manager at the Erie Niagara Area Health Education Center, where she develops and manages programs to advance healthcare equity. With a Master's in Public Health from the University at Buffalo and certification as a Community Health Worker, Kalia combines academic expertise with hands-on experience in program management and health equity. Her work focuses on addressing racial and socioeconomic disparities in maternal health, striving to ensure every individual has a healthy and equitable start in life.



Julie Thompson

Founder
Labor of Love Doula Program
DONA International Trainer

Julie Thompson founded the Labor of Love Doula Program in 2013. She has been a birth doula since 1997 and has been a DONA International Birth doula trainer since 2017. The Labor of Love Doula Program has served 89 women since 2013. As a birth doula she has served over 300 families and has trained 707 Birth Doulas from around the world, including Durango, Mexico; and in Nairobi, Kenya, Africa. She loves doing Mission trips to teach childbirth education and how to support people through the birth process and has even served in Tegucigalpa, Honduras at the Escuela Hospital. She was the 512th certified birth doula through DONA and was one of the first to be awarded Advanced Doula in 2015.

Ignite Talks



Joyce Bess

Certified Lactation Counselor
Blackwell Chapel Baby Café

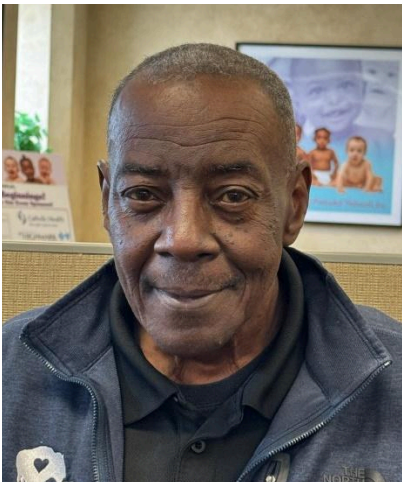
Joyce Bess is a Certified Lactation Counselor at the Blackwell Chapel Baby Café in Jamestown, NY. After obtaining her CLC license in 2015, she began volunteering her services when the café opened in 2016 and has been a leader for the organization ever since. Joyce holds a Masters in Developmental reading and is retired from a successful 34.5-year teaching career at Jamestown Public Schools. She is highly active in her church, Blackwell Chapel, which led her to the Baby Café.



Robin Fuller

Early Childhood Development Coordinator and First Step Family Resource Center Manager
Ardent Solutions / First Step Family Resource Center

Robin Fuller is the Allegany County Early Childhood Development Coordinator and the First Step Family Resource Center Manager joining Ardent Solutions in 2020. Robin completed her Bachelor's of Arts in Elementary Education and Psychology. Later she went on to complete her Master of Education in Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy. She has a deep passion for Early Childhood Advocacy and the betterment of children in school and life. Robin was a childcare director for 23 years and Parent-Teacher trainer and educator. Currently, Robin is the champion for the Allegany County Imagination Library, site coordinator for the Every Bottom Covered Program and is a certified facilitator for Common Sense Parenting and has made inroads with state policy makers advocating for early childhood development funding and improved services for families with young children. She also is a Child Development Associates PD Specialist, assisting with the observation process for teacher candidates trying to get their CDA's. She recently opened the First Step Family Resource Center, Allegany County's very first to help connect families to area resources and help families strengthen children's developmental skills.



Terry Seay

Fatherhood Program Manager
Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network Inc.

A father of 3, father-figure of 2, grandfather of 11 and great grandfather of 9, Terry is a Navy veteran who retired from the manufacturing field several years ago. He came out of retirement to help BPPN's Fatherhood Program in its development. His passion for the effort needed to improve father engagement and inclusion has, over the years, taken him on a journey starting as a Nurturing Father Program participant, to facilitator, to Fatherhood Advisor/Coordinator, to his current role as Program Manager. Terry's purpose in life is to be present, informed and engaged with his family and the men in the community who are fathers. His love language is "acts of service" and it is also what he does.



Sara Vacin

Executive Director
GLOW OUT!

Sara Vacin (she/her) is a seasoned educator and dedicated advocate with over twenty-five years of experience teaching and supporting diverse groups. A founding member of GLOW OUT!, she is serving as its inaugural Executive Director, leading the transformation of the non-profit into a comprehensive human service agency. These efforts began with the establishment of their first after school drop-in center in Batavia in April 2022, which offers vital social and emotional support to LGBTQ+ youth and connects them with essential mental health resources. Sara has also worked

to open safe spaces for youth in all four of the GLOW counties (Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, and Wyoming), coordinate family support through PFLAG meetings, and provide Safe Zone training for the community.