**2025 New Jersey Immunization Conference Speakers' Bio- Main Room**

**Speakers**

**Barbara Montana, MD, MPH, FACP,** is a Medical Director with the Communicable Disease Service at the New Jersey Department of Health. She oversees the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program. She received her medical degree from New York University (NYU) School of Medicine. She completed a residency in Internal Medicine at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia and a fellowship in Infectious Diseases at Bellevue/NYU in New York City. She is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases. She obtained a Masters of Public Health from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (now Rutger’s) School of Public Health where she is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Division of Epidemiology. She sees patients at a clinic in Long Branch, NJ.

**Jeffrey A. Brown** currently serves as Acting Commissioner for the New Jersey Department of Health.

Brown recently served as the Deputy Commissioner of Health Systems at the New Jersey Department of Health, overseeing inspections and the enforcement of regulations for approximately 2,200 licensed New Jersey health care facilities; over 2,700 mental health and addiction services and programs; the Certificate of Need Program; the Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency; and major hospital funding programs such as Charity Care, Graduate Medical Education, and the Quality Improvement Performance Program.

Prior to his role as Deputy Commissioner of Health Systems, Brown served as the first Executive Director of the NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission, where he was responsible for organizational strategy, policy, and management of a new state commission, and as Assistant Commissioner for Medicinal Marijuana under the DOH.  His work included expanding access to the medicinal marijuana program from 17,000 patients to more than 125,000, leading and overseeing the first ever comprehensive regulations to underpin New Jersey's personal use cannabis industry, development of one of the most innovative laws and tax structures for cannabis sales in the country and managing the regulatory oversight of a new billion-dollar industry.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Brown served as the Department of Health’s lead in establishing the Atlantic City Field Medical Site and was a member of DOH’s COVID-19 testing task force.  
  
Before his time at DOH and the CRC, Brown worked extensively on the passage and implementation of the Affordable Care Act, particularly the creation of health insurance exchanges and the expansion of Medicaid, has led an association of community-based providers to implement innovative new payment models in Medicaid, and has fought to expand access to health care in New Jersey’s urban communities by developing sustainable financing policies.   
Jeff Brown grew up in Mercer County and graduated Summa Cum Laude from Rutgers University.

**Mary E. O’Dowd** is the Executive Director of Health Systems and Population Health Integration for Rutgers Health. She leads and supports multi-disciplinary population health-related programs and research projects by developing partnerships with healthcare and public health partners at the state, local, and community level. In this role, O’Dowd led the development and launch of several key programs, including the [Population Health Fellowship](https://rutgershealth.org/clinical-health-affairs/population-health/fellowship) program and a podcast series, [*On the Pandemic*](https://anchor.fm/rutgerscast)*,* which engaged university experts and New Jersey health leaders in conversations regarding the critical challenges in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. O’Dowd serves on the Board of Directors for University Hospital, in Newark, and is a member of several advisory boards including the [Rutgers Institute for Women’s Leadership](https://iwl.rutgers.edu/). In 2021, first book, [*Junctures in Women’s Leadership Health Care and Public Health*](https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/junctures-in-womens-leadership-health-care-and-public-health/9781978803688), was published.

Prior to joining Rutgers, O’Dowd served as the Commissioner for the NJDOH where she promoted population health initiatives during extraordinary transformation in the healthcare delivery system. She led the Department’s response and recovery efforts during unprecedented emergent events, including: Hurricane Irene, Superstorm Sandy, Super Bowl XLVIII, and the West African Ebola epidemic.

**Noa’a Shimoni** joined the Family Medicine Department in 2012 as the Medical Director of Student Health Services. She is an alumna of NJMS and completed her residency at  
Einstein-Beth Israel Medical Center. Dr. Shimoni completed a Fellowship in Family  
Planning and an MPH in epidemiology at Columbia University. Her research interests center  
On long-acting reversible contraception.

**Yonaira M. Rivera** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at Rutgers University’s School of Communication & Information. Originally from Puerto Rico, Dr. Rivera’s scholarship focuses on reducing health inequities and improving the well-being of Latino/a/x and underserved communities through health communication initiatives. Her work uses qualitatively driven mixed methods and community-based participatory research to study social media health misinformation, cancer control and prevention, and disaster relief. She specifically focuses on working with communities to develop culturally tailored cancer educational materials for Latino/a/x audiences, understanding how engagement with health (mis)information on social media can impact health decisions, and outlining the role of social media in health communication and community mobilization. Dr. Rivera has a Ph.D. in Social & Behavioral Sciences from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and an MPH in Behavioral Sciences & Health Education from Emory University.

**Dr. David Cennimo** is a graduate of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School where he also completed a combined Internal Medicine-Pediatrics residency, Internal Medicine chief residency, and fellowships in both Adult and Pediatric Infectious Diseases. He currently practices clinical infectious diseases and infection control with clinical foci range from HIV, tuberculosis, and emerging pathogens to vaccination implementation and infection prevention.

He continues to pursue his passion for medical education as core faculty in multiple residency and fellowship programs and an Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Education at NJMS.

**Jay Middleton** does his best not to let his run-in with cancer define his life. Instead, he does his best to lean into letting cancer, his love for cycling & the outdoors, and his passion to make a difference inform how he moves through the second half of his life. An avid cyclist before cancer, Jay continued to ride throughout his cancer treatments during the pandemic and now uses his bike adventures (and sometimes misadventures) as a vehicle for fundraising and advocacy work. He credits his brush with cancer for strengthening his marriage, deepening his friendship, and providing the catalyst for leaving the private sector to pursue a career in the non-profit space with Habitat for Humanity.

**Breakout Room Speaker Bios**

**Taylor Crosby** is a public health program specialist with over 10 years of experience in the field. She has a Master's in United Nations and Global Policy Studies with a focus on public health programming. Taylor joined the VPDP team as the VFC Coordinator.

**Aneri Shah** serves as a Vaccine Manager for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program with the New Jersey Department of Health in the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program. In this role, Aneri works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to ensure federally funded vaccines are managed and distributed appropriately amongst VFC-enrolled providers throughout New Jersey. She is an expert on all ACIP-recommended vaccines and has educated patients and providers throughout her career.

**Ramona Braddock** currently serves as the Field Operations Supervisor for the Vaccines for Children Program, with the New Jersey Department of Health, Vaccine Preventable Disease Program. In this role, Ramona manages and supports field staff who are responsible for conducting vaccine compliance visits throughout the state. She has been instrumental in providing education and guidance on proper vaccine storage and handling of ACIP-recommended vaccines to all VFC providers.

She has been with the New Jersey Department of Health for over 15 years. Ramona is also a Licensed Practice Nurse. She previously worked in New York City at Jamaica Hospital and at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital here in New Jersey.

**Stephanie A. Navarro Silvera, PHD, MS, CPH** is a Professor of Public Health at Montclair State University, where she has taught since 2006. She holds a Ph.D. in Epidemiology from Yale University and advanced degrees in Nutritional Science and Biology from Rutgers University. Dr. Silvera’s interdisciplinary expertise bridges epidemiology, nutrition, and public health, with a research portfolio that centers on health inequities and the social determinants of health.

Her scholarly work spans over two decades and includes extensive publications in high-impact journals with a focus on elucidating and addressing health disparities and improving access to preventive healthcare among underserved populations.  She has led and collaborated on research funded at the national and state levels, and her work has been widely presented at national conferences. In addition to her academic work, Dr. Silvera has served as a public voice during the COVID-19 pandemic, making over 400 appearances across television, radio, and print media to help lay audiences navigate evolving scientific guidance and public health policies. Her ability to translate complex research into practical, actionable information has made her a trusted source of knowledge and a leading advocate for community health.

**Patricia Kaiser** is a Recruiter/Trainer for the NJ Immunization Information System (NJIIS) and has worked for the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium (CJFHC) for over 20 years, 18 of which have been with NJIIS. Her dedication and drive have allowed her to rise within the Consortium.

Ms. Kaiser has been a Certified Trainer for over 16 years with NJIIS and conducts Statewide NJIIS trainings and provider assistance throughout the Central Jersey region (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Somerset). Ms. Kaiser assisted the NJ Department of Health, Vaccine Preventable Disease Program, in the rewriting of the NJ Immunization Registry in 2018, creating NJIIS help documents for NJIIS users, and creating pre-recorded webinars. In August 2011, Ms. Kaiser became the Program Coordinator for CJFHC, overseeing quality assurance for NJIIS in addition to training and Provider assistance.

**Johnathan Banks** is a Recruiter and Trainer for the NJ Immunization Information System (NJIIS) and has served as NJIIS Program Supervisor at the Partnership for Maternal & Child Health (PMCH) for 16 months. He provides statewide NJIIS training and supports healthcare providers in Passaic, Hudson, Sussex, and Bergen counties.

**Charlene Henderson, RN, MA,** is a Registered Nurse and a COVID-19 health educator at the Vaccine-Preventable Disease Program within the New Jersey Department of Health. She holds a master's degree in Community Health Education and has extensive experience working in various settings, including hospitals, community health organizations, and schools, both as a Registered Nurse and a Health Educator.

**Keely Ogden** currently serves as the Immunization Quality Improvement for Providers (IQIP) Program Specialist for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program at the New Jersey Department of Health, within the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program. In this role, Keely organizes IQIP processes and conducts IQIP visits, playing a key role in relaunching the program across the state. She helps VFC providers implement proven quality improvement measures to increase the acceptance of ACIP-recommended vaccines.

Keely’s career includes experience in and supervision of medical office operations, as well as roles within managed care's Care Management Programs, including project coordinator and supervisor. She began her career with the New Jersey Department of Health in early 2024.